A FEW

NOTES AND MEDITATIONS

ON

JOHN V. AND VI.

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CHAPTER V. commences with a new aspect of man's condition—his *weakness.* All flesh is as grass, and all its glory as the flower of grass—the grass *has* withered, and its flower *has* faded. But an angel of Jehovah, *mighty* in *strength,* doing His commandments, had been there; for when had He left Himself without witness of the power and grace that were behind all and above all the ruin man had wrought? After this we have the question of the sabbath, the great theme of Jewish boasting; that is, man without strength and a sabbath without rest, are the two subjects first presented to us, with the answer to both in Jesus, who is "the power of God," and rest for the *weary* soul of man. Thirdly, eternal life, and life-giving and resurrection-power in a *Man,* who says He *can do nothing of Himself*—the dependent Man and the Son of God are one—and, lastly, the fourfold testimony to His Person.

These are the great subjects of this precious chapter.

"Now there is in Jerusalem, at the sheep-gate,

a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of sick, blind, lame, withered, awaiting the moving of the water. For an angel descended at a certain season in the pool and troubled the water. Whoever therefore first went in after the troubling of the water became well, whatever disease he laboured under." Yet there was One amongst them whom they knew not, mightier than the angel who troubled the waters, but He was not waited for; His mission, indeed, was not dependent on the thoughts of men; He had come to minister unto others, and to give His life a ransom for many. "Wilt thou be made whole?" He says to the poor man. The will was indeed present with him, but the impossibility of man was with him also. And there was "no man" to help. As was said of the poor prodigal, "no man gave unto him." And in the most interesting connection possible, His own Spirit speaks in the prophet, "When I came was there *no man*." No! there is "no man," whether the need of man demands it, or the call of God waits for an answer. The only Hope of Israel, as of man, was indeed in their midst, but unknown and unrecognised by man. To Him the Lord God had given the tongue of the learned, that He should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. And here was a poor wearied one listening to the word of the Lord God from the tongue of the learned, from Jesus Himself—"Wilt thou be made whole?"

This is the third aspect in which man's state is viewed in this Gospel; here, without strength, even when "to will" was present—power belongs to God, power and grace. In chapter iii. it was man in the flesh, in possession, outwardly, of all the religious privileges of Israel—"a ruler of the Jews," "a teacher of Israel." The Light of life shines, and the privileges are seen to be in the hands of the dead; man must be born anew. In chapter iv. it was simply the corruption of the flesh. Living water was not there. The life of the flesh differs in nothing from that which characterises the "sowing" of the body in death. The same terms apply equally to each—weakness, corruption, dishonour. In chapter iii. it is the incapacity of the mind, though surrounded with the testimonies of God, to grasp the simplest truth which would lead to life and to God—in chapter v., the inability of nature to take a single step towards the healing waters.

You see we are now coming upon great scenes in revelation; amongst these the sabbath holds a remarkable place, presented in the Gospels in different connections, and wholly new bearings. The Lord brings it forward Himself, and in each place in ways of surpassing interest. It is no longer viewed in connection with rest from creation toil, the redemption of man in the flesh from fleshly enemies, the national sanctification of Israel; nor do we find it in connection with the true Manna from heaven (Ex. xvi.)—they would not eat it, though God had given it to

them to eat—but with the truth *now* coming out on every side, that man *could not* rest because he was a sinner, and that God *would not*, because He was a Saviour,—with failure in the whole creation, and with the unrest of every creature; with the presently to be revealed truth, that its foundation is in the atoning death of Him who, risen, ascended, and glorified, is become the Head of the new creation; that the eighth day (first day of the week, the resurrection-day), and not the seventh, characterises the christian position. That the cross is the judgment of the old thing; that neither rest, nor that which is the sign of it, can be connected with that which the death of Christ has judged. All must be new—new covenant for Israel; new birth for *man;* new song; new creation. Israel was in captivity and "sorrow upon the sea" of nations—the sea and the waves roaring as ever. Jesus, Creator and Redeemer, in their midst in rejection—was that a time or season to glory in the sign of that which could not be found, save in the person of the rejected One?

God's rest in glory with His creatures, His people's participation in His rest, was the great thought of which the sabbath was the sign. We find it in connection with grace, government (law), and redemption. (Ex. xvi., xx.; Deut. v.); a sign of national sanctification and of the covenant in Ezekiel xx. It was a sign of creation-rest, and a type of that eternal rest that remaineth. The first had passed away through the

creature's sin; the second remains, no one has entered into that. Rest in Jesus, and His finished work, is another thought—rest of soul in Him in whom the Father rests, but different from the rest that remaineth. In Exodus xvi. we find the *first* mention of the sabbath as a divine institution for *man's observance.* In Genesis ii. it is said simply that God rested, having finished the work of creation, and sanctified the day of *His* rest. In Exodus xvi. we find the sabbath in connection with the manna; in Deuteronomy v., with redemption—that is, with God's work and God's gift; Bread of God that, coming out of heaven, gives life to the world. The Redeemer and the true Bread from heaven are one; the knowledge of this gives the secret of rest. God *gives* the sabbath in one place, and *commands* its *observance* in the other. When the Lord allows the question of the sabbath to be raised in His presence, He so applies it to the conscience as to make it *there* the sign of the creature's unrest. "My Father *worketh* hitherto, and I work." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Let the context be pondered. The application of the truth touching this sign of rest makes man's unrest manifest; as the uncomprehending darkness is revealed by the shining of the perfect Light. These truths are really learned in the conscience only. How blessed, too, the divine order—redemption first—then rest. (Ex. xv., xvi.) They can never be separated since sin has come into

the world; these chapters, too, contain the *first* records of each. (Genesis ii. is God's rest in creation.)

Before passing on, then, let us look for a moment at redemption—not so much in the work done against the enemy (his overthrow was total and complete, "destroyed him that had the power of death"), as in its blessed effects in the hearts of His redeemed, as much His work as the overthrow of the enemy. If He was glorious in His victory, O how happy they who were to participate in its glorious fruits! Strength, song, and gladness are its first fruits in the hearts of the redeemed; but it is the Lord who is all this to the soul, and therefore the joy is in Himself, and so a pure delight. His glory is appreciated in *His triumph*, in *His power*, and in *His holiness*. He is greater than all that He has wrought. We want Himself now—"He is my God, I will *exalt* him," the ceaseless note! heard again when glory comes, when the hand of Jehovah rests in the holy mount—"O God, thou art my God, I will *exalt* thee." (Is. xxv.) "I will prepare him an habitation"—and *He* brings to the place that He has made for Himself to dwell in, in the midst of His redeemed people. We joy in Him, and He, seeing of the travail of His soul, is satisfied. We must not forget what comes out in the first burst—"I will exalt him," as the apostle expresses it, "that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." If Exodus xv. gives the first testimony of redemp-

tion, and with it the first recorded song on earth, Revelation v. gives us the heavenly song of redemption: "Because thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue," &c.; "and *made* them *to our God* kings and priests."

May we lay hold of this thought—redeemed *to God*, and made *to God*, &c., and Who it is who did it.

Again, in Revelation xiv. we find those redeemed *from* the earth, and *from* men, firstfruits *to God* and *the Lamb*—the remnant preserved for earthly blessing—not yet singing, but learning to sing, while they listened to the voice of glory out of heaven—that "voice like great waters," and "like harp-singers playing on their harps" (power and praise), and no one could even learn this song but the redeemed. Gladness, then, strength, and salvation, are the fruits of redemption known and enjoyed in the Lord. It is important, too, to notice that God's holiness is first mentioned in connection with redemption (holiness is not spoken of in Genesis, save the sanctification of the day of His rest). He brings the redeemed to Himself, they must, therefore, resemble Himself in nature; and He is *glorious in holiness*. His habitation also amongst men is first spoken of when the redeemed are there. He *visited* Abraham, and even Adam in paradise, but He did not *dwell* with either. He dwells with His redeemed. His eternal habitation with man is the *holy* Jerusalem: everything in the

earthly *house*, in the *city*, and in the *land* of Judah is stamped with *holiness* to the Lord. (Zech. xiv.) All in the end responds to His nature. I have spoken thus of redemption, because of its connection with *rest*.

Verse 10. "The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was; for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple," &c. It was a good place for man to be found in, ere it was rendered *desolate* by the departure of Him whose presence alone gave it a place before God; there men inquired, and beheld His beauty; there the devout soul longed to dwell, because it was His dwelling-place; there He was sought in the time of trouble, and glorified in praises when deliverance came. (Ps. xxvii.) Does the last thought explain the presence there of the impotent man?) "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth;" and faith and love still clung to it amid all the vicissitudes of their wondrous story. Its former glory had long departed—yea, the glory itself; and the predicted "latter glory" had not yet returned. (See Haggai ii., margin.) But in the mind of the Spirit the

house was *one*, and viewed as subsisting till filled again with the glory of Him who comes in the name of the Lord. Could faith forget that the Lord had said, "Mine eyes and my heart shall be there continually"? No, it was still for the heart, amid the wreck of time and downfall of Israel, "our holy and our beautiful house where our fathers praised thee." Yet Jesus was about to say, "YOUR house is left unto you desolate," refusing to own it as His, being Himself at that moment the temple and dwelling-place of God, and place of rest for the heart of sin-weary man. The soul's present sabbath is found only in Him.

Our thoughts turn instinctively to that other house of which He is at the same time Builder and Chief Corner-stone, which in Him also increases unto a holy temple, a habitation of God in Spirit; Hades' gates prevail not against *it*; as was said of Himself, it "must increase." The desolation of the earthly temple can never be its portion, God's habitation it remains till its completion in heaven; until, in another figure, Christ presents it to Himself glorious, without spot or wrinkle. There is another aspect in connection with responsibility, but it does not, and *cannot*, affect the blessed truth of Ephesians ii. and v.

Verse 17. "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." This passage is, perhaps, the fullest expression of the grace of God which we find anywhere, a blessed and wondrous revelation, that, outside the scene

of ruin, the defacement of His own likeness in the moral creation, above the darkness of this world, in the glorious light of His own perfections, superior to all evil, the Father and the Son had been working in patient grace and long-suffering. Not merely as from the high and holy place of His habitation letting His compassions fall, as it were, like rain upon the parched earth; but in all their afflictions, afflicted, while, in the activities of love to His rebellious people, He found motives which they could not supply in Himself, His name, His glory—He "*wrought*" for His *name's sake.* Indeed "hitherto" is a movable term when applied to the ways of God in grace, you cannot *fix* it until He shall "work" no more. Look for a moment at the beginning of those ways in Israel as He Himself records them.

"In the day when I chose Israel, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up my hand unto them, saying, I am the Lord your God, in the day when I lifted up my hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt unto a land . . . . the glory of all lands . . . . I said, Cast away the abominations. . . . . I am the Lord your God. But they rebelled . . . . but I *wrought* for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen . . . . in whose sight I had made myself known unto them, in bringing them out of the land of Egypt."

Then He brought them into the wilderness, and gave them His statutes, judgments, sabbaths.

What was the result? "The house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness, they walked not in my statutes, despised my judgments, polluted my sabbaths; but I *wrought* for my name's sake." He said He would not bring *them* into the land, the glory of all lands, but, addressing their *children*, said, "Walk ye in my statutes," &c., but they also rebelled. He spoke of judging them; but retreated immediately into Himself, saying, "I withdrew my hand, and *wrought* for my name's sake." Again, He tells them He will scatter them among the nations, and defeat the purpose of their evil heart, of becoming like the nations, and would bring them under the rod; rebellion still was their only answer. So it came out that He that scattered them alone could gather them; accordingly *He* brings them to His holy mountain, and accepts their sacrifices there. And then, when He had "wrought" for His name's sake, in bringing them to His holy mount, *when grace* had triumphed where evil was, they would "*know* the Lord." It is grace reigning through righteousness, and mercy rejoicing against judgment, that gives the true knowledge of God —"They shall know the Lord." And there, in the enjoyment of acceptance, when its righteous ground should have been shewn them by the Lord, how grace had reigned through righteousness, would the fruits of grace be manifested in *holiness*. They hate sin for its own sake, because *it is sin*, and loathe themselves, because they had been loathsome.

But this is holiness, as in that beautiful Psalm xlv.: "Thou hast *loved* righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." In the end all answers to the nature of God. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's *house* shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in *Jerusalem* and in *Judah* shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts." (Zech. xiv.) And when the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven from God, she is called the "holy city."

I think the difference between righteousness and holiness will be easily seen from what we have been considering. How blessedly the Spirit of God, in His afflicted servant, uses this plea: "Thy name's sake;" "The throne of thy glory;" "Thy covenant with us." (Jer. xiv.) There was nothing in man to plead with God, all was gone there; but for faith there remained what God was in Himself and His ways. It was sin, then, all the way from the land of Egypt, and Jehovah "*working*;" but Father and Son—essential relationship—is also the name of deepest grace.

If *Jehovah* had wrought in Israel from the days of Egypt onward, "My *Father* worketh hitherto, and *I* work," embraces all time; they were working from the days of paradise itself—"from the day thou eatest thereof." To know the Father and the Son is eternal life, and they had "*wrought* hitherto." Thus we are let into

the profoundest secrets of grace. Alas! how little they are sought out by His professing people. It is not until we come to Revelation xxi. that we find the "hitherto" fixed, and for ever—His "*working*" was over. "Behold, I make all things new"—"It is done;" after that there will be no occasion any more to repeat that word, "hitherto." All things made new—God all in all —His tabernacle with men. Up to that time, even including the millennium, it could be said, in some sense, "hitherto." But now, He that sits upon the throne says, "It is done;" as Jesus had said upon the cross, "It is finished." Will He ever need to repeat that work or that word? or He that sits upon the throne to say again, "It is done"? In verse 3 (Rev. xxi.), "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men," we see the fulness and realisation of the thought of Exodus xxv.: "Make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (His redeemed)—but here men, as such, are the redeemed, and *we* are to be there His dwelling-place (tabernacle) "*with men.*" Shall we not participate in His own delight in being "with men," without losing our own distinctive place, through endless grace, of being His tabernacle, with God but at the same time with men also, in fellowship with God? But to be "with men," without restraint or fear! for now, enmity on man's side, and God's call on the other (we being, like the remnant, redeemed *from* the earth and *from* men), keep us apart. But then what joy it will be to find ourselves—God

Himself in our midst—" with men." Christ's "delights were with the sons of men," and His delights will be ours in that day. Become a Man Himself, the angel announced divine delight in men. What fellowship with God this will be! "Let us make man in our image and likeness." "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men." . . . . "and God himself shall be with them." What a wondrous scripture! giving us as the end of God's counsels and workings—His dwelling "*with men.*" Jesus Himself—a Man—in this final scene will be the link in these glorious thoughts, God with men, and men forming His tabernacle, as now He holds the place of only Mediator between God and man. (See 1 Cor. xv. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 5.)

But to continue the study of this great subject in John v. Let us mark how Jesus answered them, and presently we shall see how He answers His adversaries on the same subject from another point of view, in Matthew xii. Verse 17 of our chapter, "My Father . . . . and I," the special name of grace. Eternal life is revealed and communicated in this name. (John xvii.) Father and Son had "*wrought,*" from the days of paradise to that hour. "But that is making yourself equal to God," they said, and said the truth; the head was right, the *heart* all wrong; yet out of it are the issues of life! What, then, was their state before Him? But His second answer is as remarkable as the first. 1. That He had life eternal in Himself, quickening whom He would,

even like the Father. 2. That the hour was present when the dead in sins would hear His voice as *Son of God*, and live; another hour coming when all that were in their graves should hear His voice, and come forth. 3. That He had authority to execute judgment as *Son of man;* that in result, and as having all judgment given to Him by the Father, He should be honoured of all even as the Father was honoured. But what is chiefly remarkable in the Lord's second answer is, that this power, with the glory connected with it, is spoken of as *conferred* and emanating from the Father, wielded by One who, in His place of suffering for man, could say, "But I am a worm, and *no man*." He who was Himself the eternal life in His own Person tells them it was given Him of the Father to have it in Himself. ("The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.") The Creator, He, by whom and for whom all things were created, *receives* authority to execute judgment. Perfect lowliness and dependence—infinite glory linked to infinite perfection in humanity. "Son of the Father," "Son of man," and "Son of God," shine forth in the same revelation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and in answer to these poor Jews.

Now, in turning to Matthew xii., we see that what gave occasion for bringing forward this subject was, the disciples plucking the ears of corn, and eating them on the sabbath-day. It was not lawful, the Pharisees said. They did not

know that the letter kills, or were careless about it, provided they could wield it against others. And here, it will be remarked, the Lord does not once refer to the glorious truth of the Father and the Son working from the beginning, as in John. It was necessary here to meet and refute these hypocritical religionists on their own ground —they had read the scriptures. They were of those who rested in the law, and made their boast in God, and knew His will, being instructed out of the law; this was the place they took. (Rom. ii.) The Lord therefore refers them to the well-known history of the greatest of their kings —the man after God's own heart; and of God's priests in Israel. In David's time, as when the Lord Himself was there, all was in disorder in Israel, the Lord's anointed cast out and rejected. Which was of most value in God's sight, the life of His chosen one, or a morsel of the shewbread? It was not *lawful*, it is true; but if they did not know that principle, "The letter killeth," &c., they did know that, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," formed part of those oracles in which they boasted—the case of the priests was plain. Having thus met and exposed the hypocrisy of these men on *their ground, the letter of scripture*, He stands before them upon *His own*. The rejected Son of David was One greater than the temple, and Lord of the sabbath in which they gloried, the outward sign of their national sanctification. He leaves them in order to accomplish a work of mercy on the same sabbath-day.

Their rage knows no bounds, and can only be appeased by putting Him to death. In recording it, the Holy Ghost bears testimony to Him anew, in giving God's thoughts about Him from Isaiah xlii. Jesus had already borne witness to Himself. Thus, in a chapter in which man's enmity is so remarkably displayed we find a testimony to the glory of His Person, and the perfectness of His ways, in which each Person in the Godhead has His part. The Son of man is Lord of the sabbath, and greater than the temple (a divine Person)—greater than Solomon, greater than Jonah, Beloved of God, Ruler over the Gentiles, Jehovah's Servant, His chosen: these last words were Jehovah's testimony, now brought forward afresh, by the energy of the Spirit, when man was rising up against God's Beloved, in whom His soul was well pleased. It reminds us of Isaiah xlix.: "To him whom man despiseth . . . . to him whom the nation abhorreth . . . . because of the Holy One of Israel, and *he* shall *choose thee.*"

Verse 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed out of death into life." This is what the apostle calls bringing life to light—a new revelation—like that of the Father and the Son working hitherto; as is also the execution of judgment committed to Jesus because He was Son of man. The revelation of this great truth of life eternal depended upon the

presence of the *Son* (that eternal life that was with the Father); it appears first in John iii.—"gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might have eternal life." At the end of that chapter it is stated positively and negatively, "He that believeth on the *Son* has life eternal; he that is not subject to the *Son* shall not see life." In chapter v., the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that have heard shall live. The Father has given to the Son to have life in Himself. He that hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me, has life eternal, and is passed out of death into life. Here the word is evidently the word of the Son, and He that sent Him is the *Father*—the doctrine of chapter xvii. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent"—that is, to know the Father and the Son. The knowledge of the Father and the Son, as said before, carried eternal life with it. It is in John that we get this great doctrine first *brought to light.* How he loves to dwell on it—rather the Spirit by him. Eternal life, living waters, the living Spirit—it is all living when we have to do with Jesus, the Son of the living God—the living Bread from heaven. His eyes had seen, his hands had handled, what his mouth proclaimed, Jesus of Nazareth was that very eternal life that was with the Father. The life eternal possessed by Christians was *in the Son.* This is bringing life to light by the gospel.

It will be easily seen that the Son receives all from the Father in the place of Servant (sent One), from which He never departed. The identity of Jesus of Nazareth with the Son, is as true as the Son's identity in nature with the Father. "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." "I and my Father are one." He who could give from heaven the commission to turn from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, could be none other than God's Son—He receives all, then, from the Father, to communicate as Servant, in the lowly place He had taken amongst men, as perfect in that position as in His eternal one as Son. "Behold my *servant*, mine elect, in whom my soul *delighteth*." "And lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved *Son*, in whom I have found my *delight*."

Verse 30. "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just: because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." He gives the moral reason for that—"because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness." Then He gives a fourfold series of witnesses to His Person, the leading thought being that He has eternal life to communicate. (Vers. 26–39.) In 1 John v. you have a threefold testimony that eternal life is in Christ Himself, and that God has given it to us. Thus you get a *sevenfold* testimony on this subject. The four

here are—first, John; second, the Father Himself; third, the scriptures bore witness; and fourth, the works He did. "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." But in 1 John v. it says, "There are three that bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." (Vers. 10, 11.) "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." It is very important to read that verse 11 in connection with the three that bear witness. What was it the three bore witness to? What is the testimony?

There is a certain testimony given, and there are three witnesses that bear testimony to it. In the Gospel we had that the Son had eternal life to communicate, and there were four witnesses to His Person, and they would not come to Him that they might have life. Here we have the water, the blood, and the Holy Ghost witnessing to this great truth, that eternal life is in the Son, and that God has given it to us. The serious study of these two passages will make us understand what a great revelation it is, and how deep its importance. You cannot get eternal life in the first man. When the Lord raised the question of the sabbath, He set aside for ever the hope of rest for the old creation, *that* was

judged, for the sabbath was its SIGN, and, at the same time, the hope of life for man in nature was extinguished, for that was to be on this principle, "Do, and live," but the sabbath was the sign of the old covenant, "Do, and live," also. Thus we have another testimony that life is not to be found in the first Adam. You must look to the last Adam and *second Man* (what had become of the first ?) if it is a question of eternal life. In the passage before us (1 John v. 6) it is said, He came by water and blood; in that way, not by water only, but in the power of water, and in the power of blood—cleansing and expiation: but the water that cleanses, and the blood that expiates, are found in the dead body of Jesus—in that death which is the judgment of the flesh, and end of all its hopes. God has, in that sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. The very work which is a sacrifice for sin is the everlasting condemnation of sin in the flesh! Then the Holy Ghost, sent down by the ascended Lord, bears witness, "because he is truth," and gives vitality in the soul to the testimonies of the water and the blood. It is in Jesus, who has died, risen, and ascended, Jesus—the second Man—the Son, that eternal life is found. The testimony is that God has given it to us, and that it is in the Son.

A few words more on this subject of the sabbath. Have you marked the interesting connection between the end of Matthew xi. and beginning of Matthew xii.? In the former

chapter the rejected Saviour turns first in conscious Sonship, to the Father, to thank Him for the present result of His will, Himself unknown on earth, known only of the Father, and then, from out of the depths of that marvellous position, turning to the wearied ones in the world, He presents Himself as the alone sabbath of rest for man, blessed Son of the Father! in His place of rejection on earth. Impossible for any one who understands this wondrous teaching to dream of another sabbath before the rest of God has come. But now let us look again at chapter xii., and listen to the words of our divine Teacher. David, when he was hungry, and ate the shewbread, did that which was not *lawful*, but he explains in the parallel place (Mark ii.) that the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath. How true it is that the letter killeth! Could God have preferred the maintenance of an ordinance made for man to the life of His anointed king, the man after His own heart? But, not to go into the details, He presents Himself in another character of glory—the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath. Who but Himself could speak thus? The Son of man of chapter xii., Lord of the sabbath, is the sabbath of rest Himself in chapter xi.

In John iii. you get eternal life in connection with the cross ("the Son of man must be lifted up"). The new birth is in connection with the kingdom. The water and the blood, the means of sanctification and expiation for sin, are both

found in a dead Christ. Water is a figure of death, and death the way of holy liberty, as we get in Romans vi.—"He that is dead is freed from sin." Death is the means of sanctification, the Holy Ghost its power. Christ died to sin; we are counted as having died in Him, and so dead to sin. Thus, in a dead, risen, and ascended Christ, we get everything. In the Gospel we have the four witnesses that Christ has eternal life; in the Epistle three witnesses to the blessed fact that *we* have got it, and this being in the Son, we can never lose it (so all the promises of God are in Him, and have in Him their Amen. And so, too, grace and truth subsists by Jesus Christ (see New Translation), full of grace and truth, and of His fulness have all we received). Then it ends with a threefold "we know." By the Spirit of God he writes these things, that we may know that we have eternal life; and then we come in with our "we know" (1 John v. 13, 18–20); we have the witness in ourselves. Then he adds, "we are *in him* that is true;" it is thus that we realise the knowledge of Him in the truth of His nature, in that we are in Him that is true.

In John xvii. we realise the Father's love, in that the Son Himself is in us, "that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and *I* in them."

Chapter vi.—1. There are two parts quite distinct in chapter vi. In the first we have the Lord shadowed forth in His glories, in connection

with the earthly people, as Prophet, Priest, and King. Psalm cxxxii. is often referred to in connection with this: "I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread." (Vers. 26, 27.) Here we have the people in their unbelief. "Jesus answered them, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." So in chapter v. 39, 40: "Ye search the scriptures," &c.; yet "ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Then He goes on in the fulness of His grace. As in Matthew xi., where the rejected One speaks out of the depths of His personal and moral glories, ("No one knows the Son but the Father." "I am meek, and lowly in heart.") "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Here (chap. v. 40) He says, "I have eternal life for you, and a fourfold testimony to the truth, and you will not come!" What comes out next? Having refused Him as the Light and Life, they add to it their rejection of Him as the Jehovah of Israel. Do not you feel the need of the Holy Ghost to lead our souls to the full appreciation of a grace that yields to no rejection, until all has been tried in vain? They saw this great sign, and said that He was a prophet. Then they wanted to make Him a king. All these things are in connection with Israel, though His priestly place extends

beyond Israel (as His atoning death), "And not for that nation only," &c.

Verses 15–21. "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone," &c. While He is praying on the mount, a figure of His heavenly place of intercession (a reality, of course), they are on the sea—it is a figure of the remnant. It is a beautiful picture of intercession in heaven. In Matthew xiv. you get this scene developed. Why not here? I believe the reason is, because John's object is always to bring out the personal glory and greatness of Christ. "It is I;" that was enough to still every fear, for God Himself was in that I. They see Him walking on the sea. Who but God could do that? That is the thought of the Spirit here. It is a divine Person. The act reveals the Person. "Who is able to remit sins except God alone?" they say, in Mark ii. "But that ye may know that the Son of man has power on the earth to remit sins, he says to the paralytic, To thee I say, Arise, take up thy couch, and go to thine house. And he was raised up straightway, and, having taken up his couch, went out before them all; so that all were amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it thus." His words, we may add, equally revealed the Person who was there—He was morally that which He uttered. (John viii. 25.) With Him thoughts, words, and acts had their common source in the infinite depths of the

divine nature. John is always bringing in a divine Person. The Holy Ghost, as far as we have gone, knows no other object than His Person. As *Jehovah* He fed the multitude. He does not say, "I am Jehovah;" but who else could feed five thousand men out of a few loaves and fishes? Who but *God* could walk upon the waters? Jehovah is a name of relationship. You do not say it is Jehovah that walked on the water—you say it is God.

There is a wonderful fulness in that scripture, Matthew xiv. 23–33: "When the evening was come he was there alone, but the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves; for the wind was contrary," &c. Those that were toiling in rowing represent the remnant, but Peter walking on the water represents Christians coming out of Judaism. It is a question of faith. Just like the one leper that came back to give glory to God, though there were ten cleansed, and the Lord had told them to shew themselves to the priests, according to the prescribed order in Leviticus. One only saw beyond this, or had spiritual instinct to lead him to the feet of Jesus, giving God thanks. And he was a Samaritan stranger. He goes to Jesus, and the Lord sends him on his way in the liberty of salvation. He is, as to the spirit of that passage, in christian position. The poor Samaritan stranger had found God in One poorer than himself. What are priests and temples for such an one? This, too, is what Paul did, and the Jews that came out of

Judaism—like Peter, they left the boat, as it were, to go to Jesus; their path was over troubled waters, but they never sank. He who drew them to Himself sustained them. Faith alone can travel by such a path, and there is none other, if one would follow Jesus. The Holy Ghost is bringing in a living Person—Christ—to supersede all these old things that were passing away. You get this in the history of the leper.

"Lord, if it be thou"—(compare chap. vi. 68—"Thou hast the words of eternal life"). You cannot get on at all unless you have Christ before your soul. That is the greatest proof to me that we are on divine ground, the confusion we get into when the eye is off Christ. We have left the boat. We have Christ, and the Spirit, and the word, but no boat; the port in view, if not gone to sleep. We have nothing but Christ. If our eye is off Christ, we cannot walk at all. When the Lord went into the ship, that is a figure of what it will be when the Lord joins the earthly people—all their troubles will be over. They worship Him as Son of God. But in the meantime what a perfect picture it is of our present position! We cannot get on unless our eyes are fixed on Christ, an evident proof that the place we are in is a divinely ordered one. It is the right place to get your feet upon the water, but you cannot get on if your eye is off Christ. *Without Me*, He teaches us, you can do nothing; yet, when we think of the activities of the christian world, how few of all the things that

are done in Jesus' name are really done *with Him.* "Lord, if it be thou," said Peter, "bid me come unto thee"—his only Hope and Object. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" said the same disciple, upon another occasion; "thou hast the words of eternal life"—"There is none beside thee."

Verses 26, 27. "Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed."

Now we come to the second part, to the great foundation, Jesus presenting Himself in incarnation, in death, and pointing on to ascension. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (Ver. 62.) He has become actual Man. It is not Christ occupying or filling an official relationship, but taking the place of Man to meet the need of man—not of Jews alone, or of Gentiles, but of the fallen creation, that had no resources in itself. It is the Son of man giving meat that endures unto everlasting life, and sealed by God the Father. Remark this word "sealed." God never sealed the first man, it is the second Man who is before us now. Him hath God not only "sealed," but "sanctified," "sent," "justified," "accepted," and "glorified." That is the Mighty One on whom

help has been laid. There is Isaiah xlii. also, "My servant whom I have chosen." All these expressions (seven in number) refer to Him in His place of Manhood.

But this sealing by the Father, even God, when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him, is a very deep and precious truth, and has important bearings, besides its intrinsic sweetness and blessedness, as revealing at that moment the mutual relations of the divine Persons. It was when Jesus was *praying* (Luke iii.) that the heavens opened to Him, the Spirit of God came upon Him, and in the voice out of the heavens the Father was heard proclaiming, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight." It was not sufficient to announce Him to others, the voice must reach Himself personally also. It is thus the Father calls attention to Him on the ground of His delight in Him in His personal relationship—His blessed ways before Him giving immediate occasion (so to speak) for this voice from the heavens which accompanied the sealing. The next time this voice was heard, it proceeded from the glory in the cloud, with the added word, "Hear him." It seems as though the Lord desired to invest His present testimony to them with all the authority of God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—(the *Son* sealed of the *Father* by the *Spirit*), knowing its unspeakable importance to man, whose state for time and eternity depended upon the way in which he treated it,—"Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son

of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." It was man's side here—would he eat of the Bread out of heaven?

This solemn truth would have authority in their consciences as spoken by Him whom the Father had *sealed.* God—Father, Son, and Spirit—was revealed in that blessed and solemn scene. In chapter v. the mighty sanction of this testimony was not the sealing, but that the Father had given to the Son, in His position amongst men, to have life in Himself, and so He quickened whom He would—(the dead heard the voice of the Son of God, and they that heard lived)—authority also to execute judgment (which was eternal in its results), because He was Son of man. The conscience is exercised according to the manner in which Christ is presented to it. To Nicodemus He was a man come from God, and as such had authority in his conscience—he must "hear him," even though he came by night for that purpose. The woman of Samaria thinks of Messiah, who, in His day, would tell them all things. The wonderful Stranger before her had already made His voice to be heard in her conscience; this brought forth fruit presently in, "Come, see a man who told me all things that I had ever done: is not this the Christ?" Her conscience had first been reached, then mind and heart, when the Father, seeking worshippers, is proclaimed. "I know that Messias is coming," and "he will tell us all things." She learns that Jesus is Messiah, and bears testimony to Him,

according to the power of His word in her conscience, a powerful testimony, as the word shews us.

In chapter v., He was giving divine life—He gave it as Son of God, but still in the place of Man; but here, as Son of man, He is giving His flesh through death, to be fed on for the life of the world. The Father sealed, marked Him off. These are His great credentials. He is a divine Person, Bread of God out of heaven, giving life to the world, presenting Himself as the only Hope and only Object for man. It is thus, too, the Father ever presents Him: "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen," &c., is heard again in, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight; hear him!" This is the voice from the glory-cloud. Moses and Elias must retire (see Luke ix.) when Jesus, the Son, is there. The law and the prophets were until John, but not even the greatest of those born of women can be heard when Jesus fills the scene. They depart, and Jesus is left alone; they see no one but Jesus only with themselves. He had just been manifested in the heavenly glory of the kingdom, His face shone as the sun, and His garments were *white as the light;* but deeper truths than this are disclosed in this great scene—He receives honour and glory from the *Father* in that which the voice brought to Him from the excellent glory: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight." Jesus was the Son of the Father, Object of His delight, and He was now

alone—alone for them, they saw no one save Jesus with them—they saw no one else. May the Holy Spirit apply the bearing of all this to our souls!

In Matthew iii. how different was the scene! His face did not shine like the sun, nor did He stand in garments white as the light; no glorified men were His companions there, but poor sinners in their misery; and when they told it out to God, He was with them—alone for them also. Grace was poured into His lips, the *fragrance* of His garments was what came out *here*—it reached the courts above, even within the veil (so to speak), and brought the Father out. His voice from the opened heavens reveals the lowly One, the Friend of publicans and sinners, as His beloved Son, in whom He found His delight. The heavenly glory of the kingdom adds nothing to, nor does the lowliness of His place on earth take from or affect the glory and blessedness of His relationship to the Father—He is His beloved Son, the infinite All to Him. It is well to remember that His grace has given us, even now, to belong to that place where Christ is All and in all.

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