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*CHRISTIAN
PRIVILEGES.*



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CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES.

"THEY TOOK HIM UNTO THEM, AND EXPOUNDED UNTO HIM
THE WAY OF GOD MORE PERFECTLY."

Acts xviii. 26.

n/H + L

NEW EDITION.

A. S. ROUSE,
15 & 16, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.



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SAFETY, CERTAINTY, AND ENJOYMENT.

IF A BELIEVER, *Why not sure of Salvation?*

IF SAVED, *Why not happy?*

“WHICH CLASS ARE YOU TRAVELLING?”

WHAT an oft-repeated question! Let me put it to *you*, my reader; for *travelling* you most certainly are—travelling from *time* into *Eternity*, and who knows how very, very near you may be this moment to the GREAT TERMINUS?

Let me ask you then, in all kindness, “*Which class are you travelling?*” There are but three. Let me describe them, that you may put yourself to the test as in the presence of “Him with whom you *have to do*.”

1st Class.—Those who are *saved*, and who *know it*.

2nd Class.—Those who are *not sure* of Salvation, but *anxious* to be so.

3rd Class.—Those who are not only *unsaved*, but *totally indifferent about it*.

Again I repeat my question, “*Which class are you travelling?*” Oh, the madness of *indifference*, when eternal issues are at stake! A short time since a man came rushing into the railway station at Leicester, and, while scarcely able to gasp for

breath, took his seat in one of the carriages just on the point of starting.

"You've run it fine," said a fellow-passenger. "Yes," replied he, breathing heavily after every two or three words, "but I've saved *four hours*, and that's *well worth running for*."

"Saved four hours!" I couldn't help repeating to myself; "*four hours*" well worth that earnest struggle! What of Eternity? What of Eternity? Yet are there not thousands of shrewd, far-seeing men to-day, who look sharply enough after their own interests in this life, but who seem stone-blind to the Eternity before them? Spite of the infinite love of God to helpless rebels, told out at Calvary; spite of His pronounced hatred of sin; spite of the known brevity of man's history here; spite of the terrors of judgment after death, and of the solemn probability of waking up at last with the unbearable remorse of being on hell's side of a "fixed" gulf (Luke xvi. 26), man hurries on to the bitter, bitter end; as careless as if there were no God, no death, no judgment, no heaven, no hell! If the reader of these pages be such an one, may God this very moment have mercy upon you, and while you read these lines open your eyes to your most perilous position, standing as you may be on the slippery brink of an endless woe!

Oh, friend, believe it or not, your case is truly desperate! Put off the thought of Eternity no longer. Remember that procrastination is like

him who deceives you by it, not only a "*thief*," but a "*murderer*." There is much truth in the Spanish proverb which says, "The road of '*by-and-by*' leads to the town of '*Never*.'" I beseech you, unknown reader, travel that road no longer; "*NOW* is the day of Salvation."

"But," says one, "I am *not indifferent* as to the welfare of my soul. *My* deep trouble lies wrapped up in another word—

Uncertainty ;

i.e., I am among the second-class passengers you speak of."

Well, reader, both indifference and uncertainty are the offspring of one parent—*unbelief*. The first results from unbelief as to the sin and ruin of man, the other from unbelief as to God's sovereign remedy *for* man. It is especially for souls desiring before God to be *fully and unmistakably SURE of their salvation* that these pages are written. I can in a great measure understand your deep soul-trouble, and am assured that the more you are in earnest about this all-important matter, the greater will be your thirst, until you *know for certain* that you are really and eternally saved. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose *his own* soul?" Mark viii. 36.

The only son of a devoted father is at sea. News comes that his ship has been wrecked on some foreign shore. Who can tell the anguish of suspense in that father's heart until, upon the

most reliable authority, he is assured that his boy is safe and sound?

Or, again, you are far from home. The night is dark and wintry, and your way is totally unknown. Standing at a point where two roads diverge, you ask a by-passer the way to the town you desire to reach, and he tells you he *thinks* that such and such a way is the right one, and *hopes* you will be all right if you take it. Would "*thinks*," and "*hopes*," and "*may bes*" satisfy you? Surely not. You must have *certainty* about it, or every step you take will increase your anxiety. What wonder, then, that men have sometimes neither been able to eat nor sleep when the eternal safety of the soul has been trembling in the balance!

"To lose your wealth is much,
To lose your health is more,
To lose your soul is such a loss
As no man can restore."

Now, dear reader, there are three things I desire, by the Holy Spirit's help, to make clear to you; and, to put them into Scripture language, they are:

THE WAY OF SALVATION. (Acts xvi. 17.)

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION. (Luke i. 77.)

THE JOY OF SALVATION. (Psalm li. 12.)

We shall, I think, see that, though intimately connected, they each stand upon a separate basis; so that it is quite possible for a soul to know the way of Salvation without having the certain *knowledge that he himself is saved*; or, again, to

know that he is saved, without possessing at all times the joy that ought to accompany that knowledge.

First, then, let me speak briefly of the *WAY of SALVATION*.

Please to open your Bible, and read carefully the 13th verse of the 13th chapter of Exodus; there you find these words from the lips of Jehovah: "*Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt NOT redeem it, THEN THOU SHALT BREAK HIS NECK: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.*"

Now come back with me in thought to a supposed scene of 3000 years ago. Two men (a priest of God and a poor Israelite) stand in earnest conversation. Let us stand by, with their permission, and listen. The gestures of each bespeak deep earnestness about some matter of importance, and it isn't difficult to see that the subject of conversation is a little ass that stands trembling beside them.

"I am come to know," says the poor Israelite, "if there cannot be a merciful exception made in my favour this once. This feeble little thing is the firstling of my ass, and though I know full well what the law of God says about it, I am hoping that mercy will be shown, and the ass's life spared. I am but a poor man in Israel, and can ill afford to lose the little colt."

"But," answers the priest firmly, "the law of the Lord is plain and unmistakable: '*EVERY firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck.*' Where is the lamb?"

"Ah, sir, no lamb do I possess!"

"Then go, purchase one, and return, or the ass's neck must surely be broken. The *lamb* must die, or the ass must die."

"Alas! then all my hopes are crushed," he cries; "for I am far too poor to buy a lamb."

While this conversation proceeds, a third person joins them, and after hearing the poor man's tale of sorrow, he turns to him, and says kindly, "Be of good cheer, *I* can meet your need," and thus he proceeds: "We have in our house, on the hill-top yonder, one little lamb, brought up at our very hearth-stone, which is 'without spot or blemish.' It has never once strayed from home, and stands (and rightly so) in highest favour with all that are in the house. This lamb will I fetch." And away he hastens up the hill. Presently you see him gently leading the fair little creature down the slope, and very soon both lamb and ass are standing side by side.

Then the lamb is bound to the altar, its blood is shed, and the fire consumes it.

The righteous priest now turns to the poor man, and says, "You can freely take home your little colt in safety; no broken neck for it now. *The*

lamb has died in the ass's stead, and consequently *the ass goes righteously free*. Thanks to your friend."

Now, poor troubled soul, can't you see in this God's own picture of a sinner's salvation? His claims as to your sin demanded a "broken neck"—*i.e.*, righteous judgment upon your guilty head; the only alternative being the death of a divinely-approved substitute.

Now *you* could not find the provision to meet your case; but, in the person of His beloved Son, God *Himself* provided the Lamb. "Behold the *Lamb of God*," said John to his disciples, as his eyes fell upon that blessed, spotless One, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.)

Onward to Calvary He went, "as a lamb led to the slaughter," and there and then He "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) *He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."* (Rom. iv. 25.) So that God does not abate one jot of His righteous, holy claims against sin when He justifies (*i.e.*, clears from all charge of guilt) the ungodly sinner who believes in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 26.) Blessed be God for such a Saviour, such a Salvation!

"DOST THOU BELIEVE ON THE SON OF GOD?"

"Well," you reply, "I have, as a condemned

sinner, found in HIM one that I can safely trust. I do believe on Him."

Then I can tell you that the full value of His sacrifice and death, as God estimates it, He makes as good to you as though you had accomplished it all yourself.

Oh, what a wondrous way of salvation is this! Is it not great, and grand, and Godlike, worthy of God Himself—the gratification of His own heart of love, the glory of His precious Son, and the salvation of a sinner, all bound up together? What a bundle of grace and glory! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has so ordered it that His own beloved Son should do all the work, and get all the praise, and that you and I, poor, guilty things, believing on Him, should not only get all the blessing, but enjoy the blissful company of the Blessor for ever and ever: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." (Ps. xxxiv. 3.)

But perhaps your eager inquiry may be, "*How is it that, since I do really distrust self and self-work, and wholly rely upon Christ and Christ's work, I have not the full certainty of my salvation?*" You say, "If my feelings warrant my saying that I am saved one day, they are pretty sure to blight every hope the next, and I am left like a ship storm-tossed, without any anchorage whatever." Ah! *there* lies your mistake. Did you

ever hear of a captain trying to find anchorage by fastening his anchor *inside* the ship? Never. *Always outside.*

It may be that you are quite clear that it is *Christ's death alone* that gives SAFETY; but *you think* that it is *what you feel that gives* CERTAINTY.

Now, again, take your Bible; for I now wish you to see from God's word how He gives a man

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION.

Before you turn to the verse which I shall ask you very carefully to look at, which speaks of *HOW* a believer is to *KNOW* that he *HAS* Eternal Life, let me quote it in the distorted way in which man's imagination often puts it. "*These happy feelings* have I given unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Now open your Bible, and, while you compare this with God's blessed and unchanging word, may He give you from your very heart to say with David, "*I hate vain thoughts; but Thy law do I love.*" (Ps. cxix. 113.) The verse just misquoted is the 13th verse of the 5th chapter of the 1st epistle of John, and reads thus in our version: "These things *HAVE I WRITTEN* unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that ye may *KNOW* that ye *HAVE eternal life.*"

How did the firstborn sons of the thousands of Israel know for certain that they were safe on the night of the Passover and of Egypt's judgment?

Let us pay a visit to two of their houses, and hear what they have to say.

We find in the first house we enter that they are all shivering with fear and suspense.

"What is the secret of all this paleness and trembling?" we inquire; and the firstborn son informs us that the angel of death is coming round the land, and that he is not quite certain how matters will stand with him at that solemn moment.

"When the destroying angel has passed our house," says he, *"and the night of judgment is over, I shall then know that I am safe; but I can't see how I can be quite sure of it until then. They say they ARE sure of salvation next door, but we think it VERY PRESUMPTUOUS. All I can do is to spend the long, dreary night HOPING for the best."*

"Well," we inquire, "but has the God of Israel not provided a way of safety for His people?"

"True," he replies, "and we have availed ourselves of that way of escape. The blood of the spotless and unblemished first-year lamb has been duly sprinkled with the bunch of hyssop on the lintel and two side-posts, but still we are not fully assured of shelter."

Let us now leave these doubting, troubled ones, and enter next door.

What a striking contrast meets our eye at once. Peace rests on every countenance. There they stand, with girded loins, and staff in hand, feeding on the roasted lamb.

What *can* be the meaning of all this tranquillity on such a solemn night as this? "Ah," say they all, "we are only waiting for Jehovah's marching orders, and then we shall bid a last farewell to the taskmaster's cruel lash and all the drudgery of Egypt!"

"But hold! Do you forget that this is the night of Egypt's judgment?"

"Right well we know it; but our firstborn son is safe. The blood has been sprinkled according to the wish of our God."

"But so it has been the next door," we reply; "but they are all unhappy, because all uncertain of safety."

"Ah!" firmly responds the firstborn, "but *WE HAVE MORE THAN THE SPRINKLED BLOOD, we have THE UNERRING WORD OF GOD ABOUT IT.* God has said, 'When I SEE THE BLOOD I will pass over you.' *God rests satisfied with the blood outside, and we rest satisfied with His word inside.*"

The *sprinkled blood* makes us *SAFE*.

The *spoken word* makes us *SURE*.

Could anything make us *more safe* than the *sprinkled blood*, or more sure than His spoken word? *Nothing, nothing.*

Now, reader, let me ask YOU a question. "*Which of those two houses, think you, was the safer?*"

Do you say No. 2, where all were so peaceful? Nay, then, you are wrong.

Both are safe alike.

Their *safety* depends upon what God thinks

about the *blood outside*, and *not* upon the state of their *feelings inside*.

If you would be sure of your own blessing, then, dear reader, listen not to the unstable testimony of inward emotions, but to the infallible witness of the word of God.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on *Me* HATH everlasting life.” (John vi. 47.)

Let me give you a simple illustration from everyday life. A certain farmer in the country, not having sufficient grass for his cattle, applies for a nice piece of pasture land which he hears is to be let near his own house. For some time he gets no answer from the landlord. One day a neighbour comes in, and says, “I feel quite sure you will get that field. Don’t you recollect how that last Christmas he sent you a special present of game, and that he gave you a kind nod of recognition the other day when he drove past in the carriage?” And with such like words the farmer’s mind is filled with sanguine hopes.

Next day another neighbour meets him, and in course of conversation he says, “I’m afraid you will stand no chance whatever of getting that grass-field. Mr. — has applied for it, and you cannot but be aware what a favourite he is with the Squire—occasionally visits him,” &c. And the poor farmer’s bright hopes are dashed to the ground, and burst like soap-bubbles. One day he is hoping, the next full of perplexing doubts.

Presently the postman calls, and the farmer's heart beats fast as he breaks the seal of the letter; for he sees by the handwriting that it is from the Squire himself. See his countenance change from anxious suspense to undisguised joy as he reads and re-reads that letter.

"*It's a settled thing now,*" exclaims he to his wife; no more doubts and fears about it; "*hopes*" and "*ifs*" are things of the past. "The Squire says the field is mine as long as I require it, on the most easy terms, and *that's enough for me*. I care for no man's opinion now. *His word settles all!*"

How many a poor soul is in a like condition to that of the poor, troubled farmer—tossed and perplexed by the opinions of men, or the thoughts and feelings of his own treacherous heart; and it is only upon receiving the word of God *as the word of God* that *certainty* takes the place of doubts and peradventures. When God speaks there *must* be certainty, whether He pronounces the damnation of the unbeliever, or the salvation of the believer.

"*For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven*" (Ps. cxix. 89); and to the simple-hearted believer
HIS WORD SETTLES ALL.

"Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Num. xxiii. 19.)

"I need no other argument,
I want no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me."

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The believer can add—

“And that *God says so.*”

“But how may I be sure that I have *the right kind of faith?*”

Well, there can be but one answer to that question; viz., “Have you confidence in *the right person; i.e., in the blessed Son of God?*”

It is not a question of the amount of your faith, but of the *trustworthiness of the person* you repose your confidence in. One man takes hold of Christ, as it were, with a drowning man's grip. Another but touches the hem of His garment; but the sinner who does the former is not a bit safer than the one who does the latter. They have both made the same discovery; viz., that while all of self is totally untrustworthy they may safely confide in *Christ*, calmly rely on *His word*, and confidently rest in the eternal efficacy of *His finished work*. That is what is meant by believing on *HIM*. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me *HATH* everlasting life.” (John vi. 47.)

Make sure of it then, my reader, that your confidence is *not* reposed in *your works of amendment, your religious observances, your pious feelings* when under religious influences, *your moral training from childhood*, and the like. You may have the *strongest faith* in any or all of these, and perish everlastingly. Don't deceive yourself by any “fair show in the flesh.” The *feeblest faith in Christ* eternally saves, while the *strongest faith in*

aught beside is but the offspring of a *deceived heart*; but the leafy twigs of your enemy's arranging over the pitfall of eternal perdition.

God, in the gospel, simply introduces to you the Lord Jesus Christ, and says: "This is *My* beloved Son, in whom *I* am well pleased." "You may," He says, "with all confidence trust *His* heart, though you cannot with impunity trust your own."

Blessed, thrice blessed, Lord Jesus, who would not trust Thee, and praise Thy Name!

"I do really believe on Him," said a sad-looking soul to me one day, "but yet, when asked if I am saved, I don't like to say *yes*, for fear I should be telling a lie." This young woman was a butcher's daughter in a small town in the Midlands. It happened to be market-day, and her father had not then returned from market. So I said, "Now, suppose when your father comes home you ask him how many sheep he bought to-day, and he answers '*ten*.' After awhile a man comes to the shop, and says, 'How many sheep did your father buy to-day?' and you reply, 'I don't like to say, for fear I should be telling a lie.'" "But," said the mother (who was standing by at the time), with righteous indignation, "that would be making your *father* the liar."

Now, dear reader, don't you see that this well-meaning young woman was virtually making Christ out to be a liar, saying, "I do believe on the Son of God, and HE says I have everlasting

life, but I don't like to say I have, *lest I should be telling a lie.*" What daring presumption!

"But," says another, "*how may I be sure that I really do believe?*" I have *tried* often enough to believe, and looked *within to see if I had got it*, but the more I look at my faith, the less I seem to have."

Ah, friend, you are looking in the wrong direction to find *that* out, and your *trying to believe* but plainly shows that you are on the wrong track.

Let me give you another illustration to explain what I want to convey to you.

You are sitting at your quiet fireside one evening, when a man comes in and tells you that the station-master has been killed that night on the railway.

Now, it so happens that this man has long borne the character in the place for being a very dishonest man, and the most daring, notorious liar in the neighbourhood.

Do you believe, or even *try to believe*, that man?

"Of course not," you exclaim.

"Pray, why?"

"Oh, I *know him* too well for that!"

"But tell me how you *know* that you don't believe him. Is it by looking within at your faith or feelings?"

"No," you reply, "*I think of the man that brings me the message.*"

Presently a neighbour drops in, and says, "The station-master has been run over by a goods train

to-night, and killed upon the spot." After he has left, I hear you cautiously say, "Well, I *partly* believe it now; for to my recollection this man only once in his life deceived me, though I have known him from boyhood."

But again I ask, "Is it by looking at your faith this time that you *know* you partly believe it?"

"No," you repeat, "I am thinking of the character of my informant."

Well, this man has scarcely left your room before a third person enters, and brings you the same sad news as the first. But this time you say, "Now, *John*, I believe it. Since you tell me, I *can* believe it."

Again I press my question (which is, remember, but the re-echo of your own), "How do you *KNOW* that you so confidently believe your friend John?"

"Because of *who* and *what* JOHN *is*," you reply. "He *never* has deceived me, and I don't think he ever will."

Well, then, just in the same way *I know that I believe the Gospel*; viz., because of the One who brings me the news. If we receive the witness of *men*, the witness of *God* is greater: for this is the witness of God that *He hath witnessed of His Son*. He that BELIEVETH NOT GOD HATH MADE HIM A LIAR; because he believeth not the witness *that God gave* of His Son. (1 John v. 9, 10.) Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (Rom. iv. 3.)

An anxious soul once said to a servant of Christ, "Oh, sir, I *can't believe!*" To which the preacher wisely and quietly replied, "Indeed, WHO *is it* that you can't believe?" This broke the spell. He had been looking at faith as an indescribable something that he must feel within himself in order to be sure he was all right for heaven; whereas faith ever looks outside to a living Person, and His finished work, and quietly listens to the testimony of a faithful God about both.

It is the *outside look* that brings the *inside peace*. When a man turns his face towards the sun *his own shadow* is behind him. You cannot look at self and a glorified Christ in heaven at the same moment.

Thus we have seen that the blessed PERSON of God's Son wins my confidence. HIS FINISHED WORK makes me eternally safe. GOD'S WORD *about those who believe* on Him makes me unalterably sure. I find in Christ and His work the *way of Salvation*, and in the word of God the *knowledge of Salvation*.

"But, if saved," my reader may say, "how is it that I have such a fluctuating experience, so often losing all my joy and comfort, and getting as wretched and downcast as I was before my conversion?" Well, this brings us to our third point; viz.,

THE JOY OF SALVATION.

You will find, in the teaching of Scripture, that

while you are *saved* by *Christ's work* and *assured* by *God's word*, you are maintained in comfort and joy by the *Holy Ghost*, who indwells every saved one's body.

Now, you must bear in mind that every saved one has still with him "the flesh;" *i.e.*, the evil nature he was born with as a natural man, and which perhaps showed itself while he was still a helpless infant on his mother's lap. The Holy Ghost in the believer resists the flesh, and is *grieved* by every activity of it in motive, word, or deed. When he is walking "worthy of the Lord," the Holy Ghost will be producing in his soul His blessed fruits—"love, joy, peace," &c. (See Gal. v. 22.) When he is walking in a carnal, worldly way the Spirit is grieved, and these fruits are wanting in greater or less measure.

Let me put it thus for you who do believe on God's Son:

<i>Christ's work</i>	}	stand or fall together.
and		
<i>Your Salvation</i>		
<i>Your walk</i>	}	stand or fall together.
and		
<i>Your Enjoyment</i>		

When *Christ's work* breaks down (and, blessed be God, it *never, never will*), *your salvation* will break down with it. When *your walk* breaks down (and be watchful, for it *may*), *your enjoyment* will break down with it.

Thus it is said of the early disciples (Acts ix. 31), that they "*walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.*"

And again in Acts xiii. 52: "The disciples were filled with *joy*, and with *the Holy Ghost.*"

My spiritual joy will be in proportion to the spiritual character of my walk after I am saved.

Now do you see your mistake? You have been mixing up *enjoyment* with your *safety*, two widely different things. When, through self-indulgence, loss of temper, worldliness, &c., you grieved the Holy Spirit, and lost your joy, you thought your safety was undermined. But again I repeat it—

Your safety hangs upon Christ's work FOR you.

Your assurance upon God's word TO you.

Your enjoyment upon your not grieving the Holy Ghost IN you.

When, as a child of God, you do anything to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, your communion with the Father and the Son is, for the time, practically suspended; and it is only when you judge yourself, and confess your sins, that the joy of communion is restored.

Your child has been guilty of some misdemeanour. He shows upon his countenance the evident mark that something is wrong with him. Half-an-hour before this he was enjoying a walk with you round the garden, admiring what you admired, enjoying what you enjoyed. In other words, he

was in *communion with you* ; his feelings and sympathies were in common with yours.

But now all this is changed, and as a naughty, disobedient child he stands in the corner, the very picture of misery.

Upon penitent confession of his wrong-doing you have assured him of forgiveness ; but his pride and self-will keep him sobbing there.

Where is now the joy of half-an-hour ago ? All gone. Why ? Because communion between you and him has been interrupted.

What is become of the relationship that existed between you and your son half-an-hour ago ? Is that gone too ? is that severed or interrupted ? Surely not.

His relationship depends upon his birth.

His communion upon his behaviour.

But presently he comes out of the corner with broken will and broken heart, confessing the whole thing from first to last, so that you see he hates the disobedience and naughtiness as much as you do, and you take him in your arms and cover him with kisses. His *joy* is restored, because *communion* is restored.

When David sinned so grievously in the matter of Uriah's wife, he did not say, "Restore unto me *Thy salvation*," but, "Restore unto me the *joy of Thy salvation*." (Ps. li. 12.)

But to carry our illustration a little farther. Supposing while your child is in the corner

there should be a cry of "*house on fire*" throughout your dwelling, what would become of him then? Left in the corner to be consumed with the burning, falling house? Impossible!

Very probably he would be the very first person you would carry out. Ah, yes, you know right well that the *love of relationship* is one thing, and the *joy of communion* quite another.

Now, when the believer sins, communion is for the time interrupted, and joy is lost until, with a broken heart, he comes to the Father and confesses his sins.

Then, taking God at His word, he knows he is again forgiven; for His Word plainly declares that "if we confess our sins, He is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)

Oh, then, dear child of God, ever bear in mind these two things, that there is *nothing so strong* as the *link of relationship*; *nothing so tender* as the *link of communion*.

All the combined power and counsel of earth and hell cannot sever the former, while an impure motive or an idle word will snap the latter.

If you are troubled with a cloudy half-hour, get low before God, consider your ways. And when the thief that has *robbed you of your joy* has been detected, drag him at once to the light, confess your sin to God, your Father, and judge yourself most unsparingly for the unwatchful, careless state

of soul that allowed the thief to enter unchallenged.

But never, *never*, NEVER, confound your *safety* with your *joy*.

Don't imagine, however, that the judgment of God falls a whit more leniently on the believer's sin than on the unbeliever's. He has not two ways of dealing judicially with sin, and He could no more pass by the believer's sin without judging it, than He could pass by the sins of a rejecter of His precious Son. But there is this great difference between the two; viz., that the believer's sins were *all* known to God, and all laid upon His own provided Lamb when He hung upon the cross at Calvary, and that there and then, once and for ever, the great "*criminal question*" of his guilt was raised and settled, judgment falling upon the blessed Substitute in the believer's stead, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.)

The Christ-rejecter must bear *his own* sins in his own person in the lake of fire for ever. Now, when a saved one fails, the "*criminal question*" of sin *cannot be raised against* him, the Judge Himself having settled that once for all on the cross; but the *communion question is raised within him* by the Holy Ghost as often as he grieves the Spirit.

Allow me, in conclusion, to give you another illustration. It is a beautiful moonlight night.

The moon is at full, and shining in more than ordinary silver brightness. A man is gazing intently down a deep, still well, where he sees the moon reflected, and thus remarks to a friendly bystander: "How beautifully fair and round she is to-night! how quietly and majestically she rides along!" He has just finished speaking, when suddenly his friend drops a small pebble into the well, and he now exclaims, "Why, the moon is all broken to shivers, and the fragments are shaking together in the greatest disorder!"

"What gross absurdity!" is the astonished rejoinder of his companion. "*Look up, man!* the moon hasn't changed one jot or tittle. *It is the condition of the well* that reflects her that has changed."

Now, believer, apply the simple figure. Your heart is the well. When there is no allowance of evil the blessed Spirit of God takes of the glories and preciousness of Christ, and reveals them to you for your comfort and joy. But the moment a wrong motive is cherished in the heart, or an idle word escapes the lips unjudged, the Holy Ghost begins to disturb the well, your happy experiences are smashed to pieces, and you are all restless and disturbed within, until in brokenness of spirit before God you confess your sin (the disturbing thing), and thus get restored once more to the calm, sweet joy of communion.

But when your heart is thus all unrest, need I

ask, *Has Christ's work changed?* No, no. Then your *Salvation* has not altered.

Has *God's word* changed? Surely not. Then the *certainty of your Salvation* has received no shock.

Then what has changed? Why, the action of the Holy Ghost in you has changed, and instead of taking of the glories of Christ, and filling your heart with the sense of *His* worthiness, He is grieved at having to turn aside from this delightful office to fill you with the sense of *your* sin and *unworthiness*.

He takes from you your present comfort and joy until you judge and resist the evil thing that He judges and resists. When this is done communion with God is again restored.

The Lord make us to be increasingly jealous over ourselves, lest we grieve "the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.)

Dear reader, however weak your faith may be, rest assured of this, that the *blessed One* who has won your confidence will never change.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and FOR EVER." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

The work He has accomplished will never change.

"Whatsoever God *doeth* it shall be FOR EVER: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." (Eccles. iii. 14.)

The *word* He has spoken will never change.

"The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away : but the word of the Lord endureth FOR EVER." (1 Peter i. 24, 25.)

Thus the *object of my trust, the foundation of my safety*, and the *ground of my certainty*, are alike ETERNALLY UNALTERABLE.

"My love is ofttimes low,
My joy still ebbs and flows ;
But peace with Him remains the same,
No change Jehovah knows.

"I change, He changes not ;
God's Christ can never die ;
His love, not mine, the resting-place ;
His truth, not mine, the tie."

Once more let me ask, "WHICH CLASS ARE YOU TRAVELLING?" Turn your heart to God, I pray you, and answer that question to *Him*.

"Let *God be true*, but every man a liar." (Rom. iii. 4.)

"He that hath received His testimony has set to his seal that *God is true*." (John iii. 33.)

May the joyful assurance of possessing this "great salvation" be yours, dear reader, now and "till He come."

WHAT transports then will fill our heart
When Thou our worthless names wilt own ;
When we shall see Thee as Thou art,
And know as we ourselves are known ;
And then, from sin and sorrow free,
Find our eternal rest with Thee.

SALVATION.

1. "THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS."—1 *Peter* i. 9.
2. "WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION."—*Phil.* ii. 12.
3. "NOW IS OUR SALVATION NEARER."—*Rom.* xiii. 11.

THE above scriptures show that the word salvation, as used in the New Testament, has more than one meaning.

The first speaks of believers having received the salvation of their souls, which salvation is as complete now as it will be when they are with the Lord in glory.

From the second believers learn that they are to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure; that is, by the power of the Holy Spirit of God in them they are to refrain their "feet from every evil way." (*Ps.* cxix. 101.) The Christian *starts* with the salvation of his soul. He is not told to work out *that*. It was wrought out by the Lord Jesus when He died, "the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God." (1 *Peter* iii. 18.)

The third refers to the glory that believers will enter into when they are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. (1 *Thess.* iv. 16, 17.) It was in view of this that the apostle said, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." (*Rom.* i. 16; *Phil.* i. 19; *Heb.* v. 9; ix. 9, 28.)

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.

WHEN Nicodemus went to our Lord for instruction, he was met instantly by the solemn word, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) It behoves therefore every anxious soul to consider this searching divine word; because we at once learn, that whatever the anxiety of soul—earnest desires, profession of faith—if there has not been wrought this great change, the "new birth," there is no life in the soul, and consequently no salvation.

Who was it then to whom the Lord addressed these words? We learn only half the truth when we answer, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; for, in fact, this tells us nothing beyond his name and official rank, and these things have no weight before God, and no significance for the seeking soul. It is in the connection of the third chapter with the second that we shall find the real answer to our question. We read, "Now when He [Jesus] was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast-day, *many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did.* But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He

knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man. *But* " (as it should be read) "there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews," etc. (John ii. 23-25; iii. 1, etc.) There was thus a number of Jews who believed on Jesus when they saw His miracles, and Nicodemus was one of that number. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew what was in man; because, in fact, their faith was nothing more than a *natural* conviction, wrought by the evidence of the miracles, of the truth of the claims of Jesus. There was no bowing of heart before God in all this; there was nothing more than a natural or intellectual belief in the name of Christ. When therefore Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, no doubt in quest of something more, and expressed this belief, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him," Jesus answered him at once by stating the necessity of being born again. It was as if He had said, "You may believe in me as a divine teacher, and yet be lost. You must be born again before you can enter into the kingdom of God."

We thus get a most solemn warning, as well as a needed caution. The warning is, "Beware of being satisfied with a profession of belief in Christ." The caution is, "Never forget that

everything is useless if you have not been born again. You may be most earnest, most religious, a model of activity, in high repute for sanctity of life, or for works of usefulness, and yet be a lost soul; for unless you are born again, you cannot even see the kingdom of God."

Why then must a man be born again? The answer to this question brings us to a most important part of our subject. We have already shown that all men are sinners; but it is not only that they are sinners, but they have an evil, corrupt, depraved nature; and this incurably corrupt nature is the tree which produces all the evil fruits of sin. The acts of sin reveal the character of the nature; and this nature is totally unfit for God's presence. This is the purport of our Lord's words in this chapter, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." (v. 6.) All therefore that we are as natural men, as children of Adam, is flesh; and in this flesh there dwelleth no good thing. (Rom. vii. 18.)

· "Are we to understand that all men, without exception, are thus totally corrupt, hopelessly evil?"

"Yes. Such is the verdict of God upon human nature. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh.'"

"But is it possible, for example, that all the noble deeds recorded in history, or all the kind, generous, and beneficent actions which we meet

with in daily life, are all these done by those who have a totally depraved nature? Surely there must be a difference—degrees in our natural condition; for how is it possible to class such actions with open and flagrant sins?”

It matters not what may be the outward character of the actions of men, whether such as will elicit the applause or draw down the condemnation of their fellows; for as long as they proceed from men who have not been born again, they are nothing but evil in the sight of God, for a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. “For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.” (Luke vi. 43, 44.) The word of God is most explicit on this question. “The carnal mind” (the mind of the flesh) “is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*” (Rom. viii. 7, 8.) It is thus, as Luther said, not a question of doing, but of *being*; not a question of the character of actions, but a question of nature, and this nature God declares to be flesh, and the flesh is nothing but evil in His sight, and consequently “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” (1 Cor. xv. 50.)

Herein therefore lies the necessity of being born again. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh. . . . Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye

must be born again." (John iii. 6, 7.) This necessity is universal in its application. It concerns every one born into this world, the dutiful, obedient child, as much as the prodigal son; the active, zealous philanthropist as much as the convict in his cell. For the flesh is flesh, and cannot enter the kingdom of God. There must therefore be a *new nature* and a *new life*; for if there be not these, whatever a man's moral repute, he will be for ever outside of the kingdom of God.

How then must a man be born again? This, in substance, was the question of Nicodemus. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John iii. 4.) This question, rigidly construed, means undoubtedly, How is it *possible* for a man to be born again? But our Lord, in His answer, does not notice it in this form, but points out the way in which a man *is* born again. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born *of water and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (v. 5.)

(1) *Water*. Much difficulty has been occasioned by special attempts to wrest the meaning of this symbol. Ritualists of many shades have persistently endeavoured to support their false teaching of baptismal regeneration from this passage. But if we confine ourselves to the Scriptures, we shall find that the difficulty will disappear. Now it is

very evident that Nicodemus should have understood what our Lord meant; and if he did not, that he was expected to understand. For when he replied, "How can these things be? Jesus answered and said, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John iii. 9, 10.) And if we turn to one of the prophets (with whose writings Nicodemus, as one of Israel's teachers, should have been well acquainted), we shall find a distinct foreshadowing of this teaching of our Lord. Speaking of the future restoration of Israel, the prophet says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you: and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27.) Here we have the same conjunction of the water and the Spirit, and a radical change following upon its application; for nothing less than this can be implied by "a new heart." Not only so, but the water in this passage is used in the most familiar of all senses to the Israelites, in connection with cleansing.

With this passage then before us, what, we ask, is the import of the water? Turn to Psalm cxix. 9, and we get this question: "Wherewithal shall a

young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto *according to thy word.*" We read also in the New Testament of the "washing of water by the word" (Eph. v. 26); again, "Now ye are clean through" (or because of) "the word which I have spoken unto you." (John xv. 3; read also John xiii. 5-11.) The water therefore is a well-known symbol for the word of God. Hence we find the Word constantly associated in other passages with the new birth. "Of His own will begat He us with *the word of truth.*" (James i. 18.) "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God,* which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. *And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*" (1 Peter i. 23-25.) The apostle Paul makes an allusion to the same thing when he says to the Corinthians, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you *through the gospel.*" (1 Cor. iv. 15.) The word of God, preached in the gospel, is the first means of the new birth which our Lord here sets forth under the type of water.

(2) *And [of] the Spirit.* "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." (John vi. 63.) "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) The Spirit acting in and through the word of God quickens dead souls, and they are born again.

The Word cannot do this in and by itself; nor does the Spirit of God act alone, but He wields the Word as the instrument, so that by it He may bring souls out of death into life, producing in them both a new nature and a new life. Many illustrations of this might be collected from the Scriptures. Take the most prominent of all—that afforded by the day of Pentecost. The crucifiers of the Lord Jesus were gathered round about Peter and the other apostles. Peter proclaimed the word of God to them, and said, “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts ii. 36.) At the beginning of the chapter we read of the descent of the Holy Spirit; and it is said of the apostles that “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Peter was therefore speaking in the power of the Spirit, and that same Spirit clothed the word of God with mighty power, and the effect was that a multitude were born again, the change wrought upon them being indicated by the fact that “they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men [and] brethren, what shall we do?” (v. 37.) So it is now when men are born again. It is always through the Word, by the Spirit of God. There is no other way.

Dear reader, have you been born again? You surely, with this testing word before you, can have no difficulty in answering the question. If you are, your whole soul will go out in thanksgivings to God for the gift of His only begotten Son. If you are not, let me again warn you that it matters not what you are besides—you may be a good son or daughter, a loving husband or wife, a kind father or mother, and yet, not being born again, you are outside the kingdom of God, hopelessly undone and lost. Will you be satisfied in this condition? What had been the consequence if the bitten Israelites had refused to look to the serpent of brass, saying, "We may perhaps recover"? They would have died in their anguish and their sin. And so if you refuse to look to Christ, to believe in Him (Heb. xii. 25), instead of having eternal life, you will for ever perish. But if you bow to this divine necessity of being born again, acknowledging your true condition before God, and look to Christ in simple faith, you will immediately pass from death unto life.

ALL that we *were*—our sins, our guilt,
Our death—was all our own:
All that we *are* we owe to Thee,
Thou God of grace, alone.

Thy mercy found us in our sins,
And gave us to believe;
Then, in believing, peace we found,
And in Thy Christ we live.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

SUPPOSING now that those of whom we speak—"anxious ones"—have bowed to the judgment of God upon their condition, their immediate concern will be to know by what means they can obtain the pardon of their sins. The blood of Christ is the only way by which the guilt of sin can be removed. "*Without shedding of blood is no remission.*" (Heb. ix. 22.) Herein lies the necessity for the death of Christ; the need, in fact, for the whole work of redemption. And hence it is of the first importance that this truth should be rightly understood.

We have already pointed out that death has "passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) Adam first incurred the penalty through his disobedience to God. He had been warned not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) Adam disregarded the divine command, and fell under the awful sentence of death—the penalty which God had annexed to disobedience. Thus "by one man sin entered into the world, and death

by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) There is therefore no difference ; all alike are sinners ; and hence every child of Adam's race is subject to the penalty of sin, which is death. Yea, death already reigns (see Rom. v. 13-21) over the whole human family ; every individual member of it (saving those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ) being under the righteous judgment of death because of sin. " But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) He " so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Being rich in mercy, He sent His own Son to die, " the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) Just as when Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, God provided a lamb to be offered up in his stead, that Isaac might be rescued and live (Gen. xxii.), so God has provided a Lamb to be offered up in the sinner's room and stead—" the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) This is the secret and meaning, in this aspect, of the death of Christ. He died as the sinner's substitute, bore the sinner's judgment, expiated the sinner's guilt.

The marvellous efficacy of the blood of Christ, as meeting the sinner's need, flows from the character of His person and the nature of His

death. His blood is the symbol of His death, of His life poured out; for the life is in the blood (see Lev. xvii. 10–14), and hence His blood cleanses from sin, because of the value of His death before God in the sinner's place and behalf. God has condescended to teach us this by type and illustration, as well as by direct statement. Look at the Israelites in the land of Egypt on the passover night. God was about to execute judgment upon the land of Egypt; and when once He began to deal in righteousness, Israel was as much amenable to the penalty of sin as the Egyptians. How then spare the former when the latter were to be judged? "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. *And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*" (Ex. xii. 12, 13; also vv. 21–23.) The ground (mark it well) of difference on this night between Israel and Egypt was THE BLOOD. It was not what Israel *was* in comparison with the Egyptians, but it was the blood that stayed the destroyer's hand—the blood on the outside of their houses; for the Lord had said, "When *I* see the blood, I will pass over you." The blood of the lamb—for the lamb had been slain—cleansed them

typically from guilt, so that God could righteously spare Israel while He righteously destroyed Egypt. The same lesson is taught by the great day of atonement, of which we have the record in Leviticus xvi. For Aaron was directed to sprinkle the blood of the bullock and of the goat of the sin-offerings, both upon the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat, where God dwelt between the cherubim; "for on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." (Lev. xvi. 30.) All these things were but shadows of the efficacy of the blood of Christ. Thus we read: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7); and again, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: *how much more shall the blood of Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 12-14.) Accordingly we are taught, that "the blood of Jesus Christ His [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.)

We may, then, now point out distinctly the teaching of Scripture as to the blood of Christ in relation to sin. (1.) It is the only means of cleansing from guilt. This is the divinely-

appointed and the divinely-given way. *It is therefore exclusive of all other methods.* "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God." (Jer. ii. 22.) "If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." (Job ix. 30, 31.) It is only the blood of Christ which can make the sinner whiter than snow. (2.) It is the blood in and by itself alone which possesses this efficacy. There cannot be any addition to it. It is not the blood and something else. Add to it in any way, whether by feelings, prayers, penitence (all of which have their proper place), and you mar its cleansing power. (3.) God has provided the blood. It was He who delivered up His Son to death. This provision for the sinner's need is one therefore entirely of God's grace, and consequently a provision outside of the sinner altogether. God in His infinite mercy, and because He so loved the world, provided the Lamb for the sacrifice; and now the precious blood of that Lamb avails for every one who believes. (John iii. 16.) There is no limit whatever in its application, excepting in the sinner's unbelief. It is provided for all, and every one may be the subject of its blessed cleansing power through faith.

Beloved reader, you have confessed your need

of cleansing; and God has provided that which alone can meet your need. Do you ask, But how am I to obtain the application of the blood to myself? *Solely and entirely by the obedience of faith.* Let us go back to the passover night. (Ex. xii.) It was not enough that the lamb was slain, and that the blood was in the basin; but the Israelite was directed to sprinkle the blood for himself upon the lintel and the two side-posts of his door. With the bunch of hyssop in his hand, the sign of his humiliation before the righteous judgment of God, he sprinkled the blood, thereby confessing his own desert of death, and his faith in the blood as the means to avert the stroke of the destroyer, of sheltering him from the wrath of the Righteous Judge. So now. The Lamb has been provided, and slain; His blood has been shed. But the fact of His blood-shedding does not secure your safety. The question is, *Are you under the shelter of the blood?* Do you again ask, How can this be? By bowing in humiliation, like the Israelite, before the judgment which God has pronounced against sin; that is, by taking the place of a sinner, and by looking to the blood of Christ to secure you from the righteous doom and meed of sin. The moment you do this, the blood of Christ is upon you in all its value, between you and judgment, sheltering you completely and for ever from the consequences of sin; for the blood has met and satisfied all the claims that a holy

God had against you. For God hath set forth Christ a propitiation through faith in His blood. (Rom. iii. 25.) There is therefore absolutely nothing for you to do; not even have you to gather the hyssop and sprinkle the blood. You have simply to believe the word of God, to look in faith to the blood already shed, as the only means of protection from death and judgment, and God instantly sees you as covered with all its efficacy and value—cleansed from guilt and whiter than snow. Delay not, then, to seek the protection of the precious blood of Christ. At midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt; and as suddenly and unexpectedly will judgment overtake the rejecters of Christ, “for when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape.” (1 Thess. v. 3.) To-day, then, hear the entreating voice of the love of God, which bids you to flee from the wrath to come, and to “behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John i. 29.)

To Him that saved us from the world,
And washed us in His blood,
Called us to share His glorious throne,
As kings and priests to God;

To Him let every tongue be praise,
And every heart be love!
All grateful honours paid on earth,
And nobler songs above!

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

ALL forgiveness is founded on the blessed work of the Lord Jesus. Without the work of Christ, a holy and just God, yea, a God of truth, must have held man to be what he really is—a guilty sinner, who must be judged according to his works; and we know beforehand from His word that there is none righteous, no, not one. The love of God, great as it is, so great that for us He did not spare His Son, could not say that sin was not sin, or that He was indifferent to good and evil; for He is not, and in His own nature cannot be; and if He judges, and makes man himself answer for what he has done, He must judge him righteously.

Besides, we are alienated from God in heart and mind, and so really already lost. I do not now mean finally, nor that we cannot be saved out of that state; but if we can, it is because Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. Judgment, if we come unrepentant, unbelieving, before the judgment-seat of Christ, will be according to our works, and therefore to condemnation; for all have sinned.

But God is love—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God has thus anticipated, in grace, that day of judgment. The same blessed Son of God, who will as Son of man sit on the judgment-seat, and judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, has already, before that day, come as a Saviour, and died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and "he that believeth on the Son of God shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." Solemn as that warning is, I shall not say more of these last. The statement is plain enough and solemn enough without adding anything to it. They die in their sins, and are doubly guilty; they have not only sinned against His holiness, but despised His mercy.

Supposing now we do really in heart believe in the Son of God, with a faith wrought in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and a conscience which feels the need of grace and forgiveness; for that is the great point—a faith which has wrought true repentance, that godly sorrow and sense that we have deserved to be condemned which make Christ and His grace and His work precious to us. I suppose we have been all brought up to believe in what is written of the blessed Lord Jesus as a divine history; but that is very different

from believing in Him as meeting the need of an awakened conscience.

But supposing I have this true faith in Him, then it behoves me to be able to say what He has done for me.

He has died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. xv. 3); He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter ii. 24); He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. (1 Peter iii. 18.)

So that here is our question: Supposing I have true heart-faith in Him, Christ having thus died for me, what is the effect or efficacy of His death for me?

I have a perfect and eternal forgiveness and redemption according to the glory of God. I do not speak of those who neglect this great salvation; they are doubly guilty; but of what the value of His work is for those who have really a part in it. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 7.) "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord

Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. iv. 25; v. 1, 2.) "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." (Rom. v. 19.) "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom. viii. 30.) "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. ix. 12.) And its effect is complete—"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (v. 14.)

But is this valid for ever?

We have seen that it is eternal redemption, that it purges the conscience from dead works, and gives peace with God; but Scripture is more explicit. Christ is always at the right hand of God, and has presented His precious blood to God. It is always before His eyes; but Scripture is very explicit on this point—"But this [man], having offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God." Not like the Jewish priests, standing continually at the altar offering sacrifices which could never take away sins. (Heb. x. 11.) He sat down because, for redemption and forgiveness, He had done already the whole work; for (Heb. x. 14) "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." He sits there at the right hand of God till

His enemies be made His footstool ; then He will come to deal with them in judgment. But all is done for His friends ; that is, true believers, and He has sat down, having finished the work, so that those who come by it have no more conscience of sins. (v. 2.) "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will impute no sin." "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." (Rom. iv. 7, 8.) And is it only some of them ? No, that were useless. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin ;" and the Holy Ghost testifies of it clearly in that same Hebrews x. from which we have quoted, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (v. 17.) And so plainly does He put it that He declares that "where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." (v. 18.) So that, if all were not completely pardoned and effaced, there could be no remedy.

The more we consider it the more plain it is. Christ is the Judge, and if now I can say by faith, He has loved me and washed me from my sins in His own blood, how can He, when I stand before the judgment-seat, impute to me the sins He has Himself borne and put away ? He would be denying the value of His own work, which is impossible.

Again, if we are believers, we are raised in glory (1 Cor. xv. 43) ; nay, Christ shall Himself come to bring us to Himself—"Who shall change

our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory." If Christ comes to fetch us, and puts us in glory, where is the place for raising any question then about our sins? And this is clearly said in John v. 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 [judgment]; but is passed from death unto life."

Is it because God is indifferent to their sins? Impossible! But He has given His Son for us. Christ has borne them already, and cannot impute them to those who believe in Him and in the Father who sent Him in love. We know that the Lord says, "If ye do not believe that I am *He*, ye shall die in your sins." (John viii. 24.) But if we believe in Him we have the forgiveness of our sins, not of some to be condemned for the rest. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," because "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." And we possess the blessedness of this word—"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom Jehovah will not impute sin." Hence repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in Jesus' name. The Christian has a new life from Christ, and this will show itself in his walk. He is born of the Spirit, and the faith in Christ by which he has forgiveness makes Christ everything

to him, as it is written in Colossians iii.: "Christ is all, and in all"—the "everything," that is, of our hearts, and He is our life.

But I now confine myself to redemption and forgiveness.

There is, then, a forgiveness identified with redemption and the abiding value of Christ's blood, so that our sins are none of them imputed to us: God remembers them no more. We have part in this through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the door by which we enter is repentance toward God, which faith in the word of Christ always produces. We have our eyes opened, we are turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, and we receive remission of our sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus. (Acts xxvi. 18.)

Under the Old Testament, among the Jews, this full forgiveness was not known; they got a kind of absolution for each sin they committed; they were shut out from entering into the holiest by the veil, which hung before the place where God revealed Himself. Thus in Hebrews ix. it is written, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." But we learn, when the real work of which all these things were figures was accomplished in the death of the Saviour, that the veil of the

temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom (Matt. xxvii. 51); and we are exhorted (Heb. x. 19), in virtue of the work of Christ and the remission of our sins (*vv.* 17, 18), "having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh," to "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." That one work done once for all, never to be repeated, and effectual to give peace to the conscience, is the ground on which we have eternal redemption, full forgiveness, so that God remembers our sins and iniquities no more; an entrance into God's presence, and a part in the everlasting inheritance of God's children in glory.

This great difference in the state of believers before and after the death of the blessed Lord is celebrated by Zacharias at the birth of John the Baptist, Christ's forerunner. "To give knowledge of salvation unto His people, by the remission of their sins." (Luke i. 77.) So the repentant thief went straight into paradise with Christ; so to the repentant woman in the city that was a sinner the Lord said, not only, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," but, "Thy faith hath saved thee." (Luke vii. 48-50.)

There is then for faith a present but eternal forgiveness, founded on Christ's bearing our sins

in a work which can never be repeated, its value never diminished, nor anything added to it. God has proved His estimation of its worth in setting Him who did it at His right hand in glory, where He was with Him as Son of God before the world was. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." This cannot be repeated. "Christ is not entered into holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet to offer Himself often . . . otherwise He must often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the consummation of ages He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time apart from sin unto salvation." Those whose sins were put away the first time, He comes to take into glory, as to them having no more to do with sin, which He put away the first time.

FORGIVENESS, 't was a joyful sound
To guilty sinners doomed to die :
We'd publish it the world around,
And gladly shout it through the sky.
'T was the rich gift of love divine ;
'T is full, effacing every crime ;
Unbounded shall its glories shine,
And know no change by changing time.

“CLEANSED FROM ALL SIN.”

1 JOHN i. 7.

“**S**HALL we not be perfectly holy *when* we are cleansed from all sin?” This is a question often asked by some who imagine that they can be gradually cleansed from “inbred sin,” until at last there is no sin left in them, and they have reached a state of perfect holiness or sinless perfection.

They quote that precious word in 1 John i. 7 —“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin”—and say, “Does not that verse show that we can be cleansed from all sin?”

Of course it does, thank God; and what is more, if you are under the efficacy of that blood you *are* “cleansed from all sin” *now*, and so is every true believer, even the babe in Christ, and that from the first moment that he took refuge in the blood.

“But,” some will say, “if that were the case, if I, for instance, were cleansed from all sin, I should not feel sin in me as I do, and should never give way to temptation.”

To such we would reply, You are confounding the work of Christ *for* you with the work of the

Spirit *in* you, and you do not understand what Scripture means by cleansing by the blood.

Let us therefore look at one or two passages which explain it, and may God interpret His own word to us, so that we may get rid of our own thoughts, and have the truth.

Now in Leviticus xvi. 30 we read, with reference to the great day of atonement, "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to *cleanse* you, that ye may be clean from *all* your sins before the Lord;" and on examining the chapter we find not only that the people did nothing, but that the priest, who did everything *for* the people, did nothing *to* the people; he did not even sprinkle the blood *upon* them, and yet he made atonement for them, and cleansed them, and they *were* clean from ALL their sins *before the Lord*. Ah! there is the point; they were clean *before the Lord*, not in themselves, and that is just the meaning of the verse already quoted—"the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." It is before the Lord, before a holy God.

It cannot mean that we are clean *in ourselves*; for in the very same chapter (v. 8) it says, "If we say that we *have no sin*, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

"But," you say, "do we never read of the blood being sprinkled on the people?" To be sure we do, and in Heb. ix. x. we see the meaning of it. Did it not cleanse them? Yes, it cleansed them,

but in what respect? Did it cleanse their *natures*? No, it cleansed their *consciences*. The blood of bulls and goats could only satisfy for a time, but the blood of Christ purges the conscience completely and for ever, so that the worshippers *once* purged (no repetition, remember) have "no more conscience of sins." Mark, it does not say "no more *consciousness* of indwelling sin," but "no more conscience of sins." The conscience no longer charges with guilt, because all the guilt has been imputed to the One who died in my stead, and He is risen and gone into heaven "by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption," and "by one offering perfected for ever" (as regards the conscience) "them that are sanctified."

The cleansing virtue of the blood may be further illustrated by referring to Numbers xxiii. 21, where God compels Balaam to say, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel," and that at a time when they were as perverse as could be in themselves; but the blood was on the mercy-seat, and God's eye rested on that blood which spoke to Him of a perfect sacrifice for sin, and therefore He would not allow the enemy to curse, or even to accuse, His people, though He chastened them for their faults as a people who ought to have been as holy in their ways as in their judicial standing. Of course all was typical and imperfect under the law, but now it is absolutely and eternally true

that God does not impute sin to those who are under the shelter of the blood of Christ.

But perhaps you will say, "What about Psalm li. and Ezekiel xxxvi. ? Surely we get the thought of being 'inwardly cleansed from sin' in such scriptures as these ?" Well, it is quite true there is such a thing as inward cleansing ; but where that is attributed to the blood it has reference, not to the *nature*, but to the *conscience*, which is only thoroughly cleansed or purged when the blessedness is enjoyed of the man "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," and "unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity"—a blessedness which David described in Psalm xxxii. and longed for in Psalm li., but which could only be fully known when Christ had accomplished the work of redemption.

When, however, the psalmist prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," and when the prophet Ezekiel speaks of what the Lord will do for restored Israel in the latter day, "then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," &c. (Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27), we have brought before us the cleansing power of the *word of God*, and this is typified by water not only in Ezekiel, but also in John iii., and many other parts of Scripture.

The word when applied by the power of the Holy Ghost does create in us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us. When first a man is brought under the life-giving power of the Word

he is born again—"of water and the Spirit;" an entirely new life and nature, holy and sinless, is imparted to him, and those whose hearts were hard as stone, "alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works," are reconciled to God.

This is a very different thing from saying that the *old* nature is purified or rooted out, either all at once or by degrees. Such a thought is foreign to Scripture, in which you cannot find a single instance of any one professing to have attained to a state of sinless perfection, or teaching the possibility of it. On the contrary we read, "I count *not* myself to have apprehended" (Phil. iii. 13); "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see *another* law in my members." (Rom. vii. 22, 23.) The old nature remains unchanged and unchangeable, side by side, so to speak, with the new nature—"The mind of the flesh *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, *neither* indeed *can* be" (Rom. viii. 7); "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." (1 John i. 8.) And indeed the folly of those who have so deceived themselves will sooner or later be manifested, and often has been made evident by an outburst of passion, a display of pride, or a grievous fall.

Do not, however, suppose for a moment that we contend for a constant state of bondage or a fruitless struggle against sin. Far from it. "Sin shall *not* have dominion over you" (Rom. vi. 14):

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16.) But the flesh, you see, *is there* to lust; for as long as the Adam-life lasts the Adam-nature remains in us; but when the Christ-life has been grafted into us, and the Holy Spirit has taken up His abode in us, we have liberty and power to cultivate the Christ-nature, and so to have our "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Thus by watchfulness, dependence, and subjection to the Word, keeping the *eye* on Christ in glory, and keeping the *foot* on the old man by the power of the Spirit, made good to us through Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us, "whose grace is sufficient" for us, and whose "strength is made perfect in weakness," we may seek to "walk even as He walked," and thus to be as clean through the *Word* in our daily walk as we are through the *blood* "before the Lord."

"In many things we all offend" (though we have no excuse for it), and "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Eccles. vii. 20.) But "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) And He who washed His disciples' feet still washes our feet to keep us in communion with Him by the constant application of the *Word*, reminding us of the cost at which He has purchased us, even His own precious blood *once* shed, and which never loses its value.

PEACE

BY JESUS CHRIST.

ACTS x. 36.

IF you are enquiring how "peace with God" is to be procured, the holy word of God answers, "Not by works of righteousness which *we* have done" (Titus iii. 5), but by believing on the Son of God, who came "preaching *peace* to all" (comp. Acts x. 36; Eph. ii. 17), having made it "by *the blood of His cross*." Again: "*Being justified by faith, we have (now) peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*." Rom. v. 1. And the Holy Ghost has proclaimed, by the mouth of the apostle Peter, that "there is none other name *under heaven given among men*, whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12. But perhaps, dear reader, you are ready to say, "I do believe on the Son of God; I believe that He came into the world, took our nature upon Him, and died upon the cross for sin, and was raised again the third day, and that there is no other name by which a sinner can be saved, but His name." Well, this is a very sound confession as far as it goes; but are you in the enjoyment of the results of all this? If you really believe all this, then you possess eternal life, and divine righteousness. 2 Cor. v. 21. He that be-

lieveth on the Son of God *hath* eternal life; and again, "By Him (Jesus) all that believe are justified from all things." Acts xiii. 39. For one to say that he believes all this, and yet that he does not know his perfect justification before God, is a complete contradiction. If I am amongst the "all that believe," I am assuredly "justified from all things." God says so, and therefore I am bound to believe it, and rejoice in it. The completeness of the justification is founded upon the completeness of Christ's work. Faith owns this, and the soul is filled with joy and peace. I know that my sins are forgiven, and my conscience gets rest. It is deeply important to see that we are privileged to know the forgiveness of *our own sins*. There are many who, every first day of the week, declare their belief "in the forgiveness of sins," and yet who would regard it as presumption for one to say he believed in the forgiveness of *his* sins. "*We know that we have passed from death unto life.*" 1 John iii. 14.

Is it presumption to *take God at His word*? God hath said, "*He* (no matter who) that believeth on the Son *hath* (now) everlasting life." John iii. 36, v. 24; 1 John v. 12. Mark, it is not said, he shall, or may, have it, but he "*hath*" it. "*Because ye are sons*, God *hath* sent forth the Spirit of *His Son* into your hearts, crying, [nothing less than] *Abba, Father.*" Gal. iv. 6. Is it not far greater presumption "*to make God a liar*"? (1 John v. 10),

which you are doing, if you are not rejoicing in the knowledge of the forgiveness of your sins. Jesus Christ did not come to *put us in the way of making peace for ourselves*; He came to make peace, and to give it to us as a free gift, "without money and without price." Isaiah lv. May this blessed message of "peace and good-will" be published far and wide, that sinners may hear and live.

But let it never be forgotten, that though the grace of God, that bringeth a full and free salvation, hath appeared to all men, yet wherever it is received it teacheth to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Titus ii. 11, 12. If we are not showing out the latter, we may rest assured we do not fully understand the former. Living faith in the living Son of God, crucified for sin, and risen, is the grand source and root from which all good works must spring, and whatsoever work or religious service springs not from this is *selfishness*—an abomination in the sight of God: no matter what we ourselves or others think of it, God has said, "Whatsoever is not of *faith* is sin." Rom. xiv. 23.

May you, dear reader, have this precious faith; and may "*the peace of God*, which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Amen.

LAW AND GRACE EXEMPLIFIED.

DEUT. xxi. 18-21, and LUKE xv. 11-32.

IN looking through the various laws and ordinances of the Old Testament, we cannot fail to observe the intense spirit of holiness which they breathe; the most trifling ordinance, apparently, was calculated to impress Israel with a sense of holiness. God's presence in their midst was ever to be the spring of holiness and separation to His people. Hence we read in this passage of the book of Deuteronomy, "So shalt thou put away evil from among you." And again, in the ordinance of the manslayer, we read, "Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel." (Num. xxxv. 34.) *God's dwelling-place must be holy*; and "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." There can be no alteration in this. Dispensations may change, but God, blessed be His name, can never cease to be "the holy, holy, holy Lord God of Israel;" nor can He ever cease to make His people like what He is Himself. Whether He speak from amid the thunders of Mount Sinai, or in all the gentleness and grace of the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat in the heavens,

His object is still the same; viz., to make and keep His people holy.

Very different, however, is the mode of acting in the law, from that which we find in the gospel. In the law, God was calling upon man to be what He desired him to be; He set before him a high and holy standard, no doubt, but yet a standard to which man could not attain. Even though he might aspire most ardently after what the law set before him, yet, from the very fact of what he was, he could not attain to it. All his efforts were based upon the unholiness of a nature which was perfectly irrecoverable. The law was like a mirror, let down from heaven to show to all who would only look honestly into it, that they were, both negatively and positively, the very thing which the law condemned and set aside. The law said, "Do this," and "Thou shalt not do that;" and man's only response, uttered from the very depth of his nature, was, "O wretched man that I am!" In short, the law, like a plumb-line, measured the human character, and showed out all its crookedness and imperfection. It was not, by any means, its province to make the sinner better. No; its province was to reveal his sins, and put him under the curse. "The law entered, that the offence might abound." And again, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." This is very plain. Have anything to do with law, and it will prove you to be a poor,

helpless sinner, and put you under the curse. It can really do nothing else, so long as God and man, holiness and sin, continue to be what they are. We may seek to confound law and grace, in our ignorance of the true genius of each; but it will prove, in the end, to be most thoroughly vain. As well might we seek to cause light and darkness to mingle, as to make law and grace combine. No; they are as distinct as any two things can be. The law can only point out to man the error of his ways—the evil of his nature. It does not make him straight, but only tells him he is crooked; it does not make him clean, but only tells him he is defiled. Nor was the law designed, as is often imagined, to lead sinners to Christ. This idea is founded upon an erroneous quotation of Galatians iii. 24. It is not said, “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,” but “the law was our schoolmaster unto (or until) Christ.” The words “to bring us” are in italics, and do not appear in the original. This is important, as helping my reader to understand the nature, object, and scope of the law. How could the law bring a man to Christ? All it did for him was to shut him up under the curse; his finding his way to Christ was the result of quite another ministry altogether. The law acted the part of a schoolmaster from the time it was given until Christ came, by keeping souls under a restraint from which nothing could deliver, save

the spirit of liberty imparted through the gospel of Christ.

However, by a simple comparison of the two scriptures which stand at the head of this paper, we shall have a very striking proof of the difference between the law and the gospel. The case presented in each, is that of a son who was disposed to do his own will and enjoy his own way. This is no uncommon case. The prodigal desired to have his portion, and to be away from under the eye of his father. But, ah! how soon he was called to learn his folly! "When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want." Just so; how else could it be? He had left the only place in which all his need could be supplied, even the father's house. He had made his portion and the father's to be separate things, and hence he was compelled to learn that the former was capable of being exhausted. We can get to the bottom of all human circumstances and resources. There never was a cup of human or earthly happiness—be it ever so deep—ever so abundant in desirable ingredients—which could not be drained to the bottom. There never was a well of human, or earthly refreshment, of which it could not be said, "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again." Not so, however, with the cup which redeeming love puts into our hand—not so with the wells of salvation from which the gospel invites us to draw. These are

exhaustless, eternal, divine. As the countless ages of eternity roll along, God's cup shall be full, and His wells shall send forth their streams in immortal freshness and purity. My reader, how sweet—how ineffably sweet—to partake of these!

But the prodigal "began to be in want." And what then? Did he think of the father? No. So long as he had any other resource, he would not think of returning home. "He went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." This was terrible. Thus does Satan crush the spirits of his votaries. Every one who is not walking in communion with God and subjection to the gospel of Christ, is thus engaged in the service of Satan. There is no middle ground. Reader, whom are you serving? Are you serving Christ or Satan? If the latter, oh, *remember the end!* Remember, too, the Father's love—the Father's house. Remember that God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his evil ways and live. This you may learn from the prodigal. The moment his necessities led him to think of returning home, that home was open wide to receive him. And, observe, it was simply *his need* that caused him to say, "I will arise and go to my father." It was not any longing desire for the father's company, but merely for the father's bread. Many are vainly looking within for some rising emotions of affec-

tionate desire after God, not knowing that our very necessities, our very miseries, our very sins, render us suited objects for the exercise of divine grace. *Grace suits the miserable*, because the miserable can magnify grace.

And here we have arrived at a point at which we may appreciate the contrast between our scriptures. How would the law have dealt with our prodigal? The answer is simple. "Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." The law could speak of nought but judgment and death. Mercy was not within its range, nor at all in accordance with its spirit. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," was its stern language. And again, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

But how does grace deal with its object? Oh for hearts to adore our God, who is the fountain of grace! "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." In

short, the mode of treatment is the very opposite. The law said, "Lay hold on him;" the gospel said, "Embrace him;" the law said, "Stone him;" the gospel said, "Kiss him;" and yet, be it remembered, we meet the same God in both. The God of Israel speaks both in Deuteronomy and in Luke; and, moreover, we must remember what has already been stated; viz., that we trace the same object in both, which is, to give full deliverance from the power of evil.* The stone of judgment and the embrace of love were both designed to put away evil; but, ah! how much more fully was the latter in sympathy with the divine mind than the former. Judgment is truly God's strange work. It was far more congenial to Him to be on the neck of the poor returning prodigal than to be within the enclosure of Mount Sinai. True, the prodigal had nothing to commend him. He had proved himself to be all that the law condemned. He had been "a glutton, and a drunkard," the rags of the far country were upon him, and were the law but to take its course, instead of the affectionate embrace of love, he would have to meet the stern grasp of justice, and instead of the father's kiss he would have had to meet the stone of judgment from the men of his city in the presence of the elders. Hence we see the contrast between law and grace; it is most striking.

But here let us ask, How could all this be? How can we reconcile the marvellous difference

in the principles of acting here set before us? Whither must we turn for a solution of this apparent contradiction? How can God embrace a poor sinner? How can He shield such from the full action of justice and the law? In other words, how can He be "just and the justifier"? How can He pardon the sinner steeped to the lips in iniquity, and yet not "clear the guilty"? Where, my reader, shall we find an answer to these questions? *In the cross of Calvary.* Yes; there we have a precious, a divine reply to all. The Man nailed to the tree settles everything. Jesus bore sin's tremendous curse upon the cross. He exposed His own bosom to the stroke of justice; He drained to the dregs the cup of Jehovah's righteous wrath. "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Was not this a vindication of the law? Did ever the words, "So shalt thou put evil away," fall with such impressive solemnity upon the ear as when the blessed Son of God cried out from amid the horrors of Golgotha, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Oh, never, never! All the stones that were ever cast at offending sinners, all the penalties that were ever inflicted, yea, we shall proceed further, and say that the eternal punishment of the wicked in the lake of fire could not afford such a solemn proof of God's

hatred of sin as the scene on the cross. There it was that men and angels might behold God's thoughts of sin, and God's thoughts of sinners; His hatred of the former, and His love for the latter. The very same act which shows out the condemnation of sin shows out the salvation of the sinner. Hence the cross, while it most fully vindicates the holiness and justice of God, opens up a channel through which the copious streams of redeeming love can flow down to the guilty sinner. "Mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other," when the Son of God offered up Himself as a sacrifice for sin.

And if it be asked, What proof have we of this? What solid ground of assurance have we of the full forgiveness and perfect acceptance of the believer? The answer is, *Resurrection*. Jesus is now at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; and there, moreover, on behalf of the believer. "He was delivered for our offences," and, could we go no further than this, we might despair; but it is added, "He was raised again for our justification." Here we have full peace, full emancipation, full victory. When God raised Jesus from the dead, He declared Himself as "the God of peace." Justice was satisfied, and the sinner's Surety was set down at God's right hand; and all who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, believe in His death and resurrection, are looked at in Him, and seen to be as free from

every charge of sin as He is. Most marvellous grace! Who could have conceived such a thing? Who could have thought that He, who is "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person," should come down and put Himself in the sinner's place, and bear all the wrath, curse, and judgment due to sin, in order that the sinner might be set down in the very presence of God, without "spot or wrinkle or any such thing," so that God might be able to say of him, "Thou art all fair; there is no spot in thee"? My reader, was ever love like this? Truly we have here love in its fountain, love in its channel, and love in its application. The Father is the eternal fountain, the Son is the channel, and the Holy Ghost is the power of application. What divine completeness! What perfect peace! What a solid resting-place for the sinner! Who can raise a question? God has received the prodigal, has clothed and adorned him, killed the fatted calf for him; and, above all, has given utterance to the words, "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad"—words which ought to dispel every shadow of fear and doubt from the heart. If God can say, in virtue of the finished work of Christ, "It is meet," who can say it is not meet? Satan may accuse; but God's reply is, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" In short, the soul that believes in Jesus is lifted into a perfectly cloudless region,

where, it may be truly said, "there is neither enemy, nor evil occurrent;" and in that region we can see no one so exquisitely happy in the divine results of redemption as the blessed God Himself. If the prodigal could possibly have retained a feeling of doubt or reserve, what could have so effectually banished it as the father's joy in getting him back again? Neither doubt nor fear can live in the light of our Father's countenance. If we believe that God rejoices in receiving back a sinner, we cannot harbour suspicion or hesitancy. It is not merely that God can receive us, but it is His joy to do so. Hence we not only know that "grace reigns through righteousness," but that heaven rejoices over one repenting sinner. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"

GRACE is a mine of wealth
Laid open to the poor ;
Grace is the sov'reign spring of health ;
'Tis LIFE FOR EVERMORE.

Of grace then let us sing !
(A joyful, wondrous theme !)
Who *grace* has brought, shall *glory* bring,
And we shall reign with Him.

Then shall we see His face
With all the saints above,
And sing for ever of His grace,
For ever of His love.

THE ADVOCACY OF CHRIST.

1 JOHN ii. 1.

THE question often arises in the minds of the Lord's people, especially of those who are young in the faith, "What is to be done if we commit sins after we have been saved?" Many a child of God has said, "I know that I have believed in Christ, and see that my sins were put away by His blood; but what troubles me is the sins I commit now, and what am I to do with them?" The direct answer to this question is found in 1 John ii. 1, 2, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." This is clearly written to believers, for the apostle addresses them as "my children;" that is, those who have been born of God. And again, "We have an advocate with the *Father*," as it is only those who are born again who can call God their Father.

The first thing for us to see is, that, as believers in the Lord Jesus, *all* our sins are put away before God by the one offering on the cross, as we get fully brought out in the epistle to the Hebrews; because till this is seen there must always be

confusion in the mind, confounding our *knowledge* of forgiveness of sins with the work of Christ that put them all away when they were all future. In Hebrews x. 11, 12, 14, we read, "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man [Christ], after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, *for ever* sat down on the right hand of God. . . . For by one offering He hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified." The priests, under the law, *stood* and offered "*oftentimes* the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins," therefore their work was never done; but this Man [Christ] offered *one* sacrifice, and "*for ever* sat down on the right hand of God." Do you see, dear reader, that there is only one sacrifice for sins, and that there never will be another? So that if all your sins were not put away then, they never can be, for Christ is not going to die again.

People often say, "I know that my sins were put away up to my conversion;" but Scripture never speaks in that way. When did Christ bear your sins? On the cross. Did He bear a part of your sins, or did He put them away up to the day of your conversion? No; if He bore one, He bore them all when they were all future, when you had committed none of them; for, blessed be His name, He offered the "one sacrifice for sins," and then "*for ever* sat down on the right hand of

God." This word "for ever" is not that which is used for everlasting, but it has the sense of continuously, uninterruptedly, never to rise up to offer another sacrifice or to complete the work; and the reason that He is so seated at the right hand of God is, that, "by one offering He hath perfected *for ever*" (same word) "them that are sanctified." He has perfected us for ever, therefore He has sat down for ever. The value of His one offering, which put away all our sins, is for ever; therefore He has nothing more to do throughout eternity with regard to the putting away of the sins of those that believe in His name.

Of course, when a soul is first awakened by the Holy Spirit, it could only be past sins that are brought to his knowledge, and that he knows are forgiven; but then, when we get the knowledge of forgiveness, we see that the work that put our sins away was accomplished when they were all future, and the value of that one sacrifice was not only up to the day of our conversion. Now we see the One that did the work "*for ever* sat down on the right hand of God," because He has perfected us *for ever* by that one offering; and God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.) Forgiveness of sins is the common portion of all Christians, as we read in 1 John ii. 12, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." There would be no sense in saying our

future sins are forgiven, for we have not committed them, and we ought not to contemplate sinning in the future; but we can always say, as Christians, as in Colossians i. 14, "In whom we *have* redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

But many have thought, "If we have the 'forgiveness of sins,' why do we read, in 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to *forgive* us our sins'?" There is another sense in which Scripture speaks of forgiveness; when a child of God has sinned, and his communion has been interrupted, and he confesses his sin, he gets forgiveness, not in the sense of non-imputation, as in Rom. iv. 7, 8, but of communion and joy being restored, which had been interrupted by the sin. The above verse (1 John i. 9) is a general statement, and would apply either to a sinner first coming to God and confessing his sins, and so getting forgiveness once for all on the ground of the death of Christ, or to a child of God who has sinned and confesses, and gets forgiveness as a child by the Father. The one might be called *justifying forgiveness* in the case of the sinner; and the other, *Fatherly*, or *governmental*, *forgiveness* in the case of a saint; and it is very important to distinguish between the two.

CHRIST AS THE REVEALER OF THE FATHER.

GOD has been pleased to reveal Himself in various ways and under different characters in every age and in all dispensations. Before the cross He had made Himself known to Adam, to the patriarchs, and to His people Israel; but it was not until Christ came, and had glorified God on the earth, and finished the work which had been given Him to do, that all was told out, that the Father-name of God could be fully revealed. Ere this, clouds and darkness were round about Him; but as soon as atonement had been made by the death of Christ on the cross, the veil was rent, and believers could thereafter be set down in the light as God is in the light. All distance and concealment were now abolished, and all that God is, together with the name of Father, was fully displayed. Christ Himself, Christ as the eternal Son, but as the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us (John i. 14), was Himself the revelation of the Father (John xiv.); but until the descent of the Holy Ghost there was little, if any, power on the part of those before whose eyes the revelation was passing to apprehend it. There were a few anointed eyes who beheld His glory as of an only begotten with

a Father, but John the Baptist knew Him not, except by the appointed sign of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, and even Philip had to be told, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Practically therefore there was no knowledge of God as Father until after Pentecost. This will be plain to the reader if we trace a little the successive revelations of God which were made to His people in the Old Testament. To Abraham, God said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1); to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus iii. 14); and when He entered into distinct relationship with His chosen people, it was under the name of Jehovah, and that was ever His covenant name with Israel. Search indeed the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, and not even the word father will be found more than five or six times as applied to God, and in most of these cases it is used rather as indicating the source of existence than as implying relationship. All the Old Testament saints were undoubtedly born again. This is to be insisted upon, for without a new life and a new nature they would not have been able to converse with God; but it is equally true that they never knew God as Father, and therefore that they could not be

in the enjoyment of the relationship. One word from Scripture definitely and conclusively settles this point, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." (Matt. xi. 27.)

It is then abundantly proved that God was not revealed as Father before the advent of Christ. And passing now to the New Testament, it will be seen, as already stated, that Christ Himself was the revealer of the Father, and that it is in the Gospel of John He is presented to us in this character. In the very first chapter of this gospel it is said, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (v. 18.) Not only, indeed, does this scripture inform us that the only begotten Son declared the Father, but it also teaches that none other but Himself could have done so, and this because of the position He ever occupied—the place of intimacy and communion which He ever, and He alone, enjoyed, as marked by the words, "in the bosom of the Father." This place He never left; He was in it (for it is a moral expression) as much when He was the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, as when He possessed the glory which He had with the Father before the world was; and on the cross itself He was still there, for He Himself said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life,

that I might take it again" (John x. 17)—His death in obedience to the commandment which He had received, supplying, as it were a new motive for the expression of His Father's love. Later on in the gospel, we find one of His disciples permitted to lean on His bosom, and this same disciple was the chosen vessel to unfold in his gospel the eternal Sonship of Christ—Christ as divine; and this in some measure may aid us in understanding that none but He who was ever in the bosom of the Father could unfold Him in this character and relationship. In divine things it is ever true as an abiding principle, that we can only tell out to others that which we ourselves know in our own souls. If we are not in the power of the thing spoken of, our words, clear as they may seem to be, will convey but little significance. The Lord Himself laid down this principle when He said, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." (John iii. 11.)

Let us then enquire in what way the Lord revealed the Father. He Himself has answered the question. "If," said He to the Jews, "ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (John viii. 19); and again, speaking to Thomas, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it

sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father*; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of" (*from, literally*) "myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." (John xiv. 7-11.)

WELL may we sing! with triumph sing
 The great Redeemer's praise!
 The glories of the living God,
 Revealed in Jesu's face.

The love of God it was that sought
 From sin to set us free;
 That gave the Son, whose precious blood
 Has wrought our liberty.

In Him we read the Father's love,
 And find eternal peace;
 We meet in Him a Saviour-God,
 And fear and terror cease.

Then gladly sing, and sound abroad
 The great Redeemer's praise;
 The glories of the living God,
 The riches of His grace!

THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

GAL. iii. 26.

WE have already seen that Christ as the Son was the revealer of the Father; and as soon as the Father is declared it is of necessity that there should be those who are in the enjoyment of the relationship; in other words, the Father must have His children. Accordingly we find the family in the very same gospel that contains the declaration of the Father's name. There are, it may be said, three notices of it to which we may call attention.

The first is contained in chapter i.; but we turn now to that found in chapter xi. After the resurrection of Lazarus the Jewish authorities assembled together for consultation. They could not deny the miracle that had been wrought; but, shutting their eyes to its divine significance and their consequent responsibility, and caring only for their own selfish interests and advantage, they determined to rid themselves of the One who so disturbed their peace, and who was making so many disciples. They thought in their wicked counsels only of themselves; but God was behind the scene over-ruling their thoughts, and was about to make their wrath to praise Him in the accomplishment of His own eternal counsels of

grace and love. He thus used the mouth of Caiaphas to prophesy that Jesus should die for the Jewish nation, this being God's purpose from eternity; and to that prophecy the Spirit of God added another in order to embrace the full character of the death of Christ, by the hand of John, who writes, "And not for that nation only, but that also He should' gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." (John xi. 49-52.) We thus learn that not only was the heart of God set upon His children, but that also the death of Christ was requisite—requisite for the glory of God as for the redemption of His people, as the foundation on which the Spirit of God could, through the entreating message of the gospel, go out into every land, and gather in one by one those who should constitute the Father's family, and as such be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. As the Father could only be fully revealed by the life and death of Christ, so likewise the children could only be sought out, found, and gathered through that death.

The second reference is in chapter i. 12, 13, and points out the way in which we become children—the only possible way—and this must be entered upon more fully. It is stated at the very outset in accordance with the character of the gospel. In the three preceding gospels—generally termed the synoptical gospels—Christ is presented to His people for acceptance, and we see Him rejected in

the course of the narrative. This is true of all three, though there are characteristic differences. In John, on the other hand, Christ is introduced as already rejected. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." The world was ignorant (knew not God, as in 2 Thess. i. 8), and the Jew rejected Him (did not obey the gospel, as also in the scripture cited). Hence we find a fuller display in John of the person of Christ, and the introduction of the cross with its blessed teachings at the commencement (chap. iii.) instead of waiting for the historical relation at the close. We have therefore, following immediately upon the statement of His rejection, a class indicated who received Him, and who in receiving Him received power (right or authority) to become (to take the place of) the children of God; and then, to dispel all uncertainty as to the nature of the change thus wrought, it is added, "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (v. 13.) It is a divine and sovereign operation effected by a power and through agencies outside of man, and with which man, though he may be the subject of their energy, can have nothing to do.

But the consideration of this will lead us back to the very fountain-head of the existence

of the children of God. They are born of God. In chapter iii. the Lord tells Nicodemus, that "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (v. 5); and here we find another truth, that those who are born again through these instrumentalities are brought into relationship of children with the Father. Combining then these scriptures, we shall have before us the whole truth of the process by which the family of God is formed.

Its origin is in God Himself; and this same apostle tells us another thing, not only that believers are born of God, but also that their blessed place and relationship flow from the heart of the Father. "Behold," he exclaims, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons" (children — τέκνα) "of God" (1 John iii. 1); so that the very fact of our being children is the expression of the Father's heart. He desired to have His children for His own satisfaction and joy; and if we add another scripture, we shall see that in a past eternity He formed this blessed counsel of grace. "Having," as St. Paul writes, "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (Ephes. i. 5, 6.) We cannot

dwell too much upon this outflow of the heart of God, on the fact, we repeat, that our being children is but a simple consequence of the Father's love. And when in connection with this we consider what we were, the state we were in, our utter alienation from God, the bitter enmity of our hearts towards Him, we shall in some measure enter into the meaning of John's cry, "Behold, what manner of love!" Yea, it is love unspeakable, unbounded, and divine, having no motive for its expression except in that blessed heart whence it has flowed. Well indeed might we be humbled before it when we think that we—once poor sinners of the Gentiles—have become its object, and have been brought into its enjoyment, and that for eternity.

FATHER! we, Thy children, bless Thee
For Thy love on us bestowed ;
Source of blessing, we confess Thee
Now, our Father and our God.

Wondrous was Thy love in giving
Jesus for our sins to die,
Wondrous was His grace in leaving,
For our sakes, the heavens on high.

Now the sprinkled blood has freed us,
Hast'ning onward to our rest,
Through the desert Thou dost lead us,
With Thy constant favour blest.

OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST FROM THE CROSS TO THE GLORY.

I WANT to ask you to look at a few scriptures which unfold to us with great clearness and simplicity our identification with Christ from the cross to the glory.

We often find, in course of conversation, that people do not know the difference between "sin" and "sins." Were you asked what the difference is, perhaps you would say, "'Sin' is singular, and 'sins' plural." Such an answer is frequently given, but that is not what Scripture means by "sin" and "sins." Sin is the evil nature we brought into this world; sins are the things which that nature is guilty of committing. Sin is like a crab-tree, and sins the fruit that appears on it. It is just as much a crab-tree if it has only one crab-apple on it as if it had a thousand. When you are clear as to the difference between sin and sins, you will find that the Epistle to the Romans will help you in a remarkable way. The first part of Romans, from chap. i. to v. 11, is about sins we have been guilty of. From verse 12 of chap. v. it is a new subject, and the question of *sin* is taken up, not "sins." In chap. vi. sin is mentioned seventeen times; "sins" not once.

Death is also presented in one form or another seventeen times in the same chapter. The moment the Holy Ghost mentions sin, He mentions in connection with it *death*! Why is this? Because nothing short of death would meet what is due to sin—nothing but the death of Christ.

Have you found out that your evil nature is so bad you cannot make it any better? "Oh, no!" you say. "I pray, fast, and do all kinds of things to improve it!" Well, have you succeeded? You know you have not. If Satan has not stupefied your conscience with some of his opiates, you will have to own, like the woman in the gospel, that you are nothing better, but rather grown worse. Perhaps another says, "I have tried, and I find that I *cannot* make it any better." Like the man in Mark v., it cannot be kept bound with chains, or tamed, no matter what restraint you put it under. And this just proves the incorrigible badness of the first Adam nature. Now we come to a second question, more startling than the first, Have you found the flesh to be so bad that it cannot be made any worse? "No." Well, you will have to own this to be true if you bow to God's word. "Where is your scripture for it?" you say. In Rom. viii. 7. The natural mind—the mind of the flesh—is "enmity against God."

For 2500 years, from the time Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden, man was on his trial, and became so bad that God had to sweep

him away by the flood. Afterwards He put man under law for 1500 years, and finally sent His Son, when they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill Him." God had said, "Thou shalt not commit murder," and they murdered God's Son, the Saviour of sinners. With that deed the world's probation ended, and man, guilty and lost, is only awaiting the hour of judgment.

Why the cross if man could be made better? Why the propitiation for sins and substitution for sinners if the flesh could be improved? It is an awful, solemn demonstration of the fact that the flesh cannot be improved; it was brought to an end judicially in the death of Christ. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." We were the serfs, vassals, slaves of sin—tyrannized over by it, but we have died to sin in the death of Christ.

Rom. vi. 6 is the broad statement of the fact that our old man is crucified with Christ; Gal. ii. 20 is the soul individually believing it, planting the foot of faith firmly on the magnificent fact, and getting out of it all that God intends. It is intensely individual, the soul making it its own. It is true of all believers, though not enjoyed by all. A man may have a fortune left him of £500 a year, but if he does not believe it he may go on trying to eke out a miserable existence on 6d. a day. The fortune is his, but he gets no enjoyment

from it because he does not credit the fact. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me"—is just the soul saying, "I believe what God says about me in Romans vi., and I live in the enjoyment of it."

A crucified man is a man come to an end on a cross of wood. I am crucified, and now I have a new life, entirely outside and apart from Adam, a life that he had nothing to do with. God utterly ignores my standing in the first man Adam, and does not recognize me in it. (Rom. viii. 9.) If I am a child of God, I am before Him in Christ. Christ is my life. "This is the true God and eternal life," and Christ lives in me. I feel how great a thing it is for any of us to be able to say, "I am crucified," yet I am alive; I have got life, I am a living being, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Well may we ask, What manner of persons ought we to be? And, in regard to our practical life, what is to come out? Simply what is in Christ—one ceaseless flow, in all our words, our work, our ways, of Christ, because He is in us. It is intensely individual. Can you look up to heaven and say, "He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*"?

When preaching in Ireland, I once mentioned that verse, and a young lady said to me, "If only that had been pointed out to me years ago what

I might have been spared! I thought that *I* had to love *Him*. I tried one thing and another without success; but when you were preaching in my brother's cottage you said, '*He loved me.*' I can rest there. I was incapable of loving Him, but He was capable of loving me. He has done it, and I believe it." Is your faith anchored there? Do *you* believe it?

I don't know that I need say more on the first point, but pass on now to the other identifications with Christ. The first is in death; we, "our old man," crucified with Christ. If you accept that, you will never think you can make the old nature better. The people who do are to be pitied. If you had a piece of land, and sowed it with seed, and got no crop, what would you do? Get fresh seed. Then supposing you got no crop the second time, what would you do? Get fresh seed again. And supposing there was no crop the third time, after you had manured and husbanded the land in every way, you would say, "I will waste no more seed upon it; it is bad ground, and produces nothing." That bad ground is the old nature. Don't sow a thought, or word, or look upon it; for God has set it aside as a worthless thing. Why then should you try to get any good from it?

The flesh is incorrigibly bad, and the only remedy is to reckon yourself to have died "*unto*," not *through* sin, or *in* sin, but "*unto*" sin. (Rom. vi. 11.) You have died, and now you are risen. God

reckons it true of you, and if you want to be in the power and enjoyment of it, you must reckon it true as well. Did you notice that little word "also"? You will get no blessing if you don't reckon with God. Now I pass on to the second. You are *dead*. What do you do with dead people? Bury them out of sight.

Having died, and been buried out of sight at Christ's burial, and buried with Him by baptism, which is a figure of death, we are raised with Him, and that brings us to our third identification.

In Romans man is looked at as alive in sins; in Ephesians ii. he is "dead in sins," in the lowest possible condition. Think of God coming to us there. We are quickened with Christ; it is a most wonderful thing! Not only is Christ quickened, but I am quickened too. In connection with the first Adam you come in for death, judgment, and condemnation; in connection with the last Adam you have life, righteousness, and glory. I don't ask you if you fully understand it. Who does? But we can just pause and think over such a love to you and me, not more true of the oldest than of the youngest, not less of the youngest than of the oldest; we are quickened with Christ.

Fourthly, "we are raised with Him." (Col. ii. 12.) We are risen with Christ. (Col. iii. 1.) There is the life of the believer who has died in the death of Christ—"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Did God ever say

that of anybody before the death and resurrection of Christ? How could any one have died with Christ when He had never died Himself? That is a characteristic of Christianity. It was not known, and was never true before Christianity, that our life is hid with Christ. Do you believe that you are raised together with Christ? That is the point. Would it not have power over you if you believed it? What a power to separate from the world! I long for the Holy Ghost to apply it, and make it good in our words, our walk, our ways, and our lives. We are resurrection men and women—not risen as to our bodies; for that we wait till He shall come, and take us to Himself; but we are in resurrection life *now*.

How am I to prove that I belong to the resurrection family, that I am a child of resurrection? "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above." Why? Because we are dead; our life is hid with Christ, and this is the practical effect of it.

Eph. ii. 6: "Raised us up together;" that is, He has raised up Jew and Gentile. "And made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "We are seated." That is our position, not standing, but seated in restful enjoyment of our present blessings in Christ.

You will find the sixth, seventh, and eighth identifications all in one verse—Rom. viii. 17—

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." "Co-heirs," or "heirs together." Think of that. It never says that of the archangel; never does God say of any of the heavenly intelligences that they are heirs together with Christ. But we, poor Gentiles, who were afar off and not nigh, think of it—we are heirs with Christ.

"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, *as thou hast loved me.*" (John xvii. 23.) The same love that the Father bears to His beloved Son is the love with which He loves us. "All things are yours." Why? Because ye are Christ's. Life, death, &c., *all things* are yours, because you are heirs together with Christ. Don't talk about your poverty; you are richer than the archangel—heirs of an inheritance in which the archangel will never share: we are heirs with Christ. We don't half count up our possessions and blessings through being one with Christ. We have received the Holy Ghost and everything in Christ. Now it is only as you are consciously enjoying your oneness with Christ in the heavenlies, by the Holy Ghost in you, that you will be proof against the attacks of Satan against the truth. May God give us to hold the magnificent fact that we are one with Christ—co-heirs.

Every child of God taught by the Holy Ghost accepts what the Father says about him in the first six; but when we come to the seventh—“*suffering* with Christ”—people begin to question, Why must we suffer? Why should we make ourselves singular, and bring down suffering on ourselves by being peculiar? “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Just in proportion as we represent Christ, we shall be hated by the world as He was. Are we so living as to represent Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost that people can say of us, “There is a man representing Christ”? That is what we get in Phil. i.: “To me to live is Christ.” Nothing but Christ; feeling nothing that touches self, only what touches Him. How many there are who cannot bear a word! They are exquisitely sensitive as to what touches self; but when anything is said touching Christ, they feel it no more than would a marble statue—they are not touched at all by it.

“Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” It is a real gift. The apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Him; and in Heb. xi. we get, “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.”

Are you going to shirk rejection with a rejected Christ? You will never have such a moment again; you are left down here to share in His rejection. “If we suffer we shall also reign with

Him." Suffering and reigning go together. Many kick vehemently against this, but you don't know what a loss it is not to get it. It is a real gain to suffer for Him. On the road to glory we are left down here to share His path, and to say—

"Master, we would no longer be
Loved by the world that hated Thee."

Can you say—

"I'd not have joy where He had woe,
Be rich where He was poor"?

Have you got hold of these words—"They are not of the world"? It is true. God give us to accredit it!

Lastly, "glorified together." What an end to the chain of our identifications with Christ! What a prospect! When I hear saints talking of their trials and troubles, I say, What are they in comparison to glory? Who has ever been through what Paul went through, and what does he say? "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." Everything you can see is passing away. Are you living in the changeless, eternal things which are yours? You are going to be glorified together with Christ.

"We two are so joined,
He'll not be in glory, and leave me behind."

He will not be in glory alone. Look at Rom. viii. and see those five links stretching from eternity to eternity. Think of it. "Whom He did fore-

know, He also did predestinate . . . whom He did predestinate, them He also called: whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." There it is, a wonderful chain, hanging from side to side of the throne, beginning with foreknowledge and ending with glory. Do you believe it? Are you in the enjoyment of this truth? Receive it on the authority of God's word, and then you will have the enjoyment of it, and power to carry it out.

Now let us just go over these eight points of identification:

- 1st. Crucified together with Christ.
- 2nd. Buried together with Christ.
- 3rd. Quickened together with Christ.
- 4th. Raised together with Christ.
- 5th. Seated together in Christ.
- 6th. Heirs together with Christ.
- 7th. Sufferers together with Christ.
- 8th. Glorified together with Christ.

This last is our sure unfailing prospect, and we were never so near the glory as now. A few more steps through the trackless, waste, wild, howling wilderness, and then the Father's home.

"And how will recompense His smile
The sufferings of this little while."

The Lord give us to live in the enjoyment of the wonderful things which are to be ours throughout eternity, for His name's sake.

THE COMING OF THE LORD

THAT WHICH CHARACTERIZES THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

I PURPOSE to take up a subject which I feel to be deeply important—the coming of the Lord Jesus ; and to take it up, not proving it as a doctrine, but showing that it was originally a substantial part of Christianity itself. The groundwork is Christ's first coming, and His atoning death ; but when we look beyond the foundation, then we see that the coming of the Lord Jesus is not merely a bit of knowledge, but a substantive part of the faith of the church of God, and that on which the moral state of the saints, and indeed of the church of God, depends. You will see, in going through the passages which I will now quote, that it connects itself and is mixed with every part of Christianity, characterizes it, and connects itself with every thought and feeling of the Christian. A person could not read the Scriptures with an unprejudiced mind without seeing it.

I take conversion. People say, What has that to do with the Lord's coming? That is part of what they were converted to, "to wait for God's Son from heaven" This waiting for God's Son

from heaven characterized their conversion: they were converted to serve God surely, but also "to wait for His Son from heaven." (1 Thess. i. 10.)

The Christian's position as to the coming of the Lord is, that he is waiting for Christ to come according to His promise. People say He comes at death. I reply, Do you make death the same as Christ? If this were the case we should have Him coming hundreds of times, whereas we only read of His coming twice. (Heb. ix. 28.) Shall I tell you what will happen when Christ comes? Resurrection! This is quite a different thing from death. The coming of Christ is, for the saint, to be the end of death—exactly the opposite. I believe nobody can find a trace of the thought in Scripture that Christ comes at death. Instead of Christ's coming being death, it is resurrection; we go to Christ at death, it is not Christ who comes to us. Blessed it is "to depart and to be with Christ." "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." But I am to show that this thought of the coming of Christ mixes itself with and characterizes every part of Christian life.

In the first place we have it in *conversion*, as already said. They were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven. I will turn to other passages in support of it, but I will go through Thessalonians first. In the second chapter of the first epistle, at the end, the apostle speaks of what his comfort and joy in service were. He

had been driven away by persecution from the midst of the Thessalonians, and writing to them speaks of His comfort in thinking of them. But how? "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" He cannot speak of his interest in them and joy without bringing in the coming of the Lord Jesus. Again, as regards holiness: "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love . . . to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." (1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.) As to the death of a saint, they were so thoroughly looking for the Lord that if a person died they thought he would not be there ready to go to meet Him. They were wrong in this, and the apostle corrects their mistake. But now people say, when a saint dies, We shall go after him, we shall follow him. Here there is not a word about it. Suppose I were to go and say to a Christian now, who had lost some one dear to him, "Do not be uneasy, Christ will bring him with Him," he would think me wild, or find it utterly unintelligible; and yet that is the way the apostle comforts them. Them also which sleep through Jesus will God bring with Him. (Chap. iv.) He then shows the way He will do it. "We which are alive . . . shall not prevent them which are asleep." "Prevent" is an old word for

anticipate or *go before*. The first thing the Lord will do when He descends is to raise the sleeping saints. He is going to bring them with Him. If they have fallen asleep in Him, their spirits will have been with Him meanwhile; but then they will receive glory, be raised in glory, be like Him, as they had been like the first Adam, and going to meet Him in the air, will be for ever with Him; and when He appears He will bring them with Him, and they will appear with Him in glory. You get it in a general way in the fifth chapter, where he desires their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This hope then is a part of the Christian state in every aspect. Conversion, joy in service, holiness, a believer's death, the goal of blamelessness, all are connected with the coming of the Lord.

Turn now to Matthew xxv. The wise virgins take oil in their vessels, but they all go to sleep and forget that the Bridegroom was coming. But what I have specially to inquire here is, What was the original calling? The statement, clear and positive, is, that they went out to meet the Bridegroom, but while He tarried they *all* slumbered and slept—they all forgot His coming, the wise as well as the foolish. But at midnight the cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" The thing that roused them up from their sleep was the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" The

original object then of the Church was to go to meet Him who came; but even true believers forgot it. And, further, what awakes them from their sleep is their being again called out to meet Him at His coming. Then you get in "the talents" the same thing in regard to service and responsibility. He takes His journey and tells them, "Occupy till I come."

Another very striking fact as to this truth is, it is always presented as a present operative expectation. You will never find the Lord nor the apostles speaking of the Lord's coming, with the supposition that it would be delayed beyond the life of those to whom they spoke. It might be at cock-crowing, or in the morning; but they were to be waiting for God's Son from heaven. In the parables referred to, the virgins who went to sleep were the same virgins as those who awoke up. The servants to whom the talents were entrusted were the servants who rendered an account of them at His return. We know centuries have passed; but He will not allow any thought of delay. "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." Again, what was the cause of the Church's ruin? It was, "My Lord delayeth His coming." It was not saying, "He will not come;" but "He delayeth His coming." Then the servant began to beat the men-servants and

maid-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; and this brings on his judgment. If the bride loves the Bridegroom, she cannot but wish to see Him. Her heart is where He is. When the Church lost this she settled down to enjoyment where she was; she got worldly; she did not care about the Lord's return.

Turn now to Luke xii., and you will find how this waiting for Christ characterizes the Christian, and therewith the serving Him while He is away. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." They were to have their loins girded, their lights burning. Such was the characteristic of a Christian. They were to be as men that waited for their Lord, to open to Him immediately; their affections in order and full profession of Christ, but watching for their Lord's return. It is not having the doctrine of the Lord's coming. The blessing rests on those who are watching, "like men that wait for their Lord." "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." They must be girded, and have their lights bright while He is away, and watch for His return; and *then* He makes them sit down to meat, and girds Himself, and comes forth and serves them. *Now* they must be girded, and watch; our rest is not here. "But," says the Lord, "when I have things all my own way, you shall sit down to meat, and I will gird myself and come forth and serve you. I will make you enjoy

all the best that I have in heaven, and I will minister it to you; only be found watching."

Christ is for ever in grace a servant according to the form He has taken. He is girded now according to John xiii. They would naturally think that if He were gone to heaven in glory there was an end of His service to them; but He tells them, "I am going away; I cannot stay here with you, yet I cannot give you up; but as I cannot remain on earth with you, I must make you fit for me in heaven. 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.'" It is water here, not blood. "He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet." Life-giving conversion, as well as salvation, is fully wrought; but if we pick up dirt in the way, even as to communion and the walk, grace and advocacy are there to wash our feet and have us practically fit for being with God where Christ is gone. Growth there is or ought to be; and as to the unchangeable cleanness of the new man, this is certain. But if I have not been watchful, I shall pick up dirt in my path. I cannot have this in heaven, nor in communion with what is there; and the Lord says in effect, "I am not going to give you up because I am going to God and glory, and so I must have you in a state suitable to that, and washed as you are (though not all, for Judas was there), keep you fit, restoring you when you fall. But you must be watching while I am away."

It is a comfort to me to know that all the virgins woke up in time, and I believe all His saints will wake up before the Lord comes. The difficulty to the heart in looking around is that so many do not receive it. But the true service of the Lord is connected with watching. That is the state to which the blessing and the heavenly feast are attached. Then you find another thing—serving while He is away; and the result of this is, “Of a truth I will make him ruler over all I have.” It is far better to eat, as is said of Israel, of the finest of the wheat, and that in the Father’s house; but if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. With the serving in His absence, I get the ruling; as the heavenly feast with watching. The Lord then goes on to what we had in Matthew, the saying, “My Lord delayeth His coming.”

What the Lord is pressing as to *watching* and *serving* is, “I am coming again. You must be watching for me, as men that wait for their lord.” That was to be their character as Christians. Supposing all the people in this town were actually watching, waiting for the Lord from heaven, not knowing the moment He would come, do you think the whole town would not be changed? A person once said to me that if everybody believed that, the world could not go on at all; and the Christian cannot, in a worldly way.

If people were waiting for the Lord from heaven, the whole tone and character of their life would be changed. I may have the doctrine of Christ's coming, when I am really not looking for Him; but I should not like to be heaping money together when the Lord comes.

Turn now to Philipians iii. Paul was running a race. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." And how does he speak of Christ at the close of that chapter? "Brethren, be followers together of me . . . for our conversation" (our living association) "is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

The Lord's coming affects all the truths of Christianity. Christ is not now on His own throne at all. He is sitting now, according to the word in Heb. x. (and also in Psalm cx.), at God's right hand, sitting on the Father's throne, as He says Himself in the promise in Laodicea. He has settled the question of sin for them at His first coming, and they have no more conscience of sins; they are perfected for ever. And to them that look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation. He is expecting in the heavens till His enemies be made His footstool. Why does He say "His enemies"? Because He is sitting down after He has finished all for His friends; that is, those that believe in

Him. Have all your sins been put away out of God's sight? If not, when will it be done? (1 Peter ii. 24.) That you grow in hatred of them all—all right! But if they are not borne and put away on the cross, when will it be done? Can you get Christ to die again? Can you get anyone else to do it? If it is not done, it will never be done at all. Beloved friends, if the work is not finished, it will never be done at all. But it is done, and therefore He says, the worshippers once purged "have no more conscience of sins. . . For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 2, 14.)

If you look now at Col. iii., you will find the same thing in its full result held out as our hope. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." The first promise He gave the disciples when going away was His coming again. "Do not be troubled, I am going to prepare a place for you. Do not be uneasy, I cannot stay with you, so I must have you up there with me;" and the first thing is, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." It is not one by one by death, but by resurrection for the dead, and change for the living, His actual coming to receive them, raised or changed, to be with Himself where He was gone, and like Himself, that we shall be in glory with Him.

Again, at His departing from His disciples left down here, what was the last they saw of Him?

They saw Him go up before their eyes, and the angel said to them, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner." His coming is wrought into the whole texture of the Christian life.

What is Scripture's last word? "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." In the same way you get it at the beginning, with warning and threatening, Jesus Christ, Faithful Witness, the First-begotten, &c. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel," &c. "I am . . . the bright and morning star." Now I get what these saints who were watching, and those only, see. There is no star to be seen when the sun is risen; they see the morning star while it is yet early dawning, for the night is far spent, the day is at hand. Here He calls Himself "the root and offspring of David; the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." If the bride has got the sense of being the bride of Christ, she must desire to be with the Bridegroom; there is not proper love to Christ unless she wants to be with Him. Abram said of his wife, "She is my sister;" then the Egyptians—the world—took her into their house. I just add that you get here the whole circle of the Church's affections. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come." That is, the Christian who has heard

the word of his salvation joins in the cry. Then those who thirst for some living water are called to come. The saints of the Church can say, though they have not yet the Bridegroom in glory, that they have the living water, and so call, "Let him that is athirst, come," and then address the call universally, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." This they have, though not the Bridegroom. What I find then is, that in the word of God the thoughts and feelings and conduct and doings and affections of Christians are identified with the coming of Christ. Take all these things, and you will find that they are all identified with the coming of the Lord.

Take the first epistle of John, chapter iii., "Behold, what manner of love," &c. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Beloved friends, we are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son." This is what God has purposed for us. When are we to be like Christ in the glory? When He comes. It is not when a person dies, and the spirit goes to be with Christ; for then he is like Christ when Christ was in the grave; and I do not want to be like Christ when Christ was in the grave. But if I die, I shall be like Christ as to that, but this is not what I want, though blessed in itself. I want to be like Him in the

glory. When will that be? When He comes He will change our vile bodies, and fashion them like to His glorious body; so here it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when He shall appear we shall be like Him. (Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 John iii. 2.) Now mark the practical consequences upon the man that has been in his faith brought up to God's purposes. "He that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure." I know I am going to be perfectly like Christ in the glory, therefore I want to be as like Him as possible down here. You find here again what the Holy Scriptures are explicit in teaching, that holiness also is always referred to conformity to Christ *in glory*. I shall have that likeness to Christ in glory, and nothing else is my standard. You will find one passage already quoted, "To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." The perfection of the Christian is to be like Him when He comes. What again I find as to a Christian's body in 1 Cor. xv. is, "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." We have the blessed assurance that accompanies true assured hope of the first resurrection and its results.

We shall be perfectly like Christ when we are raised from the dead. We give an account of ourselves, but it is when we are like the Person

to whom we are to give an account. The full efficacy of His first coming has been lost, and therefore people are not comfortable when thinking of His second coming. But for the saint "Christ is the first-fruits, then they that are Christ's at His coming." Is Christ the first-fruits of the wicked? Surely not. Just as Christ's resurrection was the public testimony of God's approval of Himself and His work, the resurrection of the saints will be a testimony of God's approval of them as in Him. As we find in Luke xx. 35, 36, "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: but are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Could anybody show me a single passage about a general resurrection? There is no such thought in Scripture. You get the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew quoted for it, that the goats and sheep represent the two classes; but He has come in His glory down here. He is not sitting on the great white throne: before this heaven and earth flee away. Here He is come, and sits on His throne. When He does come, and sits there, He gathers all the Gentiles—the nations—to judge them. It is the judgment of the quick or the living. You have three sets of people, not two; and you have nothing of resurrection. You have

sheep, goats, and brethren. (Matt. xxv. 40.) So far from its being a general resurrection, there is no reference to resurrection at all; it is quite a different subject. Further, the only question is, How have they treated His brethren? The ground of judgment does not apply to ninety-nine out of a hundred of those who are to be judged, if it were a general judgment. Those that have had the testimony of the kingdom before He comes to judge the quick will be treated according as they have received God's messengers, but such only are in judgment.

And now the point I return to is, that the coming of the Lord influences and forms the whole life of the Christian. You cannot separate anything in the whole course and ways of the Christian from the coming of the Lord Jesus; and there is but the first coming, and the second coming. He has appeared once in the end of the world, and to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time unto salvation. It is true that He comes and dwells in us; but we speak with Scripture of actual coming. If you take holiness, or service, or conversion, or ministry, or a person who has died, they are all connected with Christ's coming. He warns them to be found watching.

I might quote other passages, but I have quoted enough to show that the Lord's coming is connected with everything in the Christian life.

When we see Him as He is, then, and then only, shall we be like Him, according to God's purpose. And now I only ask, Are you waiting for God's Son from heaven?

His bearing the sins of many is the only ground of hope for any sinner; that is, the finished work which enables us, through faith, to look for Him when sealed by the Holy Ghost. Then, I say, what am I waiting for? I am waiting for God's Son from heaven. Can you say, "I am watching for Christ"? I do not know when He will come. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." I do not ask you, "Do you understand about the coming of the Lord?" To wait for Him was the thing they were converted to. The thing that woke the virgins up was, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" Are you actually waiting for God's Son from heaven? Would you like Him to come to-night? Peter explains the delay. He says His long-suffering is salvation, not willing that any should perish. What would you think if He were to come to-night? Would it just be what your soul was looking for? People think that it would stop the gospel to be waiting for God's Son from heaven. Did the acceptance of God's testimony about the deluge stop the preaching of Noah? Far from hindering, it was what gave edge to all. May the Lord give us to be ready, when He comes—found watching for Him.

“DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.”

COL. iii. 17.

“**W**HATSOEVER ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” (Col. iii. 17.) Here I get the whole course of everyday life. There are constantly difficulties that I find in passing through this world. I say, Ought I to do this thing or that, or not? I am uncertain as to the right course, or I may find great hindrances to doing what I think to be right. Now, if ever I find myself in doubt, my eye is not single; my whole body is not full of light, therefore my eye is not single. God brings me into certain circumstances of difficulty until I detect this. It may be something that I never suspected in myself before which hinders me from seeing aright; but it is something between me and Christ, and until that is put away I shall never have certainty as to my path. Therefore “whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” This will settle nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand. If you are questioning whether you shall do a thing or not, just ask yourself, Am I going to do

it in the name of the Lord Jesus? It will settle it at once.

Thus if a person says, What harm is there in my doing such and such a thing? I ask, Are you going to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus? Perhaps it may be something of which you will answer at once, Of course not. Then it is settled at once. It is the test of the state of the heart. If my eye is single, if the purpose of my heart is all right, I get here what settles every question—it tests my heart. I wanted to know the right path, and it is as simple as A B C. If my heart is not upon Christ, I shall endeavour to do my own will; and this is not God's will. There is the constant uniform rule which clearly judges every path and circumstance. Am I simply doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus?

But what do I find with it? "Giving thanks to God the Father through Him." In another place it is said, "In everything give thanks." (1 Thess. v. 18.) Where my heart can take Christ with me, my mind is on God, and I can say, "He is with me," even if it is tribulation. I have got the path of God, I have got Christ with me in my path, and I would rather be there than in what is apparently the fairest and pleasantest thing in the world. As it is said in Psalm lxxxiv., "In whose heart are the ways of them."

This chapter (Col. iii.) begins with the great truth, that we are dead and risen with Christ—the

judgment of the old man absolutely and completely, and our reckoning it practically to be dead. People have talked about dying to the flesh, and of its being a slow death, &c., which is all nonsense. It is a simple fact that is true already; and if I died with Christ, I shall live with Him. It is the power of this that works in my soul. The root of all Paul's doctrine is, that we have been crucified with Him (Rom. vi. 6; Gal. ii. 20), and have died with Him (Rom. vi. 8); and it is not now we who live, but Christ that lives in us. Then Christ becomes the object of this life. Having laid that ground—that the old man is put off and the new man put on (Col. iii. 9, 10), which is Christ—he draws the consequence of the blessing in which we stand, and the fruits which spring from Him; and then there is this simple but blessed rule for him that is in earnest—to do nothing but what can be done in the name of the Lord Jesus.

One great thing here practically put before us is this—Christ is all. He is in all; but this is the great thing we have to look to, Is He practically all? Can you honestly say, Though a poor weak creature, notwithstanding that, I am not conscious of having a single other object in the world but Christ? You find many difficulties, you are not watchful enough, your faith is feeble, you know your short-comings; but can you, notwithstanding all this, honestly say, I have no object in the world but Christ?

First, the root of all is Christ as the life; then we pass over to the outward conduct in the man's walk. And let me remark, that while a person may be walking outwardly uprightly and blamelessly, it may be very feebly as a Christian, and without spirituality. You will find many a true Christian who has Christ as his life, and nothing to reproach him with as to his walk, and yet is not spiritually-minded. (Rom. viii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 1.) You talk to him about Christ, there is nothing that answers. There is, between the life that is at the bottom and the blamelessness that is at the top, between him and Christ, a whole host of affections and objects that are not Christ at all. How much of the day, or of the practice of your soul, is filled up with Christ? How far is He the one object of your heart? When you come to pray to God, do you never get to a point where you shut the door against Him? where there is some reserve, some single thing in your heart, that you keep back from Him? If we pray for blessing up to a certain point only, there is reserve; Christ is *not* all practically to us.

O MAY Thy Spirit guide our souls,
And mould them to Thy will,
That from Thy paths we ne'er may stray,
But keep Thy precepts still !

That to the Saviour's stature full
We nearer still may rise,
And all we think, and all we do,
Be pleasing in Thine eyes.

WHAT IS THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

AMONGST the many devices employed by Satan to discourage souls, and lead them astray, is that of beguiling them into the thought that they have committed the unpardonable sin. It is sad indeed to see the distress into which some are plunged through listening to this suggestion of the wicked one. But, before proceeding to say a few words in the endeavour to help those who may be in this painful condition, we would earnestly remind them of Satan's real character, as declared by the Lord Jesus Christ: "He was a *murderer* from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John viii. 44.)

Now, as long as men are careless and worldly, living without God, Satan leaves them undisturbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of sin; but the moment the soul becomes awakened to its responsibility to God, and the cry of the heart has gone forth, "What must I do to be saved?" than he does his utmost to hinder them from coming to Christ, to blind them to the abounding grace of God, and to make them believe that they are too sinful to be saved.

In order to understand the passage which treats of the unpardonable sin, we would invite our readers to carefully consider the whole context. Christ had been casting out unclean spirits, when "the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils. And He called them unto Him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." (Mark iii. 22-30.)

Any careful reader of the foregoing passage may see at a glance what the unpardonable sin is. It is *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*. And in what did the blasphemy consist? We are distinctly told, in verse 30, that it was "*because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.*" That is, these wicked scribes said that the Holy Ghost

was the devil. Horrible wickedness! And does not your soul, beloved reader—you who may be sorely troubled about this sin—revolt at the very suggestion of such a thing? How, then, can you have committed it? Those wicked men saw the work of the Holy Ghost before their very eyes, and yet, in their blindness and wickedness, ascribed it to Satan, saying, “He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils.” But did *you* ever see the Lord cast out devils, and say of Him, “He hath an unclean spirit”? Surely you would never allow the thought that He wrought miracles by the power of Satan, or that the Holy Ghost was Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Again we ask you, then, How can *you* have committed the unpardonable sin? Impossible! It is simply Satan’s lie to make and keep you miserable. Foolish soul, listen to him no longer; give him no place; resist him, and he will flee from you. (Eph. iv. 27; James iv. 7.)

But if Satan find that you are beginning to see through, and to escape from his snare, he will very probably change his tactics, and suggest, as he does to some, that if you have not blasphemed the Holy Ghost you have at least sinned against Him. But what saith the Scripture? We nowhere read that *sin* against the Holy Ghost is not forgiven; or who could be saved? For is not all sin against Him, in that the Holy Ghost is God? And all sin is against God; and God forgives all

manner of sins and iniquities. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the alone exception. Of every one that believeth He says, even the God that *cannot lie* (1 Titus i. 2), "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.) Again, "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) And again, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 8.)

Matthew xii. 31, 32 might still present a difficulty to some troubled soul. We read, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Another and more exact translation of this passage is as follows: "For this reason I say unto you, Every sin and injurious speaking shall be forgiven to men, but speaking injuriously of the Spirit shall not be forgiven to men. And whosoever shall have spoken a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming one."

We see, then, from this, that *speaking injuriously*

of and *speaking against* the Holy Ghost are the same as *blaspheming against* Him, which we have already sought to explain.

Some tried one, however, may say, "But, oh, I feel I've *grieved* the Spirit so often!" Well, that of course is wrong. It is *sin*, but not blasphemy. Where does God say that grieving the Holy Spirit is an unpardonable offence? Can Satan quote or misquote a scripture for that? What does the word of God say? "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.) Now God gives the Holy Spirit to those that *believe*. "After that ye [or having] believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. i. 13.) The Holy Spirit *takes up His abode* in the body of the believer. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (1 Cor. vi. 19.) And He is the *abiding* Comforter. (John xiv. 16.) He does not come and go; but once He dwells in the believer, He remains with him. We are sealed *unto the day of redemption*. If we sin, we *grieve* the Spirit, but He does not leave us. It does not say we are sealed until we sin, or even until we die, and our bodies go to corruption, but until *the day of redemption*. If we should die (or fall asleep), He ceases to dwell in us—on the earth, of course—and our bodies do go to corruption. But what the Scripture says (and it is all-important to keep close to it) is, "Whereby ye are sealed unto [or

for] the day of redemption;" that is, the coming of the Lord. (Rom. viii. 23; Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

David as a godly Jew could rightly pray, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." (Ps. li. 11.) But since the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, at the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.), once He makes the believer's body His abode, he is sealed till the day of redemption. It is on the ground of this very truth that we are exhorted not to grieve Him. What can be more miserable than to live in a house with a person who is grieved with your ways, and who is constantly showing his disapproval of them. And how unhappy the state of a Christian who is grieving the Spirit by lax and unholy walk and ways. He is the *Holy* Spirit, and is grieved by all *unholiness*. Knowing, then, that He dwells in us, how careful, watchful, and prayerful this should make us, that we should not grieve Him, but that rather we should be filled with the Spirit (Eph. v. 18), have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. v. 5), and be filled too with all joy and peace in believing. (Rom. xv. 13.)

If we grieve the Holy Spirit of God, then, He does *not* leave us, but at once makes us sensible of His grief, and our failure and sin. Communion is interrupted and joy lost, to be restored only through the advocacy of Christ and the confession of sins. (1 John ii. 1, i. 9.) But our salvation, thanks be to the God of all grace, is *eternal*. (Heb.

v. 9.) And when a soul is sealed, it is on the ground of the infinite worth of the finished work of Christ, the value of which ever abides in its lasting efficacy before God. Hence we are sealed for the day of redemption.

There is one more passage which we may connect with our subject, as it sometimes troubles souls. It is in 1 John v. 16, 17, and speaks of a sin which brings down the chastisement of God upon the offender. God deals in *government* as well as in grace, and one of His children may so commit himself that, though the subject of grace, he may be taken away from the world in the government of God.

In 1 Cor. xi. 28-32 we have a confirmation of this. Christians at the Lord's table were committing grievous sin, and partaking of the supper *unworthily*. Hence they were eating and drinking judgment to themselves. The hand of God was heavy upon them in consequence. "For this cause," says the apostle, "many are weak and sickly among you, and *many sleep*. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should *not be condemned with the world*."

And now, dear reader, if you are one that hitherto has been harassed and perplexed by the onslaught and fiery darts of the wicked one, and thinking that your case is hopeless, we would earnestly entreat you to heed no longer the lie of

the arch-enemy of your soul, who belies the character of God, but rest in child-like simplicity of faith upon *the sure word of God*. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) Listen to the word of Christ, in one of the very passages that has been troubling you, "Wherefore I say unto you, *All manner of sin and blasphemy* shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." (Matt. xii. 31.) Mark it once again, the *only* exception is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and this you *have not* committed. The false accusation comes from the father of lies. Heed him not. God has said, "*Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*"

1 CORINTHIANS X. 13.

WHEN Satan appears
To stop up our path
And fill us with fears,
We triumph by faith ;
He cannot take from us,
Though oft he has tried,
The heart-cheering promise,—
The LORD will provide.
He tells us we're weak,
Our hope is in vain,
The good that we seek
We ne'er shall obtain ;
But when such suggestions
Our spirits have tried,
This answers all questions,—
The Lord will provide.

THE FOUR JUDGMENTS.

NOTES OF A LECTURE.

THE subject of the four judgments is taken up with a desire to help those who have been lately converted, and who have confused thoughts about judgment. Some think that all are going to be judged together at the end of the world, but we learn from God's word that there are four distinct judgments; and this is not a theory of any particular school of theology, but the teaching of the Holy Ghost in the word of God.

The first judgment is passed. Christ bore it on the cross. It is most blessed to see that. He "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.) He there "suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God," who now justifies every one that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Peter iii. 18; Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. iii. 26.)

In John v. 24 we have a positive statement as to the fact that we shall not come into judgment. The word translated "judgment" in verse 22 is exactly the same as that rendered "condemnation" in verse 24, and "damnation" in verse 29. The changes were made by the translators to avoid repetition; but the word in each case should be *judgment*.

Verse 24. This is a golden chain, composed of five golden links.

"Heareth my word." Have you heard it? It makes dead souls live.

"Believeth on Him that sent me." Do you believe on Him that sent Christ?

"Hath everlasting life." Have you got everlasting life? Perhaps you say, "I don't know; I should like to know." "Do you believe Him that sent Christ?" "Thank God, I do." "Then you have everlasting life." It is a present thing; and as to the future, do not be afraid.

"Shall not come into judgment." Christ says so, and He never contradicts Himself.

"Is passed from death unto life." God will not bring two persons into judgment for the same thing. Christ has borne the judgment. It is a thing of the past, behind the Christian's back, borne 1800 years ago; and there is but a step between him and the glory.

There are five more links in Rom. viii. 29, 30. "Whom He did *foreknow*, He also did *predestinate* . . . Whom He did *predestinate*, them He also *called*: and whom He called, them He also *justified*: and whom He justified, them He also *glorified*." When we see Him we shall be instantly transformed for all eternity into His own blessed likeness. (1 John iii. 2.) Imagine, when we are raised in glory, Christ putting us before the judgment-seat to see if we are fit to be in glory. If Christians saw how they were going to be raised they would never think of being judged, because they will be raised in glory. (1 Cor. xv. 42-57.)

We will now turn to the second judgment. In Romans xiv. 10 it is declared that all shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Who are all? Every one, saved or unsaved, in the world. It does not say that all will stand there at the same time, or for the same purpose. As to believers, the question of everlasting life is settled for eternity; the question of rewards will be settled before the judgment-seat of Christ. (2 Cor. v. 10.) Believers will stand there first, before Christ's appearing; but unbelievers at the great white throne, after the millennium, and just before the end of the world. If the thought of standing before the judgment-seat terrifies you, it shows that you are not established in the grace of God, and the sooner you get good ground under your feet the better. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord. (Ps. cxliii. 2.) He has entered into judgment with our Substitute. Is He free from sins? So are we. Is He free from death? So are we. Is He free from judgment? So are we. When before the judgment-seat to have your works judged, before whom will you stand? Him who is your life, your righteousness, your peace.*

In 1 Cor. iii. 8-17 it is a question of reward. Marvellous honour! Deep responsibility! When the apostle preached Christ he laid the foundation, and the different characters of service are put in the order of their preciousness in God's sight.

* "We have to remember that at our appearing before the judgment-seat we are *already glorified*." (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.)

Gold, silver, and precious stones all stand fire, but the three others will burn—none of them stand fire. There may be a beautiful building, a fine stack of hay, a great stack of stubble, but they will all burn up. Man is manifested already. The works will be made manifest; the day will not declare him, but his work. It will be revealed by fire, by judgment of a searching character.

We have first (*v. 14*) a good man and good works, and there is a reward. Eternal life, forgiveness, salvation, righteousness, glory, the Holy Ghost, are all gifts. You will have glory with Christ as sure as He has it; that is no reward. But look to your work. Are you building according to the pattern in the Bible, or according to your own thoughts? A builder might build a most beautiful house, but if not guided by the architect's plan it would be condemned. You may get the praise of men, but if you are not building according to the divine Architect's plan your work will be condemned. A good man does good work, and he gets a reward.

Next (*v. 15*) we get a good man and bad work, and it is all burned up. He may have made a great show—erected a large building, a large stack of hay, a larger stack of stubble; he is a good man, but has worked according to his own thoughts. Get your plans from the divine Architect, and take care to let no man come between your Master and yourself. This is a good man, but his work all goes, yet the man himself is saved out of the

very fire that consumes the whole of his work. See to it that you are working according to the wonderful ways of God laid down by the Holy Ghost in Scripture. Suppose salvation was by works, this man must go to the lake of fire; for he has not a shred of good works left; but away he goes to glory through sovereign grace. We do not work for salvation, but from love to our Master. Salvation is by grace, not by works.

Rev. xxii. 12: "My reward is with me." Again we see that the second judgment is no question of life—that is a settled thing—but of rewards.

1 Cor. vi. 1–3. There is a good deal of misconception as to this scripture. It simply means that the saints of God were going to law before the unjust instead of before the Church of God, and they were told to let the saints arbitrate. Why? Because the saints are going to judge the world. It is a common idea in Christendom that the saints are going to be judged with the world, but they will be there as judges; quite a different thing. What a wonderful honour. It is most solemn. Think of Christ coming to take His saints to glory, and coming back with us to judge the world—dear ones, perhaps, who are part and parcel of ourselves, but who are finding their joy here. All saved people in this dispensation are saints. In Jude 14, 15 we find that Christ is coming back with ten thousands of His saints. How could He come with them if He had not fetched them first? He will fetch us first, then there will be the great tribulation. Then,

when we have been with Him in the Father's house for a period of time, He is coming back, and we are going to be associated with Him in the judgment of the world.

The third judgment is at the introduction of the millennium. *Millennium* is a Latin word, and means a thousand years. In Rev. xx. "thousand years" occurs six times. The Lord is coming to fetch His people; then a thousand years will roll between His coming with His people to reign over the earth and the end of the world.

Joel iii. 2, 9-14; Matt. xxv. 31-46. Here they are all living people. Nations always mean *living* people. This is the judgment of the living, when Christ comes back with us.

Let me ask you, Where do you get the doctrine of a general resurrection and general judgment in Scripture? How could this be a general judgment when they are all living people, and there is no resurrection? It is not the judgment of the dead, but of the living.

Three classes are mentioned—"sheep," "goats," and "my brethren." The sheep are saved Gentiles; the goats, those who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ's own Jewish brethren, and their message. It is not the great white throne. When that is set up there is no mention of Christ's coming, because He has been there reigning over the earth a thousand years already. Christ might come to-night and take His own blood-bought people to glory; and you who are unsaved might

live through the tribulation, and be here to be judged when Christ comes with His saints. (2 Thess. i. 7-10.)

We have looked at three sets of scriptures—the first proving that one judgment is past, the second showing that believers will not come into judgment, and the third that, instead of being judged with the world, they are going to judge the world.

Rev. xx. 11-15. The fourth and last judgment is of the dead. The thousand years will have rolled their course, the millennium will be over, the great white throne will be set up. There will be nothing there but judgment and condemnation. All who stand there will be those who are dead in trespasses and sins—the ungodly—and they will be judged according to their works; and every one will leave the great white throne to go to the lake of fire.

What effect ought this to have on us? May God use it to make us see what manner of people we ought to be! We were never so near to Christ's second coming as we are to-day. May it give a colour to our work and ways!

Dear unsaved one, whilst He is waiting for us, and we are waiting for Him, look to Him, come to Him, receive Him by faith, and you will be saved; you will have rest, and will be a child of God, and ready to go to Him; or if Christ comes first you will be ready to meet Him, and to go to be with Him for ever, and if left in this poor world a little longer it will be to live and labour for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

“NOT UNDER THE LAW.”

ROMANS vii.

IN this chapter the apostle first of all establishes the great principle that the believer is “*dead to the law.*” Then he describes the workings of a quickened soul, which, knowing that the “*law is spiritual,*” still feels “*under the law,*” and is therefore compelled to exclaim, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Now, dear friends, let me ask you, “Am *I*, or is *my state*, the object of faith?” No; surely not. Faith never makes what is in my heart its object, but God’s revelation of Himself in *grace*. If we stop half way, and see nothing but the *law*, it will just discover to us our condemnation, and prove us to be “without strength.” If God allows us to know enough of the *law*, and of the *experience* described in this chapter, to show us what is our true state, that is just where *grace* meets us.

It is not that the conflict here spoken of will not continue; *grace* could not be known at all where conflict is not known (Gal. v. 17); the unconverted only are without it; but that which will not continue when *grace* is fully known, is that bitterness of spirit in which, while the con-

flict is going on, the person judges of himself, seeing the law to be "spiritual," but himself "carnal, sold under sin." The *love of God* is not realized as his own, and therefore this causes him to cry out, "*O wretched man that I am!*"

It is quite clear that while there is this *experience* felt, there is not simple faith in God's *grace*—there is not a clear view of what God is towards me in Christ; for when the soul apprehends that—when the faculties of the new man are exercised on their proper object, there is perfect rest. And though there is still conflict, yet the soul is at peace—the battle is not ours, but the Lord's.

But how am I to know what is God's mind towards me? Is it by judging of it from what I find in myself? Surely not! Supposing that I even found good in myself, if I expected God to look at me on that account, would that be *grace*? There may be a measure of truth in this kind of reasoning; for if there be life in my soul, fruit will be apparent; but that is not to give me peace any more than the evil that is in me is to hinder my having peace. That, too, is true reasoning where the apostle says, "The law is spiritual; but I am carnal. . . O wretched man that I am!" but there is nothing of *grace* in it.

But does the certainty of *grace* take us out of all trouble? No; I am not at all denying the fact that there is, and, while we are in a sinful

body, that there ever must be, conflict going on between the flesh and the Spirit. But then it is a very different thing to have this conflict going on in the conscious certainty that God is *for me*, because I am "*under grace*," to having it in the fear that He is *against me*, because I am "*under law*."

If I see evil in myself (and this I always shall whilst here, in the root, even if it be not manifested in its fruit), and if I think that God will be *against me* because of it, I shall have no strength for conflict, but be utterly cast down—groaning as to my acceptance. But if certain that God is *for me*, the consciousness of this will give me courage and victory; nay, even enable me to say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." In the confidence of the *love* and *grace* of God, I can ask Him to search out *all* my evil, what I otherwise dare not do, lest it should overwhelm me with despair. God is *for me*, *against* my own evil.

The apostle speaks (chap. viii.) of the "carnal mind" being "enmity against God;" but then God, in the gift of Jesus, has brought out this blessed truth, that when man was at *enmity* against God, God was *love* towards man—our *enmity* was met by His *love*. The triumph of *grace* is seen in this, that when *man's enmity* had

cast out Jesus from the earth, *God's love* brought in salvation by that very act—came in to atone for the sin of those who had rejected Him. In the view of the fullest development of *man's sin*, faith sees the fullest manifestation of *God's grace*. Where does faith see the greatest depth of man's sin and hatred of God? IN THE CROSS; and at the same glance it sees the greatest extent of God's triumphant love and mercy to man. The spear of the soldier which pierced the side of Jesus only brought out that which spoke of love and mercy.

The apostle then goes on to show that those once at enmity with God, are now become His heirs; and that the knowledge of this is founded on the knowledge of *grace*—"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again," &c. *Grace* first makes us children of God, and then gives us the knowledge of it, and that we are heirs of God.

But what is the extent of this *grace* towards us? It has given us the same portion that the Lord Jesus has. We are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." It is not only certain that *grace* has visited us, has found us when we were "in our sins," but it is also certain that it has set us where Christ is—that we are identified with the Lord Jesus in all but His essential glory as God. The soul is placed thus in the consciousness of God's perfect love, and therefore, as it is said in chapter v., "we joy in God."

I have got away from *grace*, if I have the

slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, "I am unhappy, because I am not what I should like to be." But, dear friends, that is not the question; the real question is, whether God is what we should like Him to be—whether Jesus is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we are—of what we find in ourselves, has any other effect than, while it humbles us, to increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure *grace*. The immediate effect of such consciousness should be to make our hearts reach out to God and to His *grace* as abounding over it all.

It is better to be thinking of what God is, than of what we are. This looking at ourselves, at the bottom, is really pride—a want of the thorough consciousness that we are *good for nothing*. Till we see this we never look quite away from *self* to *God*. Sometimes, perhaps, the *looking at our evil* may be a partial instrument in teaching us it; but still, even that is not all that is needed. In looking to Christ it is our privilege to forget ourselves. True humility does not so much consist in thinking badly of ourselves, as in *not thinking of ourselves at all*. I am too bad to be worth thinking about; what I want is to forget myself and to look at God, who is indeed worth *all* my thoughts. Is there need of being humbled about ourselves? We may be quite sure that will do it.

Beloved, if we can say (as in chapter vii.) that "in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing," we have thought quite long enough about ourselves; let us then think about Him who thought about us with "thoughts of good, and not of evil," long before we had thought of ourselves at all. Let us see what His thoughts of *grace* about us are, and take up the words of faith, "*If God be for us, who can be against us?*"

O LORD, Thy love's unbounded—

So sweet, so full, so free—

My soul is all transported,

Whene'er I think on Thee!

Yet, Lord, alas! what weakness

Within myself I find,

No infant's changing pleasure

Is like my wandering mind.

And yet Thy love's unchanging,

And doth recall my heart

To joy in all its brightness,

The peace its beams impart.

Yet sure, if in Thy presence,

My soul still constant were,

Mine eye would, more familiar,

Its brighter glories bear.

And thus Thy deep perfections

Much better should I know,

And with adoring fervour

In this Thy nature grow.

Still sweet 'tis to discover,

If clouds have dimmed my sight,

When passed, Eternal Lover,

Towards me, as e'er, Thou'rt bright.

THE PEACE OF GOD.

PHIL. iv. 7.

PEACE is our portion. There is a "counsel of peace" (Zech. vi. 13) which belongs to us, an assured peace; peace indeed in the midst of present trouble, but still God's peace. If it were not God's peace, it would be good for nothing. I may, it is true, have my spirit much disturbed, and know trial of heart, but still I have a title to perfect peace amidst it all—not only peace with God, but peace concerning every circumstance, because God is "*for us*" in it all.

Had not man been in rebellion against God, there would have been no need for "the counsel of peace." Adam in paradise needed it not. But man has rebelled, and, though its modifications may be various, rebellion against God is still the characteristic of the unconverted heart. Such was his rebellion, that peace between man and God seemed impossible. But now, wondrous grace! we see that there is not only peace, but a "*counsel of peace*"—thoughts of God concerning peace, thoughts which Jesus alone could meet—"Lo, I come to *do thy will*, O God." (Heb. x. 9.)

Supposing God had made peace with Adam, the peace could not have lasted; the enmity in the heart of man, or that produced by the power

of circumstances thwarting his will, would very soon have broken it again. Look at Israel. They were placed in outward peace with God, owned as His people, favoured in every way, and yet what was the result? continual murmuring on their part, constant rebellion. As to moral peace with God, they had scarcely undertaken to keep His law, than they set up a golden calf to worship, and thus failed directly. And it would always be the same. It must be so; for the very will of man is altogether wrong. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. viii. 7.)

But now "the counsel of peace" is between God and Jesus, instead of man, and hence security. It is not merely peace, but "*the counsel of peace.*" The word "counsel" implies deliberate purpose. What solidity must there be in that peace which God had a "counsel" about, and all the engagements of which the mind of Jesus fully entered into and accomplished.

I have said that peace is our proper portion as the children of God—peace both as to sin, and as to circumstances. Now, it is true that the latter we have not outwardly yet; but God is taking up all that concerns us, and has taken upon Himself to make "all things work together" for our good; and the knowledge of this gives peace (if we will use our privilege) in all circumstances, be they ever those of trial, perplexity, and sorrow. Was

it not so with Jesus? Who can be tried so as He? "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Yet He had always peace. And so might we. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: *because* he trusteth in thee." (Heb. xii. 3; Isa. xxvi. 3.)

But then it is most important to see that "the counsel of peace" is *entirely* between God and Jesus. The moment we begin to rest our peace on anything in ourselves, we lose it. And this is why so many saints have not *settled* peace. Nothing can be lasting that is not built on God alone. How can you have settled peace? Only by having it in God's own way. By not resting it on any thing, even the Spirit's work, within yourselves, but on what Christ has done *entirely without* you. Then you will know peace, conscious unworthiness, but yet peace. In Christ alone God finds that in which He can rest, and so is it with His saints. The more you see the extent and nature of the evil that is within, as well as that without and around, the more you will find that what Jesus is, and what Jesus did, is the only ground at all on which you can rest.

Our peace is established in what He did, and "the counsel of peace" is "between them both." Jesus has accomplished that which God purposed towards us.

In order to this, it was needful that He should "bear our sins;" and this He did as the "sin-offering." "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

In the sacrifices, when the offerer laid his hand upon the head of the victim, there was in that act the complete identification of himself with the victim. Now there are two great characters in the sacrifice of Christ—the one that of the *burnt-offering*; the other, that of the *sin-offering*. We lay our hands on Him as the "burnt-offering," thus identifying ourselves with Him. "Accepted in the Beloved," all His perfectness, all His "sweet savour" unto God, is ours. But then, as to the "sin-offering," it is just the reverse; the hand laid upon the victim, it became identified with my sins, charged with my guilt.

Well, beloved, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus had this double character. He has completely accomplished the purpose of God, all that which was in "the counsel of peace." This "counsel of peace" was not between me and God, though I have, as the fruit of it, the enjoyment of the peace. I had not to do with it in any sense; it was "*between them both*." All is done, and Jesus, both the accomplisher and the accomplishment, has sat down, in proof that all is finished, on the throne of God. (Heb. x. 12-14.)

But, then, in order that we may have the enjoy-

ment of these things, He is acting in another way as priest. Having the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, we consequently see many things in ourselves contrary to Him—many things that would hinder fellowship with God. Now here it is that the present ministry of Christ comes in. We need His priesthood in order to maintain our communion with God; we need Him in our daily sins, as it is said, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We need the presence of perfect righteousness on our behalf before God, and He has ever before His eyes, and that "*for us*," the accomplisher of "the counsel of peace"—"*Jesus Christ the righteous*."

Here then is "the counsel of peace" which was purposed between God and Jesus. Here, and here only, have we peace. If ever our souls have any idea of rest except in that which is the perfect rest of God, if ever we are looking for peace anywhere else, be it where it may, we have got out of God's way of accomplishing peace, off the ground of this "counsel of peace." He has not called us into "the counsel;" it is that which is entirely independent of ourselves—"between them both"—accomplished and everlastingly sure. Nothing can ever touch it. God has publicly owned His acceptance of Christ's work by seating Him at His own right hand. The Holy Ghost is sent to witness to us that Jesus is now "on the

throne of God," having "*by one offering perfected for ever* them that are sanctified."

We may have a great deal of trial (we know we shall)—trial from circumstances around, trial from within, exercise of conscience and the like; but still we have the perfect certainty of God's favour; "and if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans viii. 31.) With Paul we may reckon, because of His having given Jesus for us, along with Jesus upon everything. This is the true way to reckon upon His kindness. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. iv. 6, 7.) Observe, he says, "*the peace of God.*" Again, the word is, "Be careful for nothing." If one single thing were excepted, God would not be God. Well, if exercised and troubled in spirit, tempted to be "careful," let us go to God about it. Our wishes may possibly be foolish wishes, still let us go and present them to God; if they are so, we shall very soon be ashamed of them.

LORD, while our souls in faith repose
Upon Thy precious blood,
Peace like an even river flows,
And mercy, like a flood.

THE TWO RESURRECTIONS.

A BETTER RESURRECTION.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE.

THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

THE CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION.

Act xi. 35 ; Luke xiv. 14 ; John v. 29 ; Rev. xx. 5 ; Luke xx. 36.

THE resurrection of the saints at the coming of the Lord is distinct from the resurrection of the wicked ; and the coming of the Lord is itself the hope of the Church.

The idea that Christians generally have, is that of an indiscriminate resurrection ; the righteous and wicked being, as it is supposed, to be raised at the same moment, and that moment absolutely at the end of time—after the millennium—at the close of the entire course of God's dealings with this earth on which we dwell. This was the idea which Martha, the sister of Lazarus, had. Desolate and sorrowful through the loss of her brother, our Lord, to comfort her heart, said to her, " Thy brother shall rise again." What was her reply ? " I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Martha's faith as to the resurrection was exactly that of the bulk of professing Christians now ; true, doubtless, as far as it goes, but stopping far short of the

precious fulness of truth revealed in the word of God respecting it. There is indeed to be a resurrection ; and that resurrection is to be at the last day. But "the day of judgment," "the day of the Lord," and, I would add, "the last day," each expresses, not a literal, actual day of twenty-four hours, but a lengthened period. The "last day" begins before the "day of judgment"—"the day of the Lord"—but it seems to us to embrace the whole period from the coming of Christ to receive His saints, to the time when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God the Father ; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. The resurrection at the last day embraces thus the resurrection both of the righteous and the wicked ; but this does not in any wise prove that they are both at the same moment ; and we shall see just now from the plain testimony of Scripture that they are not only distinguished from each other, but separated by an interval of a thousand years.

The first passage to which I would refer you is Luke xiv. 14, which simply distinguishes these two resurrections as to their character. Our Lord having exhorted those with whom He was sitting at table, when they made a feast, to call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, proceeds to enforce the exhortation thus : "And thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee : for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of

the just." Would any one, not previously possessed with the prevailing notion, gather the impression from this passage that the resurrection of the just and that of the wicked was an indiscriminate event? Would not the natural impression of the passage on any unprejudiced mind be, that the resurrection of the just is an event perfectly distinct?—"thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

In Phil. iii. 10, 11 the apostle represents it as his great endeavour, his arduous, his continual endeavour, to know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, "if by any means," says he, "I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." But if the only resurrection be an indiscriminate resurrection both of righteous and wicked, a simple act of God's power, apart from all questions of spiritual condition and character, how could it be Paul's solicitude "*by any means*" to "*attain* unto the resurrection of the dead"?

In John v. 28, 29 we have another important passage, in which our blessed Lord distinguishes between the resurrection of the righteous and that of the wicked. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the

resurrection of damnation." Here our Lord speaks of two resurrections, distinguishing them by the sources from whence they respectively flow, and by which they are thus respectively characterized; life in the one case, judgment in the other. "The resurrection of life" and "the resurrection of judgment." "Yes," you may perhaps be saying; "but both are in one hour." I anticipated this objection when I referred to the passage; and it is as much to meet this objection that I ask your attention to the passage, as to show you the positive proof it contains of the doctrine we are considering. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." People infer from this that all rise together. And this would be a just inference, if the word "hour" meant a literal period of sixty minutes. But if you look back to verse 25 of this very chapter, you will see that the word is used in quite another sense. Jesus had been speaking of the quickening of dead souls, how he that hears and believes has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment (or condemnation), but is passed from death unto life. He then says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." *The hour is coming, and now is.* It had commenced when our Lord spake. There is an "hour" in which the Son of

God is quickening dead souls—the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. How long has this “hour” lasted? It had begun when Jesus spake thus; it has not terminated yet! Already do we know this “hour” of quickening *dead souls* to be of more than eighteen hundred years’ continuance. For anything, therefore, that the word “hour” proves to the contrary, the “hour” in which Christ will quicken *dead bodies* might last as long as this present “hour” in which He is quickening *dead souls*. The passage before us does not determine how long the period is. It teaches plainly that there is a “resurrection of life,” and a “resurrection of judgment.” There is an “hour” coming, *in the which* both these will be accomplished; and we read, in the immediate context of this passage, of another “hour” which has unquestionably lasted for nearly two thousand years. What the period actually is that intervenes between these two resurrections we have to learn elsewhere in Scripture; and in another passage we are plainly told that it is one thousand years.

It is in Revelation xx. that we learn this. We find there that the duration of the “hour” in the which these two resurrections take place is one thousand years. The resurrection of life is at the commencement, the resurrection of judgment is at the close.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven,

having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." People say that this is figurative language; and it is granted that it is so, at once. No doubt the key of the bottomless pit, and the great chain in the angel's hand, and the binding of Satan, and the setting of a seal upon him, are all figures. But what are they figures of? Are they expressions without meaning because they are figurative? Or is the meaning necessarily uncertain and indefinite? What do they all teach us, but that Satan will be forcibly restrained, and that in his own abyss, for a thousand years? *So restrained* that he shall deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years are fulfilled. What difficulty is there in understanding the force and meaning of figures like these?

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the

rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." Observe these last words, my brethren: "THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION." There may have been figures employed in the passage; no one questions it. But when the Holy Ghost is pleased to *interpret* the figurative language He has employed—*when He is pleased to tell us what it means*—are we to evade the force of all He says, by making His interpretation figurative also? "This is the first resurrection," is the Holy Ghost's explanation of the figures or symbols by which it had been set forth. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Nothing can be more evident than what the simple, definite impression of this language would be on any mind not prepossessed with thoughts of another character. The way in which it is commonly sought to evade the plain, obvious meaning of the passage is by explaining it thus: that the resurrection of the martyrs, which John beheld, denotes a revival of the principles for which they suffered; that, having suffered death for Christian principles, the revival, and universal spread and ascendancy of these principles, is set forth by the symbol of those who had been beheaded living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. Such is the popular interpreta-

tion of this passage. But it breaks down at every point. Those who have been beheaded are those who reign. Are they *principles* or *persons* that have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God? Then again, supposing that the reign of principles might be set forth by the resurrection and reign of those who had been martyrs for them, how are we to account for their priesthood? "They shall be priests of God and of Christ." As one has said, in substance, somewhere, "You may speak of the *reign* of principles; but can you make principles into *priests* as well?" Then again, "on such the second death hath no power." What is the second death? It is explained in verse 14 to be "the lake of fire." And could there be any question of the second death, the lake of fire, having power over Christian principles? The lake of fire is for the punishment of evil persons; and it is one element in the blessedness of those who have part in the first resurrection that "on such the second death hath no power." Then further, the first resurrection is so linked in this chapter with what all admit to be a literal resurrection of dead bodies at the end of the thousand years, that you cannot explain away the one without explaining away the other. When John has witnessed the vision in verse 4, which is explained to him in verse 5 to be "the first resurrection," we are told of certain who have no part in it; "but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand

years were finished." In the verses which ensue we have a rapid glance at the events which occur when the thousand years are expired—Satan is loosed—the nations are again deceived—fire comes down from God out of heaven and destroys them—the devil who had deceived them is cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are (having been cast there alive a thousand years before, see chapter xix. 20); and then what follows? "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Is this figurative too, my brethren? If so, where is there Scripture authority for the doctrine of the resurrection at all? And if this be not figurative, why should the account of "the first resurrection" at the beginning of the chapter be set aside as figurative? If it be allowed, which it must be, that the resurrection of the wicked dead at the close of the chapter is a literal, actual resurrection of dead bodies, on what principle can it be maintained that the first resurrection at the beginning of the chapter is figurative, and denotes the revival of dead or dying principles? What says

the Holy Spirit? "This is the first resurrection."
"But the rest of the dead lived not again," &c.
The rest of the dead *what?*—*principles?*—or
persons? Surely the "rest" must bear some
relation to those from whom they are distinguished.
If it be a revival of principles which constitutes
the first resurrection, "the rest of the dead who
live not again till the thousand years are finished"
must be principles also. And if it shocks you to
trifle thus with God's holy word—if it be certain
that the dead who are raised and judged before
the great white throne, are dead persons, not
principles; then is it equally certain that the
first resurrection is a resurrection of persons too.
If the first resurrection be one of principles,
then must the second also. If the second, that
before the great white throne, be a resurrection of
persons, the first must be a resurrection of persons
likewise. Nothing can be more evident and
simple than this.

This chapter, then, demonstrates that there is
an interval of at least a thousand years between
the resurrection of life and the resurrection of
judgment. "The hour is coming, in the which
all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,
and shall come forth; they that have done good,
unto the resurrection of life; and they that have
done evil unto the resurrection of judgment."
That "hour" lasts a thousand years; the "hour"
in which Christ quickens dead souls has already

lasted more than eighteen hundred years. The "hour" in which He shall raise dead bodies commences with His coming to change His living, and raise His sleeping, saints; it closes with the resurrection of the wicked dead, and their judgment before the great white throne—"the resurrection of judgment." I commend the whole chapter (Rev. xx.) to your patient, attentive, and prayerful perusal in your closets before God.

THAT bright and blessèd morn is near
When He, the Bridegroom, shall appear,
And call His bride away.
Her blessing then shall be complete,
When with her Lord she takes her seat
In everlasting day. Rev. iii. 21.

The days and months are gliding past,
Soon shall be heard the trumpet's blast
Which wakes the sleeping saints.
The dead in Christ in glory rise,
When we with them shall reach the skies
Where Jesus for us waits.

What wonder, joy, and glad surprise
Shall fill our hearts as thus we rise,
To meet Him in the air; 1 Thess. iv. 17
To see His face, to hear His voice,
And in His perfect love rejoice,
Whose glory then we'll share.

O may this hope our spirits cheer,
While waiting for our Saviour here;
He'll quickly come again. Rev. xxi.
O may our hearts look for that day,
And to His word responsive say,
Lord Jesus, come. Amen.



