

MERREIN
IS
LOVE

H. D. BROWN.

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B E T T E R T H A N G O L D ;
Or, the Precious Blood of Christ.

By H. D. BROWN.

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“ HEREIN IS LOVE.”

BY

H. D. BROWN,

AUTHOR OF

“ BETTER THAN GOLD ; OR, THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST,” ETC.

“ Oh ! 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love,
The love of God to me.”

London:

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,
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“HEREIN IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US, AND SENT HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.”—1 John iv. 10.

“FOR GOD 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.

P R E F A C E.

MY theme is grand, too grand for even an archangel's thought to compass. It is a theme which the more we contemplate the more we are lost in adoring awe and wonder.

I have sometimes seemed to tread on very holy ground in the following pages, but I have ever sought to do so reverently, and have been careful not to go a hair's breadth beyond the line for which I believed I had scriptural warrant.

Whatever good may be in this little book belongs unto the Lord; only the imperfections and failures that mar it are mine. Should the Holy Spirit be graciously pleased to use it to help some brother or sister to clearer views or higher thoughts of Love Divine, to comfort, strengthen, and build up,—or better still, to reveal to the heart of some poor sinner the wondrous

love of God to *him*,—then blessed, ever blessed be His holy name.

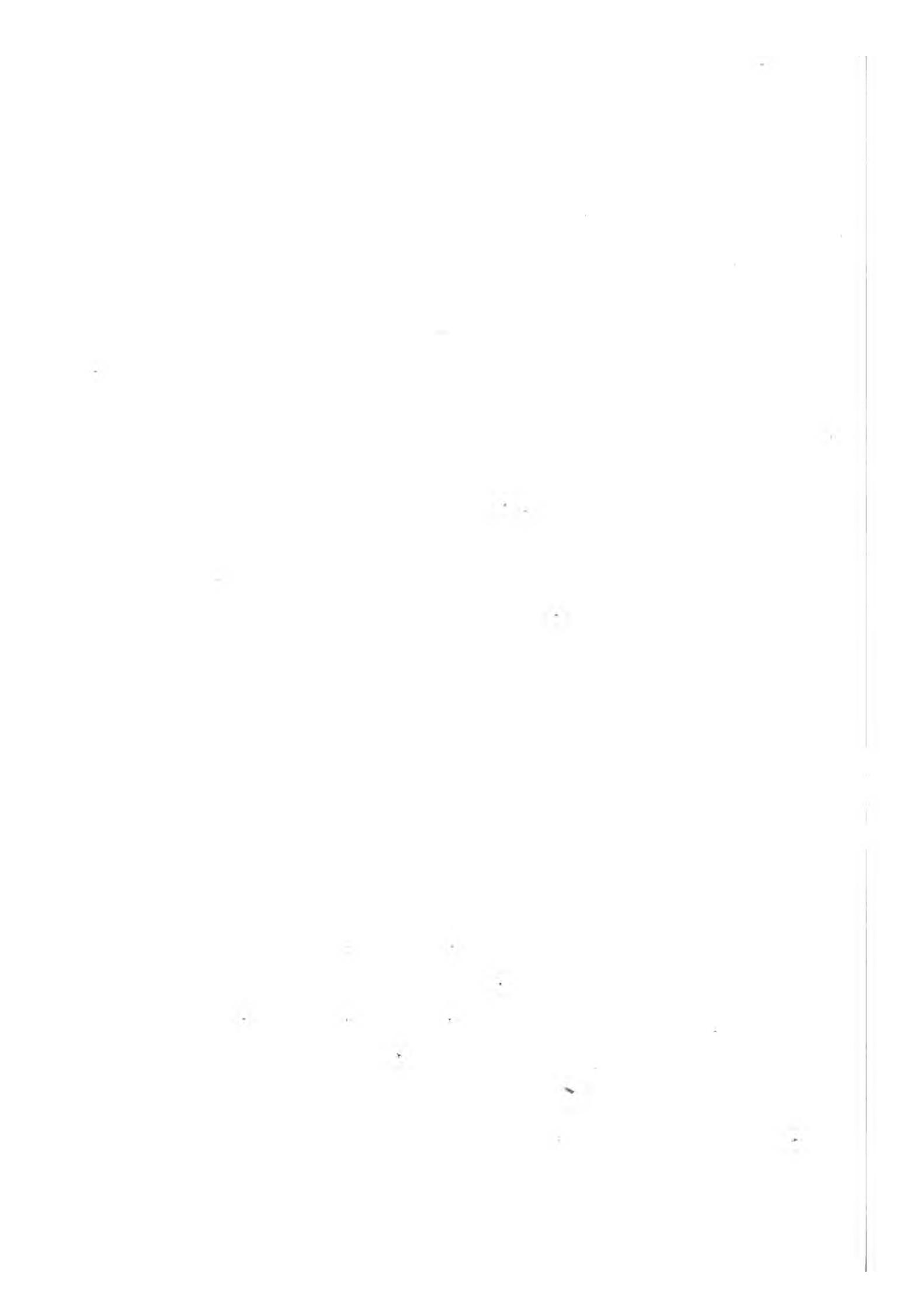
His alone is the power, and His the glory; mine the joy of “the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoicing greatly because of the Bridegroom’s voice.”

Go forth, little book, and serve the Lord of Heaven and Earth.

H. D. B.

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I.

LOVE.

I

“MANY WATERS CANNOT QUENCH LOVE, NEITHER CAN THE
FLOODS DROWN IT.”—Song of Solomon viii. 7.

“THY LOVE TO ME WAS WONDERFUL, PASSING THE LOVE
OF WOMEN.”—2 Sam. i. 26.

I.

LOVE.

LOVE ! What is it ? Can you describe it, philosopher ? Can you tell whence it comes, or whither it goes ? How is it begotten ? What are its rules ? This love which is “strong as death,” which “many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown,” so sovereign in its outgoings that no man can bind it, so capricious that it often passes by the good and the noble and seems to waste itself upon the weakest and unworthiest of all ?

Can you buy it ? No. “If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned.” It laughs at riches, it despises honour, it scorns ease, it triumphs over shame.

To onlookers it is often contemptible in its infatuation, yet it is the noblest relic which fallen human nature possesses of that image of God which was stamped upon man when first he came from the hand of his Maker.

For man presents, not indeed a *noble ruin*, but the ruin, the *utter ruin*, of a noble nature. “Let us make

man in our own image, after our likeness," said God ; "and let him have dominion over all the earth." But, alas ! "how is the gold become dim ! how is the most fine gold changed !" the crown has fallen from the head, the kingly nature is gone, the image of God is destroyed.

And that image can never be restored, except by God Himself. Even the meanest of all God's works is altogether beyond the power of man to re-make. An egg-shell, for instance, how perfect a thing it is ! yet how frail ! a little child may break it betwixt finger and thumb ; yet, once broken, not all the wisdom, nor the skill, nor the power of the whole world will suffice to restore it again as it was. And if all the united wisdom and power of man be unable to restore a broken egg-shell, how can he dream of restoring the broken image of God in his ruined soul ?

No, it is neither education, nor cultivation, nor civilization that availeth anything, but a "new creature in Christ Jesus." It is utterly vain for man to attempt, by any development of natural goodness or the suppression of evil propensities, to bring himself back even to his original purity. He must be *born* anew, *created* anew, and that by a power greater than his own, even by the power of the Spirit of God. Only He who created at the first can re-create. Man cannot gather the broken fragments of the mirror and piece them together, still less can he purge them of

their inherent defilement so that they should reflect once more the image of their Creator.

But when, by the power of God Himself, old things are passed away and all things are become new ; when the old nature has wholly departed, and the new creature has come “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ;” then the likeness of God shall again be reflected—and far more gloriously than at the first—in all who are “in Christ Jesus ;” for He is “the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person ;” and “we know that when He shall appear, *we shall be like Him*, for we shall see Him as He is.” Yea, even in this life, being “made partakers of the Divine nature,” we in a measure shew forth His glory ; for “we all with unveiled face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit ” (2 Cor. iii. 18, R.V.)

Yet, amid the ruin, the terrible havoc that sin has made, we can still see traces of the pristine glory, when man first came from his Maker’s hands a pure and holy being. And it would seem as if God in His wisdom and mercy had preserved to us above all this quality of love, that through it—blurred, defiled, and misdirected as it is—we might better understand that wondrous love Divine revealed to us in the Gospel.

All true human love bears the fragrance of Eden, and is an echo from the heart of God, for “Love is of God.” It could have no other source; only from the eternal Fountain of all good could flow so fair a stream. The stream has become muddy, full of all impurity, but still it has the traces of its heavenly origin.

Of all earthly affections, woman’s love is the costliest. It absorbs her whole nature; her heart seems formed of tendrils which are ever stretching out to find some object to which to cling; and when it finds what it longs for, it clings to it with a tenacity terrible to herself. A father’s love is deep and strong, but a mother’s love is tender and enduring. “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget;”—for some women have no womanly nature, some mothers have no *mother’s* love.

A true mother’s love is a costly thing. It costs her many days and nights of weariness and pain; it costs her many a throbbing head and many an aching heart. It will stretch across the wide world after the wandering boy; it will follow the wilful daughter even into the haunts of shame. A father’s heart *may* be steeled, but a mother’s heart *never* closes against the child she bore; nay, it would often seem as if, like an elastic band, the farther it was stretched, the stronger the tension became.

Such love is of God, and in it we have a faint illustration of "His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins," and of how His bowels of compassion yearn still towards the poor wanderers far from the Father's home.

And He takes every relationship of life to present to us a picture of His own great love in its various aspects. "Like as a *father* pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." "As one whom his *mother* comforteth, so will I comfort you. He is a "*friend* that sticketh closer than a *brother*." But it is in the marriage tie that the love He bears "His own" is best shadowed forth. "Thy Maker is thy *husband*," He saith; "for I am *married* unto you." "Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that He might present it unto Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; that it should be holy, and without blemish." Yea, He even condescends to appeal to what might seem man's selfishness; for He saith, "He that loveth his wife loveth *himself*; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, *even as the Lord the church*; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. v. 28—30).

Surely we may say as David said of Jonathan,

"Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

"Jesus, Thy boundless love to me,
No thought can reach, no tongue declare ;
O knit my thankful heart to Thee,
And reign without a rival there :
Thine wholly, Thine alone I am ;
Lord, with Thy love my heart inflame."

Paul Gerhard.

II.

GOD IS LOVE.

“GOD IS LOVE.”—I John iv. 16.

“GOD IS LIGHT, AND IN HIM IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL.”—
I John i. 5.

II.

GOD IS LOVE.

GOD is Love ! God is Light ! Marvellous Light ! Love “passing knowledge.” Not love without light, nor light without love, for love without light were foolish weakness, and light without love were deathly cold.

These are the crowning attributes of God’s Being, the attributes in which He most delights to present Himself to His creatures ; yet both are hidden from the “wisdom of this world.”

Because the natural heart of man has turned its back upon God, it sees nothing but its own dark shadow when it looks for the light or the love in His works or His ways.

The wise man of this world, baffled in his vain attempts to *philosophise* on the Being of the Creator, is forced to exclaim, “Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself ;” for He who “dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, Whom no man hath seen, nor can see,” will not reveal Himself to the vain curiosity of men. “Canst thou by searching find out

God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” Man’s puny reason, making a god of itself, vainly thinking to see the Infinite mirrored in its own shallowness, finds that “clouds and darkness are round about Him,” while humble faith, looking away from itself and its own thoughts, right up into the face of God, beholds with joy the brightness of His glory.

How sublime is the truth which our Lord taught when He said, “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”

“Truly the light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun;” but to him that is born blind there is no gladness in the sunlight, nor can he conceive what it is. The eye must be made for the light, as well as the light for the eye; and the sun *does* shine, though the whole world had sightless eyeballs.

Born blind through a sinful nature, we can see neither light nor love in the ways of God, until, being “born again,” we receive “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” This is the only key that can unlock the mystery. Christ alone—who is called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR—can unravel for us what seems a

tangled skein, for it is only when we are in living union with Christ that we can possibly understand "the whole counsel of God."

Out of Christ, man sees nothing in the universe but universal *law*. *In Christ*, he discovers that law to spring from, and be guided by, infinite benevolence. *Out of Christ*, he finds only an inexorable will. *In Christ*, he discovers that will to be but the unchangeable purpose of eternal love. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." The fault does not lie in the manifestation, but in the *power of discernment*.

So also, *out of Christ*, man regards himself as a victim of fate, a mere unit in a vast mechanism; but *in Christ* he learns that he is an object of the tenderest care of His heavenly Father, who is the Almighty God, to Whom he is very precious, and who numbers the very hairs of his head. Christ takes us by the hand, as it were, and leading us beyond the "clouds and darkness," beyond the outward seeming, beyond the presence chamber, beyond the throne, reveals to us the very heart of God, shewing us that it is His infinite, eternal, unchangeable love that is the mainspring of all His acts. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

The cross of Christ is the solution of the great enigma by which we are surrounded ; it is the central point of the universe ; may we not say it is the central point of eternity ? “ I, if I be lifted up, will draw all unto Me,” said the Lord ; and doubtless all things created will be judged according to their relation to the cross.

The cross is the most glorious manifestation of the character of God, the foundation-stone of His eternal purpose. It was not a mere after-thought to remedy an evil, it was a necessary factor in the working out of God’s great design for revealing Himself to His creatures by Jesus Christ.

Here we behold the burning holiness of God and the fierceness of His anger against sin. Here we see that undeviating justice and judgment which are “ the habitation of His throne.” Here we see His wisdom, power, and grace in that “ mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Above all things, if we would know in its fulness His wondrous love, it is at Calvary we must contemplate it ; for “ in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live by Him.” And “ *hereby perceive we the love of God*, because He laid down His life for us.”

Oh, wonder of wonders ! But for the cross even the highest archangel could not have conceived the

greatness of God's love. The love of God the Father, who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all ;" "His only begotten Son," who "was with Him from everlasting," who was "daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."

The love of God the Son, who "came to give His life a ransom for many ;" who descended from the height of heaven to the lowest depth of humiliation, to suffer the hate of devils, the reproach and contumely of men, to be despised and rejected by those He came to save, and to endure the wrath of God in the sinner's room.

The love of God the Holy Spirit, who, as He had hovered over the face of the waters, and brought forth the world in its beauty, so He had overshadowed the Virgin, and caused her to bring forth "the Son of the Highest ;" who had anointed, filled, and sustained Him in His great work, and had raised Him from the dead by His mighty power; who is now the witness for Christ to the world, and the Indweller of His people, and Whose great joy it is to glorify Christ, and reveal Him to the souls of men.

Creation could not shew forth the fulness of God's love. In all its magnitude and beauty, in all its display of wisdom, power, and goodness, it afforded a scope far too small for a full manifestation of infinite and everlasting love. It needed *redemption* in its wondrous glory to shew us "what is the breadth, and

length, and depth, and height" of that love "which passeth knowledge."

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

"How shall I praise th' eternal God,
That infinite unknown?

Who can ascend His high abode,
Or venture near His throne?

The great Invisible ! He dwells
Concealed in dazzling light ;
But His all-searching eye reveals
The secrets of the night.

He knows no shadow of a change,
Nor alters His decrees ;
Firm as a rock His truth remains,
To guard His promises.

Justice, upon an awful throne,
Maintains the rights of God ;
While mercy sends her pardons down,
Bought with the Saviour's blood."

Watts.

III.

LOVE CREATETH.

“HE HATH MADE EVERYTHING BEAUTIFUL IN HIS TIME.”
—Eccl. iii. 11.

“AND GOD SAW EVERYTHING THAT HE HAD MADE AND,
BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD.’—Gen. i. 31.

III.

LOVE CREATETH.

LOVE *must* have an object, whether that object be worthy or unworthy, it would only be pain to be pent up within itself. The human heart that has the faculty of loving yearns for something on which to pour out its priceless treasure. Even the hardest, coldest, stoniest heart will sometimes break out with a strange infatuation towards some one on which its love has lighted.

God has no need of an object of love outside of Himself. Throughout the eternal ages, the three Persons of the Godhead dwell in holy fellowship, whose awful majesty no finite, no created being can share. In the reciprocation of their own Divine perfections, Father, Son and Holy Ghost take infinite and everlasting delight.

But it pleased Him in whom all fulness dwells to create this glorious universe, on which the holy triune God might exercise the boundless wealth of His overflowing love. For not only does creation exhibit the manifold wisdom and power of the

Almighty, but it chiefly shews forth His great *goodness*. In the exquisite adaptation of part to counterpart which is found throughout nature, as revealed by all the sciences, in the marvellous provision which is made for the benefit of all (except when marred by sin) in the wonderful arrangement by which every minute particle is found to have its own sphere of action, and to fulfil its own special function with unerring precision, as if it were a living thing, we see above all things that “the Lord is *good* to all, His tender mercies are over *all* His works.”

“The heavens declare the glory of God,
 And the firmament sheweth His handiwork :
 Day unto day uttereth speech,
 And night unto night sheweth knowledge :
 There is no speech nor language where their voice is not
 heard.”

But Jehovah has “set His glory above the heavens;” and in the exercise of His adorable sovereignty He chose this little earth to be the scene of a manifestation of wisdom, power, and love of such surpassing grandeur that it should become the centre of attraction and the subject of eternal wonder to the whole intelligent creation.

All the glory of nature—and that is great, for it is the work of God—sinks into nothingness when compared with the glory of His *grace*, that marvellous design of unsearchable wisdom whereby God the

Creator was to unite Himself with His own creation, and man—perhaps the weakest of all His intelligent creatures—was, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, to become God's "Fellow," and sit upon the throne of the universe.

Only God Himself could have conceived the thought ; the revelation of it therefore *must* be divine. But oh ! what shall we say of the stupendous mystery by which it was accomplished ? Human understanding is utterly lost in the contemplation ; even the seraphic host can only cover their faces with their wings, and cry one to another, " Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."

For out of weakness came forth strength ; through death came life more abundant ; out of the terrible destruction which sin had brought into God's fair creation, Jehovah achieved this mighty triumph of redemptive power and grace, the transcendent glories of which eternity alone will unfold, when, in the full accomplishment of His purpose, the beggar shall have been raised from the dunghill, and made to inherit the throne of His glory (1 Sam. ii. 8), and the people who had sat in darkness and in the shadow of death—self-destroyed, guilty, and sin-stricken—shall have been redeemed, sanctified, and glorified, and made worthy to enjoy the fellowship of God Himself.

Yet God is not the author of sin ; though these matters are too deep for our understanding, we *know*

that God *cannot* be charged with the introduction of evil.

No fountain can send forth sweet water and bitter, nor yield both salt water and fresh (James iii. 11, 12); and how could God, who is the Fountain of holiness, be also the author of sin? “He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deut. xxxii. 4). “He hath made *everything* beautiful in His time.” Everything that came from His hand was pure and holy, and without a taint of evil. As sing the glorified saints, “Thou hast created all things, and for Thy *pleasure* they are and were created,” but we know that He is “not a God that hath *pleasure* in wickedness.”

How sin originated is not revealed, and man need not attempt to solve the dark problem; but this we may most emphatically affirm, that it was not called into existence by the will of God.

But it pleased God, in His sovereign grace, to create not only beings that could obey His will, and enjoy His beneficence, but also those who could *intelligently know* Him and *consciously* enjoy and reciprocate His love.

The highest service of all is a *free-will* service, a service of *love*; and love must be a free-will offering, it *cannot* be compelled. And God gave the greatest manifestation of His love as a Creator, in creating

beings capable of loving Him; for the faculty of *loving* is also the highest joy a living being can possess.

But this involves the exercise of perfect free will; and to bring into being one possessing this is the very acmè of creative power. Now the possession of free will opens the way for enjoying the greatest possible blessedness, but it also involves the possibility of falling through disobedience, and cutting oneself off from the life that is in God. Therefore when God created man, He shewed forth His wondrous love in entrusting him with this power of refusing obedience, in order that his service might be a free-will offering of love, without the slightest feeling of constraint. And how delightful to read of the holy satisfaction with which the Creator looked upon His work! "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was *very good*" (Gen. i. 31).

How fair and beauteous must the earth have appeared as it came fresh from the hand of its Maker! When He "laid the corner-stone thereof," it was a new delight to the angelic host, accustomed as they were to the glories of heaven; for "all the sons of God shouted for joy." Undoubtedly man, created in the image of God, was "the corner-stone thereof," the antitype of Him who afterwards became "the Head of the corner," "a chief corner-stone, elect, precious."

How surpassingly grand is the scene of which but a glimpse is given us in Scripture:—

“The earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light:

And there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good.”

Then, at the fiat of the Almighty, the waters rose into the expanse of the heavens, and floated around the earth in fleecy clouds. Then the dry land appeared, and the fresh young grass sprouted forth, and “the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind.” Then the glorious sunshine flooded the new creation, and the majestic moon poured forth her silvery rays.

“And God saw that it was good.”

Now the earth is ready for “the moving creature that hath life,” and God bids the water bring forth *abundantly*, and the earth also to bring forth “the living creature after his kind.”

“And God saw that it was good.”

So, as each new thing sprung into being at the word of the Lord, the Almighty Creator rejoiced in all His works.

“Then the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.”

And now all is ready for the king, him who, created

in the image and likeness of his Maker, was to be God's vicegerent in the world, and have dominion "over all the earth."

And when He had formed him of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man stood up "a living soul," the crowning piece of God's workmanship ; the enraptured throng of angels and archangels, whose number is "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," raised their shout of joy, "and the morning stars sang together" their psalm of praise—

"To Him who alone doeth great wonders :
 For His mercy endureth for ever.
 To Him that by wisdom made the heavens :
 For His mercy endureth for ever.
 To Him that stretched out the earth above the waters :
 For His mercy endureth for ever.
 To Him that made great lights :
 For His mercy endureth for ever.
 The sun to rule by day :
 For His mercy endureth for ever.
 The moon and stars to rule by night ;
 For His mercy endureth for ever.
 O give thanks unto the God of gods :
 For His mercy endureth for ever."

How much of beauty there yet remains to us in this world of His ! What intense delight even the natural senses of fallen man can find in the works of God ! so that even those who know Him not, and who have changed the truth of God into a lie—though they

may be men of mighty intellect—unwittingly worship the creation of His hands under the name of “Nature.”

What then must it have been to those glorious beings of vastly greater intelligence and insight than we possess, who with undimmed vision beheld the work of their Creator as the world in all its beauty burst into being at the word of the Lord?

IV.

LOVE COMPLAINEETH.

“HEAR, O HEAVENS, AND GIVE EAR, O EARTH ; FOR THE
LORD HATH SPOKEN : I HAVE NOURISHED AND BROUGHT UP
CHILDREN, AND THEY HAVE REBELLED AGAINST ME.”—Isa. i. 2.

IV.

LOVE COMPLAINETH.

ALAS ! how soon the psalm of praise and the shout of joy must have given place to amazement among the heavenly host, as the crown fell from the head of "the corner-stone" of the new creation, and God's king upon earth forsook his allegiance, and handed over the dominion to Satan ! Darkness, deep spiritual darkness, now covered the face of the earth. Sin reigned ; and as generation after generation was born unto Adam, iniquity abounded, and the whole world lay in the wicked one.

Now heaven and earth must hear and bear witness to the Divine grief over the rebellion and self-destruction of the works of His own hands : "*Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken : I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.*"

True, these words have direct reference to the children of Israel, but that is because "unto them were committed the oracles of God," and His dealings with them were typical of His dealings with man as a

race: "All souls are mine," saith the Lord. He is "the God of the spirits of all flesh," "and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth." "Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God," every word of God's revelation has a distinct ulterior reference to all mankind.

Many have a hazy idea that all Old Testament saints, including Noah, Enoch, Seth, and even Adam, were "of the stock of Israel." But this is a mistake: all these were in the line from which Christ was to come; but even Abraham was two generations before the first "Israel," and was "the father of *many* nations," both spiritually and literally—also a significant type of his representative character (Rom. iv.), while Noah and those before him belonged altogether to a different dispensation.

In Luke's Gospel, the descent of the Lord Jesus Christ is traced down through the Hebrew line to Abraham, then beyond him to Adam, "which was *the son of God*;" thus indicating that though in a limited sense He was "of the Jews," He had a higher and wider relationship to the whole human race.

In God's dealings with "the nations" in Scripture, we behold Him in the aspect of the righteous Judge who *hateth iniquity*; but in His dealings with the perverse and rebellious house of Israel we see the yearning of His bowels over a lost and ruined world.

Was it not His own creation? Had not His wisdom planned it, and His power called it into being, while His love garnished it with beauty and filled it with delights? Even amongst men, how undying is the attachment to the product of one's own hand or brain! There is an ownership in one's own creation that nothing can take away: a painting, for instance, may be bought and sold, and the actual possession may be lost for ever to the painter, yet there is a peculiar property in his own production which can never be transferred.

And so with the world which God has created, and the souls whom He has made. God *has not* given up His property in them, nor transferred it to another. They are still the work of His own hands; and all through Scripture we hear, in words addressed to the house of Israel, the note of mourning over the world that had risen in rebellion against Him in whom they "live, and move, and have their being."

And herein lies the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It is not only the transgression of a law which is "holy and just and good," not only the defilement of the soul, so that "every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil continually," but it is a personal offence against the Most High, a wounding of Him whose name is Love, whose heart still yearns over us with the tenderest compassion.

"When they knew God, they glorified Him not as

God, but changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever."

"Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid ; be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Ah, sinner ! here is the very head and front of your offending. What greater grief can a father have than that his son should turn from him and rebel against him ? yet you have turned away from the God who gave you being, you have rebelled against Him who has nourished you, you have set at nought His counsel, and would none of His reproof.

"A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master : if I then be a Father, where is mine honour ? and if I be a Master, where is my fear ? saith the Lord."

"But none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night, who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of the air ?"

Before we can have a true apprehension of the love of God in Christ, we must get a right understanding of the real character of sin, of what it is in His sight ; and this we can only learn from His own Word. Here He has condescended to teach us by things

with which we are familiar, that we may have a right, though faint and imperfect, sense of the awful revelation of His holy nature against sin.

It is "an abomination unto the Lord," "the abominable thing which I hate." It is "an offence unto Him," "a stink." It is "corruption," "an open sepulchre." He "cannot look upon it." It is "poison," "bitterness," "a smoke in His nose."

And all this is true of *all sin*. Every transgression, no matter how light it may appear in the eyes of man, is but a motion of the corruption of our whole nature. *All sin is idolatry*, a serving of another in the place of God, giving His glory to another. And God's Word teaches us clearly what His thoughts are concerning idolatry.

It is true, moreover, of *every man's heart*. "The Lord looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are *all* gone aside, they are *all together* become filthy." This is God's word concerning us, whatever our opinion may be. It matters little what a criminal thinks of his crime; it matters a great deal what the judge thinks; and this is the verdict of "Him with whom we have to do," whatever may be *our* thoughts regarding ourselves and our sins.

It is of vast consequence that we have right views of the truth on this point. There is no such thing as human innocence in God's sight—even in infancy—

on this earth, *except in Christ*. There is no human excellence of character on which God can look with the slightest complacency, *until cleansed in the blood of Christ*. “That which is born of the flesh *is flesh*,” and “they that are in the flesh *cannot please God*.” “He that soweth to the flesh *shall of the flesh reap corruption*.”

The old Adam nature is wholly corrupt, and breeds nothing but corruption.

However much men may differ one from another, all are guilty, all are defiled; and the slightest taint of imperfection cannot stand before the intense holiness of God.

When Noah sent the dove at the first out of the ark, it could find no rest for the sole of its foot over all that wide expanse of the turbid waters of death; the second time it brought back “an olive leaf plucked off”—emblem of the first signs of resurrection life coming up from those waters of death; and the third time it went forth it came not back again, for it rejoiced in a regenerated earth.

So the Holy Spirit of God could find no place of rest in all this wide world of sin, no point of contact even with our fallen nature, until it alighted “as a dove” upon Christ; and rejoicing in the new life brought to us through His death and resurrection, it now finds a *dwelling-place* in the hearts of all who are united to Him by faith, and made partakers of His Divine nature.

There is an essential difference between *sin* and transgressions which are the motions of sin. It is as the sea and its waves. There may be great waves or little waves—but it is the same sea ; or there might be no waves at all—the sea still remains ; it simply depends upon the influence of currents and the external pressure of the atmosphere. So with sin : there may be great motions or little motions, it is the same *sin* ; and even if there should be no conscious transgression at all, yet the *sin* is there.

“The carnal mind is enmity against God,” and even though the enmity may not be active, it none the less exists, though it is passive ; and the denial, or justification, or palliation of the evil that is in the heart is heinous sin, for it is “making God a liar.”

Whether it show itself in the heaving billows, the raging storm, or the comparative calm of a summer day, there is a dark sea of unrest in every human bosom till it hearken to the voice of Him who says, “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.”

Thus the black pall of sin covered God’s fair earth ; “the corner-stone thereof” had lost all its beauty ; His “own image and likeness” was defiled and in ruins, and the glory of it was turned into shame. The work of His own hands, the souls which He had made, had lifted up the heel against Him, despising His love, defying His authority, and giving unto another “the honour that was due unto His name.”

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, *and it grieved Him at His heart.*"

Strange, marvellously strange words, yet they are the words of God Himself. It is not ours to explain them, still less to try to explain them away, but to receive them with reverential awe and in childlike simplicity.

"O earth! earth! earth! hear the word of the Lord!"

V.

LOVE PITIETH.

“FOR HE HATH LOOKED DOWN FROM THE HEIGHT OF HIS SANCTUARY ; FROM HEAVEN DID THE LORD BEHOLD THE EARTH ; TO HEAR THE GROANING OF THE PRISONER ; TO LOOSE THOSE THAT ARE APPOINTED TO DEATH.”—Psalm cii.
19, 20.

V.

LOVE PITIETH.

SIN brings sorrow, and man had sold himself into worse than Egyptian bondage. His soul was bound with fetters stronger than adamant. He was led captive at the will of Satan, and sin and death reigned triumphant.

When God looked again upon everything that He had made, it was no longer "very good;" for "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" now ruled the hearts of men; the world had become a waste howling wilderness, and "the dark places of the earth were full of the habitations of cruelty."

But it is grief more than anger that He evinces; "for God is love;" He "is gracious and full of compassion." And when He beheld "those that are appointed to death," and heard "the groaning of the prisoner," His bowels yearned toward His rebellious children, who had sold themselves for nought.

So all through the symphony of Scripture we can hear this tender chord of pity, and even in the denun-

ciations of judgment against sin we can note the beating of the Father's heart, and hear the "still small voice" of His patient love.

No sooner had Adam fallen, than the voice of JEHOVAH GOD was heard "walking in the garden"—the garden which in His love He had "planted" for "the man whom He had formed." He sent not an angel to execute His wrath; but the WORD, in whom is life, came Himself "in the cool of the day," when the shadows had fallen, but ere the night had settled down; and even while He pronounced the righteous sentence, gave promise of the coming "Dayspring from on high."

Then the gloom deepened, sin became rampant, and "the earth was filled with violence; and God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Yet nearly two thousand years "the long-suffering of God waited;" and when at last the cup of their iniquity was full, and a righteous and holy God could no longer forbear; when the sentence went forth, "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them, and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth;" even yet the voice of mercy was heard saying to Noah, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; . . . and thou shalt *come* into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee."*

* It is noteworthy that the Lord did not say "*go*," but "*come*

The individual sinners who had wrought great wickedness upon the earth must perish; but God still loved the race, and He would not cut it off, so with Noah He established anew His covenant with man.

Then, when the floods were dried from off the face of the earth, and Noah builded the first altar recorded unto the Lord, and offered the first-mentioned burnt offering, we read that Jehovah "smelled a savour of rest" (Gen. viii. 21, marg.); an earnest of His infinite satisfaction in the atoning work of Christ, who "hath loved us, and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

And what gracious condescension does He show when He not only re-establishes His covenant with men, but in tender consideration of their fears He appoints a new sign of His faithfulness. "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you, and every into the ark." The Lord was there before him, and *His presence there* made the ark a type of Christ.

living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. ix. 12—16).

Again men grew and multiplied; but the lesson of the flood was forgotten, and with their bricks and their slime they essayed to build their city and to raise their tower in proud but impotent defiance of the Most High. Yet still the loving-kindness of our God was shown forth; for Jehovah, to restrain them from further wickedness, confounded their language, and "scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth."

Centuries elapsed, and "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people;" when there shone forth a new manifestation of His wondrous love to man in choosing out from this idolatrous earth one man, one family, one nation, to be a holy people to Himself, to whom He might reveal Himself in His holiness and righteousness and infinite goodness; committing to them, for the benefit of the whole earth, the oracles of God, "that His way might be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations."

In His dealings with His people Israel, we have a threefold cord giving a threefold aspect of His mind toward the human race. First, we hear Him grieving

over the sin and folly of a world that had turned its back upon its Maker. “I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?”

We see His marvellous long-suffering and patience, notwithstanding all their sin and ingratitude, their perversity and rebellion, how His bowels still yearn towards them: “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together” (Hosea xi. 8).

Secondly, we see His tender mercies toward those who know His name and put their trust in Him; how at the first, “in His love and in His pity He redeemed them;” how He found them in a desert land and in the waste howling wilderness; how He led them about and instructed them, and kept them “as the apple of His eye;” how He bore with their ingratitude, their unbelief, their waywardness, and their weak, imperfect service. “Yea, He loved the people,” not for their merits, for they had none, but for His name’s sake.

When their own folly had brought them into trouble, He still pitied and delivered them; and when their enemies oppressed them, and they cried unto Him, they found that the eternal God was their refuge, and

underneath were the everlasting arms. For, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

Thirdly, we see unutterable sorrow mingled with judgment. When the Lord Jesus wept over impenitent Jerusalem—Jerusalem that had killed the prophets, and stoned the King's accredited messengers, and would soon be guilty of the blood of the Son of God—we see in His bitter lamentation, that although the righteous Judge must pronounce the sentence, and the wrath of a holy God must be poured out upon the obdurately wicked, yet it is not His *will* that *any* should perish. "*As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked*" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11).

What a depth of tender meaning lies in those words of "the lord of the vineyard," when servant after servant had been sent in vain to obtain for him the fruit that was his due: "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son, it may be they will reverence him when they see him." True, these words were spoken in a parable, but they are the words of the Son of God Himself, who is the Faithful and True Witness, and doubtless they are an echo of the counsels of the Most High. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

Ah ! who can understand the tender mercy of our God ? "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy."

"Plunged in a gulf of dark despair,
We wretched sinners lay,
Without one cheerful beam of hope,
Or spark of glimmering day.

With pitying eyes the Prince of grace
Beheld our helpless grief ;
He saw, and, O amazing love !
He came to our relief.

Down from the shining seats above,
With joyful haste He fled ;
Entered the grave in mortal flesh,
And dwelt among the dead.

He spoiled the powers of darkness thus,
And brake our iron chains ;
Jesus hath freed our captive souls
From everlasting pains.

O ! for this love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak.

Angels, assist our mighty joys,
Strike all your harps of gold ;
But when you raise your highest notes,
His love can ne'er be told.

VI.

LOVE COMETH DOWN.

“FOR YE KNOW THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,
THAT THOUGH HE WAS RICH, YET FOR YOUR SAKES HE
BECAME POOR, THAT YE THROUGH HIS POVERTY MIGHT BE
RICH.”—2 Cor. viii. 9.

VI.

LOVE COMETH DOWN.

AMAZING "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!" What a descent! from the throne of heaven to the manger in Bethlehem; from the adoration of angels to the revilings of sinners; from the eternal glory to the sorrow and the shame; from the bosom of the Father, to be an outcast on Calvary, cast out by men, forsaken by God, "being made a curse for us."

He was rich. No tongue can tell, no mind can conceive the riches of the glory of Him "who is the blessed and only Potentate, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." The highest archangel who stands in the presence of God cannot look upon the ineffable glory of Him who sitteth upon the throne.

He was rich. The whole angelic host, "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" of glorious beings that "excel in strength," who are as "a flaming fire," stand around His throne, ever watching the slightest intimation of His will, ready with the

quickness of thought to execute His commands, and fulfil all His pleasure.

He was rich. This beauteous earth and all its fulness, those myriads of stars that deck the heavens, this vast universe, of which, with all our knowledge, we have gained but a glimpse of the outermost fringe, all are His workmanship; “for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him.” All these mighty worlds are upheld by His power, and are obedient to His will; for “He telleth the number of the stars, He calleth them all by their names.”

Yet all these are but as “the small dust of the balance,” if we would try to speak of His *riches*. Beyond the uttermost stretch of created intelligence to conceive, beyond the thick veil of impenetrable light, where God alone can dwell—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—there sits enthroned “the King eternal, immortal, and invisible,” and it becometh us only to bow the head in reverence and in silent wondering adoration of the glory, and honour, and riches, and power, which belong unto Him.

And if we cannot estimate the greatness of His riches, neither can we understand the depth of His poverty. Yet God has given us in Holy Scripture some intimation of the meaning of those words, “*He became poor.*”

He was *weak*. Perhaps we are so accustomed to consider the sublime grandeur of Christ's life on earth, His gentle dignity, His unassailable integrity, His incomprehensible wisdom, His almighty power, that we are apt to forget the weakness and the weariness of His human frame.

We are apt to forget that He "took our *infirmitiess* and bare our *sicknesses*." And herein is one very manifest proof of the genuineness of the inspired record. Had it been a human invention, the men who wrote it would undoubtedly have made the hero a mighty man, not a weak, weary, way-worn pilgrim, who, though "the Possessor of heaven and earth," had not "where to lay His head."

In Old Testament type, not only was He likened unto "the goodly cedars of Lebanon," but also to the poor "hyssop that springeth out of the wall," "a root out of a dry ground," "having no form nor comeliness."

He who is the "chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely," had "no beauty that we should desire Him." "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not; . . . we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

See Him as He sinks down by Jacob's well, "being wearied with His journey," while His hardier disciples go to the city to buy meat.

He is parched with thirst, while deep down in the

well is the cool clear water, which as a living thing would have sprung up at its Creator's bidding to quench His thirst, but He gave no command ; no angel was called to minister to Him ; but He deigned, as a weary traveller, to ask "a cup of cold water" as a favour from a woman that was a sinner.

See Him again, worn out with toil and watching, seeking a short rest in a little fishing boat ; asleep on the fisherman's pillow, the Creator rocked like a helpless infant by the waves of His own creation.

How the incessant fatigue must have aged Him, we may gather from the remark of the Jews, "Thou art not yet *fifty* years old," when He was still a young man little over *thirty*. "His visage was so marred more than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men."

Listen to the prophetic words, "I am a worm, and no man. My strength is dried up like a potsherd. I may tell all my bones ; they look and stare upon me."

And this was the mighty God the Creator of heaven and earth !

He was a *Man of sorrows*. He came to a world of sorrow. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Amid all the sounds of earth, the deepest and the loudest is a groan of anguish. From the palace of the king to the dungeon of the captive, from the mansion of the rich to the garret of the poor, comes

the sighing of sorrowful hearts ; and all that *man* can do will never lift the world's load a hair's breadth.

This load was laid on *Him*. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." This load pressed Him down till His heart was nigh to breaking. Looking around upon the heaving mass of sin and woe, seeing His Father's law broken, His name dishonoured, His image destroyed, hear Him cry, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."

He who said with a yearning heart to sorrowful men, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give *you rest*," could also say, "*My* soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

And this was the King of heaven !

He was *despised and rejected*, and this by those He came to save ! The very height of human excellence, the perfection of grace, whose every action was a deed of love, whose every utterance was goodness and mercy and truth, one might think men would have fallen down and worshipped Him. But they hated the truth, they could not bear the light ; so they were His adversaries ; they rewarded Him evil for good, and hatred for His love ; yea, they hated Him with a cruel hatred.

Yet hatred is easier to bear than contempt ; and His soul was "exceedingly filled with the contempt of the proud ;" for He was "a reproach of men, and despised

of the people.” He was accounted a leprous man ; for this is the meaning of those words in Isaiah, “ We did esteem Him stricken, *smitten of God*, and afflicted.” Cruel were the wounds made by the nails, the thorns, and the spear ; but *this* was the iron that entered into His soul ; for “a wounded spirit who can bear ?” And those wounds He suffered for *you*, sinner, for you and *me* !

But there was a deeper depth of humiliation still, a depth no human thought can fathom. We can only stand on the brink as it were, and peer wistfully into the darkness. He was *accursed of God*. Dread words of awful meaning ; words we dare not utter, were they not the words of God Himself. He bore the indignity of being cast out by men, He endured the terrible woe of being cast out by God.

“ Death and the curse were in our cup ;
 O Christ, 'twas full for Thee :
 But Thou hast drained the last dark drop ;
 'Tis empty now for me.
 That bitter cup, Love drank it up ;
 Now blessing's draught for me.”

“ FOR YE KNOW THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THAT THOUGH HE WAS RICH, YET FOR YOUR SAKES HE BECAME POOR, THAT YE THROUGH HIS POVERTY MIGHT BE RICH.”

VII.

LOVE REVEALED.

“GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.”—I Tim. iii. 16.

“HE THAT HATH SEEN ME HATH SEEN THE FATHER.”—

John xiv. 9.

VII.

LOVE REVEALED.

JESUS CHRIST was the manifestation of God to us; His life on earth reveals to us what God is.

When God made known His *law* to the people whom He loved, it was with the right hand of His power that He proclaimed it—"From His right hand went a fiery law;" but when He would declare *Himself*, when He would reveal to us His innermost thoughts, He sent "the only begotten Son, which is in the *bosom* of the Father," and He made manifest to us the *heart* of God. "For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Both were revelations of the mind of God, the one concerning *law*, the other concerning *grace*.

Man is by nature a worshipping being. "The Lord hath made man for Himself"—and the soul instinctively longs to know something of Him who made it. This yearning of the human soul cannot be quenched, although by sin it is distorted and misdirected; the restless spirit is ever searching for the Author of its

being, the "final cause" of its existence; but it asks in vain of nature, of science, of philosophy; none of these can lift the veil, and reveal the face of God.

If we would see God, we must look at Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, as He lived upon the earth, "God manifest in the flesh;" as He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Even the Bible without Christ would be but a handful of withered leaves, and give us as little knowledge of God as a heap of dry bones would tell us what is life.

But oh what a wondrous revelation of God do we get in His incarnate Son! How infinitely it transcends all human thought! What excellent wisdom, what mighty power, what exquisite beauty, what glorious majesty, what gracious condescension, what intense holiness! how "full of grace and truth"! what a combination of gentleness and strength, of righteousness and mercy, of just judgment and tender compassion! And above all, beyond and throughout all, encircling and permeating all, was His wondrous love. It shone out of every act, it was heard in every word, it filled every thought. Not a weak-kneed, foolish fondness, but a strong, real love, a mighty, all-absorbing love, a love yearning and pitiful, tender and forgiving. His whole life was one unbroken story of love, every incident in the sublime drama being full of majesty and grace. In temple or synagogue, in crowded street or on lone mountain-side, in the mansion of

the rich or the cottage of the poor, in the banqueting hall or the desert place, teaching the multitude or dealing with individuals, dispensing benefits or accepting acts of kindness, there was ever the same sweet dignity, unsullied purity, and boundless, overflowing love, an everlasting and unchanging love.

Already we have looked upon Him as He sat by Sychar's well, weary, hungry, and thirsty; yet, when His disciples brought Him food, He could not eat, because His soul was filled with pity for the spiritual "fields white ready to harvest." "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," He said. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work," the work that needed to be done preparatory to gathering in unto life eternal the harvest of redeemed souls.

See Him again, as He departs by ship privately into a desert place, having invited His disciples to come and rest awhile, for "they had no leisure so much as to eat." He finds on His arrival the beach crowded with a great multitude, eagerly waiting for Him. Not the faintest shadow of impatience at their importunity does He show, not a single word even of gentle rebuke for breaking in upon His privacy, and preventing His sorely needed rest; but when He saw them, "*He was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd.*"

So with *every* incident, great and small, in this

wonderful life; it is brimming over with the tenderest compassion.

Yet His was *a pure and holy love*, the strength of which lay in burning zeal for God. No one might touch His Father's honour, no one might falsify His Father's truth, or speak evil of the Holy Spirit, with impunity. Himself men might revile and despise, and speak all manner of evil against, and put to death, and it would be forgiven them; "but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness."

Perfect love can only exist with perfect holiness; and it was out of His love to God and man that there came His scathing denunciations of woe against the scribes and Pharisees. He tore the mask from hypocrisy. He rent open the whitened sepulchres, and showed the "dead men's bones and all uncleanness" that lay within.

There is much talk of love at the present day; men speak of it as if it were a kind of universal good-will, a weak, easy-going good nature, that tries to think well of everybody, and uses only honied words; and even amongst God's own people there are many who are inclined to let honesty of purpose, largeness of heart, and greatness of talent stand in the place of fidelity even to vital truth.

Such was not the love of Christ, and such is not the character of God. Love to others, even "to the

brethren," must ever be subordinate to our love and fealty to God and His truth. The same Apostle who was used of the Holy Spirit to write that wonderful exposition of love in the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians was he who "withstood Peter to the face" when he was to be blamed, and by the same Spirit wrote, "Though we or an *angel from heaven* preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed.*" Earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints not only is compatible with, but is a necessary part of, "perfect love."

But it is the unspeakable tenderness of the love of Christ that strikes us most, the infinite compassion, the long-suffering patience. His was the love that "endureth all things," that "never faileth." There was but one universal claim that ever drew forth His sympathy and His healing power—the sinner's *need* for body and soul: even when men in wilful unbelief rejected the blessings He brought, He mourned over them, saying, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." How gently He rebuked the unfaithfulness of His disciples! how ready to find an excuse for them: "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." Even for His enemies, in the very height of their enmity, how ready was He to plead, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

But, as we have already said, it is the *cross* which

above all else reveals the true character of God. How marvellously strange that what to nature is but a scene of ignominy, a deed of shame and woe, should be the greatest manifestation of the glory of God! How immeasurably short of the reality do the thoughts of those fall who can only see in it an exhibition of *self-sacrifice*, the culmination of a life devoted to the service of man!

Here we see, shining out with a splendour that fills eternity, every attribute of God. His holiness, which cannot *look* upon iniquity; His righteousness, which cannot abate one jot or tittle of His holy law; His justice, which demands the payment of the penalty “to the uttermost farthing;” His wisdom in devising the plan whereby He might be both “a *just* God and a *Saviour*,” and might keep His heaven pure and undefiled while He admitted “a great multitude which no man could number” of redeemed and regenerated sinners; His power in destroying the works of the devil, and *undoing the evil* that was done; His truth in fulfilling every promise at so great a cost in the full accomplishment of His eternal purpose; and the golden link which united and established all, and bound them together in adamantine strength—His infinite and unchanging love.

It is in that wonderful crucifixion Psalm (xxii.) that He says, “I will declare Thy *Name* unto my brethren,” and again in His prayer for His people (John xvii.),

“I have declared Thy *Name* unto them, and *will* declare it.”

For until Calvary none could rightly apprehend the meaning of that marvellous *redemption* Name, which, in its sevenfold glory, circles like a halo of light around the cross. There we behold—

Jehovah, the great I AM, “the Most High over all the earth” (Psalm lxxxiii. 18), who works according to the purpose of His own sovereign will in saving His people from their sins, delivering them from the house of bondage.

Jehovah-jireh (Gen xxii. 14), the Ransom provided.

Jehovah-rophi (Exod. xv. 26), “the Lord that healeth thee,” by Whose stripes we are healed, Who was bruised for our iniquities.

Jehovah-nissi (Exod. xvii. 15), the glorious banner “displayed because of the truth” (Psalm lx. 4); the banner which is clouds and darkness to the enemy, but light and joy to His own; for “His banner over them is Love.”

Jehovah-shalom (Judg. vi. 24), through whom “we have peace with God;” for He hath made peace through the blood of His cross.

Jehovah-tsidkenu (Jer. xxiii. 6, marg.), whose perfect righteousness is imputed to all who believe, and it covers all their sin (Psalm xxxii. 1).

Jehovah-shammah (Ezek. xlvi. 35), “the Lord is there,” as He said, “In all places where I record

my Name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.”

And this is that Name of the Lord which is “a strong tower, into which the righteous runneth, and is safe” (Prov. xviii. 10).

Gazing upon this scene, the world sees nothing but a weak and helpless victim suffering at the hands of wicked men ; but we whose minds are enlightened by the Spirit behold the very God of gods and Lord of lords stooping to conquer ; we behold on earth a manifestation of the character of God, a revelation of “the glory of His grace,” such as heaven itself could not present.

Angels and archangels might know much of His infinite love ; it was reserved for poor rebel sinners to draw forth the marvels of His *grace* ; and, blessed thought ! every poor sinner now on earth may know this grace flows out for *him*. “Christ tasted death for *every man*.” The blood was shed that the gate of heaven might be opened wide, that all who will may enter there.

“ Oh, 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love,
The love of God to *me* ;
It brought my Saviour from above,
To die on Calvary.”

VIII.

LOVE WEEPETH.

“JESUS WEPT !”—John xi. 35.

“OH THAT MY HEAD WERE WATERS, AND MINE EYES A
FOUNTAIN OF TEARS, THAT I MIGHT WEEP DAY AND NIGHT
FOR THE SLAIN OF THE DAUGHTER OF MY PEOPLE !”—Jer. ix. 1.

VIII.

LOVE WEEPETH.

JESUS WEPT ! Stand still, O my soul, and marvel ! Were the whole vocabulary of language blotted out, except these two words, they contain enough for the eternal wonder of men and angels. Were there nothing else in the whole Bible to show it to be the inspiration of God, these two words alone, in the infinite sublimity of their meaning, would incontrovertibly prove it to be a divine revelation.

Fehovah wept ! No created being could have conceived such a thought. We may understand somewhat of God's anger or His wisdom, His might or His majesty ; but God's *tears !* this passes all comprehension.

How touching, yet how grand is the scene described in language so simple, so full of tender pathos !

Two grief-stricken women, surrounded by a little company of mourners, are approaching the rocky cavern where lies the lifeless clay of one they loved. In the midst of the group stands the Creator, the Lord

of heaven and earth, King of kings, and God of gods—and *He too weeps!* weeps as He beholds the ruin that sin and death have brought into His own dominions; weeps in tenderest sympathy with the works of His own hands, who now stand not only in the relation of creatures to the Creator, but as partakers of the same flesh and blood. He “weeps with them that weep.” “When Jesus therefore saw her (Mary) weeping, and the Jews also weeping, which came with her, He groaned in spirit, and was troubled.”

But why did He weep? Had He not the power to save? Was He not about to manifest this power? Had He not said that this was “for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby”? Was He not about to deliver from the jaws of death, and show forth His majesty and might, as the Lord of life? Then wherefore did He weep?

He wept because *He LOVED*. He *loved* the souls whom He had made; so when He stood in the presence of death, the wages of sin; in the presence of sorrow, the accompaniment of sin; in the presence of unbelief, the root of sin, “Jesus wept!”

Have we not here an answer to the questionings of many hearts, Why did not God prevent sin? why did He endow His creatures with the dangerous faculty of freewill, when He knew it would result in the eternal fall of some? “Be still, and know that I

am God." Can the worm question the sun, why it shines, or the rain-drop, whence it comes? can the tree tell how it grows, or why the husbandman digs about it, dungs it, and prunes it? How then can any finite mind enter into the counsels of the Most High?

Enough for us to know that God Himself, in the Person of Jesus Christ, *wept* over sin, and sorrow, and death.

"For I have *no pleasure* in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God." As He said by the mouth of the prophet, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jer. ix. 1.)

"He beheld the city, and *wept* over it."

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

And what comfort have we here for the sorrowing and suffering children of the kingdom!

"Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" asked the Jews in their unbelief and perplexity, and Martha and Mary had hinted the same—"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother

had not died." Yet they could not doubt His love. "Behold, how He loved him!" said the Jews; and the sisters had sent Him the message that they knew would most touch the tender heart of the Great Physician: "Lord, behold, *he whom Thou lovest* is sick." Yet He had not come at once, as we should have expected; but, as revealed in the sacred narrative, "*When He heard therefore that he was sick*, He abode two days still in the place where He was."

Yea, and it was *because* He "loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus," that He refrained from coming immediately. Yet, though He did not come in bodily presence, His Spirit was with them; He knew all that was taking place, and His sorrow was deeper far than theirs—"In all their affliction He was afflicted;" and when the right time had come, He needed no second summons, but said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."

And when Lazarus had been called from the grave, and the tears had all been wiped away; when Jesus had given them "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," not *one* of them but would have gone through the night of weeping again for the joy that came in the morning.

How hallowed, how tender, how deep would be the communion now that Jesus had *wept* with them, and had restored to life again him whom they loved!

Moreover, they had seen the glory of God, and adoration would now mingle with their love, as all their thoughts now centred on Jesus. How much sweeter and holier than before would be their fellowship with Him on that evening when they made Him a supper, and Martha served, and Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with Him, and Mary anointed His feet with the ointment of spikenard very costly, “ and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment ”!

Doubtless, of all the hearts there which loved Jesus, none were bound to Him with so close a tie as those who had walked with Him in the furnace of affliction.

And Jesus is “ the same yesterday and to-day and for ever.” What He was to the mourners at Bethany, so He is to all His sorrowing and suffering ones now.

Does the furnace seem hot, and the trial long? It is *because He loves you*. Does it seem as if your prayer were unheard, your bitter cry unheeded? It is *because He loves you*.

“ Tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.”

“ Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart;” but there must be the ploughing and harrowing, as well as the sowing; and though the seed may be hidden from our view, we *shall* reap the harvest by-and-by.

But we get the firstfruits even now ; so soon as we have submitted ourselves under the mighty hand of God, not murmuringly, but cheerfully, then we are fitted to receive the communications of His grace ; and though the thorn may not be removed, the clouds are, and we see the bright shining of His face.

It is tears, not smiles, that bring us into closest communion with our Lord. The way into the inner chamber is the way the Master trod, and He was "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

And if the firstfruits be so precious, what shall the full harvest be ? "for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, *worketh for us* a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ;" and though we fail to realize this, our Lord knows it, and He loves us too well to let us lose the golden grain. Doubtless this is often the reason why many prayers *seem* unanswered. We cannot see the end, but He can.

The end is not here. Jesus had said of Lazarus, "This sickness is not unto death," yet Lazarus died. But death was not the end ; *the end was resurrection and the glory of God.*

So with *every* trouble, great and small, which is sent to the child of God. The end is yet to come, when Christ shall be "glorified in His saints."

If we cannot understand nor realize this, let us leave ourselves in the hands of the Refiner ; He is tting by the furnace, *watching.*

A lady asked a silver refiner by what means he knew when the molten silver was sufficiently purified. "By seeing my own face clearly reflected in it," he replied. So with Christ, the great Refiner of our souls ; He is watching and regulating the furnace, and producing in us His own image and likeness ; but lest at any time we fear the furnace has been made needlessly hot, let us remember for our comfort the tender compassion of our Lord ; for "*Jesus wept !*"

Jesus wept ! O blessed tears that fell
 From eyes that scanned the infinite. Eyes
 Which eternal ages could not dim,
 Were dimmed with tears ! Eyes from whence there shone
 The brightness of the Father's glory ;
 Tears that welled up from the heart of God,
 Revealing depths unfathomable
 Of love, and grief for human woe. Tears
 Which angels could not weep. Pearly drops
 From th' infinite ocean of God's love ;
 Yet human tears of tender sympathy
 From Him who is both God and Man. Who
 Came to wipe all tears from every eye
 Of all His ransomed ones. Heaven nor earth
 In all the everlasting ages
 Yet to come, shall e'er forget, amid
 Their joys eternal, that the Saviour *wept !*

IX.

LOVE'S OFFERING.

“CHRIST, WHO THROUGH THE ETERNAL SPIRIT OFFERED
HIMSELF WITHOUT SPOT TO GOD”—Heb. ix. 14.

“THEY CRUCIFIED HIM.”—Matt. xxvii. 35.

“I LAY DOWN MY LIFE, THAT I MIGHT TAKE IT AGAIN.
NO MAN TAKETH IT FROM ME : I LAY IT DOWN OF MYSELF.”
—John x. 17, 18.

IX.

LOVE'S OFFERING.

HEAVEN rang with hallelujah when Christ was born, and the echoes were heard by the shepherds on Bethlehem's plain. All through His earthly life the angelic hosts had charge over Him, to keep Him, to bear Him up in their hands, lest He dashed His foot against a stone ; and doubtless they vied with each other, with a holy emulation, for the honour of waiting upon and ministering unto Him, while they eagerly desired to look into the things that were to come to pass.

And what of man, for whose deliverance He came ? “*They crucified Him !*” They deemed the Lord of glory, the Fountain of life, worthy of death, the death of the cross. They counted no indignity too great, no shame too grievous, no cruelty too terrible for the King of heaven, the Saviour of the world. “*Away with Him !*” they cried, “*Away with Him ! crucify Him, crucify Him !*” as they said of His Apostle, “*Away with such a fellow from the earth ; for it is not fit that he should live.*” They spit upon

Him, they railed at Him, they gnashed upon Him with their teeth.

And what men did eighteen centuries ago, in their hearts they do now. The world *hates* Christ, and were it possible, would crucify Him again to-day. The unrenewed heart of man still cries, "Away with Him!"

Men may not hate the false Christs of their own imagination, but they hate the Christ of God. Would He only consent to be nothing more than the exponent of a model life, a divine example of self-sacrifice, and a preacher of universal charity; would He leave men's darling secret sins alone, and content Himself with thundering against the grosser forms of evil; would He refrain from trampling upon men's pharisaisms and self-righteousness—nay, if He would but stoop to meet the world half-way, and graciously make concessions on account of the weakness of humanity, doubtless the world would fall down and worship Him.

So said their master, the devil, long ago, "If Thou therefore wilt worship *me*, all shall be Thine."

Let us not be mistaken in this matter. God has shut the lion's mouth for a little while just now, and the Church has a little breathing space, and much peace and prosperity; the world also professes much esteem for the Church, and would like to regard Christianity as but a twin-sister of civilization. And, alas! alas!

the Church is only too ready to dally with the world, and to make concessions to "learning," and "culture," and "the usages of society." And "the light of life," when not hid under a bushel or a bed, is often put into a coloured lantern, so that for many it is hard to discern between the false light and the true.

The world therefore looks on with complacency, and calls itself "Christian." But let *Christ* be preached, Christ the sin-bearer, who was Himself "separate from sinners," yet "was once offered to bear the sins of many;" "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" let the unrenewed heart be told that there is *no* good thing in it, but salvation is alone through the blood of Jesus Christ, and that every one that names the name of Christ must depart from *all* iniquity, then the cross becomes the same offence as of old, and the preaching of it foolishness.

"*They crucified Him!*" Yet man's part in this great transaction was but a subordinate one. Their sin lay not so much in the act as in the *will*. They were God's selected instruments for carrying out His purpose, but instead of fulfilling their office with amazement and trembling and weeping, they gloried in their shame. So the guilt came on their own heads, and they exulted in it. "His blood be on us, and on our children," they cried.

But let us look at the crucifixion as the act of the three-one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, regarding the instruments meanwhile as nothing more than the hammer, the nail, and the spear.

Christ through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself to God. It was a free, voluntary act on the part of the Lord Jesus. "*I lay down my life. . . . No man taketh it from me; I lay it down of myself.*"

He *offered* Himself. It was a kingly offering. He was Lord of His own life, having a *right* to lay it down and a *right* to take it again, as no created being has; and but for His own free-will, death could have had no power over Him.

He offered *Himself*. Nothing less would do. Not earth, not the whole universe, not heaven itself, was sufficient to pay the penalty of God's broken law, or buy back one single soul from perdition. The Son of God Himself must be the ransom, or not a soul can be saved. Oh, how inconceivably great must be the value of a human soul! how unspeakably awful must be its loss!

He offered Himself *without spot*. As our great High Priest, He possessed a twofold character. To us He came as the revelation of God, before God He appeared as the Representative of man. He took upon Him our nature, in all its weakness and infirmity, nay, in all that pertains to its inheritance through sin, except sin itself, and as a *Man* He lived a spotless life.

It was a small thing that neither devils, men, nor angels could find any fault in Him, but in the intense light of the holiness of God He was found to be "without blemish and without spot." Think of it; from infancy to manhood, from Bethlehem to Calvary, amidst weakness and weariness, hunger and thirst, amidst suffering of body and depression of spirit, amid treachery and calumny, ingratitude, unbelief, and hardness of heart, the malice of foes, the faithlessness of friends, never for one solitary moment did He come short one hair's breadth of the perfect law of God. Not one hasty word, not one impatient thought, not one momentary ruffling of the spirit. Truly, "He was in all points tempted like as we are," yet He remained without a shadow of sin.

And the Lord Jesus, as our Representative, brought to God this spotless life, this pure and holy soul, an offering to satisfy the claims of the broken law—that law which is holy and just and good—that the streams of God's infinite mercy might flow out to the rebel race through the channel of His own eternal righteousness.

"And the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Who can comprehend the full meaning of this? In the sacrifices by the law the offerer laid his hands on the head of the sacrifice, and thus *in symbol* his guilt was transferred to the innocent victim. But with Christ it was no mere symbol, it was an awful reality.

God Himself transferred *by imputation* our guilt to Him in a way we cannot understand, though He remained in His own Person the spotless Lamb of God.

We are treading now upon holy ground, touching upon a mystery utterly beyond the reach of human intellect; but such words as these—the words of the Holy Spirit—“*He hath made Him to be sin for us,*” “*Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree,*” teach us that there was a *real* transference *by imputation* of our guilt to the person of our Surety, and believers have thereby a *real* transference of righteousness by imputation; for they are “made the righteousness of God *in Him.*”

Here we have before us the great Antitype of the *burnt offering.* “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.” “This commandment have I received of My Father.”

Of the *sin offering*; for “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

Of the *peace offering*; for “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Of the *meat offering*; for “My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.”

Of the *trespass offering*; for “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”

It is noteworthy that all the Old Testament types of

our Lord have a distinct reference, not to His incarnation, nor to His earthly life (except indirectly), but to His *death and resurrection*. And it is to His *death and resurrection* that the Holy Spirit in the writings of the Apostles almost entirely directs our attention.

It is most important to remember this at the present day, when so many point to the *life* of Christ as the chief thing, His teaching, His example; and regard His death as only the crowning glory of a life of self-sacrifice.

His was indeed a wonderful life, a life demanding not merely our imitation, but the highest adoration of our souls. It was a human life, through which the Divine glory of His Godhead shone with a bright effulgence, a marvellous revelation of God to man; but it is the *offering of Himself without spot to God through the Eternal Spirit*, His being made "the propitiation for our sins," His descent into the dust of death, and His rising again through the mighty power of the Spirit, that is alone the foundation of our salvation.

Lastly, He offered Himself *to God*.

The awful mystery of the work of our redemption was transacted between the Eternal Three alone. Our eyes cannot pierce the impenetrable veil that shrouds it; we cannot reduce it to scientific methods, we cannot explain it. With adoration we may gaze upon that which is manifest; with humble faith we must

simply rely upon the word of God that all has been accomplished, the claims of eternal justice satisfied, and the law vindicated ; so that now He can “be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

X.

LOVE'S TRIUMPH.

“IT IS FINISHED!”—John xix. 30

“HAVING SPOILED PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS, HE MADE
A SHOW OF THEM OPENLY, TRIUMPHING OVER THEM.”—
Col. ii. 15.

X.

LOVE'S TRIUMPH.

“**I**T IS FINISHED!” The cry rang out from earth, and filled heaven. If all the sons of God shouted for joy when the corner-stone of the world was laid, if the multitude of the heavenly host broke forth into a song of praise when the Babe was born in Bethlehem, can we doubt that when the great work of atonement was completed, and the victory won, the triumphant cry from the Saviour’s lips was caught up from legion to legion of the angelic hosts, till heaven rang with the music of the song, and was filled with the newborn joy?

“**I**T IS FINISHED!” The mighty work which He had come from heaven to do was completed, the terrible baptism, of which He said, “How am I straitened until it be accomplished!” was over, the full force of the wrath of God against sin had spent itself upon Him, and the claims of infinite holiness and eternal justice were satisfied.

“**I**T IS FINISHED!” *His sufferings were ended.*

Reverently we may trace His going “down to the

lowest pit," by His sayings on the cross. At first it is man's guilt and man's need that occupies His thoughts. In the freshness of His agony, it was not His own parched and quivering body that He cared for, but the souls of those He came to save: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." In His infinite compassion pleading their ignorance of the heinousness of their crime. Here it was men's doings towards Himself that was the burden upon His heart, and He interceded on behalf of His enemies.

Then He lovingly provided for her whose soul was pierced through with a sword, as spoken by aged Simeon, and at the same time gently and tenderly broke for ever the filial and maternal tie that had existed between them. "Woman, behold thy son!" He said, and henceforth John was to be the son of Mary; Jesus would only be known as the Son of God.

Then the cross became the Throne of grace, and as a King He dispensed pardon and gave eternal life to the penitent thief.

But now man is left out of sight; His dealings are with God alone; darkness covers the face of the earth, an emblem of the deeper darkness which envelopes His soul.

No created eye can penetrate the thick gloom of that awful hour; we can but listen to the echoes of the terrible woe that filled and encompassed His spirit. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy water-

spouts : all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in the darkness, in the deeps ; Thy wrath lieth hard upon me ; Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves." At last, after an awful silence of three hours, there comes out of the thick darkness, from that terrible abyss, the piercing cry, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" God alone can understand the full meaning of those words ; but they tell us of the *reality* of the judgment that fell upon Christ, and express the amazement of the Son of man at the terribleness of the wrath and the awful hiding of the face of God.

It was the last draught of the cup of woe. Man could not understand it. " He calleth for Elias," they said ; and when the poor parched body, "dried up like a potsherd," uttered the cry, "I thirst," they hasted to add their mite to His sufferings, fulfilling the words of Scripture, "They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

But now the ordeal is over, all things are accomplished, the "one sacrifice for sins for ever" has been made, and nothing now remains but to release the poor broken body, and lay it aside to rest ; so with a loud voice He proclaims to the universe of God, " **IT IS FINISHED !**" and committing His spirit into the hands of His loving Father, He bows His head, and yields up the ghost.

" **IT IS FINISHED !**" The spoiler was spoiled, the

prince of this world was cast out, the work of the devil was destroyed, the gates of brass were burst asunder, and liberty was proclaimed to the captives. Until now death had reigned; there was but one history to all of Adam's race—"Born—lived—died." The world was but one charnel house, the grave covered all. Alas! how true was the word spoken to Adam, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon *all* men."

But now the bands of death are broken, and "life and immortality are brought to light" by Him, who "through death destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."

"IT IS FINISHED!" The long train of sacrifices enjoined by the law had found their fulfilment, the holocaust of victims, whose only office had been to point to the Holy One on Calvary, was now to cease, and the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cattle would no more be heard in connection with the worship of Jehovah.

In these the Lord had "smelled a savour of rest," as they pointed to "the Lamb of God" who was to take away the sin of the world. Now that rest had come, a rest far more glorious than that of the first Sabbath which dawned on Eden, when God "rested from all His work which He had made." That was

a rest which was quickly broken, but this was a rest which should endure for ever.

“IT IS FINISHED!” The way “into the holiest” was now made open, the “new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.” The barrier which sin had raised between the grace of God and the souls of men was broken down; for the majesty of the law was vindicated, the penalty paid “to the uttermost farthing,” and the love of God, like a limitless ocean, could flow out towards sinners on the ground of His inviolate righteousness.

All this was the triumph of His LOVE. It was *love* brought Him down to undertake for us, it was *love* that carried Him through that terrible baptism of fire, *love* strengthened Him for the conflict with the powers of darkness; and when He cried with a loud voice, “It is finished!” it was *love* that proclaimed the glorious victory; love, infinite love, unmerited, unsought, sovereign love! and not a soul on all the earth can say that love was not for *him*.

The triumph was gained for *us*. Our “Leader and Commander” fought the battle alone, and won the victory by His own right hand. This victory He has given to us, and every saint—even the weakest—can now join in the triumphant song—

“O death, where is thy sting?
O grave, where is thy victory?”

Death is no more death, it is “falling asleep;” and the grave is but the resting-place, where the body awaits “the redemption of the purchased possession.”

“No shade of darkness dwelleth
Where Christ the Lord hath been ;
His presence aye dispelleth
The clouds from every scene.

The ‘strong man’s’ power was shaken,
When a stronger One than he
Entered within the narrow vale,
And bound him mightily.

His footprint there investeth
With a glory bright as day,
Where now the saint but resteth—
‘The place where Jesus lay.’

XI.

LOVE “EVER LIVETH.”

“HAVING LOVED HIS OWN, HE LOVED THEM TO
THE END.”—John xiii. 1.

“SEEING HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR
THEM.”—Heb. vii. 25.

“BECAUSE I LIVE, YE SHALL LIVE ALSO.”—John xiv. 19.

XI.

LOVE "EVER LIVETH."

WHEN He bowed His head and yielded up the ghost, it was as Lord of His own life. He laid it down, that He might take it again. When they laid the broken body by, it was but to rest awhile in the bosom of the earth, awaiting the hour of His glorious resurrection.

It was necessary that He should suffer "the pains of death" to complete the penalty; but "it was not possible that He should be holden of it;" so when the fulness of the time was come, the "Prince of life" shook off the dust of death, laid aside the cerements of the tomb, and came forth the mighty conqueror, our great High Priest, to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end." The love that brought Him down from heaven, the love that carried Him through His mighty undertaking—His is the same love still, infinite, unchangeable, and eternal—the same tender,

yearning, all-absorbing love. So soon as our great High Priest had "by His own blood entered in once unto the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," He sent no archangel to bring the message of His love to His sorrowing disciples, not even the Comforter, but Himself came to talk with them as in the old days, to show by the print of the nails and the spear, that it was really He, their risen Lord, "not lost, but gone before," to expound the Scriptures, to assure them of His continual presence with them, and anew to reveal to them the burden of His heart, commissioning them to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to *every creature.*"

As He led them again through the old familiar places, and visited with them His beloved Galilee, their souls would be knit to Him with closer, yet with holier ties. The same tenderness would beam from His eyes, the same gracious words would fall from His lips ; but He would be to them, not an earthly Master, but a heavenly ; and they would remember Him hereafter, not in the weakness of the flesh, but in the power and glory of the resurrection.

Perhaps, too, the last loved intercourse would take away the sting from the memory of their peevishness and unbelief, their petty strifes and foolish ambitions, their indecorous haste and gainsaying, by which they had so often grieved Him during His life on earth.

Henceforth they would know Him only as their

risen Lord, their great High Priest, the Saviour of the world ; and so all their future teaching and preaching would be concerning Him as such.

It is noteworthy, as already stated, that in no other aspect is He presented to us by the Apostles. His birth, His infant life is never mentioned. His life on earth is only cursorily alluded to. It is His death and resurrection, His high-priestly work in heaven, and His coming again in glory, to which our eyes are exclusively directed.

There is unhappily much poetical talk in the present day, which has a great fascination for the multitude, but which is most misleading, and all the more dangerous because of the *seeming* reverence for Christ. For when men talk, as many do, of "the child Christ" or "the Christ child," and when they hold up the earthly life of Jesus for the admiration and imitation of unconverted men, it is mere human teaching, and not "according to the Scriptures."

The life of Christ on earth, as was said before, was a manifestation of the character of God, and no man can hope to follow that, even afar off, until he has become a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus, and is made a "partaker of the Divine nature."

And herein is a most blessed truth. It is not a dead Christ, but a *living* Christ, to whom we look for salvation. Faith in Christ is not a mere belief concerning things that have taken place, but the com-

mittal of oneself to a personal Saviour, "Who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." And it is not our *faith* that saves us, but *Christ*. Faith is only the hand touching the hem of His garment. Like the lifting up of the eye to the brazen serpent, it has no virtue in itself; all the virtue comes from Him. True, it is *through* faith we obtain salvation; *but it is Jesus Himself who saves*, on the ground of His finished work for us, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And in the light of this, how inestimably precious to us are those forty days before His ascension! Without them we might have feared lest, in His glorified state, He might not have been so approachable, so forbearing, so tenderly compassionate as in the days of His flesh.

But though in the sacred record we have only a few glimpses of His interviews with His disciples after the resurrection, they are enough to show us He was the same Jesus, manifesting the same gracious condescension, and revealing, if possible, to a still greater degree, His infinite tenderness.

How well the weeping Mary remembered the old familiar tone, as He pronounced her name! how the hearts of His sorrowing and perplexed disciples burned within them, as He talked with them by the way! how graciously He rebuked the unbelief of Thomas, condescending to the weakness of his faith, at the

same time teaching how much greater is the faith of him who believes without waiting for sight.

There is no word of rebuke to His disciples for their former unfaithfulness, no reminding them how "they all forsook Him and fled," no recalling of Peter's vain boast and terrible fall; all these are *blotted out* for ever, to be remembered no more.

Nay, He even hastened to let Peter know, by specially mentioning his name, that notwithstanding his denial of Him with oaths and curses, he still had a place in His heart; and on the occasion of His publicly reinstating him, when he had dined with the disciples on the shores of the sea of Tiberias, He gave a revelation of the character of His love, most sublime, most wonderful, most precious.

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" Behold the Infinite One stooping to crave the love of a human soul, and yearning to hear the expression of that love! "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" As saith the Bridegroom in the Song of Songs, "O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Three times Peter had denied Him, and three times He would hear his voice saying that he loved Him, and three times He would reinstate him as a feeder of the flock.

And oh how precious is the truth to us! what con-

fidence it should inspire in us, in our approaches to Him, knowing there is nothing He delights more to hear than a sinner seeking mercy, nothing sweeter to His ear than the voice of His redeemed.

Seated "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," His eye is still bent upon the earth He loves; by His Spirit He is still seeking the lost, while with tenderest care He is watching over His beloved people, leading them beside the still waters, making them to lie down in the green pastures, covering them with His wings, guiding them with His counsel, comforting and sustaining them, until He brings them to their desired haven, where "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

XII.

LOVE CALLETH.

“ UNTO YOU, O MEN, I CALL.”—Prov. viii. 4.

“ HO ! EVERY ONE THAT THIRSTETH, COME YE TO THE
WATERS, AND HE THAT HATH NO MONEY ; COME YE, BUY AND
EAT ; YEA, COME, BUY WINE AND MILK WITHOUT MONEY AND
WITHOUT PRICE.”—Isa. lv. 1.

XII.

LOVE CALLETH.

THAT the ear of the Lord should be open to *our* cry is wonder enough ; but here is matter for amazement indeed, that the Lord should condescend to call unto us ! Among men, when one has offended another, it is thought right that he should make the first advances towards reconciliation, more especially if he be inferior in position to the other. But here we have the offended Majesty on high, not waiting for His rebellious creatures to seek His mercy, but being Himself the first to speak, and to offer reconciliation. Not only has He made a complete atonement, and provided a full salvation, but He condescends to call unto His enemies, and beseech them to accept the priceless boon.

There is no standing upon His dignity. He stands, but it is at the door of the sinner's heart, knocking for admittance. As lowly in heart now as He was in the days of His humiliation, He *stoops to entreat the sinner.* Oh marvel of grace ! the Lord of glory pleads with the abjects ; the King of heaven

beseeches the rebels. He so loves the world, that even now He takes the lowliest place, waiting if *any* man will hear His voice and will open unto Him. Kings are wont to *command* the loyal services of their subjects, but the King of kings and Lord of lords condescends in His mighty love to *pray* the rebellious, "Be ye reconciled to God."

And if the Master calleth thee, poor sinner, wilt thou say Him nay? Are the pleasures of sin so sweet, are the world's husks so satisfying, that thou wilt turn thy back upon Christ and all the blessedness He brings?

What is it He offers you?

The blessedness of *peace with God*, of sin covered, transgression forgiven. The blessedness of a pure heart, of a conscience "void of offence." The joy of a spirit set free; for "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The blessedness of a mind *at rest*; for "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee."

Yea, these are but the beginnings of the good things He offers you. Even in this life you may have "joy unspeakable and full of glory," and in the life to come "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

Nay, He offers you **HIMSELF**, all that He has and

all that He is ; His power, His wealth, His glory, His infinite perfections, His everlasting life.

Alas ! will you refuse so inestimably precious a gift ? and for what ? A little more of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," that is all—and the price you pay, an *eternity of woe*.

But it may be you only need the assurance that the call is addressed to *you*, and then you will accept the loving invitation.

Listen ! "If *any man* hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." "If *any man* thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." "I am the door : by Me if *any man* enter in, he shall be saved."

Why, poor sinner, if thou wouldest be saved, and all the rest of the Bible seemed against thee, yea, if heaven, earth, and hell seemed to bar thy way to Christ, thou couldest come with but this one word, and He could not say thee nay.

A woman lay sick in a lonely cottage away up among the Welsh mountains. The cottage was lonely, but the woman's heart was lonelier still ; for she was "without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world."

As she lay on her sick bed, weak and weary, she had time for thought ; but what availed it when all was dark—the past, the present, and the future ?

The multitude of her thoughts within her were "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Poor desolate soul, drifting on in the darkness to a still darker eternity, having no light, no hope!

A lady heard of her case, and visited her. She was civilly received, but no interest was evinced in what she read from the Word of God. It was the same, time after time; but at last, one day, as she read, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," suddenly the sick woman stretched out her hand, and said, "Stop, stop there; that's enough for me! 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' I'm the sinner, that's enough for me!" Then she calmly lay back on her pillow, her countenance expressing the peace that filled her soul, and over and over again repeated the precious text, ever and anon adding, "That's enough for me!"

Yes, blessed be God, it was enough for her, and it is enough for any sinner upon earth. Millions upon millions have found it so; millions are resting upon that precious truth to-day, and "whosoever will" may find in it their souls' salvation.

"This is a *faithful saying*, and worthy of *all acceptance*, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*." This then is all the qualification you need, if you are but *willing to be saved*. Saved *from* your

sins, not with them ; for Christ and holiness cannot be separated."

Simply as a *sinner*, confessing yourself to be such, you have a *right* to lay hold of the promise of God, as being one for whom Christ died. You have but to accept of the "unspeakable gift," and praise His name for "the exceeding riches of His grace."

Perhaps you say, "I do not *feel* my sins as I ought." Never mind ; are you a *sinner*? If so, Christ died for *you*.

"But I fear I am not one of the elect." That is not the question ; the question is, Are you a *sinner*? The Bible speaks of elect *saints*, not of elect *sinners*.

"But I have been a hypocrite ; I have made a false profession, and have brought dishonour on the name of Jesus." Well, this is sad indeed ; yet a hypocrite is but a *sinner*, after all ; so you come within the category.

"Ah, there is no mercy for me," do you still say? "I am a wretched backslider ; I have known the way, and run in it. I have been to the fountain once, and known the joy of sin forgiven, and peace with God ; but I have left my Saviour, and gone back into the world ; I have grieved my Lord, and denied Him. Now my heart is cold and dead ; there is no more pardon for me." Poor, poor backslider ! what hast thou lost? Thou hast left thy Father's table for "the husks that the swine do eat." Truly thou art a great

sinner, yet even in thy condemnation find thy hope ; for "Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*," and *thou art one*.

Oh, blessed, blessed truth ! this covers all sin, from the least even to the greatest, of every kind, of every hue ; so that none that cometh unto Him need fear of being cast out.

God's great salvation is for *all* ; the door is open wide : "WHOSOEVER WILL" may enter in ; for "WHO-
SOEVER shall call on the name of the Lord SHALL BE
SAVED."

Oh, wondrous message of love ! What music so sweet to the burdened sinner's ear, as the voice of the Lord proclaiming "liberty to the captive, the opening of the prison to them that are bound" ?

From His throne in heaven the call goes forth to the uttermost parts of the earth. He hath commanded His servants to "go and preach the gospel to *every* creature."

He bids the posts run swiftly, "that His way may be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations."

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation !"

XIII.

LOVE “BLOTTETH OUT.”

“I, EVEN I, AM HE THAT BLOTTETH OUT THY TRANSGRESSIONS FOR MINE OWN SAKE, AND WILL NOT REMEMBER THY SINS.”—Isa. xlivi. 25.

“THOU HAST CAST ALL MY SINS BEHIND THY BACK.”—Isa. xxxviii. 17.

“AS FAR AS THE EAST FROM THE WEST, SO FAR HATH HE REMOVED OUR TRANSGRESSIONS FROM US.”—Ps. clix. 12.

XIII.

LOVE “BLOTTETH OUT.”

WHEN the awakened soul first hearkens to the voice of the Saviour calling unto him, and realises that he has been sinning against His love, as well as rebelling against His authority, his one desire is for pardon, and he rejoices to hear the comforting words, “Thy sins are forgiven.” Or when, roused to alarm by the thunder of Sinai, he cries for mercy, his only thought is deliverance from impending doom. Like the Philippian jailor, he cries, “What must I do to be *saved?*” And the voice of the Lord, as it were holding wide open the door of the city of refuge, and stretching out the hand to pull in the trembling sinner fleeing from the wrath to come, answers quickly, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved.*”

But once inside the city of refuge, and having had breathing space and time to look around and to rejoice in the fact that he *is saved*, saved from the wrath of God that abideth on all who are out of Christ, saved “from the hand of the terrible one,” saved from the

penalty of his sins, from everlasting destruction,—he finds that there is something more than mere deliverance that he needs. Deliverance from death would not lift the load from his heart, or purge his *conscience* from sins. Even the knowledge of *forgiveness* would not suffice ; for, looking back upon the past, he would see a multitude of transgressions, every one of which would be as a root of wormwood and of gall.

Oh the bitter *memory* of sin ! how it haunts the mind ! how it stings like an adder ! Tears cannot blot it out ; but, blessed be God, the *precious blood of Christ* can, and infinite Love has provided for this also in the cross.

It is not only pardon that we receive at the hands of our loving God, though that were blessing enough for eternal gratitude, but a full restoration to all the privileges and joys of the “household of God.”

“ Make me as one of thy hired servants,” was all the returning prodigal hoped for, for well he knew he was no more worthy to be called a son. But the Father’s love and the Father’s joy was too great for that. “ Bring forth the *best* robe,” he cried, “ and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet ; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it ; and let us eat and be merry ; for this my *son* was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found.”

Oh how sweet to the mourning shame-faced soul these precious words of tenderest love, “ I, even I, am

He that *blotteth out* thy transgressions for mine own sake, and *will not remember* thy sins"! *Blotted out!* as if they had never existed. *Forgotten!* cast behind His back! (Isa. xxxviii. 17.) He will never more look upon them, for He sees us now in "the face of His Anointed." They will never confront us again; the Accuser shall never find them; and though our heavenly Father may permit us to remember them, in order to keep us humble and watchful, and to draw us closer to Himself, yet the *sting* is gone; for we know that the Lord Himself has *blotted them out*, and remembers them no more. He has cast them all "into the depth of the sea" (Micah vii. 19).

"Oh deep deep sea, where all my sins
By Christ are cast, and found no more.'

Covered by the ocean of His love, the remembrance of them *blotted out for ever*.

How sweetly was this shown forth in our Saviour's dealings with the disciples after His resurrection, to which we have already referred in a former chapter. When Joseph made himself known to his brethren, he said, "I am Joseph, your brother, *whom ye sold into Egypt*;" but when Jesus appeared to His disciples, He never made the slightest allusion to the past.

Yet there is still more than the blotting out from remembrance. There is the judicial cleansing, *the justification*. The Saviour said, "He that is washed

. . . . is *clean every whit* ;" and this responds to the Psalmist's prayer, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." "There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus."

It is most important to have a clear understanding of the difference between pardon and justification. Forgiveness is a *personal* act, justification is a *judicial* act. If a man rob me, I may forgive him, but he is not thereby *justified*; the guilt of robbery remains upon him. On the other hand, should he suffer the penalty due to his crime, the *law* is satisfied, and he is no longer amenable to it; yet I may never have *forgiven* him. But our God, in His wondrous love, gives us the double blessing. He both forgives us and removes our guilt. "He is faithful and just to *forgive us our sins*, and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness*." Nay, more, He gives us a righteousness which was not our own; for we are "made the righteousness of God in Him" (Christ); "having forgiven us all trespasses, *blotting out* the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, that was contrary to us, and took it out of the way; nailing it to His cross" (Col. ii. 14).

But there is a "*blotting out*" of a terrible nature, revealed to us in Scripture, for all those who set at naught the counsel of God, and despise His reproof: "Who-soever hath sinned against Me, him will *I blot out of my book*." What book? the book of life. "And who-soever was not found written in the book of life was

cast into the lake of fire," "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Awful words! who can comprehend the terribleness of their meaning?

And yet, marvellous as it may appear, this too has its root in love. The ancient fable tells of a peasant who, finding a frozen snake in the wood, had compassion on it, and took it into his cottage, putting it beside the warm hearth. When it began to revive, he put a basin of milk before it, which it eagerly drank. But in a little while, annoyed by the play of the children, it raised its head to strike at them with its fangs ; when the peasant, observing this, immediately seized a hatchet, and struck off its head. What nerved the father's arm to kill the animal he had ere now so compassionately cared for? It was *love*,—love to the little ones who were dependent upon him and claimed his protection.

And so also *love* is at the root of God's terrible judgments upon the serpent and his seed. Love to those whose eternal happiness depends upon the maintenance of His eternal holiness. "Whatsoever defileth" must be barred from His presence for ever, and all who "love darkness," and "will not come to the light," must be shut out from His heaven. And it is *love* that gives the warning, and tells plainly the terrible doom of all who "choose death." The Saviour sorrowfully complains, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life," and in *love* He warns them of the awful consequences of the terrible choice.

But to every sinner who is willing to “flee from the wrath to come,” and “lay hold on eternal life,” and who brings the burden of his guilt to the feet of Jesus, and to every child of God who is mourning over the remaining corruption within, how sweet those words, falling on the ear like the silvery ripple of a stream, “*I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins ; . . . for I have redeemed thee*” (Isa. xliv. 22).

XIV.

LOVE'S JOY.

“THE JOY OF THE LORD.”—Neh. viii. 10.

“HE WILL REJOICE OVER THEE WITH JOY. . . . HE WILL
JOY OVER THEE WITH SINGING.”—Zeph. iii. 17.

“THESE THINGS HAVE I SPOKEN UNTO YOU, THAT MY JOY
MIGHT REMAIN IN YOU, AND THAT YOUR JOY MIGHT BE FULL.”
—John xv. 11.

XIV.

LOVE'S JOY.

THE whole purpose of God is a purpose of joy. It is not so much a question of right government, of reward and punishment, of perfect order,—these are all subordinate to this one great end, that His whole creation may be filled with His own infinite and everlasting joy.

If a number of His creatures wilfully shut themselves out from this “exceeding joy,” theirs is the eternal loss. Their banishment for ever from His presence, to endure His infinite and eternal wrath against the sin to which they cling, is but the fruit of their own doings; it is not the purpose of their creation, nor the pleasure of the Lord; “For I have *no pleasure* in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God.”

We have seen how “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,” when they beheld the laying of the corner-stone, which, though the completion of creation, was but the beginning of the carrying out of the great eternal purpose which He had purposed in Himself, “that in the dispensa-

tion of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on the earth.” And when, by Adam’s rebellion, the link was broken that united man to the life that is in God, and the mists of sin had shut out the earth from the light of His countenance, yet God’s great purpose was not thwarted. Out of the darkness, the misery and sin would yet arise a “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

And so the Book of God, from beginning to end, is full of triumphant joy. From the earliest promise, that “the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head,” to the prediction of the glorious appearing of Him who hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, “*King of kings and Lord of lords* ;” from the first guarding of the tree of life, in the earthly Eden, to the God-given “right to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God ;” from the first clothing of Adam and Eve with the skins of animals, to the arraying of the bride “in fine linen, clean and white ;” from the first gleam of hope given to the guilty pair, to the prophecy of the new heavens and the new earth, and the great voice out of heaven, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them,” the whole Bible is full of the songs of joy and gladness.

True, there are many dark lines, by reason of the

existence of sin ; but even in the darkest parts “ the joy of the Lord ” is ever breaking forth like the sun breaking through a mass of black clouds, giving glimpses of the glory beyond.

The joy is ever inseparably connected with the advent of Christ. All through the Scripture this is the one note of jubilation ; but it gives forth the richest harmonies, as from a ten-stringed instrument. Its wondrous music reveals the depth, and the height, and the breadth, and the length of that Love which passeth knowledge.

His mission is proclaimed to be “ to preach glad tidings unto the meek,” “ to give the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”

When the Babe was born at Bethlehem, the angel proclaimed that he brought “ good tidings of *great joy* to all people,” and the multitude of the heavenly host sang anew their song of praise.

Terrible as was the ordeal through which our blessed Saviour and Lord had to pass, we are told it was for the *joy* set before Him that He endured the cross, despising the shame. And having accomplished man’s redemption, and ascended up on high, “ there is *joy*,” He tells us, “ in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” And as one by one His servants come before Him to receive the reward of their service, of their “ work and labour of

love, which they have showed toward His name," as He welcomes them to the "place prepared for them," He will say, "Enter thou into the *joy* of thy Lord."

But it is God's desire that to our utmost capacity we should *here* be filled with His joy, and it is of the greatest importance that we should know how we are to obtain so inestimable a blessing.

There are four things which are absolutely necessary.

The first is FAITH. "Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." It is a common thing for anxious, troubled souls to practically mis-read this, as if it were "Rejoicing, ye believe." They look for the *joy* first, and wait to found their faith upon that; a poor shifting foundation of quicksand to build upon. But thank God He has laid a far better, even a sure foundation. "For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST." "A chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded."

Should any such troubled soul be reading this, I beseech you to cease *looking for* the joy. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Take the plain word of God as your warrant, and resting upon that, neither men nor devils will be able to rob you of your joy.

But the *joy* comes *after* you believe, not *before*. God does not say, "Rejoicing, ye believe," but "be-

lieving, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

The next is COMMUNION. It was when our Lord had been speaking of *abiding* in Him, that He said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Christ is the Fountain of joy, the Well of living water. It is in communion with Him that "with joy we draw water from the wells of salvation."

The joy of communion is mutual. It is by abiding in communion with Him that we bring forth much fruit, that excellent fruit of the Spirit, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meakness, temperance," of which the Bridegroom, rejoicing over the bride, says in the Song of Songs, "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits. Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." And when the spouse, in her joy, gives the loving invitation, "Let my beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits," we hear the delighted reply, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh, with my spice; I have eaten my honey-comb, with my honey; I have drunk my wine, with my milk. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Thus the soul rejoices in Christ, and Christ rejoices

in the soul, when it brings forth abundantly the fruit of His own Spirit, to the glory of the Father. He Himself yearns for this communion of joy. “Let me see thy countenance,” He says ; “let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.” And the saint, filled with an ecstasy of delight, exclaims, “In Thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.”

The third channel of joy is SERVICE. Without *service*, there can be no real communion. “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,” said the Lord Jesus ; and unless we be *fellow-workers* with God, we cannot enter into full communion. It may be the service of active effort that is required of us, or it may be the service of standing and waiting, or perhaps the harder and higher service of bearing witness in suffering ; but whatever the kind or form of service, it must have this essential element, that it is a *doing of the Master’s will* ; and whatever the sphere, whether in obscure corners, almost unknown to others, or in the high places of the field ; whether within the circle of the home, or of the Church, or of the world, one thing alone is sufficient, that we be filled with the Master’s Spirit.

If we be filled with the Master’s Spirit, we shall be full of compassion for the lost. “Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law” (Ps. cxix. 136). Oh to be filled with this intense com-

passion! It is only thus we can truly enter into His joy. "He that goeth forth, and *weepeth*, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with *rejoicing*, bringing his sheaves with him." "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not *Love*, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not *Love*, I am nothing."

Yet another condition necessary to the maintenance of joy is a pure heart and an undefiled conscience. Joy is the tenderest grape of all the precious fruits of the Spirit. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have *tender grapes*."

The smallest speck of dust will hurt the eye, and the slightest stain upon the conscience, the least sinful thought lodged within the heart, even the walking in a *doubtful* path, will obscure the soul's vision, and shut it out from the light of God's countenance.

It is only when we "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," that we can have the joy of His salvation.

And when may we be filled with this joy? At *all* times and in *all* circumstances. "Rejoice in the Lord *always*, and again I say, Rejoice." Joy is the birthright of the child of God, and it is his alone.

Out of Christ there is no joy. There may be *mirth* without Christ; but "the laughter of fools is as the crackling of thorns under the pot." And there is an earthly gladness, of which men may partake who know nothing of the Lord—one of the sweets of Eden which God in His goodness has preserved to us for our earthly life—but it is full of alloy, and it *does not last*.

This is totally different from *true joy*, that "joy of the Lord," which is possessed only by those who have been "made partakers of the Divine nature," which can only flow into a human heart through a living union with God.

And oh what reason has such an one to "rejoice always"! He was *lost*, now he is *saved*. Formerly he was "without Christ," now he is "one with Christ;" he was "without God," now he is "of the household of God;" formerly he had "no hope," now he is *built* upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ; formerly he was "afar off," now he is "made nigh by the blood of Christ." He was before a child of disobedience and of wrath, an alien from the heavenly commonwealth, a stranger to the covenant of promise; now he is a child of God, a "fellow-citizen with the saints," an inheritor of all the exceeding great and precious promises which are in Christ Jesus.

And if his present state gives cause for joy, what should his future prospects do? What has he to

look forward to? "An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Everlasting joy! eternal glory! "their eyes shall behold the King in His beauty," and they shall be "*for ever with the Lord.*"

" My heart is resting, O my God,
 I will give thanks and sing ;
 My heart is at the secret source
 Of every precious thing :
 Now the frail vessel Thou hast made,
 No hand but Thine shall fill ;
 For the waters of this world have failed,
 And I am thirsty still.

I thirst for springs of heavenly life,
 And here all day they rise ;
 I seek the treasure of Thy love,
 And close at hand it lies ;
 And a new song is in my mouth,
 To long-loved music set ;
 Glory to Thee for all the grace
 I have not tasted yet.

Glory to Thee for strength withheld,
 For want and weakness known,
 And the fear that sends me to Thyself,
 For what is most my own ;
 I have a heritage of joy
 That yet I must not see,
 But the Hand that bled to make it mine
 Is keeping it for me.

My heart is resting, O my God,
My heart is in Thy care ;
I hear the voice of joy and health
Resounding everywhere :
'Thou art my portion, saith my soul,'
Ten thousand voices say,
And the music of their glad Amen
Will never die away."

XV.

LOVE'S JEALOUSY.

“GOD IS JEALOUS.”—Nahum i. 2.

“HE THAT TOUCHETH YOU, TOUCHETH THE APPLE OF HIS EYE.”—Zech. ii. 8.

“HE THAT LOVETH FATHER, OR MOTHER, . . . OR SON, OR DAUGHTER, MORE THAM ME IS NOT WORTHY OF ME.”

—Matt. x. 37.

XV.

LOVE'S JEALOUSY.

LOVE has ever an innermost circle, to which only *one* can be admitted. It is so in human love. In that closest and tenderest of unions, the marriage tie, only two can "walk together." Family affection, filial love, parental care, may be strong and tender; the devotion of friendship may be deep and lasting, yet it is not aggrieved by being shared by others ; but the true love of husband and wife cannot brook the intrusion of a third.

And while the Lord our God presents Himself to us in all the relationships of life, as father, mother, brother, and friend, He takes the marriage relationship above all others to typify the close and intimate union that exists betwixt Himself and His redeemed, and to shew forth the unspeakable tenderness of His love for the people of His choice. "I the Lord thy God am a *jealous* God;" and truly He experienced that "jealousy is cruel as the grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire, a most vehement flame ;" for it cost Him baptism of blood and fire to "redeem us from all

iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people FOR HIS OWN POSSESSION” (Titus ii. 14, R.V.).

And now He is jealous *for* His people. He encompasses them about like a wall of fire, and will permit no evil to befall them. Their enemies may rage, but except in so far as He is pleased to permit their malice for trying and purifying them, “there shall not a dog move his tongue” against them. When the enemy oppresses them, as He saith, “My fury shall come up in my face; for in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken” (Ezek. xxxviii. 18, 19); for “thus saith the Lord, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with a great jealousy” (Zech. i. 14). Yea, so vigilant is His watchfulness, so exquisitely tender His jealous care, that He declares that “he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye.” This holy jealousy is the most glorious of all the aspects of His love, most blessed to the saints, while it is most incomprehensible to the unspiritual.

A *right* jealousy is an essential element of love; without it true love cannot exist, and it is because God’s love is such a full, true, pure love, such an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable love, and such a matchless, wondrous, overwhelming love, that it is so full of holy jealousy.

God is jealous for His own glory. This is no selfish jealousy. The whole moral government of the universe, the happiness of all His creatures who look to Him

for their well-being, depends upon the unsullied glory of God. Were His glory to be for one moment tarnished, the universe would instantly become a moral chaos.

His glory means the absolute perfection of all His attributes ; His "wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth ;" and if one of them failed in the slightest degree, or were exercised at the expense of another, the reins of government would fall from His hands, and the whole fabric of the universe would be plunged into irrevocable anarchy and ruin.

Therefore it is out of His infinite love that He so jealously guards His own glory.

And the saints rejoice because "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth ;" and He has declared, "My glory will I not give to another." And whatever be the machinations of men or devils, "the glory of the Lord shall endure for ever."

God is also "jealous for His holy Name" (Ezek. xxxix. 25) ; His wonderful redemption-Name Jehovah, in all its sevenfold glory, JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH-JIREH, JEHOVAH-ROPHI, JEHOVAH-NISSI, JEHOVAH-SHALOM, JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH. "Thou shalt call His name JESUS ; for He *shall save His people from their sins.*" "And they shall call His Name EMMANUEL . . . God with us." Here we see how His people are enfolded in His jealous care for His most blessed Name,

And Jesus, how jealous He was for His Father's honour ! "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up." "Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise." It was the glory of His Father's name that He came to manifest, the magnifying and making honourable of His Father's law that He set before Him as the grand end of His mission to the earth ; it was in loving obedience to His Father's command that He gave Himself for us, "an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour."

We have already spoken of His jealousy *for* His people ; but He is also jealous of His people's love. He claims their undivided affection. They are to Him "a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." He gave Himself for them. He bought them with His own blood, He takes them for *His portion*, His inheritance. He delights in them, rejoices over them as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride.

No sacrifice was too great to make for them, no glory, no blessedness too great to provide for them. Into His own glory He must take them, on His own throne they must sit with Him : wherever He is, there they must be also ; therefore He is "jealous over them with a godly jealousy." He cannot permit another to participate in the love that is due to Him alone.

They must be purged of everything that draws their hearts away from Him, even "the *little* foxes

that spoil the vines," and the "dead flies" that infect the fragrance of the ointment.

This is the purpose of all His care, of the discipline He puts them through, the heated furnace, the pruning knife, the bitter draught; it is that He may "present them to *Himself* a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Nothing therefore can be more delightful to a gracious soul than to realize its position in this innermost circle of His love, and to enter into the fulness of the meaning of those words, "I THE LORD THY GOD AM A JEALOUS GOD."

"I lift my heart to Thee,
Saviour Divine,
For Thou art all to me,
And I am Thine :
Is there on earth a closer bond than this,
That 'my Beloved's mine, and I am His' ?

Thine am I by all ties ;
But chiefly Thine,
That through Thy sacrifice,
Thou, Lord, art mine :
By Thine own cords of love, so sweetly wound
Around me, I to Thee am closely bound.

To Thee, Thou bleeding Lamb,
I all things owe ;
All that I have and am,
And all I know ;

All that I have is now no longer mine,
And I am not my own : Lord, I am Thine.

How can I, Lord, withhold
Life's brightest hour
From Thee ; or gathered gold,
Or any power ?

Why should I keep one precious thing from Thee,
When Thou hast given Thine own dear self for me ?"

Mudie.

XVI.

LOVE'S SECRET.

“THE SECRET OF THE LORD IS WITH THEM THAT FEAR HIM.”—Ps. xxv. 14.

“HE BROUGHT ME TO THE BANQUETING HOUSE, AND HIS BANNER OVER ME WAS LOVE.”—Song Sol. ii. 4.

“IN THE SECRET OF HIS TABERNACLE SHALL HE HIDE ME.”—Ps. xxvii. 5.

XVI.

LOVE'S SECRET.

CLOSE as is the relationship between Christ and the Church, there is yet an inner sanctuary into which He brings the individual saint.

The believer is not merely an unit of the "great multitude which no man can number," not merely a partaker with others of all the blessings of the new covenant, which indeed would be enough, and more than enough to satisfy all his desires; but the blessedness which union with Christ brings is immeasurably greater still. Each believer has a whole Christ to himself, for all that Christ is to the whole Church, He is to even the *least* in the kingdom of heaven.

At conversion he first realizes this. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," is a blessed truth; but when, beholding the Lamb of God, he can say, "God be merciful to me, *the* sinner—yea, the very sinner for whom Christ died—in whose stead the Lamb is offered as a sacrifice"—that moment he finds peace in believing; that moment he receives a "white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no

man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." The Spirit itself bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God.

As he grows in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, he realizes more and more the blessedness of this intimate personal union, and this is what the Lord Himself desires and delights in. Christ does not hold communion with multitudes, but with individual souls. "*Lovest thou Me?*" is the question He puts, as if all the universe were shut out, except Himself and that soul; and the answer, "*Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee,*" thrills Him with joy.

This is the end of all His dealings with us. He draws us into the wilderness, that we may lean upon our Beloved alone. "*Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*" There He feeds us with the finest of the wheat, the "*hidden manna,*" the sweetest communications of His grace.

Oh, if we but realized the *purpose* of His love, we would not shrink so from the "*desert place*" or even the furnace; for wherever it is His will that we should be, we always hear the loving invitation, "*Come with Me apart.*" He goes there with us, and would have us to know by sweet experience that to be alone with Him is the greatest blessedness we can have.

Saints in all ages have found that "*in the time of*

trouble" He "hides them in His pavilion, in the secret of His tabernacle." What are the most triumphant songs we hear? Are they not the "songs in the night"? It was at *midnight* that Paul and Silas sang praises unto God, in the dark and loathsome Philippian gaol; and so triumphantly did their voices ring, that the prisoners heard them through those thick dungeon walls.

There can be no closer fellowship while on earth than the fellowship of His sufferings; and in whatever way the sufferings have to be endured, "in all our afflictions He is afflicted."

Even in human lives, the tenderest sympathy is called forth by fellow-suffering, and hearts are drawn closer to each other in tribulation; so, though the pruning-knife be keen, or the furnace "seven times heated," or the desert place a dreary wilderness, yet our Beloved Himself is there, and His one design is to draw us into closer communion.

Affliction is not always sent as chastisement or even discipline. Often it is the saints who have made the highest attainments, who are walking closest with God, who are afflicted yet more and more: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and this "that we might be partakers of His holiness." "Every branch that *beareth fruit*, He purgeth it, *that it may bring forth more fruit*."

It may be that we have been on outpost duty, and

we may have been too ready to draw the sword, like Peter, when the Lord would have it sheathed ; or we may have been cumbered about too much serving, like Martha, and so been careful and troubled about many things, when the Master would have us sitting at His feet, and learning of Him.

Then he draws us into the secret of His presence, shutting us in with Himself alone. There “we sit down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit is sweet to our taste.” We find in this intimate communion that He hath “brought us into His banqueting house, and His banner over us is love. His left hand is under our head, and His right hand doth embrace us.”

How sweet thus to pillow the weary head upon the arm of His love, while we are shielded by the right hand of His power ! First the bride learns to sing, “ My Beloved is mine, and I am His,” and then the grander and more glorious truth bursts in upon her ravished soul, as she exclaims, “ I am my Beloved’s, and *His desire is towards me.*”

But the way to the banqueting house mostly lies through the wilderness : the path is rough, and the thorns are sharp, and nature shrinks from pain. “ No chastening *for the present* seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.” Yet so sweet is the balm of Gilead, so precious is “ the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby,” so delightful

are the manifestations of the love and the grace of their Beloved, that none of the saints have ever grudged the price at which they have obtained the joy.

So wrote, in quaint language, the saintly Rutherford, who had deep experience both of the cross and the banquet: "The cross of Christ is the sweetest burden that ever I bore; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship." And again, "Oh, what a life were it to sit beside this well of love, and drink and sing, and sing and drink, and then to have desires and soul faculties stretched and extended out many thousand fathoms in length and breadth to take in seas and rivers of love." "I have but small experience of suffering for Him, yet I find a young heaven and a little paradise of glorious comforts of Christ in suffering for Him and His truth. The glory, joy, and peace, and fire of love, which I thought had been kept till supper-time, when we get leisure to feast our fill upon Christ, I have felt in glorious beginnings in my bonds for this princely Lord Jesus."

So said another who had been much in "the King's chambers," and whose saintly life was drawing to its close. When one asked after his welfare, he replied, "I am weak, but it is delightful to feel oneself weak in the everlasting arms. Oh, what must Christ be in Himself," he exclaimed, "when it is He that sweetens heaven, sweetens Scriptures, sweetens ordinances, sweetens earth, and even sweetens trials! What must

Christ be in Himself?" Taking a walk one day in a field close to his house, he pointed to several spots where he had been ravished with views of God's grace. "Yea," he said, "my soul hath been so transported here, that, as the Apostle speaks, whether I was in the body or out of the body, I could scarce tell; and perhaps it is superstitious in me, but I confess that I have a peculiar love to those very spots."

Thus in all ages the saints who have walked with God, who have dwelt in the secret place of the Most High, and had *fellowship* with the Lord, have been ravished with the glory of His grace.

But the effect of this soul-communion with Christ is not to narrow, but expand the sympathies. Basking, so to speak, beneath His smile, the fruit of the Spirit is brought to greater perfection, ripened and mellowed. Through intimate communion with Christ we grow into His likeness, and are filled with His Spirit, and the infinite love which finds in Him its everlasting source flows through us to all around, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Thus the heart is first filled with adoring love to God, then it flows over "to the saints which are in the earth, to the excellent;" and wherever it sees the reflection of Christ, there it finds its delight; then it streams forth in tender pity to the lost: like its Lord, it is "moved with compassion towards the multitude, because they are as sheep not having a shepherd."

So when the Lord bids us come with Him apart into a desert place to rest awhile, it is that we may drink from the secret springs that supply the river of the water of life, and having drunk deeply, that we may become channels of the fulness of blessing to others.

“A little bird I am,
Shut out from fields of air,
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him who placed me there ;
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleaseth Thee.

Nought else have I to do,
I sing the whole day long,
And He whom most I love to please
Doth listen to my song.
He caught and bound my wand’ring wing,
But still He bends to hear me sing.

Thou hast an ear to hear,
A heart to love and bless ;
And tho’ my notes were e’er so rude,
Thou would’st not love them less ;
Because Thou knowest as they fall,
That love, sweet love, inspires them all.

My cage confines me round,
Abroad I cannot fly ;
But tho’ my wing is closely bound,
My heart’s at liberty.
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

Oh ! it is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore,
Whose Providence I love ;
And in Thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind."

From "Madame Guyon's Life."

XVII.

LOVE SATISFIED.

“HE SHALL SEE OF THE TRAVAIL OF HIS SOUL, AND SHALL BE SATISFIED.”—Isa. liii. 11.

“HE WILL REST IN HIS LOVE.”—Zeph. iii. 17.

“THIS IS MY REST FOR EVER ; HERE WILL I DWELL ; FOR I HAVE DESIRED IT.”—Ps. cxxxiii. 14.

“AND HIS REST SHALL BE GLORIOUS.”—Isa. xi. 10.

XVII.

LOVE SATISFIED.

GOD *satisfied!* Jehovah finding *rest!* Who can comprehend the meaning of these words?

God rested once from His work of creation; and when that rest was broken, then began the work of redemption. The Lord Jesus revealed God to us as being at work. “I must work *the work of Him that sent me,*” He said. “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” And here is a work in which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have been engaged for six thousand years, and still are engaged—the restoration of a ruined world, the salvation of immortal beings who have destroyed themselves.

It is a work which has occupied the thoughts of God throughout eternity, a work of infinitely greater magnitude and glory than the creation of a universe. Creation needed only “the word of His power,” redemption demanded the incarnation of the Son of God, His being brought “into the dust of death” (Ps. xxii. 15), and His being raised again by the mighty power of the Spirit. And the culminating

glory of this great work is the satisfaction which God Himself derives therefrom; even the infinite desires of the eternal Godhead find therein their full and perfect enjoyment.

First, we see God's satisfaction *in man*, in the *Person* of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For God formed man to be a delight unto Him, to receive and reciprocate His love and joy; and though man in himself proved but a broken reed, this did not hinder or shake God's unchanging purpose. Satan, the great adversary, sought to spoil God's work; but though he succeeded as far as Adam and his race are concerned, yet he only made a way for the fullest manifestation of the glory of God's wisdom, power, and grace. God's purpose was not altered, and in due time He brought forth His only begotten Son, this perfect Man, who, uniting His true humanity with His true Godhead, was *the MAN* of God's eternal design, in Whom is all His delight.

For we must remember that it was in His *humanity* that Christ was the *only begotten Son*. In His Godhead He was equal with the Father, co-eternal, uncreated. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” It was therefore the MAN Christ Jesus who filled the thoughts of God throughout eternity. It was in His *manhood* that Christ, in the purpose of God, “was set up from everlasting.” And it is to this that those

beautiful words in the book of Proverbs undoubtedly refer : "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth: and my delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 22, 31). And so, when, in the fulness of time, Jesus stood forth before men and angels, God proclaimed from heaven, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*"

In the meat-offering, in which we have a type of the Person of the Lord Jesus, Jehovah's portion was to contain "*all the frankincense.*" So there is a fragrance in Christ which can only belong to God, a supreme excellence which no finite being has power to apprehend.

Again, we see God satisfied with the *obedience* of Christ.

In Adam man soon broke the law of his God, and trampled it under foot; but it was God's purpose that *man* should keep His law, and His purpose could not be set aside. Therefore in the second Adam we see the law of God kept perfectly by the *new* Man, the head and representative of redeemed mankind.

We have a beautiful type of this in the giving of the tables of the law of Moses. The first tables were hewn by God Himself; and having written the law on them with His own finger, He sent them to His people by the hand of His servant Moses. When Moses discovered the sin of Israel, he brake the tables of stone,

in token of the broken law; then, having become the mediator between God and the transgressors, God said to him, "Hew *thee* two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood." And having presented to God the new tables, God wrote on them "according to the first writing, the ten commandments," and Moses put them into the ark of Shittim wood; which was typical of the incorruptible humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: *yea, Thy law is within my heart.*"

Thus God's purpose was fulfilled, and His law was kept perfectly by *man* in the Person of His Anointed.

We see God satisfied with the *work* of Christ.

Not only had the law to be kept, but the penalty had also to be paid for the transgressing of the law, in order that the law should be magnified and made honourable.

The everlasting destruction of the whole race of man could not have satisfied the claims of eternal justice, nor vindicated the majesty of the law; it needed a greater victim to make full atonement for sin; nothing less than the death of the Lord Jesus Christ could do this.

But the unblemished Lamb of God, having our iniquity laid upon Him, being made a curse for us, enduring the wrath of God against sin, is an atonement

of such infinite value, that God Himself declares it to have fully met all the claims of the broken law, and *He is satisfied.*

How offensive to Him must be the attempts of those who seek to add something of their own to the price that has been paid ! which, though having a show of devotion, are only vain attempts to tarnish the glory of Christ ; as if with the “filthy rags” of their own righteousness they could add to the value of *His* robe of righteousness, or enhance the beauty of His garments of salvation.

And why should the poor doubting soul be troubled about its acceptance ? If God be satisfied, why should not we ?

“ Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no ;
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.”

“ It is *God* that justifieth ; who is he that condemneth ? ” Nothing that the holiest man could do would add one iota to the value of what Christ *has done*, and it is only *offending God* to harbour such thought.

But yet again God is satisfied with the *result* of Christ’s mediatorial work.

“ Are there few or many that be saved ? ” is a question that often arises in many hearts ; but surely it is enough for us to know that God, who devised and carried out the grand scheme of redemption, will *Himself*

be satisfied ; that the Lord, "Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross," "shall see of the travail of His soul, and *shall be satisfied*." What a glorious consummation is this ! The heart of God, with infinite and everlasting love, shall be completely satisfied with the number of the redeemed !

Whether or not the number of the saved will be greater than the lost, God in His wisdom has not told us ; yet surely it is not presumptuous to believe that the bulk of the human race will be found to have obtained salvation.

True, during all earth's history to the present time, God's people have been but a few and feeble folk, a little remnant, compared to the hosts of the ungodly. But these have only been such as were chosen to bear witness for Him here, to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth, to preserve it from corruption, till His purpose was fulfilled.

But what of the countless myriads of little children who have died in infancy during all these ages—taken away before they knew their right hand from their left, or how to choose the good, and refuse the evil ? Are we not fully warranted in believing that, through the offering of the "one sacrifice for sins," they have gone to swell the ranks of the "great multitude which no man could number" ?

Even in civilised countries, where the greatest care is taken of infant life, it is said the vast majority die

in their earliest years. And what of the dark places of the earth, where ignorance, superstition, and cruelty combine to make a terrible death roll of "the little ones"? Has not God, even in this, "made the wrath of man to praise Him," and from the very habitations of cruelty worked out the marvellous purpose of His infinite and unspeakable love?

This is no palliation of the awful sin of infanticide, which hangs like a millstone to the neck of the human family. One of the most terrible cries for vengeance in the day of judgment will be the cry of the "little ones," whose lives were a prey to the wickedness of man. But,

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform ;"

and the chief of all these wonders will be found to be the wondrous mystery of redeeming grace. Does not a great and precious truth lie hidden in those words of our Saviour, "*Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven*"?

But though to the present time the Lord's people on earth have been a "little flock," it will not be always so.

The days are coming when Satan will be bound for a thousand years, and his power will no longer hinder the preaching of the gospel; days when it shall

be said to Christ, “Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most Mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty, and in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness;” and to His people it shall be said, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”

Then the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever; for God has promised, “Ask of me; and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.”

Who can imagine the countless multitudes throughout those thousand years, who, “being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever,” will yield a willing obedience to the Lord Christ?

Yet all our thoughts and the questionings of our hearts concerning this matter can only revert again, and find rest in this grand truth, that “*He* shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be *satisfied*.” Satisfied with the purchase of His blood, with the result of all His bitter pain and woe, His high-priestly intercession and providential care; when His heaven shall be filled with the redeemed “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

What a glorious consummation this ! It infinitely transcends all human thought. If “the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him ” be beyond the power of man to conceive—the ever unfolding glories which throughout the eternal ages will satisfy to the full the intensest longings of the glorified saints—what shall we say of the glory and the joy that satisfies the Lord God Omnipotent Himself? How infinitely does it surpass the highest reach of all created intelligence !

Even now, if there is joy in the presence of the angels over *one* sinner that repenteth, how great must be that joy over the multitudes which over the wide earth are being daily brought to His feet by the power of the Spirit of God ! And what is that compared with the joy when *all* will be gathered in ?

And if even now the Lord has joy in His people, poor, weak, and imperfect as they are, not only in such as occupy prominent positions in His service, not only in the great Elijahs, but also in the many thousands “ who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal,” the multitudes of His *hidden ones*, who in feebleness and obscurity are yet serving the Lord, and glorifying His Name on the earth, what will it be when He presents them all “ faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy ”? Then indeed will He “ *rest* in His love. He will rejoice over them with joy, He will joy over them with singing.”

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. xxi. 3). "And they shall see His face: and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. xxii. 4). "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xxii. 5).

In that day the saints too will all be satisfied. They will be satisfied with the *ways* of God. Here, in the dust of battle, the dimness of vision, the weakness of the flesh and weariness of the spirit, God's ways are for the most part inexplicable to us. At best we must walk by faith, resting in the Lord, and waiting patiently for Him. The "raiment of needlework" and "clothing of wrought gold" for the king's daughter (Ps. xlvii.), while it is being fashioned stitch by stitch, no one can have any conception of what it will be when it is all complete, and the bride "shall be brought unto the King."

But then all will be made plain, all God's dealings with us, whether as regards our individual souls or the church at large, will be made clear to us, and doubtless one of the great joys of eternity will be looking back upon what God hath wrought in us and in the whole church.

The saints will be satisfied with the *wisdom and power of God*. How many there are of God's children who foolishly question in their hearts as to the nature of the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. What will be the employments, what the enjoyments of heaven? Shall we recognise our friends? Shall we have a special love to those whom we have loved on earth? There are very many of God's people who most *needlessly* trouble themselves with such questions as these.

Surely we may leave all such things with implicit confidence in the hands of our loving heavenly Father, knowing that every right and true longing of our hearts which *He* has implanted will be abundantly satisfied. His wisdom, His power, and His love will be sufficient to provide for every capacity which He has created.

And this leads me to say lastly, that the saints will be satisfied with CHRIST.

It is when the eye is taken off *Him* that the soul is concerned about the external glories and subordinate joys of heaven. When faith is strong, and love is deep, Christ, and Christ alone, is the object of the soul's desires.

“ The bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face :
I will not gaze on glory,
But on my King of grace ;

Not on the crown He giveth,
 But on the piercèd hand.
 The Lamb is all the glory
 Of Immanuel’s land.”

There we shall “see the King in his beauty,” beholding Him with unveiled eyes ; in His presence finding fulness of joy, at His right hand “pleasures for evermore.”

Pure “as He is pure,” holy as He is holy, “we shall be like *Him*, for we shall see *Him* as *He* is.”

O wonder of wonders ! “*we shall be like HIM*,” and “*in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*” Partakers of *His* joy, sharers of *His* glory, seated *with Him* upon *His* *throne* ! And nothing short of this would satisfy “the great love wherewith He loved us,” and “redeemed us to God by His blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

TO HIM BE GLORY BOTH NOW AND FOR EVER.
 AMEN.



