

The Church in the House

A series of sermons, Bible lectures, Bible
essays and devotional studies; with a
selection of choice sacred poetry.

By
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PUBLICATION OFFICE "OUR HOPE"
456 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y.

And all Booksellers

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The Church in the House

Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon, our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer, and to beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to *the church in thy house*: Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. verses 1-3).

It was about the year sixty-one or sixty-two of the Christian era when a company of men left the gate of Rome to follow, for a short distance, the great Appian highway. They halted probably at a certain place, secluded from the heavy traffic of the artery of Roman commerce, and there they bowed the knee. In fervent prayer they commended two of the little group to the mercy and protection of God, and then they said farewell. They returned to Rome, while the two marched on southward. A few years before a similar scene had taken place, only they had then come from Rome to meet one, whom they longed to see face to face, and then walked with him to the great world city (Acts xxviii:15).

The men who had accompanied the two were Christians of the Roman assembly. The two brethren to whom they said farewell had been with them for a season and had started on their long and dangerous journey to their far away destination, the city of Colosse, in the Roman Province Asia. One was Tychicus and the other Onesimus. The few things they needed for their journey were probably strapped to their backs. In the fold of the customary Roman garment, each carried a priceless treasure. The treasure was not silver or gold, but it consisted of several parchment rolls upon which words were written containing better riches. All silver and gold will perish; the messages written on the parchments these messengers carried are imperishable. Gold tarnishes with time; these messages they carried in their bosom, near to their heart, are shining brighter today than ever before.

The parchments were entrusted to them by the prisoner of the Lord, the great Apostle Paul. The Lord of Glory had dictated these messages and Paul knew their great

importance. He did not fear their possible loss because the Lord, who had given the messages, would watch over them and see to their eternal preservation. Tychicus had received from Paul the letter addressed to the Ephesian assembly, so near and dear to the Apostle, for there he had labored for three years; he also received a letter to the assembly in Colosse, whom Paul loved as much as the Ephesian believers, for they were members of the same body.

Onesimus had received a personal letter addressed to a gentleman, an earnest Christian, by name of Philemon, who lived in Colosse. The story of Onesimus is intensely interesting.

Onesimus was a slave, the property of Philemon. Onesimus was another slave, the slave of sin. Christians treated their slaves in utmost kindness. The instructions given as to slaves in the Epistles which Tychicus had received speak of this. "And ye masters, do the same things unto them (the slaves), forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him" (Eph. vi:9). "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal" (Col. iv:1). Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, received this kind and considerate treatment and took advantage of it. When opportunity offered itself he stole a sum of money and ran away from his master. Rome attracted him and there he went. What followed, the details of it, we have not on record. I wonder if he became destitute in the great city. Perhaps his money was now all gone and dire want stared him in the face. What is he to do now? Perhaps as he walked the streets of Rome, as the homeless of our great cities do, he met others, and among them may have been a Christian believer, who may have given the run-away an invitation to come and hear a noted prisoner in the Roman prison speak the words of truth and life. Perhaps he heard of this prisoner preaching the Gospel in some other way. But when he heard the name "Paul" his attention was at once arrested. The name "Paul" was a household word in his master's home. Philemon held him in the highest esteem. They loved and

honored him as the great Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, And this great man of God is in Rome! He must needs see him, and perhaps the same day he went to see Paul. What happened we can only surmise. Some day we shall hear the full story of Onesimus. Did he listen to a Gospel address, given by Paul in a meeting permitted by the authorities? Or did he meet the Apostle privately? But this we know, Onesimus heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the power of God unto salvation, from the lips of Paul. The miserable slave of sin must then have opened his heart to the servant of the Lord. He told him that he was the slave of Philemon in Colosse; he spoke of his theft; he repented of his sin and then he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and the slave became, by faith in Him, a child of God, a member of the Body of Christ, a brother beloved. He was anxious to return to Philemon, to serve him now as a Christian slave.

Then Paul wrote the beautiful letter to Philemon.

“I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.” Marvelous grace which acted in behalf of the slave, saved him and changed him into a son of God and heir of God! Marvelous grace, which enabled Paul to speak of the run-away slave as “my son”! “Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me; whom I have sent again; thou therefore receive him that is, mine own bowels; whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the Gospel. But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account.” These are beautiful words, an echo of the Lord’s gracious pleading before the Father in glory.

But we do not follow the train of this thought nor are we writing an exposition of Paul's letter to Philemon.

The letter is addressed to Philemon, to Apphia, beloved (or "sister"), the wife of Philemon, to Archippus and to the *church in the house* of Philemon. It is evident from these words that the Christian assembly met in the house of the Colossian gentleman. What a happy day it must have been when Onesimus appeared at the door of Philemon's home, when he handed to him the courteous letter of Paul! And after reading the letter, with what joy Philemon must have embraced Onesimus the slave, and now a brother beloved. When the church in the house met that day in evening worship, Onesimus was there, gladly received, because he was the Lord's.

The Church in the House! In the middle of the first century there existed no great, world-famous buildings in which so-called "Christian worship" was carried on. They did not build cathedrals with lofty spires, with stained glass windows, with artistic carvings of apostles and saints, with altars patterned after the Jewish worship in the temple. They did not know anything about a priesthood officiating in robes of royal splendor, swinging incense, chanting, crossing themselves, celebrating the high mass with candle light. When they met (Acts xx:7) to remember His death and His resurrection in the Lord's supper, nothing was said of transubstantiation or consubstantiation; they met to do what the Lord had requested—"Do this in remembrance of Me," nor did they use an elaborate ritual, but all praise, all worship was under the direction of the indweller of the true Church, the Holy Spirit. Nor did they know anything of different sects and parties, the present day unfortunate divisions in Christendom.

The original Church in the House met around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ for simple worship and praise, for the reading of the Word of God, the declaration of the Gospel, and the feeding of the flock of God through the gifts the risen Christ has given to His Body.

There should be a revival of "the Church in the house"

in our times. Ritualism is increasing everywhere; it is the worship in the flesh and not the worship in the Spirit. No true believer can find the food there he needs, and on account of the perversions of the Gospel he rejects it completely. The conditions in nominal Protestantism are even more deplorable. While there is a faithful remnant, and faithful Bible-loving and Gospel-preaching ministers in all evangelical denominations, "keeping His Word and not denying His Name" (Rev. iii:8), loyal to the Word of God and to the Christ of God, standing by the old Book and the old Gospel, Protestantism as such is going to pieces. Some of the leading evangelical denominations are being rapidly leavened by the leaven of the Sadducees. The faith of our fathers is almost totally rejected; Christianity is stripped of its supernatural character. Christ, the adorable Son of God, is degraded to the level of a religious leader or a way-shower. The message of the Cross is branded as a survival of a primitive "blood superstition." The new birth is ridiculed as a psychological, natural process. All other truths, so dear to the believer's heart, are attacked and set aside. This departure from the faith is not confined to the larger cities. It is as prominent in hundreds of villages and smaller towns throughout our beloved land, and equally so in other lands. Everywhere scattered believers ask the question—"What shall we do? Where shall we go? We cannot go and listen to a man who denies our Lord. We dare not support the enemies of the Cross." There are also villages with no religious services at all, with no Christian fellowship whatever. Yet believers are commanded not to forsake their assembling together (Heb. x:25).

We think of the lonely, isolated farm houses, hundreds of them scattered in all our states and throughout the vast Dominion of Canada, with no opportunity to attend services where the Gospel is preached. In many of these isolated places Christian families live. We know of not a few of them by correspondence, and how they hunger for Christian fellowship and for more real food for their soul's need. How can all this need be met? Oh! there is One, the great

Shepherd of the sheep, who knows His scattered sheep. He knows them by name; He knows their circumstances and He is able to minister to their need according to His own riches in Glory.

“*The Church in the House*” can be the means of making this blessing possible and supplying fellowship. The Church in the house can meet the need we have mentioned.

“*Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them*” (Matt. xviii:20). This blessed and encouraging promise still holds good today. If but two or three gather unto His Name, acknowledging Him as their Saviour-Lord, worshiping Him, there He is in the midst. If two are gathered, He is the third; if three, He is the fourth. This little gathering with Himself in the midst is an assembly, a Church. Here He will manifest Himself and speak His blessed “Peace be unto you!” As He is acknowledged, He will respond to faith and give the needed blessing. He will own the little Church in the house and the children will be brought up through the Church in the house “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The Church in the house will also be used in bringing the knowledge of the Gospel to others, so that new members are added to the Body of Christ.

A word about Family worship. The Christian family should have daily home worship; this also is “a Church in the house.” The family, father, mother and children may enjoy the ministry of loyal servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, attend the regular preaching services, meetings for true Bible-study, prayer-meetings, and the children be under the faithful instruction of godly teachers, yet all these true church privileges do not make family worship unnecessary. Without daily family worship the home is not a “Christian home.” Alas! the true Christian home as it used to be is fast disappearing. The writer visits yearly many homes in many states, North, South, East and West. In the great majority of them, home worship, the reading of the Word of God, and family prayer, is totally neglected. Only in one home he visited in a year had the Bible a place on the dinner

table and was read in connection with each meal. The strenuous modern life, the hurry of it, and other things, have robbed most Christian homes of household worship, so pleasing to our heavenly Father and so much needed for spiritual progress. May it please God to send us soon a revival of "*the Church in the house*," true Christian home worship.

And furthermore there is the abuse of the Lord's Day, the day set apart for rest, quietness, spiritual enjoyment and fellowship with the Lord. It is not a Sabbath of legal demand; it is the day of holy privilege and blessed memory. The automobile and the Sunday newspaper have worked untold harm to this day. Yet this day should be the day for blessing which will last throughout the week.

We have written and published this volume, "*The Church in the House*," with much prayer that it may be used to establish a Church in the house, yea in many houses in different places where true ministry of the Word is not available; that it may be helpful to revive the interest in home worship; that it may bring blessing to the isolated farm houses; that it will be used in home reading on the Lord's day; and also bring blessing to the aged, to shut-ins and others who can no longer attend public worship.

The sermons, Bible lectures, devotional studies and Gospel addresses are some of those the author has given in his nation-wide ministry, and which have been greatly owned by our Lord in the salvation of many and in the upbuilding of the members of the Body of Christ. The sacred poetry published in this volume has been carefully selected and likewise will be helpful.

"Take it Father! This new book be Thine,
Fill it only with Thy teachings, only filled
For Thee, and for the pilgrims to Thy home.

* * * * *

Give me thoughts,
But quicken them with power; give me words,
But wing them with Thy love; give music too,

But let it ring all beautiful and sweet
With holiness; yea, give to me, if such
Thy holy will, far better and far more
Than heretofore, but only add this gift,
Without which all were worthless and in vain,
Thy Blessing. So the Glory and the Praise
Shall all be Thine for evermore. Amen.”*

*From a poem of F. R. Havergal.

THE GLORY OF THE BIBLE

A Lecture*

"O earth, earth, earth! Hear the Word of the Lord!" (Jer. xxiii:20).

Many times this great man of God spoke of "the Word of the Lord." Almost one hundred and fifty times he mentioned "the Word," exhorting his nation to hear and to obey it. He knew the Lord had spoken to him, that he received the message from God. He knew that obedience to the Word of God would bring untold blessing to the people. He knew that disobedience and the rejection of the divine message would result in judgment. The people refused to hear. They mocked the prophet of God. They listened to false prophets whom the Lord had not sent, who preached—"Peace! Peace!" when there was no peace. The rejection of the Word of the Lord was responsible for the dreadful moral conditions, the unrighteousness and lawlessness, prevalent in Jeremiah's times. The judgment clouds were gathering over Jerusalem. Soon the storm of divine displeasure would sweep over the nation. And so Jeremiah in deep agony of soul cried out—"O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the Lord."

It is hardly necessary for me to say that we are living in days when the Bible as the Word and Revelation of God is increasingly rejected. Shorter Bibles, abridged Bibles, and Bibles mutilated in other ways, are published and recommended to our generation. The enemies of the Bible have multiplied during the last twenty-five years in a startling way. Infidels have always been antagonistic to this blessed Book of books, but the most dangerous enemies of the Bible are found today in the very camp of Christendom. As the living Word, our Lord, was betrayed with a kiss by one of His followers, so those who claim to be the followers of Christ betray the written Word with a kiss. They speak of the Bible

*This lecture was delivered a few years ago in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church of Washington, D. C. Senator Simeon D. Fess presided over the assembly and introduced the speaker. Some of the Senators and Congressmen present said that this lecture should be given in all the leading cities of our land.

as a good book and in the same breath they deny its inspiration and its divine, unchangeable authority.

There exists in our country an Anti-Bible Society, whose aim it is to discredit the Bible, to strip it of its supernatural character. The leaders of this society sent an invitation to evolutionists, modernists, destructive critics and other liberalists in various denominations to join with them, for, as the appeal said, "Your aim is like ours to discredit the Bible." They spoke the truth.

Inasmuch as there is today such outspoken antagonism to this old Book it is needful to call attention afresh to the glory of the Bible.

This venerable Book possesses a glory which is unique. There is no other book in existence which has such a glory, and it is safe to say, even if the human race should exist ten thousand years more and advance in culture, producing literary gems which outrank all the recognized classics of today, that no other book like the Bible with its peculiar glory will be put again into hands of man.

The Glory of God-Revelation

The first glory we mention is the glory of God-Revelation. There is a supreme, infinite, omnipotent, all-wise Being, whom we call "God." It is contra-natural to deny His existence. According to the Bible it is the fool who saith in his heart, "There is no God." This was written several thousand years ago. Reason teaches man that there must be a Being of all beings, One who transcends human reason, who produced the universe, the Life of all life, the framer of and upholder of His own laws. But there is more than reason, which witnesses to the existence of God, it is the inner consciousness of man, the creature of God. God-consciousness is universal. No tribe of men has ever been found destitute of this consciousness.* Go into the wildest parts of Africa, or to the islands of the sea among cannibals, or visit the vast regions of Central Australia and you will find, even

*See "Christianity or Religion?" by the same author for proof given by leading anthropologists.

among the most degraded, this consciousness of the Supreme One.

This Being of infinite wisdom, who has given to His creature-man the capacity to know Him and be in fellowship with Him, demands a self-revelation. What God would He be, who created man and did not reveal Himself as Creator, and as a God who loves His creature? If there is no self-revelation of God it would lead us to believe He does not exist. Where then is to be found such a revelation of God, which is intelligent, reasonable and satisfying to the human soul, which in its innermost being thirsts for the knowledge of God?

In possession of Oriental races are religious books which are called "The Sacred Writings of the East." No one would deny their antiquity. I possess many of these volumes—the Rig-Veda, the Vedic hymns, the Laws of Manu, the philosophical Upanishads, the Zend-Avesta, and many others. I take one of these volumes in my hands and as I read, and read on, it seems to me as if I am wandering in a dismal swamp. All is dark and dreary. I look for a single ray of light which would bring help to my hungry heart, but I look in vain. And as I read on it becomes darker. As I wander along I strike vileness and moral degradation; in fact certain portions of these "Sacred Writings" are so vile that their translation has never been attempted. Whatever these "Sacred Books of the East" may mean to the mystic mind of the Orient, they contain not a speck of God-Revelation. I put down the volume and I take up the Bible. I open it at random and as I read, it seems to me I have left the dismal swamp behind. As I read and read on, I feel like having stepped into a bright and glorious June morning. The night is gone, a glorious sun shines all about me.

I look at the beginning of this book and read, "In the beginning God." What a majestic word! Then I read and hear He is the Creator of heaven and earth. As I read on I find this God acting in history. He comes into human history and reveals Himself as the sovereign God, He makes known His character of holiness, righteousness, mercy and

love. He deals with man. He speaks to man by His Spirit and through His Word. As I search the pages of this Book I discover His Glory, how He revealed Himself as the Lord of Glory in physical, visible and spiritual Glory. He speaks in promise and announces One to come whose name is to be "Immanuel"—God with us. And finally there steps into human history a Man who came from above, One who is God and whom God sent to make God known to man; I hear Him say, "Whosoever seeth Me seeth the Father," and then He pours forth such revelations of God as a holy, a righteous and a loving Father, which satisfy the heart of man. Where can we find such a wonderful, all-sufficient God-revelation outside of the Bible? There is none to be found. That is why the master-minds of the race have bowed in reverence before this Book.

Because this Book has in it God-Revelation, the Book itself is spoken of as sharing some of the attributes of the Godhead. The critics of the Bible have accused Bible-loving believers as being "Bible-idolators," by which they mean, that as a heathen worships an idol, we worship a book. Why should we not honor and glorify this Book, which acquaints us with our God, which makes known His eternal purposes, and bares His great, loving Father-heart? I quote Hebrews iv:12, 13: "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Here is a blending together of God and His Word. God is Life—His Word is Life. God is power—His Word is power. God is omniscient—His Word is omniscient. God is unchanging—so is His Word. God is eternal—His word is enduring and abiding. Such is the outstanding Glory of this Book.

II. The Glory of Truth-Revelation

God is Truth and His Word is Truth. Much is being made today of the word Science. High school boys and girls are being taught that Science contradicts the Bible. The man or the woman who says this has probably "the little knowledge which is a dangerous thing." What is Science? Science is knowledge obtained by experiment, by searching. Far be it from me to discredit Science. I have no fault to find with this word, unless it spells "Christian Science." Pure Science is perfectly legitimate. The Scientist uses his God-given capacity to search out God's wonderful creation. He has made marvelous head-way. The Geologist has taught us much about our earth, in fullest harmony with the Bible. The Astronomer has been used to reveal the wonders of the universes above. The Chemist, the Biologist, and the Medical Scientist, all have discovered and uncovered the great things of God's creation. Yet of every branch of human Science it is true, will ever be true—"we know in part." The Scientist who claims to know it all is no true Scientist at all. One of the greatest Scientists said, "Science has its limitations." He spoke truth. There are certain things in which the whole race is most interested and which no Science can explain. We search for the truth about human existence and human destiny and we ask the Scientist to answer our questions, but he is silent, or tells us something which does not satisfy the cravings of our heart.

What is the origin of man and of things seen? What is the destiny of man, and of the earth? What will the future bring? How will it all end? These are the important and burning questions with which the mind of man has always wrestled. The questions as to our origin and our destiny have never been answered and solved by any philosopher or scientist. Real knowledge of where we come from and where we go to can not be provided by the telescope or the microscope. Revelation alone can give us the Truth and answer these questions. Where is the Revelation which gives full and satisfactory light on the enigma of

human existence? It would amuse you and bring smiles to your face if I were to speak of some of the ridiculous things ancient nations of culture and art believed as to the origin of man and his destiny. Millions of human beings still believe sheer nonsense about these things, though they speak of their beliefs as Philosophy. Only in the Bible do we find this Truth-Revelation. I turn to the opening chapter of the Word of God and find here the Revelation as to our origin. The question is answered as to where we come from. I turn to the end of the Book and here I find the destiny of the human race, that it will be twofold, either an eternity of light and glory, or an eternity of night and shame. Yea, here I find the sure knowledge as to what the future will bring.

And this revelation is so chaste, so simple, so wonderful that it brings conviction to the mind of man that it is the truth.

But what happens when man turns away from this Truth-Revelation? What happens when man with his proud heart and mind refuses the Revelation God has given, and turning away from it attempts to find his own answers to these questions? I do not need to answer these questions. They were answered nineteen hundred years ago by an inspired pen. Will you listen! The Apostle Paul received the following dictation from the Holy Spirit when he was in the Roman prison: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. iv:3, 4).

This divine anticipation has come true today. I visit our great institutions of learning. The men who boast of superior scholarship have cast aside the Bible. They tell the young that it is out of date. They ridicule any one who still believes in what is written in the opening chapters of this Book. They brand the Creation account, the revealed beginnings of history as legend, call it unscientific, folklore and untrue. They turn their ears away from the truth.

But they must teach something. They cannot ignore the question—where does man come from? Having turned away from the truth they turn to fables. They teach the fable of evolution, first taught, not by Charles Darwin, but by Thales, a Greek philosopher of the sixth century before Christ. Evolution is an unproved heathen theory.

And what about the destiny of the human race? They sneer at the idea of heaven as a locality. They are not sure if there is existence after death. They are looking for scientific demonstration that man survives physical death. They have turned away from the truth revealed in the Bible. They brand future retribution as a survival of the dark ages and belief in Satan as an echo of Babylonian mythology. But they cannot ignore the question. What do they accept instead? They turn to, what is politely called, "Psychical Research." They employ spiritistic mediums, either frauds or immoral women, to search through them for an answer about human life after death. They study occultism. Men like Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle do not believe in divine Revelation, but they readily believe the fraud and inventions of Spiritism.

It is the Glory of the Bible to unveil the past and the future, to show to man what has been and what will be. Here, and here alone, the Truth is found.

III. The Glory of its Production

The Bible came into existence as no other book did. It is God-breathed. Though the instruments employed in writing the different books which compose the Bible lived many centuries apart, wrote under different circumstances and independently of each other, the Bible is one great, harmonious whole. Behind all the human writers of this Book there stands one great Author, who directed every thought and every pen. That great Author is the Holy Spirit. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

The liberal theology claims to believe in inspiration. They tell us they do not deny the fact of inspiration, that the Bible was written by inspired men. But they say that other

men besides the Bible-writers were inspired, and some of these "other men," they assert, were more inspired than the minor prophets, with their Jewish patriotism. So we hear them say, Dante, Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Browning and Ruskin were inspired. I have read Dante, Chaucer, Spencer, Milton, Goethe, and all the rest they mention, but I never came across in their writings, that any one of them ever introduced one of their productions, beautiful as some of them are, by saying, "Thus saith the Lord," or "The Word of the Lord came unto me." But I read the Bible and find that the men who wrote this Book, the different sections of it, used several thousand times these statements—"Thus saith the Lord"—"The Lord spake unto me"—"the Word of the Lord came unto me"—"The Spirit of the Lord spoke," and similar phrases. Why did our great poets, Dante, Milton or Goethe, or any other one never use such expressions? Because they were honest men. They knew if they employed such words they would deceive themselves and others, for the Lord did not speak through them. Can the writers of the Bible, with their messages of righteousness and divine warning, be charged with having deliberately claimed divine communications, when the Lord did not speak to them and through them? Assuredly not! They spoke the truth when they said they were the mouthpieces of the Lord.

We may draw a comparison between the living Word, the Son of God, and the written Word, the Bible. How did the Son of God become incarnate? By the Virgin birth. The Spirit of God came upon the Virgin of Nazareth; the power of the Highest overshadowed her. His human body was called into being by a creative act of the Spirit of God. He was born, and then He walked on earth as that unique Being, very God and very Man; truly God and truly human, apart from sin.

In like manner the written Word of God, the Bible, came into existence. The Holy Spirit came upon these chosen instruments, the power of the highest overshadowed them. The Lord put His own words into their mouths and pens.

Therefore the Bible is the Book divine. But they were human beings. Their individuality was not ignored nor set aside. The human element is easily seen in this great Book also. It is the God-Man Book; the divine-human Book. But like the God-Man, the God-Man Book is also infallible.

Bring me another book of which this is true!

IV. The Glory of its Preservation

The story of the preservation of the Bible is a story of wonders. The Bible is the most beloved Book in the world. The Saints of God have always loved His Word. Beautiful picture of that old man, sitting in Babylon, with windows open towards Jerusalem; Daniel, reading the scroll of Jeremiah! How many martyrs were burned by cruel Rome, chained to the stake with their Bibles! How they did love the Bible! But the Bible is also the most hated Book in the world. Who has ever heard of hatred against the Sacred Writings of the East? Or have there ever been attempts made to destroy the Koran so that not a single copy of it might be left? Behind the hatred of the Bible stands an unseen master mind, who hates the Book, and the Person whom the Book reveals. This being, Satan, has done his utmost to destroy the Bible; he is still doing all he can to get the Bible out of the way. Through heathen philosophers, through Roman emperors, through Papal Rome, through infidels and rationalists, through the present day modernists and liberalists, he has expressed his hatred against the Book. But God has watched over His Word. He has taken care that not one word or letter of it perish. He has done miracles in the preservation of the Bible. We do not need to go outside of the Book of Jeremiah for an illustration of how the Lord preserved His Word.

The wicked King of Judah, Jechoiakim, had heard of Jeremiah's messages, of his prophecies and his warnings. He sent one, Jehudi to fetch the precious roll of parchment on which Baruch, at the inspired dictations of Jeremiah, had written. Jehudi reads to the king for a few minutes.

The king becomes impatient. He takes the roll, slashes it with his pen-knife and to make sure of its total destruction he casts it into the open fire-place and watches till the fire has consumed it. Perhaps with a sneer upon his lips he said: "Go and tell Jeremiah! Ask him 'where is the Word of the Lord?'"

"Then the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying: Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the King of Judah has burned" (Jer. xxxvi).

Friend! the words which the king burned are the words which you still read in your Bible. Then the Lord announced the king's fate because he dared to make an attempt to destroy His Word. He should be childless. His body in the day of his death should be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. He was treated like a dead ass. What fate is in store for the men who make present day attempts to mutilate the Bible! They who try to destroy this temple, the temple of God's eternal truth, God will deal with in judgment.

But with a history of the preservation of the Bible covering several thousand years we need not fear that the enemies today in the camp of evangelical denominations will succeed in getting the Bible out of the way. God watches still!

V. The Glory of its Message

A still greater Glory is the message which the Bible brings to the human race. It is a simple message. It is a deep message, so deep that the finite mind of man cannot fathom it. It is a message which covers the spiritual need of man. It is a message of power to set man free. It is a message of love and grace. I have heard preachers speak of the different messages of the Bible. They mentioned the messages to the young and to the old, to the rich and to the poor, to the well and to the sick, to the learned and to the unlearned, to saints and to sinners. The real message of the Bible,

the message man needs, is threefold. The three outstanding messages of the Word of God start all in one chapter. In that chapter we find the source and as we read on, it is like following the waters from a spring in some woodland. We walk along a little creek. By and by the creek becomes a river and the river a mighty stream. So we can trace these messages, ever widening and expanding throughout the Word of God.

The chapter which contains the source of all the Bible messages is the third chapter in Genesis. Do I believe in the historicity of this chapter? Is it history or allegory? The modern religious thought speaks of it as unhistorical. The believer with a true Christian salvation-experience knows that it is historically true. If it were a myth, if the fall of man downward (not upward as evolution claims) is not historically true, then the third chapter in the Gospel of John must also be rejected and branded a myth, for the foundation of this great Gospel chapter is the third chapter of Genesis.

As we read this chapter, containing the record of the fall of man, we see the great wisdom of God in the messages which originate here and which continue to the very last chapter of the capstone of God's Word, the Revelation.

The *first message* we call the black line message. It is the message of sin and death. The first man transgressed; he sinned and became alienated from his Maker. A righteous God pronounced upon him and his offspring the sentence which is so very evident throughout human history. And then the goal, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Death is in the world by sin. The wages of sin is death. Then man was expelled from the presence of God and began his wandering in the night of sin.

The message of sin and death we can follow throughout this book. Many times, throughout sacred history, God reminds man where he is, and what he is by nature. As the pages of history are written, the black line message

becomes blacker and blacker. It is the blackest in the opening chapters of that great Epistle, the Epistle to the Romans. There we behold Jew and Gentile guilty and lost before God. The whole world is guilty. There we see the depths of degradation and vileness.

A set of infidels during the late war appealed to the United States Postal authorities to exclude the Bible from the mail. Their plea was that the Bible contains stories of immorality. And who is the infidel that he should charge this blessed Book with immorality? Is it not a fact that most men and women are infidels because they are immoral?

Yes, it is true the Bible uncovers the wickedness of human nature and shows the horrible depths of sin. But this is only another evidence that behind this message stands He who knows all about man and his vileness. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. xvii:10, 11).

Some of the other religious books in possession of Oriental peoples flatter man. The Bible shows man what he is. The message of sin and death reveals his condition, his sinfulness, his guilt, his destiny, for the black line message leads into the outer darkness to the place of eternal night and eternal separation from God.

But in this chapter a *second message* has its starting point. Here Jehovah utters the first promise as to future redemption. He announces the coming of the seed of the woman. The heel of the seed of the woman is to be bruised. This is the germ of prophecy concerning the Redeemer and His redemption. Thus it has been interpreted by the Church from the beginning. With this first prophecy starts the red-line message. As we follow this message we see it expanding. It leads us past the historical events which foreshadow redemption by blood through the seed of the woman. The death of Abel, dying for his brother's sin, the offering up of Isaac, the passover lamb in Egypt, the brazen serpent, the sacrifices and offerings of the levitical worship belong to the

red-line message of redemption. As we follow it through the prophetic Word we hear the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the sufferings of the coming Christ, the seed of the woman. The red-line message takes us past the Messianic Psalms of a suffering Messiah, the Twenty-second, the Sixty-ninth and others; we listen to the great fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and finally this red-line message leads us up to Calvary. There the Lamb of God shedding His blood fulfills the sacrifices and offerings brought on Jewish altars. He dies for His creatures' sins; He makes peace in the blood of His Cross. And after Calvary the flood gates of the love which passeth knowledge are opened wide, and grace, more fathomless than the sea, pours forth its unsearchable riches. God offers in Him, the substitute of sinners, all the sinner needs for time and eternity. What a glorious message, the message of redemption!

And finally there is a *third message*. We call it the golden-line message. The seed of the woman, whose heel was bruised, is to bruise the serpent's head; He will defeat and completely overcome the serpent, the author of sin. This portion of the divine program of redemption is still unaccomplished. It is future. We also follow this golden-line message through the prophetic Word and read there of the coming glories. We listen to the prophecies announcing the coming of the victorious King, the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace. We behold His Glory covering the heavens. We see Him enthroned upon the throne over all the earth. The uttermost parts of the earth are given to Him. He receives a kingdom into which all nations are gathered. All swords become plowshares, all spears pruning hooks. All lawlessness and unrighteousness is dethroned. Peace on earth and Glory to God in the Highest has come. And as we still follow the golden-line message it leads us through the gates of the New Jerusalem, which finally comes down from heaven to rest, as the eternal habitation of His redeemed people, in the new earth, surrounded by the new heavens.

Such is the threefold message of the Bible: the message of

sin, telling us that we are lost and guilty sinners, the children of wrath; the message of redemption, that Christ died for our sins; and the message of eternal Glory. Where is there another book with such a message, which meets the needs of man!

VI. The Glory of its Power

The Bible has life and power. If the great message it contains is believed it accomplishes something in individuals as well as in nations. It is a glorious power this blessed Book contains.

During the days of "the Inter-Church World Movement" I was asked to give an address after a banquet. For several reasons the invitation could not be accepted. If I had spoken on the theme assigned to me, "What is the greatest need of the Church in our days," I would have said: "The greatest need is a restored confidence in the Bible as the Word and infallible Revelation of God." It is sad to say, but the confidence in the Bible as the final authority for faith and life, has been undermined by certain men who claim religious leadership. The much lauded, scholarly Bible-criticism, is destructive, for it puts the Book of God on the same level with the religious literature of other nations—imperfect, and therefore untrustworthy.

The present day widespread lawlessness and the increasing moral decline is but the repetition of history. You can go back several thousand years and find that whenever Israel listened to and obeyed the Word of God, the conditions of righteousness improved; whenever it disobeyed, unrighteousness prevailed and national disaster followed. And so it has been in the history of Christendom. Paul in prison outlined the moral conditions of the last days of this Christian age.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholly, without natural affection, truce breakers,

false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." What a picture of our own times! And who are they? "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. iii:1-5). The rejection of the Word of God and especially the true Gospel of Jesus Christ in the professing Church produces the conditions which we face today.

One feels like shouting it everywhere, "Back to the Bible! Listen to the Word of the Lord! Give the Bible a chance! Believe and obey the Bible! Earth, earth, earth! Hear the Word of the Lord." Look at the power of the Word of God! It changes lives. The drunkard, the gambler and the harlot, listening to its message of redeeming love, bow their heads in penitent shame, then look up to Him who died for them, the friend of sinners. Then the tears of sorrow over sin are wiped away. The stricken conscience is healed by the peace which comes from God. The most wonderful transformation takes place. They are born again and with the new birth begins a new life, a new existence.

Look at the power of the Bible! Here is a tribe of men, they gather to a vicious feast and devour human flesh. They are in many ways below the beast. Constrained by the love of God, a missionary, at the peril of his life, seeks them out, and after having learned a little of their language, he begins to preach the Word. They listen and believe the message of love. What a transformation follows! Like the demon-possessed, demented wreck, of whom we read in the Gospel (Mark v), they are now clothed and in their right mind, sitting at His feet.

Remember, the man who goes after the drunkard, the gambler and the harlot, these wrecks of human society, is a believer in the Bible as the Word of God; so is the missionary who goes forth holding high the Word of life and power. What success would the modernistic critic of the Bible have with his denials of the Christ of God, the blood of Christ and the redemption power of God, if he went to the ungodly and to criminals, or to fetish worshipers, with the message

he has invented? What he preaches has no more power to save man than the philosophy of Hinduism.

I take this precious Book to my heart and say, "Thou art my mother dear." I have two mothers; one gave me the natural life and from the other mother I received my spiritual life. This Book is my second mother, for it is written, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i:23). This Word is my mother and the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the Word, is my father, in the new birth. And Peter writes next, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii:2). As the babe needs the mother's milk, so the newborn believer needs the milk of the Word. And besides milk there is meat, and strong meat here to nourish and to build up the new life.

The Word of God is therefore food for the soul, the bread of life. Spiritual growth is dependent on how we feed on His Word. Here we find the heavenly wisdom, guidance and direction, daily help and strength, comfort and hope. The Bible wipes our tears away in sorrow and loss. It is also a sanctifying power, for the Lord Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth" (Jno. xvii:17). As we read the Word and obey its precepts, we walk in separation from the world and in fellowship with Him who speaks through His Word to our hearts. All need is supplied in the Bible, and through obedience to it we receive power to live, power to serve, power to suffer.

Will any one tell me where I can find a Book like this Book!

VII. The Glory of Coming Vindication

There is a seventh Glory I want to mention to you, the Glory of coming vindication. The Bible has been vindicated many times in the past. It has been vindicated by the records of past civilizations. The historical statements of the Bible have been challenged many times by destructive critics and other infidels. But strange to say, the very men who doubt the Bible and the accuracy of Bible history have

been used to confirm the trustworthiness of the Book. Some university sends out an archaeological expedition. The men who deny the Bible put in their spade to lay bare the ruins of Babylon, Nineveh, Ur, Ercch, or some other ancient city. They find in the debris cylinders, cones and tablets covered with the long extinguished languages of Assyria and Babylonia. The Accadian and Sumerian inscriptions, written in cuneiforms, are deciphered, and these records vindicate Bible history. What defeat destructive criticism has suffered on the territory of archaeological discoveries! Science had to bow before the Bible and vindicate its inspired statements. Present day events vindicate the Word of God, for what is happening in the world today, among the nations, and among the people Israel, we find pre-written in this wonder-Book.

A great vindication is yet coming, a vindication which will forever silence the enemies of the Bible. As I have indicated before in this lecture, there is a striking analogy between the living Word, the Son of God incarnate, and the written Word, the Bible. Both have their humiliation and their exaltation. The Bible is now in its humiliation. It is the rejected Book. According to prediction, there is yet to come for this Book a Gethsemane and a Calvary, that is the complete rejection of the Word of God. It will be crucified, so to speak, nailed to a cross, as the living Word was nailed to the Cross. That will be during the time when Satan's man controls the earth and the complete apostasy holds sway for a short time. But there is coming for the Bible a third day of resurrection and Glory. That day comes when He, the living Word, comes back to earth again. His second coming will bring with it the complete and forever-lasting vindication of the Word of God. The coming One will fulfill all what is unfulfilled. Then every mouth will be closed and the enemies of the Bible will pass away in everlasting shame and contempt.

Such then is the unique Glory of the Bible. Like the Glory of Christ, it is inexhaustible. Friends! while the enemy rages against this Book, let us stand by the old

Book! Let us read it more, study it more, love it more, obey it more! Read it every day; read it with your children —“Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou wakest it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Prov. vi:21-23).

THE BIBLE*

Here is the spring where waters flow;
 To quench our heat of sin;
Here is the tree where truth doth grow
 To lead our lives therein;
Here is the judge that stays the strife
 When men's devices fail:
Here is the bread that feeds the life
 Which death cannot assail.
The tidings of salvation dear
 Come to our ears from hence;
The fortress of our faith is here;
 The shield of our defense.
Then be not like the hog that hath
 A pearl at his desire,
And takes more pleasure in the trough,
 And wallowing in the mire.
Read not this Book in any case
 But with a single eye;
Read not, but first desire God's grace,
 To understand thereby.
Pray still in faith with this respect,
 To fruitify therein;
That knowledge may bring this effect—
 To mortify thy sin.
Then happy thou in all thy life,
 What so to thee befalls;
Yea doubly happy shalt thou be
 When God by death thee calls.

*These lines were printed as prefatory to a Bible published in 1594.
The author is unknown.

THE STONE AND THE ROCK

Genesis xlix:24.

"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Thus spake Jacob to Pharaoh in answer to the Egyptian's question: "How old art thou?" (Gen. xlvi:8). His life had been eventful. Mighty things had happened. When he left his homeland the Lord met him in a vision. He saw the ladder between heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending; above it stood the Lord, the God of his fathers. He spoke to him and assured the homeless wanderer of future blessings and protection. "Behold, I am with thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. xxviii:15). The faithful, covenant keeping Jehovah had fulfilled His promise. He kept him in good days and in evil days. Sorrow upon sorrow, like the waves of a turbulent sea, swept over him. His beloved Joseph was taken from his side; for many years he mourned him as dead, believing that he had been torn to pieces by a wild beast. The sunset of his life was now at hand. It brought to the tired pilgrim joy and peace. The Lord wiped his tears away for the glad-some news had reached him, "Joseph is alive!" The years of his mourning were over, and when he met his Joseph "he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while." Then old Jacob said, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive" (Gen. xlvi:20, 30). Finally he called his twelve sons together for the last words. The dying patriarch becomes, by the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, a prophet. He prophesies of what is to befall his sons and their offspring "in the last days." The whole history of Israel, past, present and future is revealed by divine vision and by his inspired words.

Reuben, Simeon and Levi are mentioned first. They had committed deeds of vileness and cruelty. The character of the nation Israel up to the time of Christ is outlined in these sons of Jacob. "Unstable as water"—such was the nation's history for centuries. Judah reveals the nation during the time the promised Shiloh, the promised Messiah, is on the earth. Zebulun and Issachar, in connection with whom sea and commerce, indolence and service, are mentioned, describe Israel scattered among the nations during the present age. Dan is to be "a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." These mysterious words present a picture of Israel in apostasy under the man of sin, the false Christ, during the end of the age. Very significantly this tribe is left out in the seventh chapter of Revelation. And when dying Jacob had spoken of Dan, he said, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." These words indicate that in Israel there will be found a waiting remnant, waiting for Him who brings salvation to his people. This remnant is seen in Gad, Asher and Naphtali. Jacob speaks of Gad to be overcome by a troop, but finally he shall overcome and have the victory. Asher has "fat bread and shall have royal dainties"; it is the tribe of joy and happiness, as the name Asher (happy) indicates. Naphtali is the hind let loose, giving goodly words, for the godly remnant of Israel will scatter the tidings of the King. The coming of that King, the King of Israel, the Shiloh unto whom the people shall gather, is revealed in the words addressed to Joseph. Benjamin, named by his mother Rachel "Benoni" (the son of suffering), but called by Jacob after Rachel had died "Benjamin" (the son of the right hand), pictures Him who suffered and who comes again to reign in righteousness and peace.

It is in speaking of Joseph that Jacob mentions "the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." Joseph, as is well known, in his history of suffering, in his greatness and exaltation in Egypt, is perhaps the most striking and complete type of Christ. When Jacob mentions "the Stone of Israel" he speaks of Christ also. Both words "*the Stone*" and "*the*

Rock" are prominent words throughout the Holy Scriptures. Around these two words may be grouped all the great and essential Gospel truths, as well as prophetic truths, in both Testaments. It is but one of the many wonderful evidences that the Bible is the Word of God, revealing the Truth and the Wisdom of God. In studying God's works in creation we can take the telescope and look at the marvels of the heavens above. Or we can take the microscope to examine a drop of water and find the same marvels of God's wisdom and power there. And so we may study the Word of God with a telescope, examining its revealed plans, the eternal purposes of God, or its mountain peaks of divine truth. Or we can take the microscope and examine phrases and a single word, and find in one word the same divine wisdom and glory revealed as we do in the great thoughts of God, which we can think over with Him.

The Rock

We shall find that the "Stone" briefly mentioned by the aged patriarch, becomes later a prominent type of Christ. The "Rock" is found for the first time in Exodus, in the familiar passage of Chapter xvii:2-6. The people thirsted, they had no water. They cried to Moses, "Give us water that we may drink!" Moses cried to the Lord, the only way open for God's people in the time of need. Jehovah did not disappoint the praying man of God. And Jehovah said unto Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel, and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take it in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." It is a significant type of Him, the rock of ages, smitten by the rod of judgment, so that the waters of life, of cleansing and refreshment might gush forth for thirsting humanity. When Toplady wrote his immortal hymn,

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r,"

he must have had in mind this scene of Israel's history. The solid rock, strong and unmovable, is the type of Him "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Jehovah Himself is there upon the rock. Moses' rod, which was used by him in the execution of judgments upon the river of Egypt, is the symbol of judgment. It was on the cross where the smiting took place, and out of His spear-pierced side, after He had uttered the glorious shout "It is finished," blood and water flowed forth, the blessed evidences of the efficacy of His atoning work. The smitten rock became the source of the rivers of waters. The Apostle Paul informs us that "that rock was Christ"—"For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. x:4). Here we are reminded of the promise of our Lord. "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii:38, 39). The water which was supplied by the smitten Rock is therefore the type also of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The smitten Rock, the death of Christ, is God's gracious provision for the needs of sinful man. That Rock too is our hiding place. "In the cleft of the Rock" His own are securely sheltered for time and eternity (Sol. Song ii:14).

Speak to the Rock

Once more we read of the Rock in Israel's wilderness experience. Again they were without water. Then Moses and Aaron fell upon their faces and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto them. "And Jehovah spoke unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together,

thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the Rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth its water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the Rock, so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts to drink. And Moses took the rod from before Jehovah, as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the Rock, and he said unto them, Hear, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this Rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and with his rod he smote the Rock twice; and the water came abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also" (Num. xx:7-11).

There is a deeper lesson here than the lesson that Moses lost his temper and spoke angrily. Moses was to take the rod from before Jehovah. It was the rod of Aaron, which had blossomed overnight and had yielded almonds. It was Jehovah's testimony as to Aaron's priesthood after the rebellion of the children of Korah. Aaron's budding, fruit bearing rod is a type of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and His everlasting priesthood. This rod Moses was to take, and standing before the rock speak to it. But instead of following the given instructions, in the anger of his spirit, he took his own rod and smote the rock twice. By his hasty action he marred a beautiful type. The rock needed not to be smitten again. Christ was smitten once, and now all that is needed is to make use of His priestly intercession, typified by Aaron's rod.

It is interesting to note that in the two passages, the smitten Rock and the Rock to whom Moses was to speak, two different Hebrew words are used. In Exodus when the Rock is smitten the Hebrew word is "*Tsur*," which means a sharp, outstanding rock; in Numbers the word for rock is "*Sela*" which means a high rock.

Moses' Testimony of the Rock

Moses in his final testimony to the people, whom he had led forth out of Egypt, in his prophetic song, speaks of that Rock, the Rock of Ages. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect" (Deut. xxxii:4). "He made him to suck honey out

of the Rock, and oil out of the flinty Rock" (Verse 13). Then he speaks prophetically of the rejection of the Rock. "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God that made him and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation" (Verse 15). Thrice more he mentions the Rock (Verses 18, 30 and 31). From these passages we learn that Moses knew the symbolical meaning of the Rock, that it is Christ, the Rock of Salvation.

David and the Rock

King David speaks more of the Rock than any other prophet. We suppose, when the crownless King was persecuted, when he wandered through the mountainous wilderness of Judea, many times rocks sheltered him, while at other times an elevated rock he climbed was the means of his escape. He could not help but think of His God, who had called him to the kingdom, as the Rock, his shelter and his sure foundation. How many times he sang of that Rock in his inspired songs! "Jehovah is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer" (Ps. xviii:2). "For who is God save Jehovah? Or who is a rock save our God?" (Verse 31). "Jehovah liveth, and blessed be my rock" (Verse 46). "Unto Thee will I cry, O Jehovah, my Rock" (Ps. xxviii:1). "Be Thou my strong Rock"—"For Thou art my Rock and my fortress" (Ps. xxxi:2, 3). "He only is my rock"—"The rock of my strength and refuge is God" (Ps. lxii:6, 7). "Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation" (Psa. xcv:1). "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Psa. lxi:2). These are a few of the Davidic expressions. The children of Korah, those who escaped the judgment, because they did not side with the rebellion of their kin, also bear witness to the Rock (Psa. xlvi:9). Ethan the Ezrahite speaks of the Rock (Ps. lxxxix:20). And Isaiah testifies of Him as "the great rock in a weary land" (Isa. xxxii:2). From these quotations we learn that the Rock is one of the symbolical names of Jehovah, widely used by the saints of Old Testament times.

The Rejected Stone

We read in the Gospels how our Lord, before He went that memorable night to the garden of Gethsemane, sang a hymn with his disciples. What hymn was it? The Jews chant the Psalms in their synagogical services. At Passover time they sing what they call "the great Hallel," the great praise. They chant Psalms One Hundred and Thirteen to One Hundred and Eighteen. This is the hymn the Lord Jesus sang with His disciples in the night He was betrayed. Perhaps He was the leader of this hymn; He only understood the full meaning of what they sang. In that hymn is a significant statement as to a stone, a prophecy which becomes very prominent in the New Testament.

"The Stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psa. cxviii:22, 23).

There is a traditional legend among the Jews, upon which the statement of this verse may be based. It is said that when Solomon built the temple, the material was all prepared beforehand. This is not tradition, but a fact revealed in Scripture. When the builders were putting the material together they came across a stone shaped in an unusual way. The stone differed from all the rest. They tried to fit the stone into various places; but they could not place it. Then in anger they rolled the stone into a deep valley. They proceeded using the prepared material and finally they discovered that the rejected stone was the head of the corner. They had to bring back that stone. We do not know who composed the Psalm in which the rejected stone is mentioned, for the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm has no inscription. The tradition may be based on facts and used by the unknown writer after the erection of the Solomonic temple.

Isaiah's Testimony to the Stone and the Rock

Before we learn from the New Testament the use that is made of the prophecy concerning the rejected stone which becomes the head of the corner, we quote the words of

Isaiah concerning Jchovah the Stone and Jehovah the Rock. "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Isa. viii:14). This prophetic utterance concerns the Immanuel. For some of the people, who believe, He will be a sanctuary, and for the rest of Israel He will prove to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, because they believe not. But what becomes of the stone of stumbling, the rejected stone? We find the answer in another passage of the same prophet. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. xxviii:16). The rejected stone is to become the foundation upon which something is to be built.

Our Lord's Testimony

The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of Himself as the stone predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures. During the last week of His earthly life, the week when He died for our sins, He was surrounded in the temple by the chief priests, the elders and the Pharisees. He spoke to them in parables, parables in which He foretold His own rejection. When He had spoken the parable of the householder, who planted a vineyard, whose servants, sent to the vineyard, had been maliciously stoned and killed; who finally had sent his own son and heir, whom they also killed; He asked them the question, "When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" They answered readily "He will miserably destroy those wicked men." They had announced their own doom. Then the Lord asked them a question. "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes?" (Matt. xxi:42-43). He quoted the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm and thus confirmed the Messianic interpretation of that verse. And His listeners knew this likewise. They realized that He spoke of Him-

self. They knew they were the builders about to reject the Stone of Israel, for it is written "when the chief priests and the Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them."

Passover was at hand. They were about to chant the hymn, the Psalm in which the rejection of the stone of Israel is announced. The Lord reminds them of it as if He would prevent them from doing the deed; giving them a warning.

The Rock is Smitten

The determined counsels of eternity (Acts iv:28) had to be accomplished. Christ had to die; the Rock must be smitten. His people, to whom He came, delivered Him up. "We have no king save Ceasar! Away with Him! Crucify Him!" But the smiting of the Rock, the Stone of Israel could not be done by the hands of wicked men led by satanic power. God, the Holy God, did the smiting. "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered" (Zech. xiii:7). God made Him, who knew no sin, sin for us. He delivered Him up for us all. He was made a curse for us. The Rock of ages was smitten on the cross in our behalf.

Fifty days after His physical and glorious resurrection the waters flowed forth. As the waters of the smitten rock followed Israel in the wilderness, so the living water, the Holy Spirit, abides for this age, the wilderness for God's people. His promise of "rivers of living water" is fulfilled. He has been smitten and glorified.

The Testimony of the Holy Spirit

Once more the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm is quoted in the New Testament. It is now the witness of the Holy Spirit who came on the day of Pentecost. Peter "filled with the Holy Spirit" stands before the same men to whom the Lord had given His word of warning. His blessed voice must have still been ringing in their ears and hearts, when

He reminded them of the prophecy of the rejected stone. Then the Holy Spirit speaks through Peter, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner" (Acts iv:10, 11). The Holy Spirit gave the testimony in the Psalm. The Son of God confirmed it by quoting it to the leaders in Judaism, and finally the Holy Spirit, through Peter, affirms the accomplishment of the prophecy.

Upon this Rock

When our Lord spoke of the house built upon a rock (Matt. vii:25) He meant Himself, the Rock of Ages, and faith building upon this foundation. "And the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock." It is the first hint in Scripture of that body of New Testament believers, called the Church of God, the body of Christ, which is to outweather every storm, against which the gates of Hades can not prevail.

In Matthew's Gospel we find the great fundamental passage in which the Lord Jesus Christ announced what was going to happen after His rejection, after His death and after His resurrection. There was to be a church, an assembly, which He calls "My Church."

It was at Cesarea Philippi when the Lord put the question to His disciples "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" He received an answer which indicated that the people knew Him not. Then He asked a second question: "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was a revelation given to the fisherman of Galilee by the Father. In both questions and answers we find the fact of His rejection and the fact of His Sonship. When he was raised from the dead He became Christ and Lord, as the risen Man. Peter's confession anticipates His death and resurrection. Then

the Lord made that wonderful announcement of what would happen after His rejection, His death and His resurrection. "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi:18-18).

From these words we learn that the church was not in existence when He spoke thus. It was still a thing of the future. The view that He organized the church with His twelve apostles is erroneous. Our Lord did not build His church while He was "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. xv:8). After the Stone of Israel had been rejected, after the Rock had been smitten, and the living water (the Holy Spirit) was poured forth, the church came into existence.

Rome bases upon these words of our Lord to Peter her spurious claim that Peter is the rock of the church, that the Lord gave him the place of supremacy, and that he was as the head of the church officiating in Rome. Each of these claims is false. The Lord did not say that Peter is the rock upon which the church rests. The original text contains the conclusive evidence. The Greek for rock, a big solid rock, is "*Petra*." The Greek word "*Petros*" means a piece, a fragment of a rock. Maintaining these two Greek words the verse we quoted reads in this wise "Thou art Petros (a fragment of a rock) and upon this *Petra* (the solid rock) I will build my church." This is confirmed by John i:42, where the Lord addressed Peter as follows: "Thou art Simon the son of Jona, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." This makes it clear that Simon the son of Jona, because he believed, is a stone; but the Lord Jesus Christ is "The Stone." Peter is a piece of the rock, but the Lord Jesus Christ is "The Rock." Not Peter, but the Son of God, our Lord, is the Rock. Not Peter was smitten, but Peter's Lord.

Peter's Testimony to the Stone and the Rock

We now let Peter speak for himself. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen

of God, and precious, ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore who believe He is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto they also were appointed" (1 Peter ii:4-8).

What a blending together of scripture passages we have here! The Holy Spirit through Peter's pen calls attention once more to the prophetic statements in the Old Testament concerning the Stone and the Rock. These are Psa. cviii:22; Isa. viii:14 and xxviii:16. Peter mentions the builders (the religious leaders of Judaism) again, who disallowed the stone. He speaks of the rejected stone, the rock of offense, and how the rejected stone became the chief corner stone.

In all this testimony Peter never mentions himself. He has nothing to say about being the rock and foundation stone of the church. He does not say anything about being a priest or a bishop. He does not even mention "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Why not? Because he had used the keys already in preaching first to the Jews (Acts ii) and then to the Gentiles (Acts x); he had opened the door to the kingdom of heaven by preaching the Gospel to the Jews and to the Gentiles. But he bears witness to Christ that He is the living stone, and that he, as well as all other believers, are living stones, who by faith and the Spirit of God are one with the Stone, the corner Stone, the rejected Stone.

And the Apostle Paul

Not Peter, but the Apostle Paul, received from the glorified Christ the ministry concerning the church. Unto him was made known by revelation the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the children of men (Eph.iii:1-9).

That mystery is the church, the body of Christ and the bride of Christ. The church is called the body of Christ, because the life of the head is in the body and in each member; the church is the bride of Christ, because she is the object of His eternal love. Paul tells us by revelation, that the rejected Stone, the son of David, the King of Israel, is the chief corner stone, upon which the church, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles is building. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple of the Lord; in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God by the Spirit" (Eph. ii:19-22). Blessed be God for such a foundation, and blessed be His Holy Name for the grace and glory which is ours as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, as being living stones, members of His body, destined to share in all eternity His glory and His inheritance!

The Future Manifestation of the Stone of Israel

Some day the building of that spiritual house, the church, will be completed. It would be a strange building which continues to be built and never reaches a completion. For many years there has been building in New York City a magnificent Cathedral, which is to be one of the most famous edifices on this continent. It will take years yet to finish this structure. Finally it will be finished. It would be a strange building, this church, if it should never be finished. But it will be completed. The church—the *Ecclesia*—as this word tells us, consists of an elect number of men and women, Jews and Gentiles of all nations. That full number will be reached; then the body is complete and the building upon the corner stone ceases. When that time is reached something startling happens. What will it be? The rejected Stone will reappear.

We listen to His own testimony. "And whosoever shall

fall on this Stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. xxi:44). Here is the past and the future. Israel fell against the Stone. The Rock of Ages became for them the Rock of Offense, because they believed not. The result was as stated by our Lord, they were broken, nationally, to pieces, and became wanderers among all the nations.

But the Stone is to fall, and then grind to pieces those upon whom the Stone falls. This is still in the future.

The Smiting Stone

When our Lord uttered this prophecy He reminded us of what is written in the Book of Daniel, to which He referred later in His prophetic Olivet Discourse (Matt. xxiv:15). We read in Daniel "of Nebuchadnezzar's great dream" (Dan.ii). The man-image represents the times of the Gentiles. When the times of the Gentiles end, and the political conditions are in the earth as prophetically pictured in the two clay feet of the image and the ten toes of iron, then a Stone falls from heaven, deals the man-image a destructive blow when it crushes upon the two feet. The whole image collapses; it is ground to powder, every part of it becomes like "the chaff on the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away." This Stone is Christ. It is not Christ, as postmillennial commentators assert, in His first coming; it is Christ in His second coming. When He came the first time, in humiliation, the Stone and Rock was smitten. When He comes the second time, He will deal the judgment blow to the political conditions on earth, deal in judgment with the ungodly and thus end the times of the Gentiles.

The Stone Becomes a Mountain

"And the Stone which smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. ii:35). The meaning of this we need not seek in a commentary; it is found in the same chapter. "And in the days of these kings (the ten toes of the image) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." The smiting

Stone, the Lord Jesus Christ, becomes a mountain, filling the whole earth. It is symbolical of the Kingdom which comes when the King comes back to earth again.

What a wonderful story is the story of the Stone of Israel, the Rock of Ages! We have traced it from start to finish in the Scriptures. As believers we rest upon Him, whom Israel rejected. He is our sure foundation; we look forward to the time when we shall share in His kingdom, according to His promise. But, beloved, let us also remember our responsibility. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii:11-15).

THE DESERT ROCK

They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ (1 Cor. x:4).

Rock of the desert, pouring still
Thy stream the thirsty soul to fill;
Rock of the desert now as full
Of living water, pure and cool,
We stand beside thee now.

Rock of eternity, to thee
In thirst and weariness we flee;
Thy waters cannot cease to pour,
Their fulness is for evermore;
Let him that thirsteth come!

Bright water of eternity,
We come, we come to drink of thee;
The voice of welcome that we hear,
The voice dispelling every fear,
Is "whosoever will."

River of life, upon thy brink
We sit, and of thy waters drink.
The murmur of the sparkling wave
Speaks still of Him who came to save,
Who bids us drink and live.

River of peace, so full and bright,
Each drop clear-shining with the light;
And still the voice that comes from thee,
The voice that telleth all is free,
Is "whosoever will."

River of health, thy current pours
Its freshness on the leprous shores;
True Jordan bidding all draw nigh
For health and immortality,
With "whosoever will."

River of love, so deep and wide,
All heaven is in thy flowing tide;
For all the love of God is here,
The love that casteth out all fear,
The “whosoever will.”

Dear River, what a sun is thine!
What glories of thy waters shine,
What freshness in each sparkling drop!
And still the voice that cometh up
Is “whosoever will.”

River of God still flowing on!
Thy source the everlasting throne.
River of heaven, translucent stream,
Thy fulness ever at the brim
For “whosoever will.”

Horatius Bonar

WE WOULD SEE JESUS

John xii:21

It was the glorious day of His earthly triumph. His claim of power to raise the dead had been substantiated in His greatest miracle, the raising up of Lazarus. A large number of Jews witnessed the impressive scene, when He stood before the tomb of His friend and commanded "take ye away the stone!" They had seen Lazarus, who had been dead four days, coming back to life in answer to His majestic "Lazarus, come forth!" As He still tarried in Bethany a large number of Jews came to see Him, and Lazarus. On the next day, as the news of the miracle spread everywhere, a multitude of people, when He was coming to Jerusalem from Bethany, went forth to meet Him. A veritable forest of palm branches was seen as they advanced. Mighty shouts were heard: "Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord." Then He came. They saw their King riding upon the young ass. The Jews from Bethany who accompanied Him, and those from Jerusalem, all spoke of the great miracle. Here and there, in little groups, stood the Pharisees, the scribes, the priests, gnashing their teeth and saying among themselves "Behold the world is gone after Him."

In the vast multitude were certain Greeks. They were Gentiles who had come from their homeland to worship at the feast. Tired of the decaying philosophy of Greece, unsatisfied in their pagan religion, seeking light, knowledge of the true God, peace and assurance, they had become proselytes to the Jews' religion. The Old Testament was translated into their language. They probably knew that the hope of Israel is the promised Messiah, and so when they heard of this wonderful Man, whom the multitude acclaimed as the King of Israel, they approached Philip with the request "Sir, we would see Jesus." But when Andrew and Philip spoke to the Lord, He had no answer for these inquiring Greeks. Instead of being elated over the great demonstration of His

own people, and over the Gentiles seeking after Him, He spoke of the hour when He, the Son of Man should be glorified. He meant the hour of His death followed by His resurrection and exaltation. His holy soul was troubled, because before Him loomed up the Cross. There was no answer to the seeking Gentiles. The time for His full revelation as the Saviour of the world had not yet come.

But now, after Christ has died, is risen, ascended on high and the Holy Spirit has come down to take of the things of Christ to show them unto us, the desire of any heart and every heart to see Him and to know Him, can be abundantly met. "We would see Jesus" should be the heart cry of every child of God. The Spirit of God answers that cry. And how do we behold Him?

I. We behold Him in the Scriptures. Of the Scriptures our Lord said "They are they which testify of Me." Whenever we take our Bibles in hand to read the Word of God, the foremost thought should be "We would see Jesus." In the vision of Himself our need, yea all our need, is graciously supplied. All God is and all God has revealed is like Himself inexhaustible. All our searching can never exhaust the revelation of His person. There remains always something new to be discovered about His matchless person as revealed in the Old Testament. The Scriptures testify of Him as to His Deity. The Redeemer to come is Jehovah, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. He is the Holy One of Israel, who created the heavens and the earth. He is Immanuel, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Almighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

The Scriptures testify beforehand of His incarnation. He was to come as the seed of the woman, Virgin-born. Holy seers gave, hundreds of years before He came to earth, a sketch of His life, pictured His character and the works He would do. Above all, the Scriptures announce Him as a Sin-bearer, the Lamb of God, and the great work of redemption He would do in His death and the results of that blessed work. Besides the direct prophecies of His atoning work, such as the twenty-second Psalm and the fifty-third chapter

of Isaiah. His sacrificial death was foreshadowed by the sacrifices and the offerings, in the different phases of the Levitical worship, by the divinely instituted priesthood, in historical events, such as the Passover, the Red Sea deliverance, the brazen Serpent lifted up in the wilderness. Then we find in the Scriptures His exaltation; the One who is rejected by men, who suffered and died, is to rise, and will be seated at the right hand of God. The greatest vision we find in the Old Testament is the vision of His Kingship and the Kingdom which will be His in the day of His future and glorious manifestation. We see Him, in many prophecies, in His royal splendor, the King of kings, the Lord of lords. He receives the uttermost parts of the earth as an inheritance, and the kingdoms of this earth for His possession.

Thus we behold Him in the Scriptures. What a marvelous fact is the harmonious witness of all Scripture to the Person of our divine Saviour. Human writers, living centuries apart, writing independently of each other, could never have produced such a witness. It is the work of the one great author of the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit. It should be for all believers the most blessed occupation to search the Scriptures, to explore the mines of God's riches, and to learn more of Him, in whom are hid all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God. As we read and search and come face to face with Him who is altogether lovely, discovering things old and new, our hearts are filled with joy. As we read of His glory and power, manifested even before His incarnation in sacred history, we receive new glimpses of our own blessedness in being called into His fellowship. Then our hearts should burn within us as did the hearts of the disciples on the road to Emmaus when He, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv:27).

II. We See Him in the Gospels in His Incarnation Glory. The four Gospels reveal only a fraction of His blessed life. What the Spirit of God testified beforehand in the Scriptures as to His coming in the flesh, born of the Virgin, His character, His message, His miracles and above all His sufferings, is

seen fulfilled. But what glory we face as we read these records! What divine majesty! What perfection in His moral character! He was the perfect incarnation of wisdom, knowledge, truth and every form of loveliness. Yea, He is altogether lovely! He manifested divine omniscience. He knew all things. The secret thoughts and questionings of His disciples were known to Him; the secret plottings of His enemies were an opened book to Him as well.

And as He manifested divine omniscience, so He also manifested divine omnipotence. He had power over nature for He is creation's Lord and Master. One majestic "Peace! be still!" and there is the sudden calm. He, the maker of the laws of nature, is above these laws. He walked across the stormy sea. He fed the multitudes in a miraculous way. All manner of diseases and human afflictions were overcome by Him. He spoke but a word and immediately the leper was cleansed; immediately the paralytic took up his bed and walked; immediately the eyes of the blind were opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped and the tongue of the speechless uttered His praises. He halted a bier on which they carried the widow's son to his resting place in mother earth. He halted the funeral train. He is moved with unspeakable compassion. Oh! how I wish I could have heard these two words coming from His gracious lips—Weep not! The bearers of the bier stood still. "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" And suddenly the blanched cheeks become rosy again. The young man sat up and spoke. He had power over death for He is the prince of life. The unseen world of spirits, angels and demons, was subject unto Him. Demons trembled in the presence of this Man, for they knew Him. What the man of culture and human progress denies today, demons confessed, for they knew Him, that He is the Son of God, who some future day will seal their eternal doom. And angels ministered unto Him; legions of them awaited His pleasure. He had power to forgive sins; to speak the words of life and peace to the humble penitents who cast themselves at His feet.

Then what gentleness, meekness, kindness, sympathy we

find in Him as we follow His blessed footsteps! He is sinless, perfectly holy. No guile was ever found in His mouth. His lips poured forth grace and truth. He never erred in a single word; no idle word was ever spoken by Him.

How great the words He spoke, the teachings He gave, the truth He revealed! Never man spake like this man—was the testimony of officers who had been summoned to arrest Him. The common people heard Him gladly for He preached the gospel to the poor; He healed the broken hearted, He preached deliverance to the captives of sin; He set at liberty them that are bruised and preached the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke iv:19). His teaching was simple so that the common people could understand Him; yet it is so profound that the greatest minds of the human race have never fathomed it. As the twelve year old boy He astonished the master minds of His people by His understanding and wisdom.

His true Church has always bowed, and still bows before Him in worship and adoration. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" continues the confession of His people. Rationalists and unbelievers have also born witness to Him. Napoleon Bonaparte uttered the following noble words concerning our Lord, "Everything in Christ astonishes me. His Spirit overcomes me, and His will confounds me. His ideas, His sentiments, the truths which He announces, His manner of convincing, are not explained, either by human observation or the nature of things. His birth and the history of His life; the profundity of His doctrine, which grapples the mightiest difficulties, and which is of those difficulties the most admirable solution; His gospel; His apparition; His empire; His march across the ages and the realms; everything is to me a prodigy, a mystery insoluble, which plunges me into a reverie from which I cannot escape—a mystery which is there before my eyes, a mystery which I can neither deny nor explain. Here I see nothing human. Everything is above me. Everything remains grand—of the grandeur which overpowers. His religion is a revelation from an intelligence which certainly is not that of man." 'This great

tribute of the great Napoleon puts to shame the modern critics with their weak and puerile inventions. Napoleon acknowledged the supernatural person, the supernatural character and the supernatural teachings of the Lord Jesus. The modern critic denies it. Napoleon will arise some day in judgment with this generation and condemn it.

To see the Lord Jesus in His lovely character on earth, in His meekness, lowliness, kindness, patience and sympathy, must ever be one of our chief occupations as Christians. As born again, in possession of the divine nature, and therefore not of the world, as He was not of the world, we are in possession of His mind.

“But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. ii:16). “Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ Jesus” (Phil. ii:5). We are called to walk even as He walked. The new nature craves this. It longs for holiness, a life of separation unto God. This longing is one of the evidences that we are born of God. As we behold Him, see Him and are occupied with His loveliness, we have the promise that we shall be changed, that is transformed, into the same image from glory unto glory. This is the work of the indwelling Spirit; He produces in us the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! let us then gaze more on Him as revealed in the Gospels!

III. We See Him as our Sin-bearer in His Precious work on the Cross. The Son of God, the true God and the eternal Life, came to earth for the one great purpose to die for our sins. The goal of the manger was the cross. The widespread liberal religion, known as modernism, teaches that our Lord came to bring the right philosophy of life. They claim He lived a life of love and self-surrender to show man how to live. For these new religionists, who deliberately strip Christianity of its supernatural character and power, the gospel is “the golden rule.” They also claim that the Lord Jesus died for the principles He advocated; that He died as martyrs die. They charge the Apostle Paul with having formulated the redemption-by-blood theory; the substitutionary death of Christ is branded as a myth, unknown to Christ Himself.

The Gospel records give us the right answer. In the beginning of His ministry we behold Him requesting baptism. John's baptism was unto repentance. How well the baptizer said: "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" (Matt. iii:14). He entered Jordan and the Holy One indicated that He had come to take the sinner's place in death, for Jordan is the type of death. John the Baptist knew His great mission, for he bore witness of Him: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world" (Jno i:29). Then we listen to His own words: "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep * * * therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (Jno x:14, 17, 18). "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark x:45). "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jno iii:15, 16). "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die" (Jno xii:32). These blessed words we have quoted are sufficient to show that He taught the sacrificial aspect of His death.

On the transfiguration mount Moses and Elias "spake of His decease which He should accomplish in Jerusalem." Moses represents the Law; Elias the Prophets. Both the Law and the Prophets predict and teach His atoning death. Caiaphas, the high priest, spoke truth when he said: "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (Jno xi:49, 50). What did he mean by these words? "And this spake he not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Even Satan knew the great

object of His coming in the flesh and what would be the ultimate result of His death. When he offered to Him the kingdom of this world, if He would acknowledge his authority. He tried to prevent Him from going to the Cross.

When our Lord had announced His coming suffering and death to His disciples the first time, Peter took Him aside and rebuked Him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord." We see our Lord shaking Himself loose from Peter's grasp and saying "Get thee behind me, Satan! Thou art an offense unto Me! for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matt. xvi:21-23). Satan tried to use Peter to keep the Lord from going to Jerusalem to die as the Lamb of God.

Nothing could hinder Him from finishing the work the Father gave Him to do. The eternal purposes of redemption could never be frustrated. When the great hour came, the hour fixed from before the foundation of the world, He set His face like a flint to go up to Jerusalem. We follow Him into Gethsemane and behold His agony there. We see Him in the hands of vile men, energized by the power of darkness, cruelly treated; His face marred and smitten, His back scourged, mocked with a purple robe, crowned with a crown of thorns. They nailed Him to the cross. He despised the shame and endured the cross. Hanging there, lifted up from the earth, He shed His precious blood, without which there is no remission of sin. But the great work of sin-bearing was done, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us. When the God of holiness dealt with Him in the place of ourselves: when God's hand smote Him in our stead, and pouring out His soul unto death He uttered that heart and soul piercing cry "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We listen again and as He is about to bow His thorn-crowned head He gives the victor's shout, "It is finished."

And thus we see Him in faith. We believe and know that the work of the cross meets all our need. He died for our sins; He bore them all in His body on the tree. Before we ever existed He knew us. Before our sins ever were committed He paid for them. And now justified by faith, faith

in Him, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. More than that. With the great apostle we say what he said; we confess what he confessed, "I was crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii:20). "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi:14).

We glory only in the cross,
On which the Son of God
Finished the mighty sacrifice,
Purging our sins with blood.

There peace forever made by God—
Himself our peace, we see;
Himself the bearer of our guilt
On the great altar-tree.

The reconciling work was done,
The work that ends the strife,
When, He, the Word made flesh, for us
Laid down His blessed life.

The debt was paid, the peace was made,
The veil was rent in twain,
And access to the Father given,
By Him the victim slain."*

It was Count Zinzendorf who said "My passion, my only passion is He." And so it should be. His passion was His mighty love for us. The passion of the new nature is He Himself.

IV. We See Him also in His Resurrection Glory. The Prince of Life and Lord of Glory could not be holden by death. He died as to the body, but inasmuch as it was a holy, a sinless body, it could not be as it is with our bodies, "dust to dust and ashes to ashes." His body could not see corruption (Psa. xvi:10; Acts ii:31).

He predicted His resurrection from among the dead on the third day. He spoke of being raised by the Father and He declared that He would rise. In anticipation of it He spoke those blessed words, cherished by all His people, "I

*Horatius Bonar.

am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (Jno. xi:25, 26). And so He arose, showing Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them for forty days (Acts i:3). The grave was emptied on the third day; the body was gone. Angels gave the message "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." But how little we know of the resurrection body of our Lord! How many mysteries are connected with it! The body showed the nail prints. The place where the Roman spear had pierced His blessed side was also seen. It was a real body, not a phantom body. He ate in their presence. He passed through a closed door. He appeared suddenly and suddenly He disappeared. Those who knew Him so well, for they had walked with Him, talked with Him and lived with Him for several years, when He appeared in their midst, cried out for fear and were terrified, supposing they had seen a spirit. Then He said "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have" (Luke xxiv:37-39). Where was His dwelling place during the forty days? Oh! the mystery of His resurrection body! How little we know of it! Yet it concerns us for whom He died, who have died in His death and who are risen with Him. His resurrection is the promise of our own resurrection; our body of humiliation has the promise of being fashioned like unto His own glorious body. We shall be transformed into the same image, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren.

But while we do not know all that His glorious, triumphant resurrection meant, and while His resurrection body is shrouded in a mystery, which we shall fully know in that coming day of His glorious manifestation, we do believe it all. In faith we see Him risen and exalted at God's right hand. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that

He, by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. ii:9). For all who have accepted Him as their Saviour and Lord it is an indisputable fact "that God raised Him from among the dead and gave Him glory" (1 Pet. i:21). As the dying eye of Stephen beheld Him standing at the right hand of God, so we see Him in faith, and know He is gone to God, "angels and principalities being made subject unto Him." As we gaze in faith on Him, Who is our Lord, we can know "What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i:19-23). And this risen Christ calls us, who are before God risen with Him, to live the risen life, the life of victory.

V. We See Him as the High Priest and Advocate with the Father. As the high priest entered into an earthly tabernacle, which human hands had erected, so Christ our high priest entered into heaven itself. We have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens. He ascended upon high and led captivity captive. He entered heaven itself and took His place at the right hand of the majesty on high; welcomed by God and constituted a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. All this is wonderfully revealed in the epistle to the Hebrews where we see Him as our great high priest. The high priest in the Old Testament is a faint type of our great high priest. As Israel's high priest carried upon his bosom a breast-plate of precious stones, and two onyx stones upon His shoulders, all engraven with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, so He carries us upon His bosom, in deepest affection, and upon His shoulders, which represent His divine power. His love is as great as His power, and His power is as great as His love. He is appearing

in the presence of God for us so that we can be sustained in earth's trials and sorrows and that we can be victorious in all temptations. He prays for us. He comes with His loving sympathy in our sorrow, for "He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; He was tempted in all points like as we are, apart from sin" (Heb. iv:14, 19). He is interested in every one of His own, yea even in the smallest things in our lives. As He is omniscient He knows all things, our circumstances, our needs, our thoughts, yea, He knows them from afar off. More than that He knows the future. As our high priest He prays for us (Jno. xxii:9). When we pray down here, pray for our need, for guidance, we often err, because we are short sighted. But He never errs in praying for us. Your prayers, beloved, are often not answered as you thought they should have been answered. Often the very opposite comes to pass. Take it then in faith that what happened is the answer to His perfect prayer for you.

Do you remember His words to Peter, whom Satan had selected for sifting? Like the serpent Satan sneaked up to his prey. Peter knew nothing of it. But Peter's Lord saw it all. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And this happens still. Satan is the accuser of the brethren; he still asks permission to test God's children. We do not know his cunning devices, his wiles and all the pitfalls he prepares. But Christ our great high priest knows, and sees, and prays for our preservation, that our faith fail not.

It is a blessed word Paul writes in Romans. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v:10). The life of Christ by which we are saved is the life which He lives in the presence of God or us. His presence there is our salvation here. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii:25). "Let us therefore come boldly unto

the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. iv:16).

Oh! blessed and glorious sight for faith to behold! We have in the presence of God an almighty, omniscient, all-loving, all perfect and all glorious high priest. Come then with your tears of sorrow; He wipes them away. Come in your weakness and He will give you strength; come with your troubles and trials, with your heartaches and disappointments. His ear is always open. As He was on earth, always accessible, so He is still. He is our burden-bearer as He was our sin-bearer on the cross.

He is furthermore our Advocate. While His priesthood is so fully mentioned in the Hebrew epistle, His advocacy is found only once in the New Testament. John, in addressing the family of God wrote to the little children, that is, all new-born ones: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 Jno. ii:1-2). We learn from these words that the advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ concerns our sins. Like the priesthood of Christ so His advocacy concerns only His own. He is our Advocate not with God, but with the Father. "If any man sin," means, if any true child of God sins. When we sin there follows a broken fellowship with the Father. The Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts leads us to confession. To bring our sins to the light, humbling ourselves, confessing our failures and sins, judging ourselves—this is the path of restoration. All this is the result of His advocacy. He does not wait till we confess our sins, but as the sin has been committed, He pleads at once before the Father.

We see Him as our Advocate, who never fails, who is never discouraged. We come to Him with our sins and weaknesses and trust in His gracious, perfect intercession in our behalf. This gives peace, assurance and joy.

VI. The Coming Face to Face Meeting. The apostle John writing "to the elect lady," at the close of his epistle

said, "I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full" (2 Jno., Verse 12). Well may we think, as we read these words, of a coming face to face meeting, when we with all the redeemed shall meet our Lord face to face. When that meeting, promised so long ago, takes place "our joy" will be full. He will have fulness of joy in having with Him in never-ending glory "the travail of His soul." Our joy will be full when we shall see His face.

He left to His disciples the promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye may be also" (Jno. xiv:3). They also heard Him ask the Father for the accomplishment of this promise. "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou has given Me" (Jno. xvii:24). How precious this promise must have been to His disciples! How that pleading voice must have re-echoed in their hearts! How they must have daily looked for the fulfilment of the promise and the answer to His prayer! The manner of His coming again, the way they would see Him, He had not revealed to His eleven disciples. The Apostle Paul received it from the Lord in a direct revelation. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv:16, 17). We shall meet Him in the air. The face to face meeting takes place in that day, when He comes with the triumphant shout, to raise those who died in Him, to change "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" all living believers. What a day that will be! It brings the complete and ever-satisfying realization of "that blessed hope." Oh, it is true when He comes for His Saints we shall be reunited with our loved ones; it is true in that day earth's mists will roll away; it is true that we shall then no longer look into a glass darkly, and it is true we shall then be perfectly sanctified and glorified. All these facts and many

more belong to our blessed hope. But "that blessed hope," the highest and the best of it will be to see Him as He is. "We shall see Him as He is." Many of us know what it means as Peter wrote, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter i:8). But oh! what will it be when we shall see Him as He is!

"Face to face with Christ My Saviour,
Face to face, what will it be!"

We have no picture of our Lord, of His blessed face, how He looked in His body on earth. Isaiah wrote seven centuries before He was born of the Virgin, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. liii:2). Yet we believe His face shone out the glory of holiness, the loving-kindness of His great, loving heart and His gracious tenderness, for He wept with them that weep. And because His face revealed the holiness of His soul, His meekness and lowliness, the natural man saw no beauty there. Then came the hour when cruel blows marred that face. "His visage was so marred more than any man." The literal rendering gives the thought that the features of His countenance were blotted out.

The face which we shall see is not the face as seen on earth, but the glorified face of Christ, shining out the Glory of God. What that glory is, the most vivid imagination cannot describe. To see Him as He is; to look into His face; to hear His voice and to be forever united with Him in an unspeakably blessed union, this is the glorious consummation of our blood-bought redemption. Yea, more than that—"We shall be like Him." We shall be like His Son, the First Begotten from among the dead.

"We would see Jesus." Oh! how many hearts are sighing thus today. The age is getting darker; the conflict becomes hotter; the trials severer. We look about us in a world to which we no longer belong, in it but not of it. On all sides we see His blessed Name dishonored. As never before

He is the rejected One. The evidences of sin and the display of the power of darkness are seen everywhere. There is a frightful increase of unrighteousness and lawlessness, just as it is predicted in God's Word. Are you getting tired of this age with its passing, and soon ending, charms? Is your heart crying as never before, "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus"? Are you longing for home, His home and our home? Is it on your lips, because it is in your heart—Lord Jesus, come soon that we can meet face to face for fulness of joy and fulness of glory?

VII. The Eternal Vision. Great are the mysteries of our coming eternity. We know it will be "Forever with the Lord." But what all this means no Saint has ever understood. What will be our eternal occupation there? "His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. xxii:3) thus it is written. But, how shall we serve Him?

In the message written concerning the eternal New Jerusalem we also read, "And they shall see His face" (Rev. xxii:4). And linked with it is this, "His Name shall be in their foreheads." Here is perfect vision and perfect identification. We shall never lose sight of His face. But to see His face forever and ever, how is this possible without becoming tired of it? says the human mind.

A couple had lived many years together. The wife was far from good looking, and once a visitor said playfully to his friend, the husband, "You have looked into this one face for almost half of a century; are you not getting tired of it?" "Ah!" answered the husband, "you are mistaken. I love her as never before and her face becomes daily more attractive, more beautiful and more charming to me."

Oh, no! we shall never get tired of "seeing His face." It will become more beautiful and more glorious as eternal ages roll on and on.

Beloved in the Lord, true spiritual Christianity is seeing the Lord Jesus Christ, heart occupation with Him. Such a vision and heart devotion makes it possible for the Holy Spirit to manifest His power in our lives and in our service. Seeing Him in His Word; seeing Him in His life; seeing Him

dying for us, seeing Him risen; seeing Him as our Priest and Advocate, and longing for the greatest vision of all, the promised face to face meeting.

We would see Jesus; for the shadows lengthen
Across this little landscape of our life;
We would see Jesus, our weak faith to strengthen,
For the last weariness, the final strife.

We would see Jesus, the great rock-foundation,
Whereon our feet were set by sovereign grace;
Not life nor death with all their agitation,
Can thence remove us, if we see His face.

We would see Jesus, other lights are paling,
Which for long years we have rejoiced to see;
The blessings of our pilgrimage are failing;
We would not mourn them, for we go to Thee.

We would see Jesus, this is all we're needing;
Strength, joy, and willingness come with the sight;
We would see Jesus, dying, risen, pleading;
Then welcome day, and farewell mortal night.*

*A. B. Warner, 1858.

THE CHRIST OF THE CROSS—THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Cor. i:23-25).

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal. vi:14).

Years ago there was built in New York a magnificent church edifice. The well polished cornerstone bore as an inscription the above text from the first Epistle to the Corinthians: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." Someone later planted at the foundation of the building a delicate little vine. In course of time it covered the front of the church. It also crept over the entire cornerstone, so that this beautiful text was almost entirely obscured. However, the first three words, "*But we preach,*" were still readable; the rest was no longer to be seen.

It is a good illustration of the conditions we face today throughout Christendom. There is preaching, a lot of it; but preaching of what? No longer the great message which God has sent to a lost world, the message of Christ crucified, the Cross, and the Gospel of Christ. The vines of oratory and human wisdom; the vines of the world and worldly ambitions; the fatal and malignant vines of destructive criticism, have blotted out the great message.

But what remains of Christianity if Christ crucified is no longer preached? Though the preaching may be of the highest type, filled with charming phrases, beautiful sentiments, choice illustrations which stir the emotions of the soul—yet there remains of Christianity nothing but a religious, ethical system of no more value, of no more power than Confucianism, or any other pagan religious system. Towards this awful rock of complete shipwreck all seems to be rapidly drifting in Christendom.

To us who know the Christ of the Cross, who glory in the Cross of Christ, God's call is to exalt this one great message which Paul calls "the Testimony of God"; the Person of Christ, the Cross of Christ, the Power and the Wisdom of God; that which reveals God in the fulness of His Love and His Power.

And this great man of God magnified this message above everything else. Think of it for a moment! The Apostle Paul was a man of no mean ability. He was endowed with great natural gifts. He possessed great attainments, speaking several languages. He came to Corinth, that great city of art, culture and philosophy, famous more than anything else for its licentiousness. Those Greeks loved the display of human wisdom; great orators were their delight. But when Paul came to Corinth he put aside all his natural gifts and his attainments. He does not come to them with excellency of speech, nor with enticing words. He knows the God-given message needs no embellishment from his side. Nor does he want the applause of man, nor does he care for their criticism, that his speech is rude and contemptible. He knew what he preached *is* the testimony of God, and that behind it stands the power of God. He knew that testimony preached would not leave him ashamed. Whether he preached Christ crucified to the Jew or to the Barbarian, in Jerusalem, in Asia, in Rome or in Corinth, God's power to save would be manifested. And how the world needs this great message today! And blessed be God its power is undiminished; it never loses its power.

The Christ of the Cross

Who is *the Christ* of the Cross? It is the old question, still the great and burning question: "What think ye of Christ?" We must be clear on that first. Though everyone who listens to these words may know the right answer, yet it can never be out of place for human lips of clay to tell out the glory and greatness of the Christ of the Cross. God Himself delights to hear Him exalted, who is ever His delight; and besides this, there are unseen, silent listeners, good and evil, angels and demons.

Have you ever noticed who first answered this question

in the New Testament? It was not Peter, when in his God-given revelation he declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Two demons were the first who confessed Him. They cried out, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God" (Matt. viii:29). Yet man with his darkened mind, his unbelieving heart, denies that which a demon does not dare deny. The great religious world answers the question by calling Him—the great leader, the perfect man, the perfect example, or something else, but robs Him of His highest glory, the glory of Deity.

To get new glimpses of His matchless Person, the dignity and glory which is His, is our great need, for then shall we realize more fully the Cross and its power.

In His wonderful person He is unsearchable. Paul wrote of the unsearchable Riches of Christ, which include the unsearchableness of His Person and His Glory. We call certain things in creation unsearchable. The unsearchable depths of the sea, with its wonderful world of animal and vegetable life, in brilliant colors and of vast dimensions. Or we look at the great mountain ranges, with their hidden treasures of silver and gold, and speak of their unsearchable riches. And greater still this vast universe, with its millions of heavenly bodies, as numerous as the sand on the seashore, with its nebular constellations in an unmeasurable distance, inconceivable to the finite mind. What unknown and unsearchable riches!

Yet what are they all in comparison with the unsearchable Riches of the Person of our Lord! He created all these things. The sea is His and He made it. It is He of whom Moses wrote: "Before the mountains were brought forth or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Psa. xc:2).

And again, "Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, like a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end" (Psa. cii:25-28). And

the heavens, which declare His Glory, are the works of His fingers. We hear Him speak through Isaiah, "To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One? Lift up your eyes on high and behold who hath created these things? That bringeth out their hosts by number; He calls them all by name by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth" (Isa. xl:25).

Such He is, the Creator of all things. Nor must we forget the unsearchable Riches of eternal Glory. There is an uncreated heaven, a place which always was, where the Eternal Godhead ever existed. And in that eternal place of Glory He dwelleth as the Only Begotten of the Father, sharing His eternity and His Glory. To this He referred when He prayed, "And now, Father, glorify Me with the Glory which I had with thee before the world was." What unsearchable Riches must have been His!

Such is the Christ, the Christ of the Cross, the Son of God.

Through the Cross

Through Him God makes known His wisdom and His power; through Him He displays His love; through Him He reached down to the depths where fallen man is and lifts him from the horrible pit and the miry clay, to share the Glory of eternity in His own presence. The way is by the Cross, which to the religious Jew was the stumbling block and to the Greek, in boasted wisdom, foolishness. It is equally so today to the teacher of Modernism, the camouflaged Unitarian.

And that Cross is not a thing of yesterday. The Cross is not an afterthought with God. It is God's forethought. It was in the eternal purposes and councils of God before the foundation of the world, before there ever was a sinner. God knows the end from the beginning. He knew what would happen when He called things into existence; He knew that man would become a sinner and His enemy by wicked works. All things were known to Him from the beginning; all history, past, present and future, is and was

known to the Omniscient One. And in that mysterious, unfathomable eternity He made provision for the redemption of man unto the praise of His own Glory, and that provision centers in the Cross. Therefore we say, the Cross is God's forethought; it is an eternal Cross.

When sin became a fact and man became the lost creature of God, then God in revelation announced the Cross. We see it for the first time in the first prophetic promise, in the protevangelium, concerning the seed of the woman, and behold it illustrated for the first time in its blessed meaning for lost sinners, when the Lord covered His naked creatures with the skin of a slain animal, which through death had to provide the covering (Gen. iii). And ever after the Cross looms up in type and in prophecy. We behold the Cross foreshadowed in Abel, who died for his brother's sin. When Abraham put his beloved son upon the altar to sacrifice him as a burnt-offering, we have a vision of the Cross, as well as in the other sacrifice, the ram, which was offered up instead of Isaac. The passover Lamb, with the sprinkled blood, and Jehovah's matchless assurance, "When I shall see the Blood I will pass over you"; the passage through the Red Sea, which separated His people from Egypt and exterminated their enemies, as well as the passage through Jordan, the type of death, to bring them in to the promised inheritance; all these blessed historical events foreshadow the Cross and its great work in behalf of lost sinners. That earthly tabernacle in all its appointments, its continual sacrifices and offering, its mercy seat sprinkled with blood, and nearly everything else, even to some of the minutest details, points to the Cross and the Christ of the Cross. And there is the brazen serpent, which our Lord told Nicodemus is a type of His Cross. Even a disobedient prophet, Jonah, cast into the sea, with seaweed twined about his head, going down into a grave, out of which the power of God brought him forth, foreshadows the Christ of the Cross.

And what shall we say of the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking in Prophecy concerning the Cross and the Christ of the Cross? The two greatest, most marvelous pictures

of the Cross are found in the Psalms, and in the Book of Isaiah. In the Twenty-second Psalm, the Spirit of God showed to David the suffering of Him, who should come from his loins, David's son and David's Lord. Here we have a pen picture of death by crucifixion, which in David's day was an unknown mode of death, for it was cruel Rome which invented crucifixion. How in that Psalm the Cross looms up, beginning with the sufferer's cry, describing the physical agony and its attending details, every reader of the Bible knows. Isaiah describing the true Servant of Jehovah, ever showing that He who serves on earth is Jehovah, the Lord of the ends of the earth, leads us onward step by step, till we reach the summit of his great evangelical message in the fifty-third chapter, where we behold that perfect, sinless servant smitten and afflicted of God, bearing the iniquities of His people, so that we might be healed by His stripes. How sad it is to see that this great prophecy of the Cross and the Christ of the Cross, the prophecy which the ancient synagogue interpreted as meaning the Messiah, which the Church always believed as one of the most precious predictions of the divine sin-bearer, is today in apostate Christendom no longer believed as having anything to do with our Christ. Infidel Jews, to counteract the Gospel, invented the theory that the suffering servant in Isaiah the fifty-third chapter is the nation Israel; and this infidel view is today taught in the seminaries of apostate Christendom.

The Christ Who Came to Go to the Cross

And then He came. He, who is very God, left the bosom of the Father, at the appointed time, the time decreed before the foundation of the world, to be born of a woman, so that He might become the Christ of the Cross and finish the great work. That passage in the tenth chapter of Hebrews is unutterably sublime. I believe it takes us back to heaven right before He left the Glory behind. The smoke of sacrifices and the incense was rising upward from Jewish altars. Then when about to come into the world He turned to the

Father and said, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared me. In burnt offerings for sin Thou hast had no pleasure—then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x:5-7). And then He came.

The Holy One, who knew no sin, who cannot sin, for He is God, and God cannot sin, needed in His incarnation a holy body, a specially prepared body. He needed a body in order to suffer and to die. That body had to be a sinless body, with no taint of sin whatever in it. There was only one way to produce that body. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Life and of Power had to create that body. Even so the Spirit came upon the Virgin of Nazareth and produced in her by a creative act the human body for the Son of God. Then He, the Highest, overshadowed her and united Himself with that holy, sinless body. It seems to me blindness has become densely satanic, unspeakable in its character, when men who claim to be teachers of Christianity say it does not matter how Christ was born, or that He was born like any other man. If that were true He would be a sinner like every other man; He could not have been the Saviour, but would have needed salvation Himself. The greatest blasphemy human lips can utter is the denial of the virgin birth of our Lord.

And when He came, He came to do His will, to accomplish the eternal will of God; and that meant the Cross. He came to be the Lamb of God. He knew what it all meant before He ever came, and when He came the Cross was the great purpose, the goal ever before Him. Self-conscious as He was, even in childhood, He must have known of that Cross. When He read His own Scriptures, wherever He looked, wherever He read, He must have seen on every page that Cross. In His baptism, when He went into Jordan, it was the Cross He then beheld, and on the Mount of transfiguration the theme even then was the Cross, for Moses and Elias spoke of His decease in Jerusalem. In the nights spent alone in desert places and upon mountains, in fellowship with His Father, the great theme of communion must

have been that Cross. As long as His hour, the hour appointed in eternity, had not come, He walked in immortal humanity among men, glorifying the Father, manifesting the invisible God. His body, that prepared body, was not only a sinless body, but it was also a deathless body, a body on which death had no claim, for only where sin is, death can be. But when His hour came, He set His blessed face like a flint to go up to Jerusalem and to finish the work the Father gave Him to do, the work of the Cross.

The Cross on which the Lord of Glory Died

But let us be clear what the Cross means, what the great work is which was done there. There is one verse of Scripture which introduces us to the real meaning of the work of the Cross. It is a statement so blessedly deep, that no saint has ever fathomed it; a statement which reveals to us the very heart of the atoning work of our Lord. It is written at the close of the fifth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, "For He hath made Him sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be the righteousness of God in Him." Here is the greatest setting forth of the work of the Cross. Let us be very clear about it; no sin-bearing was connected with the fact of His incarnation. It does not mean that He was made sin for us, or bore in any way our sins, during His blessed, holy life on earth. That was impossible. Only on the Cross was He who knew no sin made sin for us. On the Cross He who hated sin, as God hates sin, there and there alone, the sinless One was made sin for us. There the Just One took the place of the unjust, the Prince of Life went into the jaws of death; the Lord of Glory was stripped of all, He gave all, and, finally, the waves and billows of Divine wrath broke over His blessed holy Head.

But when and how was He on that Cross made sin? We must realize that what man did unto Him could never make Him sin in our stead. What cruel man did to Him, the scourging, the marring of His face, the vile spitting, the crown of thorns, was but the manifestation of man's hatred

energized by Satan's power. True, all these physical sufferings, the shame connected with it, hold a certain relationship to His atoning work, but never could these make Him sin for us, nor accomplish the work which needed to be done, so that God's power and wisdom might be demonstrated. Nor was He in the completest sense of the word "made sin for us" when they nailed Him to the Cross, mocking and sneering, so graciously answered by Him with His prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Nor was it when He remembered an unfulfilled Scripture, and that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He said, "I thirst." Nor was it when He spoke to the dying thief, "Verily, I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

When and how was He made sin for us? When did He do the great work which needed to be done? Solemn is the word recorded in the Gospel: "*Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.*" What mysterious hours these are! Everything shrouded in darkness; something transpired then which the eye of man could not behold. In those three hours He who knew no sin was made sin for us. Then the real sin-bearing took place. There is but one thing recorded about these three hours. When they were drawing to their close, about the ninth hour, the Christ of the Cross uttered with a loud voice, with a soul piercing voice, in accents such as never were heard before, nor ever will be heard again, "Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani?" —My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? What it all means is the secret with God Himself; He only knows the depths of woe into which He who took the sinner's place descended, when He met the righteous claims of a righteous God, and vindicated the holy character of God. Then He drank the cup to the very last drop and made His soul the offering, poured it out to the full. In those three hours the great work was done.

Three hours the land was wrapt in gloom,
Three hours the city saw no sun,
Three hours blank fear was in each face:
It seemed as if earth's day was done.

Three hours the cross itself was hid,
 While through the gloom the Sufferer's cry—
 My God, why dost Thou Me forsake,
 Breathed out His dying agony.

Three hours in that mysterious cloud
 That blotted out the noonday sun,
 The face of God's dear Son was hid;
 Only the ear could hear His groan.

Most wondrous hours, in which was done
 The greatest deed ere done below;
 The deed in which all heaven was joined,
 That saves us from the endless woe.*

And when He bowed His blessed head and said, "It is finished," the work, the matchless work of the Christ of the Cross was done, forever done.

The Cross, the Wisdom of God

We are told in this chapter that "the world by wisdom knew not God." The world with all its pretended wisdom, with all its searching, could not find a way back to God; deeper and deeper man was dragged down, and farther away from God. Man with his wisdom could not get back to God. Then God stepped in and made known His wisdom by that which appears to be the foolishness of God, a crucified Christ, which is the weakness of God; and shows that His foolishness is wiser than men and His weakness stronger than man. In the Christ of the Cross we see, therefore, the wisdom and the power of God.

And what wisdom! God is Light and God is Love. He is Light; in Him there is no darkness at all. He dwells in an unapproachable light. And the sinner, yea, a world of lost sinners, is in darkness and must forever be excluded from the presence of a holy God. Yet God is Love. How can the two be reconciled? How can the awful gulf between a holy God and unholy sinners, guilty and lost, be bridged? The Cross gives the sublime and eternal answer. The Christ of the Cross, the holy Son of God, met the righteousness of God and fully satisfied that righteousness. And now God comes forth and shows His wisdom in marvelous Love and

*Andrew Bonar.

Grace, and made that possible which was impossible for man to discover and to do. Righteousness and Peace now kiss each other in that Cross; His blessed work of righteousness is peace, the peace with God forever made in the blood of the Cross.

The Cross the Power of God

It is the Cross which gives power to God to stoop down to man dead in trespasses and sins, and to take him from the dunghill of his misery and shame, and more than that, to lift him into the heaven of heavens, into the place of Sonship and Heirship. Apart from that Cross God has no power to save, for the Cross of Christ, that is the Gospel, is the power of God unto salvation. God is eternally powerless to save man, if man rejects the Christ of the Cross. "For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God." And all are saved who believe on Him, the Son of God, the Christ of the Cross, and for such who believe, the Cross is the power of God. But who is able to tell out what power there is through the Christ of the Cross!

Through the Cross believing sinners have a perfect justification before God; we are justified freely from all things. Our sins are forever gone; we have no more conscience of sins. Through the Christ of the Cross we enjoy perfect peace with God, a peace which will last forever and ever. Through the Christ of the Cross we possess a precious nearness to God with a perfect access into His presence as Father. Through the Cross the old man is put to death and we have become a new creation. Through the Cross we have the perfect victory over the flesh, the world and the devil. Through the Cross has been purchased for us every spiritual blessing. It is the Cross which has forever shut the gates of hell and opened the portals of eternal glory, to be with Him, like Him and His fellow heirs. Such is the power of God. But the half has never yet been told. Proclaim it anywhere and everywhere and God's almighty power in salvation will be manifested.

And let me say while the Cross was known in that past eternity, it can never be forgotten in all eternity to come. It is the eternal Cross. Never can its blessed memory be erased from the hearts of the redeemed. Every fresh glory in eternity, when God displays the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us, has its source in the work of the Cross, and will bring forth the never ending acclamation, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

Unveil that cross to me, O Lord!
That I may see the sacrifice
There offered, and in it the way
To a recovered Paradise.

Light up that cross to me, O Lord!
That I its heavenly power may know,
The health, the pardon, and the joy
Which from its open fountain flow.

Unveil that face to me, O Lord!
Once hid in darkness for my sin;
That in its light I may rejoice,
And with true boldness enter in.

Withdraw each cloud that hides the cross;
Let nothing come between that face
And this faint heavy eye of mine,
That longs to see its heavenly grace.

Christ—the power of God, the wisdom of God! How horrible is the thought that man today is turning away from that Cross; the great religious world, like the Greeks of old, speaks of it as foolishness. And how solemn the thought that all who turn from it are those who perish. The sentence of eternal death and darkness is thus pronounced upon the different Unitarian "isms," like Christian Science, Spiritism, Theosophy and others. The Modern Theologists, the Destructive Critics and a host of other infidels who garb themselves as ministers of righteousness, all despising the Cross as the only redemption, are on the road to eternal perdition. How Satan hates that Cross and tries today in many ways to obscure it. So much the more must we exalt it and lift it high. The preaching of the Cross was never more needed than today.

Let us glory in the cross; boast in it. It has made us

dead to the world and the world dead unto us. Alas! that God's people live out so little the Cross and show so little that separation which the Cross has accomplished and which the Cross demands. He died for us that we might live for Him.

When I survey the wondrous Cross on which the Prince of Glory died—
My richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride.
Were the whole realm of nature mine, 'twould be a present far too
small—
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all—Amen.

THE BELOVED

Francis Quarles (1592-1644) the author of these two beautiful verses, was the son of a country gentleman of Romford. He was for a time secretary to Archbishop Usher in Ireland, but lived mainly as author, publishing much in verse and prose from 1620 upward.

He is my Altar; I, His holy place;
I am His guest; and He my living food;
I'm His by penitence; He mine by grace;
I'm His by purchase; He is mine, by blood;
He's my supporting elm; and I His vine.
Thus I my Beloved's am, thus He is mine.

If all those glittering Monarchs that command
The servile quarters of this earthly ball,
Should tender, in exchange, their shares of land,
I would not change my fortunes for them all;
Their wealth is but a counter to my coin;
The world's but their's; but my Beloved's mine.

THE GIFT OF GLORY

Who by Him do believe in God, who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him Glory (1 Peter i:21).

And the Glory Thou hast given Me I have given them (John xvii:22).

The two verses we have read give the most wonderful glimpse of the loving heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. They introduce us to the riches of His Grace and of His Glory. What we may have to say on this matchless theme is like the stammering of a little child. Not till we are with Him and behold His Glory, not till we enter into the full enjoyment of His inheritance, can we understand the full meaning of these blessed statements. The Glory of Christ which is mentioned in both of these Scripture passages is the peculiar Glory which He received from His righteous God and Father. We must therefore distinguish first of all between the two Glories of the Son of God.

His Essential Glory of Deity

The Lord Jesus Christ is God. All God is, He is. All the Glory of God is His Glory. He is eternal and has no beginning. He is almighty, omniscient and omnipresent. He appeared on earth "God manifested in the flesh," but in doing so He did not divest Himself of the Glory of Godhead. The visible Glory He had with the Father before the world was, was the only Glory He left behind, when He clothed Himself with a human body in His Virgin-birth. The evidence of this we find in the four Gospels. Let us examine briefly the incident at the close of the seventeenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Peter was taking a walk. Perhaps it was along the lake at Capernaum. One of the collectors of the tribute money approached Peter and asked him "Doth not your master pay tribute?" As hastily as ever Peter answered in the affirmative. Peter finished his walk and came to the house where the Lord abode. He did not permit Peter to speak and give a report of what had happened. "What thinkest thou Simon? Of whom take the kings of the earth custom or tribute? Of their own children or strangers?" Such were the questions

He put to Peter. And Peter said "Of strangers." Then are the children free. The Lord instructed Peter to go back to the lake and to cast a hook. He is to take the first fish and opening his mouth he would find a piece of money, just the right coin needed to pay the tribute. We wonder if Peter baited that hook, or if he had faith that the fish would come to the hook without the usual bait. But as we look at this incident we see His omniscience and His omnipotence. He had listened to the conversation between Peter and the receiver of the tribute. He had heard Peter's answer. He knew the piece of coin which probably a fisherman had dropped into the sea. He knew the place where it was to be found. He commanded a fish to pick up this coin. He brought this fish to Peter's hook. Here is the display of omniscience and omnipotence. These two attributes of God we can trace in numerous other Gospel passages. At least once He also spoke of His omnipresence. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (Jno. iii:18). As Son of Man He was on earth yet He spoke of being also in heaven.

His Other Glory

But Peter writes of a Glory which God gave Him. He Himself spoke of the Glory given to Him by the Father. What Glory is this? It is His acquired Glory. It is the Glory He received from God as a reward. Righteousness makes a double demand. It demands the punishment of the transgressor. "The soul that sinneth shall die." But the righteousness of God also demands that he who does right and satisfies God's righteousness must be rewarded. Let us suppose the first man, Adam, had not transgressed, that like the second Man, he had said "Get thee behind me Satan!" What would have happened? God would have come to him and approved his faithfulness. He would have rewarded him for his obedience. The Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity is the second Man, the other Adam. He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. His meat and His drink was to do the will of God. He did not sin, for He knew no

sin. "Neither was guile found in His mouth; who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Every step of the way down here He glorified God. Day and night He had the Lord always before Himself (Psa. xvi:8). He lived the life of perfect trust and obedience. And finally after this holy, spotless, perfect life of obedience He finished on the cross the mighty work the Father gave Him to do. On that Cross He met and satisfied the righteousness of God; He vindicated His holiness and in it all manifested the love of God. His sacrificial death is the one great act of obedience which enables God to be a just God and the justifier of all who believe on Jesus (Rom. iii:26; v:19).

For all this, God in His righteousness had to reward the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Man. This is the meaning of Peter's statement, "God raised Him from the dead and gave Him Glory." As very God, in His eternal Deity, He needed no additional Glory, for He possesses, as we have seen, all God's Glory. As the Man, who lived on earth, who was obedient, who did the eternal salvation will of God, He had to be rewarded. This truth is more fully stated in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians.

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of beings in heaven, and beings in earth, and beings under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii:6-11).

His Wonderful Gift of Glory

When He prayed His great prayer before going across the brook Cedron to Gethsemane, He spoke of that Glory. This prayer, rightly called "His high-priestly prayer,"

was spoken in anticipation of His finished work, of His resurrection and His ascension and enthronement at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This explains His utterance, "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." He also said, "I am no longer in the world," and finally speaks of the Glory the Father gave Him. It is His resurrection Glory.

And when He speaks of this reward Glory He makes known His wonderful love and grace, in saying that all who belong to Him, who trust in Him, who are redeemed by Him, to all He gives the very Glory He received from the Father.

It is all so wonderful! All we deserve on account of our sins He took upon Himself when He died on the Cross. He paid it all and therefore, all being met, our debt settled in a perfectly righteous way, we have nothing to do and nothing to pay. We come to Him and find our refuge in Him. We are justified freely, acquitted and set free. What a most blessed Gospel it is!

But here is something still more blessed and glorious. God, on account of His finished work, the work in our behalf, gave Him Glory. This acquired Glory He bestows upon us, He makes us sharers of it. And so we state it again.

All we deserve—Jesus paid it all.

All the Glory He deserves and He received, He gives to us.

One of the unrecorded sayings of the Lord Jesus, unrecorded in the Gospels, we find in Acts xx:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." He is the great and bountiful giver, and His greatest gift is the gift of His earned Glory. Beloved, take it in! All the Glory you and I will have is His own Glory, which the Father gave to Him. The Glory of our Head, is the Glory of each member. But what is this Glory? We find by studying the New Testament that the Glory He received and which He shares with us and we with Him is sevenfold.

The Glory of Sonship

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, first of all, in the bosom of the Father. He is the Only Begotten, the eternal Son of God. Then He clothed Himself with a

human body and became Son of God by incarnation as the angel Gabriel said to the Virgin of Nazareth (Luke i:35). Then He died in that body, and, of course, only His body died. On the third day God raised Him from among the dead, He became the First-Begotten from the dead, Son of God by the resurrection from among the dead (Rom. i:4). All who believe on Him, accept Him as their Saviour, become by faith in Him the children of God. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He authority to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jno. i:11-14).

Here we face the redemption wisdom of God. The first man, Adam, is called in Luke iii:38 "Son of God," because God created man in His own image. Sin robbed man of his sonship and man became alienated and an enemy of God. How can God bring him back and restore this lost relationship? God sent His Only Begotten into the world. After His sacrificial death God raised Him from the dead and made Him the First-Begotten. And now all who believe on Him, who died and rose again, become in Christ Jesus sons of God, receiving the divine nature and eternal life. As He is the Son of God risen from the dead so are we; sons of God like Himself with the glorious goal that some future day we shall be like Him, that He might be the First-Begotten among many brethren (Rom. viii:29). God in infinite grace has opened the grave where we are by nature, dead in trespasses and sins, and now we are risen with Christ, in possession of His nature and His life, members of the family of God. That is why "He is not ashamed to call us brethren" (Heb. ii:11). In this way we share His Sonship glory.

The Glory of His Inheritance

He hath appointed Him heir of all things (Heb. i:2). Some deniers of the Deity of our Lord have argued that this verse disproves His Godhead. For, say they, if He is very

God, why should He be appointed the heir of all things? It is true as God, as Creator and possessor of heaven and earth, nothing can be added to Him and to His Glory. But we must remember this is spoken to Him, who had taken the creature place, who had passed through death and who became in resurrection the head of the new creation and of a greater family of God than Adam (if unfallen) with his descendants could have ever been. Because God in His infinite love wanted to display the power and riches of that love, He constituted His risen Son the heir of all things; so that all who are united to Him might also share His great inheritance. Had the first man not sinned, His inheritance would have been this earth; but man redeemed inherits in Christ all things. Triumphant the Apostle Paul writes "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii:17). He who was rich became poor for our sake that we, by His poverty, might be rich. Fellow-heirs in Christ! What saint has ever discovered what this means? All He possesses belongs to us. The Lord told Abraham to look toward heaven and tell the stars "if thou be able to number them" (Gen. xv:5). We can go out into the clear night and look into the starlit heavens. All these heavens belong to Him, to whom God has given the pre-eminence in all things, and they belong to us; up yonder is our glorious inheritance. But who can measure these heavens! Who knows the mysteries of the stars? When the day of redemption comes of the purchased possession, the inheritance for which He paid by His blood (Eph. i:14), then we shall know. When He comes again He claims all His possessions. The uttermost parts of the earth will become His; the nations will be given to Him as His inheritance and all the glories of the heavens will be revealed. It is then that He brings His many sons unto glory. May the Holy Spirit make this real to our hearts so that in the midst of loss, suffering and tribulation we may rejoice in hope, yea glory in tribulation.

Heirs of God! Joint heirs with Jesus Christ! What dignity and what glory!

The Glory of His Place

Another Glory He received is the Glory of the place God has given to the risen Man. He has placed Him at His own right hand. He gave Him the highest possible place of Honor and Glory. In eternity His place was in the bosom of the Father. But now He is the glorified Man at the right hand of the majesty on high. This was announced many centuries before He came. David in the Spirit wrote—“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (Psa. cx:1). Throughout the New Testament this exaltation to the right hand of God is emphasized. The Holy Spirit bears witness to it on the day of Pentecost, the day on which God’s Spirit came to earth (Acts ii:34). The first martyr, Stephen, saw Him standing at the right hand of God. Paul’s great theme is the exalted Christ “who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. viii:34). Five times in the Hebrew Epistle the great Apostle mentions this fact as well as in some of his other Epistles.

This glorious place, this place of nearness to God the Father, which belongs to our Lord, belongs to us in Him. In His person we are at the right hand of God also. He has made us sharers of His place, for we read in Ephesians ii:4-6: “But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Oh, wonderful revelation! Born again we receive His life, we are risen with Him, sharers of His resurrection, and we are seated in Christ in the heavenlies. Sometimes this is quoted in the wrong way, “seated with Christ.” The day is surely coming when we shall be seated *with* Him but now we are seated *in* Him. Another wrong conception is as if this meant a good, spiritual meeting. Many times it is prayed that a prayer meeting might be so spiritual that “we are seated tonight in heavenly places.” It does not mean a spiritual meet-

ing, but it means our position before God in Christ Jesus at all times. He is there and we are in Him there also.

So near, so very near to God,
I cannot nearer be,
For in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He.

There is a popular hymn which is used in community singing. Believers and unbelievers, Catholics and Protestants, Unitarians and Jews sing together

Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee,
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me.

Sarah F. Adams, who wrote this hymn was a Unitarian. That is why she does not mention the Lord Jesus Christ. But can *a* cross, some earthly trouble, trial or affliction, lift us and bring us near to God? Oh, no! Not a cross but *the* Cross on which the Prince of Glory died is the power which can make us near to God. By that cross, we who were afar off are now made nigh. Let us praise Him for this place of nearness and enjoy it in faith.

The Glory of His Name

Another Glory He received in resurrection is the Glory of His Name. God has given Him a name which is above every name (Phil. ii:9). The Glory of this name is not yet fully known. The Son of God bears many names. All His names and titles would fill many pages. But what must be the name which is above every other name? What must be the name which nobody knows but He Himself (Rev. xix:12)? The full revelation of that name awaits His future manifestation, when He comes the second time. Then every knee must bow and every tongue confess Him. His own will then receive His name, for He will share it with His Church. He has given the promise, "I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. iii:12). It is also written, "His name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. xxii:4).

When a bride marries a duke she becomes a duchess; if she marries a prince she becomes a princess, and if she marries a king she becomes a queen. The bride shares the titles, the honors and the names of the bridegroom. And when the espoused virgin, the true Church, the Bride of Christ is joined in Glory to the Bridegroom, when she becomes symbolically the Lamb's wife (Rev. xix:7), she will share His name of glory.

The Glory of Priesthood

Our Lord is Prophet, Priest and King. On earth during His ministry He was the Prophet. Through His sacrificial death, in offering His own holy body, shedding His own blood, He became Priest, and when He comes the second time He will be the King of kings.

His priesthood was the Father's glorious gift unto Him. Though He exercised priestly functions on earth, He was not a priest in the sense of the Levitical priesthood. He sympathized with the afflicted, He wept with them that sorrowed and shed tears. Such were His priestly functions while on earth. But when His work was finished, He entered heaven itself. There, back home with the Father, He was greeted of God (or welcomed) with the words written in the One Hundred and Tenth Psalm, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. v:1-10). As such He represents His people in God's presence (Heb. ix:24). He intercedes in our behalf and when we bring our spiritual sacrifices, worship and praise, He presents these sacrifices unto God His Father and they are acceptable to God, because they are offered in His worthy name.

This priesthood we likewise share with Him. In another sermon on "Our Christian Priesthood" this blessed privilege is fully unfolded. The holy priesthood we possess is given to us by Himself. It is not something we have earned, or which we attain through our experience or service, but it is His gift. In that perfect day when we are gathered in His presence we shall all sing the Glory-song. "Unto Him who loveth us, who hath washed us from our sins in His own

blood and hath made us priests and kings unto God His Father, to Him be Glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. i:5-6). It is true we shall be priests with Him in the day when He will be the priest upon His own throne (Zech. vi:13), but we are priests with Him now. He intercedes in heaven and we intercede on earth and worship in spirit and in truth.

The Glory of Kingship

He became as the Son of David, and because He is of the royal seed of David, He has the promise of a throne and a kingdom. Like His progenitor David, He was a crownless King, and still He is the crownless King, as far as the earth is concerned. He does not possess the promised kingdom. Many speak of His kingdom, which is now building on earth, thinking that the church is the kingdom, and that the kingdom is the church. The Prophet Daniel had heard in the message brought from heaven that Messiah should be cut off and "have nothing" (correct rendering, Dan. ix:26). He did not receive the kingdom to which He was entitled as the Son of David. But God gave Him what was not announced in the word of prophecy. He received the Church. The kingdom will be given to Him when He returns. This He spake also in a parable (Luke xix:12). Daniel saw Him in a vision coming in the clouds of heaven to receive a kingdom, "that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him" (Dan. vii:13-14). The prayer "Thy kingdom come" is still unanswered and will not be answered till the day of His return in power and in great glory. Then all His enemies will be made the footstool of His feet and He will receive the nations for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psa. ii). Upon the Father's throne He is waiting still for the hour when He will receive His throne, the throne over all the earth.

This coming kingdom, as well as the royal Glory connected with it, belongs to His redeemed people. We shall have a glorious share in it. It is an interesting fact that the Church of Jesus Christ is nowhere called a kingdom, nor

is our Lord called anywhere "The King of the Church." He is King of kings, the King of the Jews, the King of nations, the King of saints, the King of righteousness and the King of Peace. He is the Head of the Church, the Lord of the Body, the Bridegroom of the Bride; but nowhere does the Holy Spirit speak of Him as the King of the Church. When His kingdom comes and He receives the throne of His Glory, the Church will not be a subject in that kingdom, but the redeemed will reign and rule with Him. What He receives from the hand of His Father He has promised to give to those who overcome (Rev. ii:26-28). Listen to Heaven's most glorious song, that never-ending praise: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth" (Rev. v:9, 10). And this is not the song of but a few of the redeemed, as some in religious pride claim; nor is it Israel's song, but all the redeemed will sing that song and all will have share in His glorious kingdom, for it is not the result of attainment and service, but the gift of His grace.

The Glory of Judgeship.

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son * * * And hath given Him authority also, because He is the Son of Man" (Jno. v:22, 27). This is another gift of Glory the Father has bestowed upon Him. He is the executor of all future judgments. There will be a judgment seat of Christ, before which the Saints will have to appear to receive their rewards (Rom. xiv:10; 1 Cor. v:10). There will be a judgment throne when all nations are gathered before Him (Matt. xxv:31, 32). Throughout the thousand year kingdom He will judge the world in righteousness (Acts. xvii:31). Finally there will be a great white throne, which He also will occupy to judge the wicked dead, raised up in the second resurrection.

And even His judgment Glory He will share with us. Of

this coming Glory the Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthians, who were so worldly and unreasonable that they appealed to heathen judges, the unjust, to settle certain disputes which had arisen amongst them. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? * * * Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi:2, 3). We shall not only reign with Him, but we shall be judges with Him.

Marvelous gifts of Glory! With Him we are sons of God, destined to be like Him. We are heirs of God, fellow-heirs of Christ; we share His place of nearness to God; we shall bear His glorious name; we are priests and kings with Him and shall judge the world and angels.

Such is our Glory in Him. We possess it all in faith and some day we shall possess it in fulness and in reality. It is not far away.

David, when pursued by the enemy, said once "there is but a step between me and death." How true this is today, surrounded by many dangers on all sides. But we should never speak as David spoke. Let us rather say "there is but a step between me and glory." The next step may bring us face to face with Christ our Lord.

THE GLORY OF THE CHRISTIAN

Honor and happiness unite
To make the Christian's name a praise;
How fair the scene, how clear the light,
That fills the remnant of his days!

A kingly character he bears,
No change his priestly office knows;
Unfading is the crown he wears,
His joys can never reach a close.

Adorn'd with Glory from on high,
Salvation shines upon his face;
His robe is of the ethereal dye,
His steps are dignity and grace.

Inferior honors he disdains,
Nor stoops to take applause from earth;
The King of kings Himself maintains
Th' expenses of his heav'nly birth.

The noblest creature seen below;
Ordained to fill a throne above;
God gives him all He can bestow,
His Kingdom of eternal love!

My soul is ravish'd at the thought!
Methinks from earth I see him rise;
All angels wonder at his lot,
And shout him welcome to the skies.

William Cowper

THE FUTURE GLORY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all, to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (Ephes. i:22, 23).

The Ephesian Epistle is the inspired document which reveals the Glory of the Church. The Church is the Body of Christ, because like the human body, this spiritual body has a certain number of members, and the life which is in the head is in each member. But the Church is also called the Bride of Christ, because she is the object of Christ's love. This is blessedly unfolded in Eph. v:22-32. Adam, the first man, is the figure of Him who was to come, the second man, the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. v:14). The woman taken out of Adam's side, while he slept, destined to be his help-meet to share with him the dominion of the earth, is a type of the Church. Eve was of the body of Adam; therefore he said when he saw her "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. ii:23). But she was also his bride. And so the Church is His Body, and individually we are "members of His Body, of His flesh and of His bones." (Eph. v:30). But the Church is also the Bride of Christ, as Eve was the bride of Adam.

The Church is an elect Body. Ephesians i:4-7 tells us that its members were chosen before the foundation of the world. This Body was not in existence in Old Testament times. Believers in the Old Testament were saved, as we are saved "by grace," but they did not constitute the Body of Christ. This Body was formed on the day of Pentecost. On that day the assembled believers in the Lord Jesus Christ received the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Spirit. He filled them all and at the same time they were baptized by Him into one Body (1 Cor. xii:13). That day when the Holy Spirit came from heaven to earth was the birthday of the Church. Yet the full revelation as to this Body was not given on the day of Pentecost. The Lord gave it to the Apostle Paul. It was not known on the day when the Holy Spirit formed this body, that Gentiles would also be called

to become members of the same body. Paul tells us of this in the following words:

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in a few words, whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel” (Ephes. iii:1-6).

And so writing to the Ephesian believers, who had been Gentile pagans, he reminded them that they used to be aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But having believed on Christ they had been made nigh by the blood of Christ. “Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. ii:12-22). This Body is still building. The calling out of that Body by the preaching of the Gospel among all the nations of the world is still going on. It will end some day, when the full number which makes up this Body is reached.

The Destiny of the Body of Christ

One of the misconceptions in Christendom is the view that the Church of Jesus Christ is a permanent institution on earth. That a day is coming in which this body will be removed from the earth, is to many almost inconceivable. The Church came suddenly into existence, and so suddenly will it disappear some day from this earthly scene. The Head of the Church is in Glory. A multitude of disembodied

spirits, members of the Body of Christ, are in the Lord's presence. They passed away in the hope of resurrection, the resurrection of their bodies. This resurrection has not yet come. Millions of the members of the Body of Christ are now living on earth and waiting for the promised consummation, when the Body, the complete Body of Christ will be united to the Head in Glory. This is the destiny of the Church. The destiny of the Bride is to meet the Bridegroom, and to become, symbolically—the Lamb's wife. This destiny of glory will be reached when the Lord Jesus Christ comes again. This is the first, great purpose of His coming, to call unto Himself His Body and His Bride. The sleeping saints (sleeping as to their bodies) will be called first from their graves. They will arise. Then those living in the day of His coming for His saints will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye and together, the risen saints and those who were changed in a moment, overclothed instead of unclothed (2 Cor. v:3), will meet Him in the air and the great union will take place. Then the Glory of the Body and the Bride of Christ begins. What then is that Glory as revealed in this Epistle?

The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times

We read in the first chapter the following words: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in the Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in Him. In whom we also have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. i:9-11). The dispensation of the fulness of times is the coming dispensation. There has been a law dispensation, which is past. We are living in the grace dispensation, in which God offers the richest He has to offer. But this will also pass away. Then comes the dispensation of the fulness of times, the Glory

dispensation. It comes as the result of His return and will be the dispensation, or administration, of His own Glory. All things will then be gathered together in Him and all things will be put under Him. But we must notice that the word "Christ" has the definite article, so that it reads "The Christ." It is the complete Christ. Speaking in all reverence, Christ is still waiting to receive His fulness. That fulness is the Church, for as we have read, the Church, His Body, is the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. When the Church is united to Him in Glory, the Body joined to the Head, then has He His fulness. It is then "The Christ," Head and Body One. So then, when the dispensation of Glory comes, the dispensation of the fulness of times, it will mean the Glory of the Body as much as it means the Glory of the Head. All things will be gathered in Him and under Him. Then the Body of Christ will share the inheritance of the Head. What inheritance will it be? What is the inheritance which we have obtained in Him? It is threefold. *We shall be like Him*, what He is that we shall be. All He possesses we shall possess with Him, for we are *His fellow-heirs*. Where Christ is there we shall be, *forever with the Lord*. Such is the future Glory of the Body of Christ. But who is able to say what it all means in never ending Glory!

The Redemption of the Purchased Possession

The fourteenth verse of the same chapter gives us another glimpse of the future Glory of the Church. "Who (the Holy Spirit) is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His Glory." The work of the Holy Spirit in the believer is mentioned in the first chapter of this Epistle. He quickens and He seals. He is the Spirit of promise, given to the believer. He is also the Spirit of promise in the sense that His presence in the believer promises better things. As such He is the earnest of our inheritance, the pledge that in the future we shall come in possession of our full inheritance.

The inheritance is here called "the purchased possession." The Lord Jesus Christ made the purchase; He paid the full

price for it in His sacrificial death on the Cross. We read of "the redemption of the purchased possession." While the price of the future possession of the Church is paid for, it is yet to be redeemed by the power of God. The possession which has been purchased for the redeemed is the heavenly sphere, the wonderful heavens above. These heavenly places, of which this Epistle speaks so frequently, are still in a certain way in the possession of Satan, "the prince of the power in the air." The sphere above this earth is the seat of the kingdom of darkness. In the last chapter of this Epistle we read of our Christian warfare, that it is "against the wicked spirits in the heavenly places" (vi:12, corrected rendering). Wicked spirits are therefore holding on to the purchased possession. This purchased possession, which belongs to Christ and to His Body, will be completely redeemed by the power of God. Revelation (Chapter xii) gives us the prophetic history of this coming redemption. Satan and his angels will be cast out of heaven and the Body of Christ will take possession of the inheritance above. But what is this heavenly possession? They tell us that the heavens above are almost limitless. Astronomers speak of distances beyond human reckoning. They tell us of the host of heaven that they cannot be counted. These wonderful heavens with their unsolvable mysteries, mysteries which are baffling science, are His possession and ours as well. We shall receive this possession in the day of full redemption.

Exceeding Riches in Ages to Come

One of the most glorious verses in the whole Bible is the seventh verse of the second chapter of this Epistle. "That in the ages to come He might display the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." This verse is the climax of a great revelation. What man is by nature is seen first (Eph. ii:1-3). What the Grace of God does for the believer follows. Quickened with Christ, saved by Grace, risen with Christ and seated in Christ in the heavenly places. And all on account of the love wherewith God has loved us. The destiny of the Body of Christ in

ages to come is made known after that and is embodied in this verse. Christendom is mostly ignorant about the meaning of the word "age." They know little of the meaning of "ages to come." The prevailing idea, that the present age in which we live, is the last age, and that when it ends no other age will follow is unscriptural. The present age will end. How it ends and what kind of an age will follow is fully revealed in the prophetic Word. The coming age will be "the dispensation of the fulness of times," which we have already explained. It will be the Kingdom age during which the Lord Jesus Christ will exercise His Kingly rule and authority, showing forth His Kingly Glory. When the Kingdom age ends and the earth is consumed by fire (2 Peter iii:10) there will be a new heaven and a new earth. This will be the eternal age.

Here then we read of what the next age, and the eternal age, will hold in store for the Body of Christ. He will make a display of the surpassing riches of His kindness toward those in Christ Jesus. Our age loves to display. This is "man's day" in which he boasts of his achievements. But this boasting age will end some day in the predicted crash, when this Christless civilization will be swept by the judgments of God. When this age closes and man's proud boasting and display ends, then God will begin His display.

Heaven opens and the Lord Jesus Christ comes back. What a day it will be when His Son, the glorified Man is revealed from heaven! His Glory will cover the heavens. He comes in great power and glory. He will not be alone. His redeemed are with Him. Not a member of His Body is missing and each reflects the Glory of Himself. The Son brings His many sons unto Glory. He is then glorified in His Saints and admired in all them that believed (2 Thess. i:10). What a marvelous, unspeakably glorious display that will be! It is the display of Christ the Head, and the Church His Body. Throughout the Kingdom age this display continues. The Head and the Body, the Bridegroom and the Bride, will be together in the New Jerusalem and reign over the earth.

But this is not all. In the eternal age, from eternity to eternity, God will continue His display of Grace and Glory. He will bring forth something new in Glory, new riches of Himself for those who are united for all eternity to His well beloved Son. From eternity to eternity He displays the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward the Body of Christ. How one is overwhelmed in the presence of such a statement! And how little, how very little we know of all these coming riches of Glory! What a destiny! Nothing but Glory is before us! What is the little suffering, the little while down here, in comparison with such eternal Glory!

The Mystery of the Church Manifested to Angels

As we have seen, the future of the Body of Christ is in Heaven, in endless, glorious union with the Head. The heavens above are tenanted by the host of angels. Scripture speaks of them as "an innumerable company" (Heb. xii:22), which means that they cannot be numbered by the human mind. God knows their number. He knows the number of stars, He even calleth them all by names (Isa. xl:26) and so He knows the angelic hosts and calls them by name. The angels will know in the day of glorious consummation the manifold wisdom of God by the Church. This we read in chapter iii:8-11: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all the saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world was hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord." The principalities and powers are angels. From the very beginning of history they were desirous of looking into those things which concern man's redemption (1 Peter i:12). It was the great theme they followed in Old Testament times with wonder and adoration. When the Son of God finally appeared on earth we see them intimately connected with

His life. Then after His finished work and exaltation they learned to understand the manifold wisdom of God by the Church. They watch and see on earth how through the preaching of the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit the Body of Christ is being gathered. They look on when true Christian worship is carried on (1 Cor. xi:10). They see how the spiritual house is being fitly framed and joined together. Finally they behold the wisdom of God in the glorification of the Church. They know that man was made a little lower than themselves (Psa. viii), that the human race is below them in the classes of created beings. And sin had dragged man lower and linked him with Satan, so that man walks as a sinner "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power in the air" (Eph. ii:2). Then the Creator of the Angels left the highest Glory and became man, being made a little lower than the angels. He suffered and died for man's sin and when God raised Him from among the dead, He lifted Him as the First-Begotten, the glorified Man and head of the new creation, above the angels "being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb. i:4). This place above the angels the Body of Christ shares with the Head. They behold the wisdom of God in the glorious exaltation of the Body, when the Church takes her place above all principalities and powers. Then the angelic hosts will worship and rejoice in the glorious consummation of the mystery of God (Heb. i:6).

A Glorious Church Presented

One more passage in this Epistle tells us of the future Glory of the Body. "Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify it with the washing of water by the Word. That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v:25-27).

The love of Christ, past, present and future is before

our hearts in these verses. He loved the Church before the foundation of the world. In time He came and expressed this love by giving Himself for it. This He did on the Cross. There His great and matchless self-giving took place. Here we read of His present love, which is for all who belong to Him, His Church. "That He might sanctify it with the washing of water by the Word." This great present-love work He symbolized in the upper room, when He took the soiled feet of His disciples in His loving hands and washed them. Loving the Church and giving Himself for it stands first. It does not say, He cleansed and washed the Church, so that He might have it for His own, and then love it, because it was cleansed and fit to be loved. No! He first gives Himself for it, purchases it by shedding His blood, so that He might have a perfect title to it. Then He cleanses and washes it to be fit for Himself. The cleansing and washing is by the Word. For this He prayed. "Sanctify them through Thy Truth, Thy Word is Truth."

Then comes that which is still future, the coming presentation of the Church. He will present it unto Himself, a perfect, a glorious Church, without spot, blemish, wrinkle or any such thing. This presentation will follow the judgment, or, award seat of Christ. It is the place before which every member of the Body will have to be made manifest. Our works and our service will be tried. Secret things will be brought to light. Unconfessed sins will be dealt with and put away by Him. All the wrinkles and blemishes will be removed. It will be another demonstration of His great love. Then, when all is righted, and brought to the light, judged and for ever put away, He will present His completely sanctified Body unto Himself and "present it faultless before the presence of His Glory with exceeding joy" (Jude, verse 24). This glorious goal is mentioned in the last Book of the Bible, the Revelation: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen,

clean and white, for the linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. xix:7-8).

Such is the future Glory of the Body of Christ as revealed in the Epistle to the Ephesians. Yet how very little we know after all of this coming Glory! We only look now in a glass darkly. But what we know of it is sufficient to show us our wonderful calling and glorious future. This light of the coming Glory should ever be about us, before us and around us. Our thought should be fixed upon that Glory. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in Glory" (Col. iii:1-4). Such occupation with Glory to come gives power to deny through grace ungodliness and worldly lusts, and power to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age, looking for that blessed hope (Titus ii:11-13). It weans the heart away from things seen and fills the soul with joy unspeakable and full of Glory. It gives patience in suffering and lifts heart and mind above all earthly circumstances. To walk and to serve unto the Praise and Glory of our Lord demands a knowledge of our Glory in Christ in the power of the Spirit of God. God grant it unto us all.

FROM GLORY UNTO GLORY

“From Glory unto Glory!” Thank God that even here
The starry words are shining out, our heavenward way to
cheer!

That e'en among the shadows the conquering brightness
grows,
As ever from the nearing light intenser radiance flows.

“From Glory unto Glory!” Shall the grand procession fail
When the darkening glass is shattered as we pass within the
veil?

Shall the joyous song of “Onward!” at once forever cease,
And the swelling music culminate in monotone of peace?

Shall the fuller life be sundered at the portal of its bliss,
From the principle of growth entwined with every nerve of
this?

Shall the holy law of progress be hopelessly repealed,
And the moment of releasing see our sun of Glory sealed?

The tender touch of moonlight, with an orbit quickly run,
The lustre of the planet, circling slowly 'round the sun,
The mighty revolutions of its million-heated blaze,
“From Glory unto Glory” lead our far-expanding gaze.

Then onward, ever onward, through the unexplored abyss
(Dark barrier between the suns of other worlds and this)
Until the measure-unit mocks the grasp of human thought,
And space and time commingle while the clue is feebly sought.

‘Till in that wider ocean, deep calleth unto deep,
Star-glories with attendant worlds, forth flashing as they
sweep
Around their unseen center, that point of mystic power,
In unimagined cycles, where an age is but an hour.

Then onward and yet onward! for the dim revealings show,
That systems unto systems in grand succession grow,
That what we deemed a volume but one golden verse may be,
One rhythmic cadence in the flow of God's great poetry.

That what we deemed a symphony was one all-thrilling bar;
Through aisles of His great temple resounding full and far;
That what we deemed an ocean was a shallow by the shore!
Then onward yet, in eagle flight, through the Infinite we
soar—

“From Glory unto Glory,” till the spirit fails; and then
Illimitable vistas still opening to our ken,
Mysterious immensities of order and of light,
Stretch far beyond our farthest thought, as thought beyond
our sight.

But the starting point in heaven shall be “no glory of the
moon”

No planet gleam, no stellar fire, no blaze of tropic noon:
From glory that excelleth, all that human heart has known,
Our onward, upward, shall begin the presence of the Throne.

“From Glory unto Glory” of loveliness and light,
Of music and of rapture, of power and of sight,
“From Glory unto Glory” of knowledge and of love,
Shall be the joy of progress awaiting us above.

“From Glory unto Glory” that ever lies before,
Still wondering, adoring, rejoicing more and more;
Still following where He leadeth, from shining field to field,
Himself the goal of Glory, Revealer and Revealed!

“From Glory unto Glory”—with no limit and no veil,
With wings that cannot weary and hearts that cannot fail;
Within, without, no hindrance, no barrier as we soar;
And never interruption to the endless “more and more!”

For infinite outpourings of Jehovah's love and grace,
And infinite unveilings of the brightness of His face,
And infinite unfoldings of the splendor of His will,
Meet the mightiest expansions of the finite spirit still.

O Saviour, hast Thou ransomed us from death's unknown
abyss,
And purchased with Thy precious blood such everlasting
bliss?
Art Thou indeed preparing us, with love exceeding great,
And preparing all this glory in such "far exceeding weight"?

Then let our hearts be surely fixed where truest joys are
found,
And let our burning, loving praise, yet more and more
abound;
And gazing on the things not seen, eternal in the skies,
"From Glory unto Glory," O Saviour, let us rise.

—*F. R. Havergal.*

CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD

Ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an *holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. * * * But ye are a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*, an *holy nation*, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the excellencies of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter ii:5, 9).

The first Epistle of Peter is addressed "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." They were Jews who had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Believing on Him they were born again, saved by grace; they had also received the Holy Spirit, were sealed by Him and He had baptized them into the one body, the Church. "In that Body there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision, nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii:11). Though these strangers in the dispersion were by nature Jews, by grace they were members of the Body of Christ. I mention this, because of late a mode of interpretation of the New Testament has been pressed, which claims that the Epistles of Peter are Jewish, that the privileges mentioned in this Epistle, as well as the message, are Jewish and have no meaning for the Church of Jesus Christ. This is an extremely misleading suggestion. These teachers claim, for instance, that the priesthood taught by Peter, is Jewish and not Christian. Such an assertion robs us of one of the highest and most glorious privileges and exercises. True believers possess a priesthood, bestowed upon them by the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are holy priests and royal priests. We shall answer four questions as to this priesthood and shall find in our meditation most precious, soul-inspiring truths.

I. Are all Christians Priests of God? The anticipations of the Holy Spirit, writing the messages of the New Testament nineteen hundred years ago, are really wonderful, and constitute one of the magnificent evidences of the supernaturalness of these Scriptures. He is omniscient. He anticipated what would take place in the history of Christen-

dom and warned beforehand. He anticipated the different heresies which would spring up; He knew of the doctrines of demons which would be promulgated by the power of darkness; He knew of all the perversions of the truth which would be invented and that finally the mystery of lawlessness would prevail and there would be the falling away, headed by the man of sin. The Spirit of God knew that there would arise in the professing Church a class of men who would lay claim to a special privilege, who would call themselves priests. This priestly class was also foreseen by our Lord. In His throne messages to the seven churches in Revelation, He speaks twice of the "Nicolaitanes." The word means "The domineers over the people." Of Nicolaitanism He says "which thing I hate." It means the priests, who claim to have the exclusive right to come into the presence of God, to represent other men, a right which is denied by sacerdotalism to the rest of the people, "the laity." The Lord Jesus Christ hates sacerdotalism, because it strikes at Himself and His own blessed priesthood. This man-made priesthood of ritualistic Christendom, one of the leading satanic perversions of the age, this priestly assumption has been and still is the corruption of Christianity. It is patterned after the levitical priesthood in the Old Testament. It is aped after the departed shadow.

This invention of a special class of priests in the Church is traced by ritualists through Peter. They invented for him a Bishopric; they say that he was the head of "the Church in Rome," and was the first pope. Peter never saw Rome. It is historically untrue. Then it is claimed that Peter ordained certain men by the imposition of his hands, thus transferring apostolic authority. And these men ordained others and so it went on through the centuries. The apostolic authority was transmitted from century to century through the different popes, some of whom were monsters in human form, vicious and immoral men. And only those who have been thus ordained are priests and through their office work blessings are obtained for the people, which otherwise can not be secured.

In Africa we find still among certain tribes the rain-makers. They put on a bright, red cloth, which distinguishes them from the other negroes. The rain-maker dances around, has a rattle with which he rattles and mumbles something which the others, who look on, cannot understand. He holds out his hand to receive gifts. He says, unless I put on this cloth, rattle and dance and mumble, and you give, there will be no rain.

In a beautiful building there stands a man in a red, a white or a black gown. He turns this way and that way; he bows and crosses himself; he mumbles something in a foreign tongue; he holds up something and holds out his hand. He says, "Unless I do this you cannot receive blessings from God nor can your sins be forgiven." The rain-maker and the man-made priest are in the same class.

The Holy Spirit anticipated this perversion and moved the pen of Peter to write about priesthood. But when he wrote he did not claim a priesthood vested in himself. He never mentions anything about himself. He says he is an elder with no superior rank among the other elders (Chap. v:1). He is, on the other hand, commissioned by the Spirit of God to write that all Christians, those who are living stones, resting upon the one rock Christ Jesus, constitute one great priesthood on earth. Hence, all true believers are priests of God.

II. What constitutes Believers Priests? Let us see first of all that Peter does not exhort and write—"ye ought to be priests"—"ye should be a holy priesthood," but he writes "Ye are an holy priesthood and ye are a royal priesthood." Christian priesthood is therefore not something which is attained, but something which is conferred as a gift. Everything the grace of God does for us has for its goal this Christian priesthood.

To illustrate this, and answer the question we have asked, let us look back for a moment to the Old Testament priesthood vested in the tribe of Levi, in Aaron and his sons. It foreshadowed both the priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of believers. Aaron's priesthood foreshadowed the

priesthood of Christ in offering Himself and entering into the Holiest in heaven; the priesthood of the sons of Aaron foreshadows the priesthood of believers who are associated with Christ.

In order to be a priest in the Old Testament one had to be born into that position. One born in the tribe of Judah could not exercise priestly functions. He had to be of the tribe of Levi. In preaching once to an audience of Hebrews I mentioned the fact that our Lord is the Priest in heaven now. A Rabbi arose in the audience and challenged the statement. He said "How can your Jesus be a priest if he was the Son of David and therefore of the tribe of Judah?" We answered him in the words of the one hundred and tenth psalm "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." The argument of the Rabbi is answered in the seventh chapter in the Epistle to the Hebrews. While our Lord fulfilled the Aaronic priesthood, He was not a priest after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchisedec.

Therefore only those born in the tribe of Levi could be priests. We are by our natural birth excluded from being priests of God, but what fits us to be priests with a perfect right of access into the presence of God, is the new birth. We must be born into the position of priests.

Furthermore this is illustrated by what was done to the priests so that they might be fit to exercise their divinely commanded functions. Without going into the details of the levitical ceremony we point out that three things were prominent in the initiation of the priests: *Water, Blood and Oil*.

First of all they were washed all over in water. This was done only once. When they ministered daily they had to wash their hands and feet in the laver. This is the blessed key to the washing of the disciples' feet by our Lord. When Peter had refused to have his feet washed by the gracious hands of his Lord, and when the Lord had said to him "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me" (Jno. xiii:8), Peter demanded to be washed all over. Then the Lord informed him that there was no need for that. "He that is bathed (correct rendering) needeth not save to wash his feet,

but is clean every whit." Peter had believed on Him as the Lord, the Son of God. He was born again, washed all over. The new birth is compared to a bath. Paul uses the same figure in his Epistle to Titus. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the bath of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Tit. iii:5).

The bathing of the priests in the Old Testament at the time of their initiation was therefore a type of the new birth. Their daily cleansing of hands and feet is that which the Lord indicated in the feet-washing, that we need daily cleansing, the washing of water by the Word. We are born again and the new nature fits us to come into the presence of God as our Father; the washing of water by the Word is needed for our unbroken fellowship with Him. Because we are born again we are priests of God.

Then blood was used with the priests in the Old Testament. A sacrifice was brought and the blood of it applied to the priest according to the command of the Lord. All believers know what the blood means. It is the type of His precious blood which was shed for us. His blood has made peace; it has also made us nigh and we have no more conscience of sins. Because the blood was shed and we are covered by the atoning work of the Son of God, we can come without fear and trembling into the presence of the Lord. Did the high priest fear and tremble when once a year he went into the Holiest with the blood of a sacrificial animal? There was no need to be afraid for he had gone in the way God had appointed, and when he stood and sprinkled the blood, he could do so without a moment's doubt that he was acceptable to God, in whose glorious presence he stood. Much more have we boldness to enter into the Holiest, not with the sacrificial blood of a creature, but "by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. x:19-20). The blood has made us nigh, the blood gives boldness to go into the Holiest, the blood constitutes us priests.

They were also anointed with oil. The oil is the type of the Holy Spirit. The anointing and pouring of oil is typical of the gift of the Holy Spirit, bestowed freely upon all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The indwelling Spirit is the power which enables us to draw near to God and act in His presence as priests, bringing the spiritual sacrifices of which Peter writes.

It is all of grace. Grace has saved us; grace has given us a new birth; grace has given us peace; grace has given the Spirit of God and grace has made us nigh so that we can be priests of God.

III. What are the Functions of Our Priesthood? We have seen that Peter mentions the priesthood twice. He speaks first of our holy priesthood and then of our royal priesthood. They are not the same thing, but two phases of our God-given privilege. What then have we to do as holy priests and what are we to do as royal priests?

It will help us to examine briefly the priesthood of our Lord. As we have learned in our meditation on "the gift of glory," the priesthood is one of the gifts He received from the Father in His resurrection, and He has made us participants in His priesthood. What then is His priesthood? What is His holy priesthood and what is His royal priesthood?

In His finished work He fulfilled all the types of the sacrifices and the offerings. Then He entered into the tabernacle not made with hands, into the Holiest in heaven, just as Aaron entered with the blood of an animal into the earthly tabernacle. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. ix:11-12). There He is now as the holy priest ministering to the needs of His people on earth. He is there to present the prayers, offered in His own worthy name, before God. There He is in everlasting joy and gladness. He intercedes for His people;

He prays for them. The ministry of intercession is constantly, unbrokenly carried on by Him.

What then is His royal priesthood? The royal priesthood leads us back to Melchisedec. When He came back to His eternal dwelling place to be again with the Father, He was greeted as "priest after the order of Melchisedec." Melchisedec was priest and king. He was king of righteousness and king of peace. His capital was Ur-Salem, probably the place called later Jerusalem. Suddenly he appeared to Abraham, the friend of God, when Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him. How did he bless Abraham? He revealed unto Abraham the name of God; Melchisedec made known to him the excellencies of that name. He blessed him in the name of "the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth." He made known to Abraham the glory of God. It seems that up to the time Melchisedec came to Abraham he did not fully know who the Lord was who called him to leave the land of the Chaldeans, and who brought him to the land of promise. When Melchisedec revealed Him as the most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, the man of faith was not slow to lay hold of it (Gen. xiv:22).

This is the character of the royal priesthood of our Lord. He makes known the character and the excellencies of God. He is now the priest after the order of Melchisedec, but the fullest display and exercise of His royal priesthood is reserved for the future. Scripture tells us that He will be "a priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi:13). He is still upon His Father's throne, waiting to receive the throne promised to Him. In the day of His return He will receive that throne and become for all the earth and all creation the Priest-King. With that event there is connected the manifestation of the glory of God, the Most High, the millennial Name of God. Then all nations will know Him and walk in the light and in the glory of God.

We are now prepared to ascertain our own holy and royal priesthood. As holy priests, born again, blood bought and in possession of the Spirit of God, we come into the presence

of God to bring our spiritual sacrifices first of all. What are these? Hebrews xiii:15 gives the answer. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name."

When we come into the presence of God in the name of our great high-priest, praise, adore and worship Him, we bring spiritual sacrifices. It has frequently been asked "What is the highest and the best a Christian can do on earth?" The answer given generally magnifies unselfish service for others. True service rendered in a self sacrificial spirit is a great thing, but it is not the greatest. It says nowhere in Scripture that God is seeking servants to serve Him. But He seeks worshipers. The Samaritan woman had asked our Lord about the true place of worship. Should it be upon a mountain or in a house? He answered: "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; *for the Father seeketh such to worship Him*" (Jno. iv:23). The Father does not seek servants, but worshipers, who stand in His presence and worship Him. John Milton, when he had become blind, wrote about his blindness.

"God doth not need
Either man's work or His own gifts: Who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best: His state
Is Kingly: Thousands at His bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

Have you ever considered what praise and worship, coming from this earth, must mean to God? Let us imagine ourselves in the third heaven. There stands the throne of almighty God. His omniscient eye beholds all His works. He governs with His mighty laws the universes. He watches over all the solar systems and beholds their never ceasing movements. His omnipotent power keeps all in place. And then He beholds our earth, the dwelling place of man. As He looks upon this planet how dark it must look to Him, who dwelleth in His unapproachable light! He

sees all the crimes, the lawlessness, the bloodshed, the injustice and outrages committed here. He hears all the groans and moans, the curses and utterances of infidelity defying Him. He listens to the denials of modernism, that His own blessed Son, is but a mere man, who did not die for the sins of man, to bring man back to God. He sees and hears it all; nothing escapes Him.

But all at once, out of this dark, sin-cursed earth a voice comes, carried upward by His own Spirit. That voice says "Father!"

"Father, Thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I come to thank Thee once more for Himself. I thank and praise Thee for the Son of Thy Love, whom Thou didst send. I want to thank Thee that He died for my sins, that He bore them all in His own body on the tree. I adore Him, I worship Him; He alone is worthy. Worthy be the Lamb that was slain! Hallelujah. Father, Thine own heart delights in Him and through Thine infinite grace He is my delight, the One altogether lovely. I do not come to Thee to ask, but to praise and to adore."

Oh! it seems to me as such words are heard by the Father's heart in heaven, He must bid the Seraphim to cease their "Holy! Holy! Holy!" for here is that which delights the great heart of Love, the praise of a sinner, washed in the blood of His Son.

Have you ever tried this? Coming to God without any petitions, without any requests, just to praise and worship—this gives peace and joy and the deepest satisfaction. It is the atmosphere of heaven which we breath in such worship.

Intercession is another prominent phase of our holy priesthood. Our high priest in heaven intercedes for all His saints, and we are called upon to share in His ministry of intercession. If our hearts are following the leading of the Spirit, He will guide us in our prayers for whom we should especially pray at certain times. Believers requesting each other to remember them in prayer is blessedly scriptural and pleasing to our great intercessor in glory. In times of trial and sorrow, our high-priest ministers especially to His people,

caring for and sustaining them by His priestly sympathy. It is but an echo of His loving interest at such times when we remember suffering ones in prayer. He carries all our burdens and we are told to carry one another's burdens (Gal. vi:2). Such then is our holy priesthood.

As royal priests we are to show forth His own excellencies. This we do in the world among our fellow men. As holy priests we go in to God to bring our praises, our worship, and to represent others before God; as royal priests we go forth to represent the Lord before man. The true Church is compared to the moon, the light for the night. The moon witnesses to the absent sun during the night. Christ is absent in person from the world, but the Church is His representative, called "the Epistle of Christ," to be read and known of all men. The aim of a true Christian life must be to reflect Christ, to walk even as He walked, to shew forth His own excellencies.

There is a remarkable statement in the second Epistle to the Corinthians which teaches this. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, for the outshining of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv:6). It takes us back to the first chapter of the Bible. An original creation had been plunged into chaotic darkness. When God's hour had come He spoke, "Let there be light!" Then the light shone out of darkness, and step by step during the six days God's glory in creation shone forth. The same God has also shone in our hearts, which are by nature darkness and ruin. The light and power of the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ has dispelled the darkness and has manifested the glory of God our Saviour. But He has shone into our hearts, given us a new nature, and the Holy Spirit, so that His Glory as it is in the face of Jesus Christ might shine out. We are to shine out His character of moral loveliness.

The next verse gives us another lesson. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." We have this treasure in earthen vessels, our self-life. The earthen vessels remind

us of Gideon's victory with his three hundred men. He put into their hands earthen pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. Then he commanded when the sound of his trumpet was heard, that all the three hundred were to trumpet and smash the earthen pitchers so that the torch-light could flash forth. Without the broken pitchers the light would not have shone forth and no victory could have been won. So we, in order to be His royal priests, must put our self-life into the place of death. It must be broken again and again. As we put the old man into the place of death, where he belongs, we are enabled to show forth the excellencies of the new man.

Note also, beloved friends, that the holy priesthood comes first, the royal priesthood is put second. If we would be more alone with God, more in His presence, if we brought more spiritual sacrifices, praise and worship, we would be better royal priests.

IV. What are the Functions of Our Eternal Priesthood? All we have in the risen, glorified Christ is not for time only, it is for all eternity. We enjoy but little of our Sonship and glorious blessings now. Eternity will bring us into the full possession and full enjoyment of all. It is so with our priesthood. It is an eternal, never ending priesthood. When He comes and takes us to the Father's House, when we shall receive a body like unto His own glorious body, when His blessed hands lift us to the glories of the coming kingdom, then shall we not only reign with Him, but we shall be priests with Him, in a way we could not have been down here.

As holy priests we shall give Him endless praise and endless adoration. The song of the heavenly priesthood of the redeemed will never end, nor can it end. "Thou art worthy * * * for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth" (Rev. v:9, 10). It is the perfect praise of our everlasting holy priesthood.

And our eternal, royal priesthood? Oh! who can even

Imagine what that will be! We shall be like Him! His own glory will become ours! He will be glorified and admired in all them that believed! We shall shine out His glory! Angels will stand in holy admiration as they gaze upon this royal priesthood, this vast company of priests and kings forever associated in endless bliss with the Lord of Glory, the King of kings.

Well may we pray, "Lord, by Thy Spirit grant unto us the reality of all this. Forgive us the neglect of our holy priesthood, that we are seeking so little Thy face in fellowship, that we have brought so few spiritual sacrifices and have so often forgotten the great privilege of intercession. Forgive us that we have so little shown forth Thine excellencies in a separated life, for Christ's sake. Amen."

HOLY PRIESTS IN INTERCESSION

When it is well with thee before thy God,
Remember those with whom it is not well;
Bear them upon thy heart before that God
In whose glad presence thou hast learned to dwell.

Pray for thy friends; let the full heart go out
For all thou lovest here; forget not one:
Count o'er the precious names; nor let a doubt
Obtrude that God upon thy cry can frown.

For the true Church of God thy prayers prolong,
The one wide family of God below,
The little flock of every tribe and tongue;
All one in faith, in love, in joy and woe.

For all the members of that throng,
And for each fellow pilgrim alone and faint;
Known or unknown, the feeble or the strong;
For each hard pressed and sorrow stricken saint.

Plead for the bleeding heart and burdened soul,
Plead for the weary and the wounded here,
Ask that the God of health would make them whole,
And the great comforter dispense His cheer.

Plead for the weary earth, upon whose breast
Ages of evil and unrighteousness
Have lain, unbroken by one hour of rest;
Plead for the hast'ning of the age of peace.

Plead for the advent of the promised King,
The reign of heavenly Glory here on earth,
The budding of the world's eternal spring,
The coming of creation's second birth.

—*Horatius Bonar.*

THE SUFFERING OF THE RIGHTEOUS

It is an old, an age-long question—"Why do the righteous suffer?" Why have often those who are close to God, who are walking with Him, more suffering to endure than others? How can these sufferings be harmonized with the righteousness of God? It is a fact which history records that many of God's choicest saints and servants have been great sufferers. They had to pass through the darkest waters, through untold trials and afflictions. They "were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. xi:35-38).

Since these words were written by him who also was a sufferer, the Apostle Paul, thousands, tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands have been added to the long list of the suffering heroes of faith. What unspeakable and horrible cruelties have not the righteous suffered! Burned alive, flayed, scourged to death, torn by wild beasts, racked, dismembered, buried alive, eaten by vermin and tortured in various diabolical ways. The pagan Roman emperors persecuted the righteous through Satanic suggestions. Still worse were the sufferings of the righteous under papal Rome. And still this awful work has been going on in Russia and elsewhere.

Besides the sufferings of the martyrs there are thousands upon thousands of the children of God who suffer in various ways. They pass through affliction upon affliction, are afflicted with bodily infirmities; their loved ones are snatched away; they wrestle with poverty and are often in dire want. The world stands by and mocks. They point at the righteous

and when they suffer the ungodly sneer at God as a loving Father. And the righteous have to look on and see the worldlings laughing and prospering.

What mystery the suffering of the righteous presents! Perhaps the greatest mystery is the silent heavens.

Prayer after prayer ascends to the throne of grace but there is no answer, and the soul cries out "hath God forgotten to be gracious" (Psa. lxxvii:9). These suffering ones, in agony of body and soul, with no seeming answer from above, can say with David "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent" (Psa. xxii:2); and again "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried; mine eyes fail while I wait for my God" (Psa. lxix:2-3). Oh, the mysteries of suffering!

The word of God gives a sufficient answer to the question "Why do the righteous suffer?" I mean an answer which is sufficient for the child of God. But the Bible does not explain *all* the mystery of suffering. For the full light we will have to wait till "the day breaks and the shadows flee away." Then we shall no longer look into a glass darkly, but we shall know as we are known.

The main portion of Scripture which deals with the suffering of the righteous and gives light upon it, is the Book of Job.

Job a God-fearing, Righteous Man

The ancient Book of Job contains the history of a real person. It is not a fictitious allegory, as claimed by the Protestant liberalist. The beginning of this Book gives us the evidence, for we read "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job." He is mentioned elsewhere in the Bible as a historical character and not as a product of the imagination of some unknown poet. Twice the prophet Ezekiel speaks of him and mentions his name alongside of Noah and Daniel (Ezek. xiv:14, 20). Of course this has no meaning for the baptized infidel, for he also claims that

Noah and Daniel are invented personalities. I believe that Ezekiel the consecrated priest-prophet knew a lot more about Noah, Job and Daniel, than the modern day critic. James in his epistle also mentions Job and his patience (James v:11).

There can be no question that Job lived in patriarchal days. The evidence of this is abundant in the Book itself. We hear of him as a godly man. He was perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil. God had blessed him with sons and daughters. His possessions were also great. He had houses and land, thousands of sheep, camels, she asses and oxen. He was very conscientious in bringing God-pleasing sacrifices for his sons and daughters. All this we learn from the opening verses of this Book. It presents to us a prosperous, a peaceful picture.

The Stroke of Affliction

There came a day which opened brightly. The sons and daughters had gathered in the eldest brother's home. But before that day closed the scene was changed and the dark clouds of trouble were hanging low.

A panting runner came to Job and told him that the Sabeans had overtaken the servants, who watched the cattle. They had all been slain. He alone of all the servants had escaped. Job had hardly recovered from his astonishment when another messenger is seen in the distance. And now he has reached Job and tells him "The fire of God" probably lightning, "is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped." He is still giving his sad message, when a third runner arrives, respectfully waiting till he finishes. Job turns to him in silence; his eyes bid him to speak. And he said "The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." And he is still speaking when a fourth one has arrived to pant out the sorrowful news he is bringing. Says he: "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.

And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

What a day of sadness and sorrow it was for God-fearing Job! His children were dead, his servants, except four, had been killed, his herds had perished. In one day the prosperous man was reduced to poverty.

The Heights of Suffering

This was not all. The wealthy man, stripped in a few hours of nearly all his belongings, still enjoyed physical health. Some time after his great affliction, sickness attacks him. He is stricken by a terrible disease and in a short time he is covered with sore boils from the soles of his feet unto his crown. Then, as an outcast, we see him sitting upon an ash heap, holding a potsherd in his hand to scrape himself with it. Three of his friends, having probably heard of his misfortune, called on him. They were Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, men of intelligence, wise men, and perhaps as wealthy as Job was. They were struck dumb as they gazed upon the erstwhile prominent and influential land and cattle owner. Seven days and seven nights they looked upon the patient sufferer and not a word escaped their lips. Afterwards they tried to find a solution of their friend's suffering. They tried to solve the mysterious afflictions, but they failed to find an explanation. They found no answer, yet they condemned Job.

The Source of Job's Afflictions

The terrible afflictions which came so suddenly upon Job, the loss of his loved ones, of his servants, his possessions, and finally his bodily afflictions would be an unsolvable mystery if it were not for the revelation as to the source from whence they came. The first and second chapters of this Book contain this revelation, and revelation it is, for if it is not revelation it would be a poetic fancy, invented by a genius, but untrustworthy.

After the description of Job's character and family life we are at once taken to heaven. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job. i:6). The throne of God is in the third heaven, from where He governs the universe and His watchful eye is upon all. This is much more reasonable, if we have to speak of reason, than the inventions of evolution, which claim that all is left to blind chance. In this great universe there are heavenly tenants, the innumerable hosts of angels. They are the servants of almighty God. How He uses them in the government of the universe we do not know, as it is unrevealed and therefore God's secret. It seems from time to time these beings appear before the throne of God. They are called "the sons of God," the term which is applied in the Old Testament to these supernatural beings. They probably appear to worship and to give an account of their manifold activities.

Among these sons of God, Satan, the former great Lucifer, the son of the morning (Isa. xiv:12), also appeared. He is among the sons of God, one of the Scripture evidences of his original dignity. And it seems that in spite of his fall and his never-changing enmity against God, he still retains a part of his past glory. We have stepped upon mysterious ground. Questions upon questions arise in our hearts as to this being. We cannot answer these questions, because God has been pleased to hide some of these things from our human knowledge. Whenever God is silent it would be more than folly to attempt to discover by searching. We must trust the silences of God as much as we trust the definite promises of God.

Here we read of Satan having access to the throne of God. He is face to face with Jehovah. He is under Him, and when Jehovah asks "Whence comest thou?" he must answer. His answer is significant. "From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it." This earth, in its original condition, was in all probability the habitation of Lucifer, one of the morning stars. When he revolted

and fell by pride (Isa. xiv:13-15) he lost his dominion and was dispossessed. He became a wandering star, the prince of the power of the air. But he visits his former habitation, where he has seduced man to sin, and walking to and fro, he does all he can to frustrate the purposes of God in redemption.

Jehovah asks him another question: "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" It was a challenge to Satan, for Satan knew Job well and probably had often tried to alienate him from his Creator.

Then Satan speaks. He takes up Jehovah's challenge. "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast Thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance in the land is increased. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face."

Here Satan reveals one of his chief characteristics. He is the accuser of the brethren before God; and on earth he is the accuser of God to the brethren. His accusations are not aimed at the worldling Christian, one who lives the divided life, but he watches those the most who are fully on the Lord's side, who are living a consecrated life. What is revealed to us in the opening chapters of Job still goes on in heaven. But when he accuses the sinning people of God on earth our Advocate is there also with the Father to rebuke him (Zech. iii:1-4).

"And Jehovah said unto Satan, Behold all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of Jehovah." With what eagerness he must have rushed forth to execute the granted permission. Here then are three great lessons. The first is that Satan can do nothing unless permitted by the sovereign God. The second—he is limited in his assaults, and the third—the object of his attacks is to make the tried saint to abandon God and curse Him to His face.

Here also we get lessons on Satan's power and what he controls. The Sabeans and the Chaldeans were his instruments. He used lightning and the hurricane; he is the prince of the power in the air (Ephes. ii:2). Through these instruments and agencies he brought affliction and loss upon the servant of God. He has the power to afflict with disease.

The Overshadowing Power of God

What then did Job do when loss and affliction came so suddenly upon him? Did he go under it in despair? Did he lament and accuse God on account of what had happened and turn away from Him after the blessings he enjoyed were gone? "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshiped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Satan was completely defeated. The power of God had overshadowed him; His grace sustained him and Satan's challenge had been fully met.

And when he is covered with the loathsome disease, when his health was gone and he sits among the ashes, Job's wife appeared on the scene. Why did not Satan take her away from Job? Because he knew that she would be too good an instrument for him to use. He had spared her for a purpose. Then said his wife unto him: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." But he said unto her: "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Chap. ii:9-10). Satan used her as his mouthpiece, as he used Peter when he suggested that the Lord should spare Himself and not be crucified. Satan had become desperate as he feared defeat again, and so bluntly through Job's wife he suggested what he had planned to accomplish. Job should curse God and then after having cursed Him, turned his back on Him, to commit suicide. But in all this

Job did not sin. The gracious power of God overshadowed him once more and by his patience and submission without a single murmur he glorified God. The enemy is defeated and departs, nor does this dark shadow re-appear in the history of Job. The Victory was on God's side. He had sustained His servant Job.

Why God Permitted it All

Here then we find the first answer to the question "Why do the righteous suffer?" He permits their suffering for His own glory. Satan tried his best to snatch Job away from God. The question was not so much, however, is Job going to remain trusting in adversity and suffering? The real question was, can God keep his servant and carry him through the deep waters of affliction? Job glorified God in it all. Jehovah had kept him and the victory was not on the side of Satan. God triumphed.

And so it has been in the history of the Church and in the experiences of thousands of saints of God, suffering saints, whose sufferings glorified God. All the persecutions, recorded in the annals of the Church, were instituted by the roaring lion, the liar and murderer from the beginning. Equally so all the perversions of the truth are his work. He tried to crush out the life of the Church, but the gates of hades could not prevail against it. Thousands upon thousands who were cruelly murdered, after being tortured, sang praises unto the Lord. They glorified Him by patient suffering. They faced the lions and the bloodthirsty tigers with their "Hallelujahs." How many of those burnt at the stake during the reformation, and before the reformation, prayed out of the flame which slowly consumed their bodies, and asked the Lord to forgive their enemies, and then died, and saying with their last breath "Lord, into Thy hands I commit my spirit." Thousands died thus glorifying God. What glory God received through their suffering!

And so it is with all who suffer among the people of God, who have to pass through sorrow upon sorrow. By their suffering God proves that "His grace is sufficient," that He

is able to keep all His children, that He can give songs of joy in the night and fill their hearts with His own praises.

Friend, if you suffer think of your great privilege to glorify God in the midst of it all! You suffer in patience and without a murmur. In the midst of all your tribulation you praise Him by submitting to His gracious and ever good will. This is the glory He receives from you, and that is why He has permitted your trials. As you suffer in patience, trusting the Lord, saying with suffering Job "Though He slay me, yet will I trust," you are following closely in the footsteps of His own blessed Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. You have fellowship with His suffering. He will draw closer and closer to you and then you will find out what a wonderful Saviour He is, how great His peace and comfort and how He gives you His own strength to endure.

So let the accuser of the brethren continue in his pernicious work, there is one who watches over it all. Our God can never be defeated. All must redound to His own honor and glory.

For the deeper explanation of the mystery of suffering we will have to wait till He unveils the little lives we lived down here and shows us how wonderfully "all things worked together for good to them that love God."

Another Answer

But we find in Job another answer to the question "Why do the righteous suffer?" God permits their suffering not only for His glory but also for the good of His children. This is illustrated in the case of Job. It is true he was a God-fearing man, perfect and upright, who never forgot God. He also kept conscientiously the religious duties of bringing burnt offerings. Such offerings were known from the beginning of history as the right approach into the presence of God. Abel brought such an offering and orally, without a written revelation, the necessity of sacrifice had been preserved. So Job offered burnt offerings according to the number of his children. But as we search the character of this God-fearing patriarch we discover a serious flaw. It

is something which God cannot tolerate in the lives of His servants. He was self-righteous. Pride was his besetting sin.

From the New Testament we learn that pride is "the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. iii:6). The word "condemnation" in the Greek is "*Krimos*," so that we can read "lifted up with pride he fall into the crime of the devil." Lucifer, the "son of the morning," lifted himself up with pride. His language, which led to his horrible fall, is recorded in Isaiah's prophecy. "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God—I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High" (Isa. xiv:13, 14). When he approached our first parents he injected the same poison which was in his heart, for he said to the woman "ye shall be as gods." The very essence of sin, as it is in our fallen nature, is pride, self-exaltation. This is what God must hate and what He cannot tolerate in His saints, for it links them with Satan and gives Satan an opportunity to drag the saint of God down. Against self-exaltation and pride our Lord in His teachings often warned. "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke xviii:14). Against this the Holy Spirit warns. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James iv:6, 7). Self-exaltation and self-sufficiency was Peter's sin also. The Lord said to him, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath asked for thee (just as it was in the case of Job), that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke xxii:31). The Lord permitted the sifting so that Peter might be purged of his self-exaltation and pride. At the same time the Lord prayed for Peter, as He prays for all of us, that his faith fail not.

Self-exaltation and self-righteousness we also discover in the life of Job. He brought burnt offerings for his sons, saying: "It may be my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." We read not a word about himself that he might have sinned and done wrong. This pride of heart

comes out in the answers Job gave to his three friends. Without entering into the lengthy dialogues, we can sum it up in one sentence, the verdict of Elihu, when he said that Job justified himself rather than God, and that Job was righteous in his own eyes (Job xxxii:1-3).

We point out one of the answers which Job gave to the arguments of Bildad the Shuhite, which we find in the twenty-ninth chapter. He rehearses his past greatness, The letter "I" is prominent throughout this chapter. Let us listen to him. "When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street—What happened?—the young men saw me, and hid themselves, and the aged arose, and stood up." Everybody said "here comes the great and holy Job"; the young ran away; the old stood up in reverence. "The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth." Everybody stopped talking to listen to the great and holy Job. "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. Because I delivered the poor, that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him"—"I put on righteousness, and it clothed me * * * I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame * * * I was father to the poor * * *. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them."

What self-esteem! What pride of intellect and pride of good works! And though he sat, poverty stricken, covered with sores from head to foot, he has the last word in the defense of himself. "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes" (Job xxxii:1).

Elihu, the Son of Barachel

Then suddenly another speaks. He must have been the silent listener of the controversy and he sized up the situation. He is angry with Job "because he justified himself rather than God" and he is angry with the three friends of

Job "because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job." Elihu represents the Son of God in this drama. His name is significant.

We translate the four names we find in the opening verses of the thirty-second chapter. *Elihu*—My God is He; *Barachel*—The Blessed God; *Buzite*—The rejected One; *Ram*—The Exalted One. How well these names fit our Lord! He speaks beautifully of what God does and permits in chastening "*That He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man*" (Job. xxxiii:17).

Pain comes, affliction upon affliction; the flesh is consumed; the soul draweth near unto the grave. Then Elihu speaks of deliverance. "Then He is gracious unto him and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, *I have found a ransom (atonement)*." Elihu tells Job that God is waiting to be gracious, waiting for confession. "If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going to the pit, and his life shall see the light" (Verses 24-28). This is the Gospel in the Book of Job. * * * Finally Elihu opens the way for God Himself to speak of Himself, of his greatness and majesty. Job is silent; he does not answer Elihu. His lips are closed. But once he opens his mouth and says "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand on my mouth." And when he speaks again he confesses that for which God was waiting— "*I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes*" (Job xlvi:6). Then Job's sufferings ended. There is the restoration of what he had lost; he received twice as much as he had before. The loathsome disease departs. He had humbled himself, confessed his vileness, abhorred himself and repented in deepest humiliation.

For the Saints' Great Good

So God permits His children to suffer, to pass through the deep waters of sorrow and affliction; He permits Satan to sift them, but the purpose of all is that it might be for our good. How we all should welcome that which puts us in

the dust before Him and cleanses us from pride and self-exaltation!

How beautiful is the message penned by the prisoner of the Lord, the Apostle Paul, who suffered so much himself. Oh! that we would read it more, read it daily. “Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him. For whom the Lord *loveth* He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, *that we might be partakers of His holiness*. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. xii:5-11).

Sufferer! tried and tested child of God! read these words on your knees, believe them, trust Him in all your trials, who can do nothing but love you. Then arise and “count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (trials); knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James i:2-4). Yea, arise and “glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed” (Rom. v:3-4).

Tried and tested saint! Patient sufferer, look onward and forward to the coming day, and say in faith and hope, unshaken, firm and steadfast, “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. viii:18).

When it is the darkest shout it aloud in defiance of all the

powers of evil—"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii:35-39).

When we are in the Father's house, when we review our lives in His light, when we discover His thoughts of love and peace, which governed all, we shall praise Him more for our sufferings, our trials and tribulations, than for the blessings we enjoyed.

AN ANODYNE

By Thomas Ken*

As in the night I restless lie,
 I the watch candle keep in eye;
 The innocent I often blame,
 For the slow wasting of its flame.
 Sweet ease!—O whither are you fled!—
 With one short slumber ease my head!

My curtain oft I draw away,
 Eager to see the morning ray;
 But when the morning gilds the skies,
 The morning no relief supplies.
 To me, alas! the morning light
 Is as afflictive as the night.

My vigorous cries to God ascend,
 Oh! will not God my cries attend?
 Can God's paternal love forbear—
 Can God reject a filial prayer?
 Is there in heaven for me no cure—
 Why do I then such pain endure?

My flesh in torture oft repines,
 At what God for my good designs;
 My spirit the repiner chides,
 Submissive to God's will abides:
 God my disease and temper weighs;
 No pang superfluous on me lays.

Why should I then my pains decline,
 Inflicted by pure love divine?
 Let them run out their destined course,
 And spend upon me all their force;
 Short pains can never grievous be,
 Which work a blest eternity.

*Thomas Ken was chaplain at the Hague to Princess Mary, and became Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1685 as the special choice of Charles II. For many years he suffered grievously from rheumatism and other disorders. It grew worse, and worse, and his latter days were overshadowed by terrible tortures. This beautiful poem was composed by him in one of his many sleepless and painful nights.

PRAISE

By George Herbert*

King of Glory, King of Peace,
I will love Thee;
And that love may never cease,
I will move Thee.

Thou hast granted my request,
Thou hast heard me;
Thou didst note my working breast,
Thou hast spared me.

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing Thee,
And the cream of all my heart,
I will bring Thee.

Though my sins against me cried,
Thou didst clear me;
And alone when they replied,
Thou didst hear me.

Seven whole days, not one in seven,
I will praise Thee;
In my heart, though not in Heaven;
I can raise Thee.

Thou grew'st soft and moist with tears,
Thou relitest;
And when justice called for fears,
Thou dissentest.

Small it is, in this poor sort,
To enroll Thee;
E'en eternity is too short
To extol Thee.

*George Herbert was born in 1593 and was highly connected. He was rector of a small church in Bemerton, a village between Salisbury and

THE DOOR

A Gospel Address

I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture (John x:9).

This is one of the great sayings of our Lord. We remember the others. "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jno. viii:12). "I am the Bread of Life, he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (John vi:35). "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John x:11). "I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die" (John xi:25, 26). "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John xiv:6). "I am the true Vine" (John xv:1). All these words are simple and yet they have depths which no finite mind has ever been able, nor ever will be able, to fathom. No other man ever spoke as He spoke. Certain men, called religious leaders, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, and others, spoke of light, of truth, and claimed to point the way to the knowledge of God; not one of them ever said "I am the light; I am the truth; I am the way." The Lord Jesus Christ spoke thus because He is the "I Am," the Lord-God manifested in the flesh.

The words I have read belong to the most simple of His Gospel-sayings. He compares Himself to a Door, and gives the assurance that if we enter through Him we shall be saved.

Wilton. There the little road-side church, almost as in his days, still stands
 Crouching entrench'd in slopes of daisy sod,
 And duly deck'd by Herbert-honoring hands.

And here, suffering also from advancing consumption, he lived that saintly life of "detachment" which his poems reveal—rather embody. When no longer able to walk to Salisbury Cathedral he took his lute, played and sang praises to the Lord. Singing on earth, as Isaak Walton says, such hymns and anthems as the Angels and he, and his holy friend, N. Ferrar, now sing in heaven.

A child knows what a door is. It is the means of entrance into a building. Before we pass through the door we are outside; when we have crossed the door-step we are inside. Behind the door we find shelter. Some years ago in walking across the presidential range in the White Mountains, at an elevation of over five thousand feet a storm came up. But there was a hut for refuge. The door was open; I entered in and was sheltered from the wind and the rain. Behind the door is security and behind the door we find rest also. Then we know what a closed door means. It shuts us out from the building.

So when the Lord Jesus Christ says "I am the Door" He wants you to understand that He is the means of entrance into the Kingdom, the presence of God. If we use Him, accept Him, believing on Him, we are brought in to that which saves us, gives us shelter, security and rest.

In order to illustrate this great saying of our Lord, I desire to call your attention to a number of Scriptures in which a door is mentioned, and these different doors will illuminate this simple and blessed word of the Friend of Sinners.

The Door in the Ark

The first time we read of a door as the means of entrance is in the historical record of a great divine judgment which swept over this earth. That judgment was the deluge. Oh, I know that certain men ridicule the belief that such a judgment ever happened. They call the record a legend. We fear some of these men, who still retain the name "Christian," are wilfully ignorant (2 Peter iii:5). Geology bears witness to such a universal flood, when the earth was under water. The echo of this great catastrophe is found in a distorted way among all ancient nations. The Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Greeks, Chinese, Aztecs, Peruvians, the North American Indians and others possess the great flood tradition, and this universal tradition is a sure evidence of its historicity. But the greatest witness that there was a flood, that Noah built the ark, and that the whole record in Genesis is true, is the Lord Jesus Christ,

He who is the Truth and infallible in His knowledge and all His utterances. "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all" (Luke xvii:26, 27). And here is more than a confirmation of the deluge; here is a prophecy. There will be another judgment, for the Son of God says so. When that judgment comes you need a place of safety, a shelter where judgment cannot reach you.

The ark Noah was commanded to build is a type of that place of salvation and shelter. It is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The entrance-way into the ark as the place of shelter and safety is also a type of our Lord. The way into the ark was a door, and only one door; it was in the side of the ark. Through this those who were saved from judgment had to enter in. That door was kept open. God waited with long suffering in the days of Noah (1 Peter iii:20) and while God waited, Noah was the preacher of righteousness (2 Peter ii:5). No doubt he preached the coming judgment, pointed to the ark which was building, told his hearers that in order to be in the ark for shelter and salvation they must enter through the door. But that generation was unbelieving; they rejected the message and the invitation, because they believed not. Then the Lord who had provided the ark, who waited in long suffering, shut the door (Gen. vii:16). Those who had entered in were safe; the waters of judgment did not reach them nor did they even behold the judgment scene, for the ark had but one window and that was above. Those who had not entered were shut out and no knocking or begging, no pleading and no weeping could open that door.

So God has provided a place of salvation, safety and shelter in His blessed Son, and He Himself, in order to enter into that place, is the door. This is the meaning of His word "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved." When the judgment comes, as it surely will, all who accepted Christ, trusted on Him, used Him as the Door, will be safe and secure.

The Blood-marked Door

In the second Book of the Bible, Exodus, we find the record of another judgment. The seed of Abraham was enslaved in Egypt. A wicked king ruled over them; the whip of the taskmasters slashed them and they moaned and groaned under the awful burden. It is a little picture of the condition of the entire human race, enslaved by sin and controlled by Satan. God remembered His chosen people. The hour of their deliverance was at hand, and He was now to redeem them. Egypt's hour also had come. In one night the Angel of the Lord was to pass through Egypt, enter every house from Pharaoh's magnificent palace to the miserable hut of the Egyptian slave, and there to slay the firstborn. For the seed of Abraham living in Egypt (the type of the world) the Lord had provided an escape. They, too, would have suffered that night if God had not ordained redemption for them. The Israelitish house-father was to take a pure, a spotless lamb and kill it in the time and in the way as commanded. The main thing was not the eating of the lamb, but the blood. The head of the family took the blood in a basin with a bunch of hyssop and marked the lintel and the two side posts of the door with the blood, so that the doors of all the Israelitish houses were blood-marked doors.

“And the blood shall be for you a token upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy, when I smite the land of Egypt” (Exod. xii:13).

The night came. The Israelites had followed in faith every instruction. The blood had been put upon the doors, and then they retired and slept in security behind the blood-marked doors. It was ten o'clock and nothing happened. Another hour passed and still another. It is midnight. All at once a wail of terror is heard from the palace of Pharaoh. He bows over his firstborn, who suddenly has been stricken by death. The same wail and cry of despair comes now from every house. Death is everywhere.

"And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of the cattle" (Exod. xii:29). What a night of horror and of woe that must have been! "There was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead." But Israel behind the blood-marked doors had perfect peace. Not a single person was touched by the judgment stroke of God; not even a dog moved the tongue to give an alarm.

Christ is our passover Lamb. He who said "I am the Door," died for our sins. His precious blood is the token of our redemption. When you hide behind His cross, trust in Him who died for the ungodly, then you are sheltered by the blood, as Israel was in that judgment night. He speaks still as He did then, "When I shall see the blood I will pass over you. Is this your place today? Do you trust in His finished work? Are you sheltered by the blood?

Supposing the Israelitish father had taken the lamb in his arms and said "it is a beautiful lamb, it is a spotless lamb. I will present it to the Lord when He passes through Egypt and when He comes near my house, I will stand before the door and say to Him 'Mighty, holy Lord! look upon this spotless lamb! Here it is, so beautiful and fair, and I want to tell Thee my life shall be from henceforth ordered in such a way that I too shall live a spotless life and be acceptable to Thee.'" What would have happened? The Angel of the Lord would have unsheathed the sword and the Egyptian wail would have come from that house also. And here are some who speak of the loveliness of Jesus, the spotlessness of His character, the depths of His words, and who try to imitate Him, live clean lives, and then think that all must be well. Oh delusion of all delusions! Many sang here this evening

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

and yet you constantly bring forward your good moral

character, your honesty, your charitable works, your religious persuasion, your resolutions of doing this and that. Let me tell you God does not say "When I see that you are a Methodist, a Lutheran, a Presbyterian, a Baptist—when I see your moral life and that you pay your debts—when I see you are doing the best you can—then I will pass over you." No! "When I shall see the blood I will pass over you!" Oh friend! have you fled to the Lord Jesus Christ as a lost and guilty sinner? Have you used Him as the door? Are you sheltered by the blood of the Lamb? Unless you are behind the blood-mark, sheltered by His blood, there can be no peace nor security.

The Door with the Scarlet Line

There stood once in Israel's land a city known for its pleasant situation, charming surroundings, and for its pleasures and the licentiousness of its inhabitants. Jericho was a very wicked city. The ruler and his subjects were vile idolators, yielded to the devil, practicing the most unspeakable immoralities. The measure of their wickedness was full. Their complete extermination, men, women and children, was an act of God's righteousness and mercy. They felt secure behind their strong, thick walls. But when they heard of the victorious, on-marching hosts of Israel, and the God who led them forth and used them in the execution of His righteous judgments, they were terror stricken. Upon the town wall there stood an inn, some kind of a roadhouse where one of the many vicious women of Jericho carried on her hellish business of corrupting the bodies and souls of men. Two spies arrived at her house, sent by Joshua. The king of Jericho heard of it and knew the men were in Rahab's inn. She hid the spies in her attic. This was an act of faith (Heb. xi:31). She had believed the report of impending judgment; her heart was seeking salvation; the hiding of the spies was the expression of her faint faith. Therefore, because she believed she was not to perish. She received the assurance of her salvation, but she must put a scarlet thread in the window, a scarlet line which hangs down and covers

the door of her house. She is to bring in all her relations, father, mother, brethren; the whole household and all who are in her house, behind the door covered by the scarlet line, shall be saved.

Now comes the day when Jericho's king and the garrison of the stronghold behold the Israelites marching around their city, with priests blowing trumpets. But nothing happens. The second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth day passes and the same marching, the same sound of the trumpets, and nothing happened. I wonder if the besieged with their king began to mock and to ridicule, as modern day scoffers do, who say "Where is the promise of His coming?" "where are the judgments threatened in the Bible?"

But on the seventh day something happened. When they had marched on that day around the city for seven times, and they had finished the seventh march, and they shouted with a mighty shout, the city wall crumbled to dust. The finger of the Lord had touched the great fortress and it fell. Nothing was left of the wall. But look yonder—what is that? There is a house which did not fall. There a piece of the town wall is untouched by that judgment. The house is safe. Behind the door covered by the scarlet line are saved souls rejoicing in God's salvation. And so you, my hearer, if you believe the report, if you flee to Christ, if you use Him as your door to salvation and safety, if you are resting upon the rock of ages, you are safe for ever. Your house cannot fall.

The Valley of Achor, the Door of Hope

Centuries later, after Jericho had fallen under the judgment of God, Hosea, the prophet, wrote the following promise of Jehovah. "And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a *door of hope*, and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, when she came up out of the land of Egypt" (Hos. ii:15). These words lead us back to Jericho. Achan saw among the spoil in Jericho a goodly Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold. All was to be accursed of Jericho,

but he coveted these things and took them. On account of his sin great trouble came upon the entire people and they all suffered through the sin of the one. Then Achan had to die. He was stoned to death with all his possessions. Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, and through the death of Achan the curse was removed and the fierceness of the anger of the Lord was turned away. The place was called "the valley of Achor." Hosea speaks of it as "the door of hope."

Through one man sin and death came into the world and the curse rests upon the whole race. Another man came and He died for our sins, was buried and rose again, and through Him the curse and the wrath of God is turned away, for all who believe on Him. He is our door of hope.

The Door of the Tabernacle

The place of Israel's worship was enclosed in fine white linen (Exod. xxvi:1). For the instructed Israelite the white linen was the symbol of God's holiness and righteousness. He stood before that earthly place of worship knowing that Jehovah dwelt within and he, a sinner, was barred from His presence. The white linen wall shut him out. But there was a door in that fine white linen. It had a hanging of blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen (Exod. xxvi:36). When the Israelite, his head bowed in penitence, passed through that door, he found after he got inside that the fine white linen wall, which shut him out, now shut him in. The door is a type of Christ. The very colors speak of Him. Blue is the color of heaven; purple, the color of royalty; scarlet, the color of blood and white the color of righteousness. Heaven—Royalty—Blood—Righteousness! Who does not see the meaning! Heaven's royal blood gives righteousness. It is Christ, the door. "By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved." As we pass in through Him we are shut in by the very righteousness, which, when outside, condemns.

And there was another door in that tabernacle. It was formed by a heavy veil and hid the Holiest from the eyes of

man. Between the Cherubim the Lord dwelled in visible glory. Any Israelite passing through that door-veil would have been at once consumed by the fire of God's holiness. To pass inside would have meant sudden death. Only once, on the day of atonement, the high priest passed behind that veil with the sacrificial blood.

Do you know what happened at a certain time to that thick veil? It took place not in the tabernacle, but in Israel's temple. A company of priests were ministering in the semi-darkness. Suddenly the darkness increased. It became darker and darker. They must have looked at each other with blanched faces. What does it mean? And now their attention is arrested by something on that hanging veil. The veil quivers and shakes. An unseen hand rends that veil, not from the bottom upward, but from the top to the bottom. That hand reached down from above. Slowly the tear continues till it is complete and the Holiest is now laid bare.

Outside of Jerusalem One hanging on a cross had bowed His thorn-crowned head, after crying aloud "It is finished." The Lamb of God had died. God indicated at once that the new and living way into His holy presence had been made by the blood of Jesus. It was God Himself whose hand rent the veil in the midst. Christ is the door. If it meant death and judgment for those in the Old Testament who passed through that veil into the presence of God, it now means death and judgment for all who refuse to come unto God by this new and living way. Oh, soul, use this way, it is the only way of life and salvation!

By Me if Any Man Enter in, He Shall be Saved

What I have said shows the meaning of the word of our Lord, "I am the Door." Through Him we enter into the presence of God. Believing on Him we are saved. In Him judgment cannot reach us; in Him we are covered by the righteousness of God; in Him we are safe and secure; in Him is our shelter, our peace and our glory.

But let me call your thought also to those who may enter

through Him as the door to find in Him salvation. He said "By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved." "Any man!" It has been rightly said "Whosoever—it means *you*." So "any man" means *you*. He does not say any man who repents and is really sorry for his sins; or any man who makes restitution; or any man who is baptized in a certain way; or any man who is trying his best to live a right life. No! Any man! No matter how far gone into sin, how vile and unrighteous the past has been, how much evil a man has done and has been an instrument in leading others astray. Just any man! So let me say it again—*any man means you*. He invites you to come to Him, to use Him as the door, to enter in by Him, and He gives you the assurance if you believe on Him and thus use Him as the door, you shall be saved. Will you then pass in this very moment and find in Him and through Him salvation, eternal life, peace, hope and joy, yea, all you need?

And the Door was Shut

But will this door remain open for ever? Or is a day coming when the salvation rejectors face a door which is shut? Our Lord speaks of a shut door in His parable of the ten virgins (Matt. xxv:1-13). The ten virgins represent the entire Christian profession. The wise virgins, who have lamps and oil in their lamps, are typical of real believers, those who have accepted Christ, entered in through Him and received the oil, the Holy Spirit, from Him. The foolish virgins with lamps and no oil are typical of the large mass of nominal Christians, who have the outward form of godliness, but know nothing of the power of salvation. They have never been born again, because they never accepted Christ as their Saviour, and they never accepted Him because they did not confess themselves as sinners and their need of Him. If they had used Him as the door, entered in by faith, trusting Him, they also would have had the oil.

Then the Bridegroom comes. And He will surely come, For He has promised that He would come. Those who are ready will enter in with Him to be at the marriage of the

Lamb. All are ready and worthy to be with Him who are sheltered by Him as the door, covered by His precious blood. But those who were not ready, those who are only Christians in name and were never saved, will come to a closed door. "*And the door was shut.*" They have lost their opportunity. They might have gone in also, but they neglected so great a salvation. They refuse His gracious offer and the wooing of His Spirit. And how they knock and how they cry, Lord, Lord, open unto us! Lord, Lord, open unto us! And finally there comes a heart-piercing answer. "*Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.*" You would not have me and now you cannot enter in. They are for ever outside and must wander on in eternal night. Lost! forever lost! There is no second chance.

Friend, hear it again! "*I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.*" Do you want to be saved? Then this very hour enter in through the open door, through Christ who died for your sins. How soon you may face, if you refuse, the closed door.

Late, late, so late! And dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light had we; for that we do repent;
And learning this the Bridegroom will relent;
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light; so late! and dark and chill the night!
O let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in though late, to kiss His feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.

—*Alfred, Lord Tennyson.*

SAVED BY GRACE

A True Story

All alone in the evening gray,
Sick and dying, poor Hannah lay;
Through the broken pane the cold wind swept,
Poor Hannah shivered, and moaned, and wept.
But it was not cold, and it was not pain,
That made her shiver and moan again:
She did not say, "My pain is sore,"
But "Where shall I be when all is o'er?"
For Hannah remembered the years gone by,
And she said, "A sinner—a sinner am I!
All black and fearful the sins appear,
That I had forgotten for many a year;
And thousands, thousands, they come to mind—
There is hell before and sin behind.
The Lord is holy, and just, and true,
And what He has said He will surely do.
He hath for sin an awful doom,
A lake of fire beyond the tomb;
And my soul is black with the sins of years,
They cannot be washed away with tears.
And sure it is vain to pray and cry;
He cannot hear such a sinner as I.
I am going—going—to stand alone,
Before the Lord on His awful throne!"

Bright and glad as the stars came out,
With many a laugh and many a shout,
Jack and Will in the garden played,
And they heeded not the noise they made.
But the neighbor calling said, "Children, dear,
A woman is sick in that house so near;
There, where the broken pane you see,
She is lying as ill as she can be.
She soon must die, and you see 'tis best
You should be still, and let her rest."
Then in a moment they were still,
For tender hearts had both Jack and Will,
And they sat and looked at the casement lone,
Till the stars shone bright, and the day was gone.
Then Jack said, "Will, she will go to Heaven,
If she has had her sins forgiven.
I learned at school that when Jesus died
The door of Heaven was opened wide,
Because He was punished Himself for sin.
So now if we die, we can all go in;
Of our sins there will not a word be said,
For Jesus Christ was punished instead;
And if she believes He loves her so,
Beyond the stars her soul will go.
He will lead her in through the golden door,
And she will be happy for evermore."
Then Will said, "Jack, that is all quite true—
But does she know it as well as you?"

What Jesus did we have both been taught,
 But some know this, and some do not.
 O Jack, maybe she has never known
 What it is that the Lord has done!"
 Then Jack said, "If you would help me, Will,
 I would climb up to the window sill,
 And through the hole I would call and say,
 'Jesus washes our sins away.' "

The neighbor said when her work was done,
 "It may be Hannah is all alone,
 And oh! it's an awful thing to lie
 Too ill to live, and afraid to die.
 So just to sit with her I will go,
 But how to help her I do not know."
 So the neighbor went, and she heard no moan,
 And she thought, "Poor Hannah is dead and gone";
 She lighted the candle with fear and dread,
 And stooped to see if Hannah was dead.
 But there she lay with her face so bright!
 It shone with glory and not with light.
 And she said, "O neighbor, the Lord is good!
 He has washed me white in His precious Blood,
 My sins are gone from before His Face,
 And He has prepared a glorious place,
 Where those He loves with Himself shall be,
 And to that sweet Home He is calling me.
 O neighbor, here in the dark I lay,
 I felt so guilty I could not pray,
 And all my sins like a mountain stood
 Before the terrible Face of God.
 Then all in a moment, sweet and clear,
 A voice spake loud, though none was near,
 Like an Angel speaking I heard it say,
 'Jesus washes our sins away!'

And whilst I thought, Do my ears tell true?
 It said, 'Poor woman, He died for you.'
 And then did the words come sweet and low
 That I had forgotten long ago;
 I once heard tell in the years gone by,
 How Jesus came on the cross to die,
 And there He hung in the darkness dread,
 With a crown of thorns on His holy Head.
 And some old, old words came back to me,
 'He bore our sins on that cursed tree.'
 Yes, it was true that mine He bore,
 So the guilt is gone, and the judgment o'er;
 And more than that, if He died for me,
 What must the love of Jesus be!
 He in His Home of glory waits
 To see me enter the golden gates;
 Whilst I lay moaning in black despair;
 His heart was longing to have me there.
 And oh, for the welcome I soon shall know!
 No words can tell how I long to go!"

And so, ere many a day was done,
There was joy in the Home beyond the sun,
For Hannah had entered the golden door
To dwell with her Saviour for evermore.
God saith that all who to Jesus come
He in His love will welcome home.
The Lord is holy, and just, and true,
And what He hath said, He will surely do.
—*Mrs. Bevan.*

**AN UNALTERABLE DEMAND AND
ABSOLUTE NECESSITY****John iii:1-16**

He was a splendid man. Everybody in Jerusalem knew him. He belonged to the strictest sect in Judaism, the sect of the Pharisees. Nineteen hundred years ago the word Pharisee had a different meaning from what it has today. The Pharisees were at that time the most religious people, who conscientiously conformed to every precept of the law and kept to the very letter the God-given ordinances. A certain Pharisee and son of a Pharisee bore witness to the strict religious life he had led, when he wrote "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. iii:6). And this strict religious Jew, a Pharisee, whose name was Nicodemus, was also a recognized teacher, in fact the teacher in Israel. Everybody knew him and esteemed him for his deep religious knowledge, which earned him the title of teacher. He was well versed in every part of the law and the prophets, knew the greater part of the ancient writings by heart and was acquainted with the comments on the Scriptures by other great teachers before him. Besides this he was a ruler of the Jews, which demanded a moral, clean life. This Nicodemus was no common man. He was a religious, law-keeping, scholarly, deeply-learned, moral man. And he came to our Lord by night, acknowledging him as a teacher come from God. The Lord told him at once, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God," and again "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John iii:3-7). Thus our Lord told the great, religious, scholarly and moral ruler and teacher of the Jews that there is but one way into the Kingdom, the way of the new birth.

This is one of the great vital truths of the Word of God which needs to be emphasized as never before. The third chapter in the Gospel of John is one of the fundamental chapters of the Bible. Its important truths are in our

times increasingly rejected and obscured. How necessary it is therefore to turn again to the solemn declarations which came from the lips of our Lord in that memorable night when Nicodemus sought His presence.

We are surrounded by cults which all claim to be exponents of true Christianity. But they all deny the great truths which our Lord teaches in this chapter. Tested by the third chapter of John, Christian Science, Russellism (known now as "The International Bible Student Association"), Theosophy, Spiritism and kindred cults are found to be anti-Christian.

And those in evangelical Christendom who deny sound doctrine and follow, what they term, the new theology, also reject the teachings our Lord gave to Nicodemus. Some years ago a preacher who sides with this so-called "modernism" said, "If our Lord were now on the earth He would no longer preach as He did nineteen hundred years ago. He would not make such a demand today as He made of Nicodemus. He would certainly adapt His preaching and teaching to the better conditions and to the special needs of the twentieth century." What blindness such language reveals! Whatever came from the blessed lips of the Son of God is eternal truth, unchangeable and abiding. They may deny what He said about the way into the Kingdom. They may put in the place of His words their own inventions, as they do; but that does not affect what He said and what He demanded, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." It was true when Nicodemus heard these words; it is as true in our day, and it will be true in all the future as long as sinful men are on this earth. There is no other way to see the Kingdom, to enter the Kingdom of God, than the way which our Lord expounded to Nicodemus. "Ye must be born again." It is an unalterable demand. Anyone who denies this and tries to enter the Kingdom of God in any other way will find out to his eternal shame and loss the solemn truth of it.

But look at this good, religious, scholarly and moral Jew,

Nicodemus. To him our Lord said, "Ye must be born again." He told him in other words that all he had done, and he was doing; all he had made or ever could make of himself, could never bring him into the Kingdom of God. All his religiousness, his knowledge, his education, his morality could not give him a place in the Kingdom. All went for naught. The great teacher, He who is the Truth, said, "Ye must be born again."

Such a demand was not made by the Lord of the publicans and the sinners. He did not breathe a word of it to the abandoned woman, for whose sake He went all the way through Samaria. With what tenderness He treated her. In His seeking love and loving words He demonstrated to her the possibility of salvation and the blessings connected with it. To the religious, learned and moral Nicodemus He demonstrated the absolute necessity of the new birth. Some think the gambler, the drunkard, the down and out, the harlot—they need to experience a new birth, but the person who lives a decent life, who has a certain amount of culture and besides this makes a religious profession and belongs to a religious society called "church," has no need of a new birth. The case of Nicodemus shows this to be a false hope. He represents the modern day religious professor, the moral and cultured element. You—church-member, professing Christianity, but not knowing the reality and power of salvation; you—moral man, with your self-righteousness—you *must be born again*. You may be a church-member, make a profession of religion, live a decent, straight, honest and clean life, you may use the so-called ordinances and even do service in the cause of Christ, but if you are not born again, you are not in the Kingdom of God, and if not in the Kingdom of God, you are outside and lost.

Our Lord shows us why it is absolutely necessary to be born again to enter the Kingdom of God. One sentence explains it all. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Every human being comes into the world with a sinful nature. By the natural generation we receive a nature of sin and death. It comes to us through Adam. This

nature can never be anything else than a sinful nature, the nature which is flesh. It is impossible to bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing. Our old nature is absolutely unclean and corrupt, and it is impossible that it could bring forth anything good. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. The nature we receive in our natural birth is wholly unfit for heaven. It can never be fitted for heaven. We may try self-improvement, as many do; we may polish up the old nature and put over it the veneer of anything nice and attractive, but underneath it all there is that nature of sin, which cannot enter the Kingdom of God. And they that are in the flesh (in this old nature) cannot please God. Let them do whatever they may, but they cannot please God.

Every sinner needs a new nature. And this is what is meant by being born again or born from above. We must receive a new nature which is imparted by the Spirit of God. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." When our Lord mentions "born of water" He does not mean Baptism. Water-baptism cannot save nor can it produce or secure for us the new birth. Water is symbolical of the Word of God (1 Peter i:23). The Word of God is the instrumental means and the Holy Spirit the agent in the new birth. And this new nature, which we receive in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, this new nature which is given to us by the Holy Spirit, this divine nature, is our *only* fitness to be in God's presence in heaven as the blood of Jesus Christ is our *only* title to glory. And how simple is the "how" of the new birth. We cannot procure it for ourselves. Our works cannot secure it. As already stated an ordinance cannot help us to get it from God. In John iii:14-16 the question is answered of how we receive this new nature and are born again. It takes us to that blessed, hallowed spot, the cross of Christ. He died for sinners; He died for you. He gave Himself. The great work is done. And upon that finished work, the peace which was made in the blood of the cross, God offers now without money and without price,

the priceless gift, eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. It is a simple way. It is a blessed way. You come to Christ as a lost sinner, realizing that you deserve nothing but wrath and eternal condemnation. You believe on Him. You say He died for the ungodly—I am ungodly—He died for me. I now cast myself on Him as my only Hope and as my Saviour! I trust on Him. And as you do this the Holy Spirit acts and you *are* born again. A new life has been imparted unto you, even eternal life. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John v:24). Believest thou this? Reader, when were you born again? Oh, hasten and accept God’s gracious offer of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. No other way to glory. It is an unalterable demand and an absolute necessity. “Ye must be born again.”

VANITY OF THE WORLD

God gives His mercies to be spent;
Your hoard will do your soul no good;
Gold is a blessing only lent,
Repaid by giving others food.

The world's esteem is but a bribe,
To buy their peace you sell your own;
The slave of a vainglorious tribe,
Who hate you while they make you known.

The joy that vain amusement gives,
Oh! sad conclusion that it brings!
The honey of a crowded hive,
Defended by a thousand stings.

'Tis thus the world rewards the fools,
That live upon her treach'rous smiles;
She leads them, blindfold, by her rules;
And ruins all whom she beguiles.

God knows the thousands who go down,
From pleasure, into endless woe;
And with a long despairing groan,
Blaspheme their Maker as they go.

O fearful thought! be timely wise;
Delight but in a Saviour's charms;
And God shall take you to the skies,
Embrac'd in everlasting arms.

William Cowper

THE SUPREME TRAGEDY OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of Him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born (Matt. xxvi:24).

It was a solemn moment when "He sat down with the twelve" for the last meal. Soon that supper was ended. They sang together the great Passover hymn from the Psalms; then they went out into the Mount of Olives and arrived at the garden. The great agony of Gethsemane was passed and He said, "Rise, let us be going; behold he is at hand that doth betray Me." And Judas, one of the twelve, appeared with a great multitude. He had left that meal and gone out—and it was night (Jno. xiii:30). He went out into more than physical night—he rushed into an eternal night of never-ending darkness. And the Lord who knows all things sent after him this solemn, mournful word: "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." Perhaps it is the saddest word the friend of sinners spoke. What must His loving heart have felt when these words passed His gracious lips!

What did He mean? Did He mean merely the sin of His betrayal? Did He grieve only over the fact that Judas would betray Him for thirty pieces of silver? There is something deeper here than that. Why did He say that it would have been a good thing if Judas had never existed, had never seen the light of day?

If it were true that human life is life on earth only for a number of years, and that when death comes it is all over, that there is no existence after death, then these words would be an insolvable enigma. But man is not a beast, nor does he die like the beast. Man possesses endless being. The immortal soul given to him by His Creator distinguishes him from the beings below him, the animal world. The consciousness of existence after death is universal throughout the human race. The lowest tribes, the most degraded fetish worshipers, bear witness to the eternity consciousness they possess by their funeral rites, when they put away their

dead. They may put some crude objects, pottery or other articles into the grave with their dead. It is a witness, though in a primitive way, that they believe they live again after death. When a gorilla or a chimpanzee dies there are no funeral rites prepared by the other gorillas or chimpanzees, no pots filled with victuals to give them along on the journey to another life. Every race and every tribe of man possesses this immortality consciousness. The cultured atheist tries to deny it, but many times the dying infidel too had to bear testimony before he departed life, that his boasting infidelity was a lie against his own consciousness.

It is written everywhere in the Bible that man has endless being and that the supreme tragedy of human existence is the loss of the soul. The Word of God reveals an existence after death either in endless light and glory, at home with God, or an existence in endless darkness and never-ending separation from the source of all happiness and peace. The loss of the soul means eternal existence in unspeakable woe. This is a most solemn revelation. How many theories have been invented to deny this fact! Some teach that the wicked man is annihilated and ceases to exist, and that only those who receive eternal life by faith in Christ possess endless being. But God never annihilates anything. If it were true that the wicked man, the ungodly sinner is annihilated, our Lord would not have spoken the truth when He said of Judas that it would have been better if he had never been born. It would have been worth while to live thirty or forty years, enjoy life, have some pleasure and then disappear forever in non-existence.

Others tell us of a second chance, like the deluded association of Bible students, known as Russellite-Millennial Dawnists. They twist the Scriptures and hold out a false hope to the wicked, so that he can continue in his wickedness and hope for another chance (Ezek. xiii:22). But if there is another chance for Judas then our Lord's words about him cannot be understood. It would have been a good thing for him to live, for finally in another chance he would repent and become an heir of glory. Another school of theorists

call themselves "reconciliationists," with headquarters in California. They teach universal salvation, that ultimately everybody is going to be saved. They do not deny that there will be future punishment, but they claim it will end some time. If this were true, and Judas after suffering thousands and tens of thousands of years would finally reach heaven, the words of our Lord could not be explained in their meaning, for it would have been good for Judas to have lived, to have suffered for his sins and finally spend eternity never-ending in bliss and glory.

If we believe the teaching of the Word of God that the man who dies in his sins, the wicked man, is lost forever, then the words our Lord spoke concerning Judas take on their true and solemn meaning. The supreme tragedy of human life is the loss of the soul. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" There is no human being who can understand what the loss of the soul is and what it all includes.

The eternal punishment of the wicked is revealed in the New Testament, but Old Testament believers knew of it as well. Let us take for an example David. The babe of an unholy union, the child of Uriah's wife, was taken very ill. We see the king before the Lord; he wept, and prayed, and fasted all night. He is prostrate on the ground. The elders of his house come to raise him up, but he continues to groan and to moan. Thus he keeps on for seven days. The baby died. The servants step softly and whisper to each other "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken to our voice; how will he then vex himself when we tell him that the child is dead?" They are afraid to tell him the sad news. He noticed the whispering servants of his household and asked if the child was dead. They tell him that the little boy has died. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. In great astonishment the servants look

on and see this strange behavior of the king. No longer he moans, no longer he weeps and fasts, and finally they ask him, "What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while he was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept, for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? *I shall go to him*, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. xii:15-23). He knew the innocent babe was safe in Jehovah's keeping, as we know that our innocent little ones are covered by the atoning work of our Lord. David had the hope and assurance of eternal life.

Let us turn to another scene in the life of the shepherd-king. Sorrow upon sorrow had come into David's life on account of the sin he had committed. Finally his son Absalom, a wicked, ungodly fellow, rises in a vicious rebellion against his own father. He is forced to send his army against him, but ere they go forth he calls three of his generals and instructs them, saying: "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." What anxious hours the king must have passed! And how he watched for fleet runners from the battlefield! He sends the watchman to the roof of the tower. He sees several men running. Out of breath the first one arrives, Ahimaaz, and shouts: "All is well!—Victory, victory!" How little the king seems to care for it. One burden is upon his heart—"Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz steps aside, here is Cushi the second runner! He also brings the tidings of victory. "Is the young man Absalom safe? Oh! tell me, Cushi." And Cushi bows his head and announces the death of the king's son. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went thus he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son Absalom!" (2 Sam. xviii). Why this grief? Why this heart-rending lamentation? Why did he not possess the calm-

ness he had when the babe died? Why does he cry and weep and sorrow now? Because he knew Absalom, his son Absalom, had died in his sins and gone into outer darkness, eternally lost.

But let us look for a little while at Judas over whom the Lord Jesus mourned. He was a disciple of Christ. The Lord had called him to be one of the twelve. He was therefore an apostle. When the Lord Jesus Christ sent them forth as His Kingdom messengers, He sent Judas with the rest. He commissioned them all to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, to raise the dead and to cast out demons. This divine power was also conferred upon Judas. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers and performed other miracles. Yet though he was an apostle, a disciple, preaching the truth about the kingdom, and did miracles, he was not a believer, he was an unsaved man. He is a dreadful example of how far a person may go in profession without being a saved man. Of such our Lord spoke in the sermon on the mount, when He said: "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out demons? and in Thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii:22, 23).

Judas never believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Whenever he speaks to the Lord, Judas never addressed Him, as the other disciples did, as "Lord." He spoke to Him as "Rabbi"-Master. The Holy Spirit calls special attention to this in the Gospel of John. "Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (Jno. xiv:22). There was another disciple by the name of Judas among the twelve. He speaks here and addresses Christ as Lord; the Spirit of God wants us to know that it was not Judas Iscariot who addressed Him by this divine name.

And why did Judas not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lord come down from heaven? Because he loved sin. He loved money. It was his besetting sin. The love

of money made him a thief. He knew that if he did what Peter did, fall at His feet and say "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man," he would have to give up that sin. He refused to do this. He loved darkness more than light. He continued to love money and finally Satan used him to betray the Son of Man for thirty pieces of silver.

And all along Judas had looked into His face of kindness and tender sympathy. All along he had listened to the loving words of the friend of sinners, heard Him say to the penitent "thy sins are forgiven, go in peace; sin no more." For several years he had walked with Him and talked with Him, had witnessed His deeds of mercy and of power. But he continued to love money and finally, when about to betray the Lord and afterward in despair to hang himself, the friend of sinners sent after him as he went out into that awful night this lament: how good it would have been if he had never been born.

To betray the Lord Jesus Christ actually for thirty pieces of silver is no longer possible. But alas! there are many thousands upon thousands of cases like the case of Judas. Thousands profess discipleship and are church-members; they call themselves by the honored and glorious name of Christ, but true salvation they do not know. Their Christianity is only an empty profession. They have never been saved by being born again. And why not? Because they love sin. It is the love of some sin which keeps them away from knowing Christ as a real Saviour. His gracious, loving hand is extended to them; his Spirit pleads with them, but here is that sin which is cherished in the heart, and for the sake of a little pleasure, a little this, a little that, they betray the Lord Jesus Christ and finally pass out of life unsaved.

Friends, do you realize that solemn word of the Lord Jesus Christ—better if that man had never been born—is true today of every man and woman who refuses to accept Christ as the Saviour from sin? The man and woman who lives without Christ, who loves sin and lives in sin, and passes out of earthly existence without Christ and His

salvation, of such, too, it is true, it would have been good if they had never been born. A Christless life, no matter what the religious profession may be, is followed by a Christless eternity and the loss of the soul.

Often, a generation ago, certain magazines put up questions for debate. We remember one on which a certain newspaper printed for months the answers of their readers—"Is life worth living?"

This question does not seem to be debated any longer. Life has become so attractive, the many inventions have added pleasure and enjoyment to life, that in the eyes of the world only a pessimist would deny an affirmative answer to this question. Yet we know there must be thousands of hearts deeply sighing and saying—"Oh, is life really worth living?" Sorrow, pain, disappointment, losses and finally the grave! Let us ask the question then. How do we answer it? Is life worth living? No. Is life worth living? Yes.

I want to illustrate this double answer by a story taken from the Word of God. There lived outside of Jerusalem on a magnificent estate a very wealthy man. He was a cultured man and very well thought of. Let us suppose one of the Jerusalem societies debated this question and sent a man to interview this wealthy gentleman. He arrives and states his errand. We imagine the rich man smiled at what appeared to him a foolish question. Is life worth living? "I certainly think it is. Look at the success I have had! Come to this window! Look out on my private park and away beyond, as far as you can see this is my estate. Thousands of cattle of every description are my property, with herds of camels. I have a hundred servants, slaves, who obey my command." He showed his visitor his great palace, furnished with objects of art, Greek sculpture and Oriental silks, tapestries and rugs. He pulled aside a heavy silk curtain and showed his banqueting hall, set for a great feast that very night. Perhaps he spoke of the honors heaped upon him and many other things which man prizes so highly. "Is life worth living?" and he answered with a

joyous laugh—"a thousand times, Yes." And leaving the palace the rich man may have pointed to a sick old man, way down at the basement door, surrounded by dogs, and perhaps he said—"Go and ask this beggar your question."

Let me ask the rich man now. Though he lived in Palestine some nineteen hundred years ago, he is still living. How do I know? Because the Lord Jesus Christ says so. I have to look down—"Rich man! wealthy man of culture, once clad in purple and fine linen, tell me, was thy life worth living?" And there comes up to my ear a frightful wail. Oh! if I only never had lived. I died and left all that I had gathered. All my riches and earthly glories are gone. I am lost, forever lost! Oh! if I only never had lived! But let us turn to the beggar Lazarus at the rich man's gate. There he lies friendless and starving. He exists miserably from the refuse of the rich man's table. He knows nothing of purple and fine linen. His rags barely cover his nakedness. And he is sick. His body is covered with sores. Dogs surround him and lick his sores. But one day when the dogs were with him he looked at them and suddenly his eye breaks. The dogs vanish from his vision and in their stead he sees angels, who carry his disembodied spirit into Abraham's bosom.

I look up and ask Lazarus this question: Lazarus, once the starving sick beggar, yet trusting God; Lazarus, tell me, was thy life down here worth living? And there comes back a Hallelujah—praise the Lord that I ever lived. I believed and trusted the Lord and He has brought me to the place of eternal rest and glory. Praise the Lord! The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory I have now. My light affliction which was but for a moment has worked for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Friend, as the world says, make the best of life. Enjoy all the pleasures life affords. Gather riches, heap treasures together. Make yourself a name engraven in the pages of history. They may give you the highest positions of honor and human glory, and after your death erect monuments

in your praise. But if this is all, then your life was not worth living. You lived and died without God and without Christ, and the result is the loss of your soul.

The only life worth living is the life which is lived in the faith of the Son of God, in His fellowship. You may be obscure in life in every way, struggle along day after day, year in and year out. You may be the poorest among all your neighbors, and sick and suffering besides, but if you know Christ, if He is your Saviour and your friend, if you belong to Him and He is yours, life for you is worth living. In Him you have eternal life, the gift of God, and the sure promise of a coming eternal glory.

Will you live the life worth living? It can begin this very moment, as in faith you turn to Him who died for your sins, who loved you and gave Himself for you, so that you might escape the sinners fate—the supreme tragedy of human existence—the loss of your soul.

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee
O, Lamb of God, I come, I come.”

THE SECOND DEATH

They die, and die not; theirs is life in death,
And death in life; a living death for aye:
Done with earth's sunshine; done with heaven's fresh breath,
Shut in with utter darkness, and shut out from day.

They might have lived; for He who loved and died
Came with the words of immortality.
But Him they would not hear, when by their side;
And now His grace has passed beyond their reach away.

Now death, the death that dies not, has become
Their dismal heritage in realms below.
O endless deathbed! O eternal tomb!
O never-coming bliss, but ever-coming woe!

O second death! the death of life, and all
That makes life worth the living! O thou deep,
Deep sadness of the soul's dread funeral,
At which, if angels can, they sure must ever weep.

To them the resurrection comes in vain.
It comes; but to the death of deaths they rise—
The second death, the death of deadly pain,
From which all hope departs, from which all comfort flies.

O Thou, the sinner's hope, ere hope be gone;
Save Thy lost creature from the death of doom.
O pluck the prey from the destroying one;
O raise him, raise him now from sin's sad prison tomb.

—*Horatius Bonar.*

PAUL'S PROPHETIC PARABLE

Romans xi:15-27

The message of the eleventh chapter in the Epistle to the Romans is very important for our times. Here are revealed God's great and never-failing purposes concerning the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God. Briefly stated, they are the following: God has not cast away Israel, His earthly people, because God's gifts and calling are without repentance. They fell on account of unbelief, but in the purpose of God they are still His people. In fulfilment of the prophecies, given by their own prophets, they are blinded; their eyes are darkened, their ears stopped up and they are scattered among the nations of the world. During the time of their fall and their blindness God sends the Gospel of salvation to the Gentiles. By their fall salvation came unto the Gentiles. But these things are not permanent. When God's purpose among the Gentiles is accomplished, Israel's present condition will be changed. There is coming for Israel a time of fulness, a time when the unfulfilled promises of blessing and glory will be fulfilled. They are going to be restored spiritually and nationally. Their sins will be taken away. And when this happens it will mean, according to this chapter, greater blessings to the world than the blessings which came when they stumbled and fell and the Gospel was given to the Gentiles. But when will Israel be restored? When will Israel be saved in a national salvation? The chapter tells us that "the fulness of the Gentiles" must come in first. This means that the elect Church of Jesus Christ must be completed and come in, that is to be united with the Head in Glory. Then the Deliverer comes, that is His Return in power and Glory, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Paul's Prophetic Parable in this chapter contains solemn truths. What we read here is impending. Christendom has never heeded the warning given here. Nor is there paid any attention to the importance of the parable in the religious thought of today. But those who love His

appearing understand the message, its timeliness and its solemnity.

I. The Good Olive Tree. Its Root and Branches. The Apostle speaks of an olive tree whose root is holy and whose branches are also holy. We can then call this olive tree the holy olive tree. What does this olive tree typify? It typifies Israel, the chosen people of God. There can be no question about it. In the ninth chapter of the book of Judges we find another parable which will give us some light on the olive tree Paul has in mind. Jotham stood on the Mount of Gerizim and in defiance of the men of Shechem he spoke a parable. We read it.

“The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them, and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon” ((Judges ix:8-15). What is the meaning of this parable? It has more than a local historical application. Trees in Scripture are used as typical of nations. When we examine both Testaments we find that the olive, the fig tree and the vine are symbolical of Israel. In God’s purposes this nation is to be the kingly nation, a royal priesthood. But, like the trees in Jotham’s parable, Israel refused. Then the bramble becomes king. The bramble, a miserable thorn-bush, represents the Gentiles. Israel rejected nationally results in the times of the Gentiles.

The olive tree is the type of Israel in covenant relation

with God. The fig tree is typical of Israel's national position and the vine points to fruit bearing. Isaiah speaks of this when through him the Lord complains that the vine only brought wild grapes (Isa. v and Psa. lxxx).

We read then of the good olive tree, representing Israel's covenant relation, that the root is holy and that the branches are also holy. The root of the olive tree is three-fold—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They were constituted holy, separated unto God. Abraham living in Ur of Chaldea, in the midst of idolatry, was called by the Lord of Glory to leave Ur behind and follow the Lord. Then He gave to Abraham unconditional promises. God's sovereign grace had called Abraham and He established a relationship of grace. Isaac and Jacob received the same promises; they were also constituted holy, separated unto the Lord. From this root came the branches, the people Israel. Like the root, so the branches are holy. The nation is to be a separated people, a people to whom the Lord said "Be ye holy, for I am also holy."

II. Some of the Branches were broken off. The parable tells us that some of the branches of the good olive tree were broken off. They were severed from the root. The root remained and was unaffected, but some of the branches were removed from the root. The life and sap which is in the root stopped circulating in the branches and they withered and became lifeless. This is what happened to at least a part of the nation. They lost their national life and their spiritual life. They became nationally and spiritually dead. The Lord showed to the Priest-prophet Ezekiel, in the vision of the valley of dry bones, this future and age-long condition of the nation (Ezek. xxxvii). Such has been the state of Israel during this present age, not all Israel, for there is a remnant among them.

III. Why were these Branches broken off and severed from the Root? The breaking off of the branches is a judgment of God. Why did He deal with the chosen people, chosen by Himself, in this manner? The parable gives us the answer to this question, "Because of unbelief they were

broken off." Unbelief severed them from the root and plunged them into national and spiritual death.

What kind of an unbelief is it which led to the breaking off of these branches? Unbelief, as we know from Scripture, has always been the great sin of that nation. On the other hand, the brightest and most glorious examples of faith and trust in God are found in Israel. They were unbelieving in Egypt as Moses said to the Lord, "they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice" (Exod. iv:1). They were unbelieving in the wilderness, though they witnessed the acts of Jehovah, their God. They believed not God and trusted not in His salvation (Psa. lxxviii:22). The promised land was before them, but they could not enter in on account of unbelief. In every period of their history unbelief is prominent. They turned away from Jehovah and worshiped idols. They practiced the abominations of the surrounding nations. Yet when they turned to the Lord, when they cried to Him, He had mercy on them and forgave them. The house of Israel was carried away into captivity with the promise of a future re-gathering. The house of Judah went into Babylonian captivity. After seventy years a remnant returned. God was again gracious to His people.

The unbelief on account of which finally the Lord dealt in judgment with them so that they were driven from their home land and scattered among all the nations of the earth, is the unbelief which culminated in the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, their promised Messiah, the Son of David. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. They were witnesses of His mighty deeds of divine power and mercy; they listened to His words of grace and truth. In their blindness and unbelief they knew Him not, and then the representatives of the nation, the scribes, the elders, the priests and high priests, deliberately delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles to be crucified. This is the unbelief on account of which the branches were broken off, the unbelief which brought upon them blindness and judgment.

And our Lord predicted this judgment. The parable of the fig tree, and more, the cursing of the fig tree which yielded no fruit, and its sudden withering, forecast Israel's future history. He wept over Jerusalem and announced the mournful program "they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi:24). In a parable He spoke of His coming as the Son and Heir to the vineyard of Israel, and what they had done to the prophets and servants of God in the past, they would do to Him (Matt. xxi:33-41). And in another parable He predicted the fate of the rejecting people and city. It would be the destruction of the murderers and the burning of their city (Matt. xxii:7). Jeremiah had spoken of this coming judgment of the olive tree. "The Lord called thy name. A green olive tree, fair and of goodly fruit; with the noise of a great tumult He hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken off" (Jer. xi:16). What a mighty witness the broken branches are that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the promised Christ and King! The national and spiritual condition of that nation bear witness to the fact that the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ was the crowning sin of Israel.

IV. The Wild Olive Tree. In the next place the Apostle speaks in this parable of a wild olive tree. "And thou being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree." Whom is he addressing? Gentiles. The wild olive tree is the symbol of Gentiles. The Gentiles are put upon the root of the holy and good olive tree to receive life and fatness out of the root. What does this mean? A teaching is widespread in many denominations, in fact in every portion of Christendom, that it means that Israel has been completely set aside and that the Church is now in the place of Israel. This is a fatal mistake. Take for instance the sect known by the name of "Seventh Day Adventists." They believe that the Church is Israel now, that the Church has taken

Israel's place entirely and that the natural Israel has no hope and no future. Of course if the Church is Israel then the Church ought to keep the law, including the seventh day, and conform to all the demands of the law dispensation. That which our Lord warns against, not to put the new wine into the old wine skins, is exactly what this cult does. They speak of the Gospel, the new wine, and then put it into the old wine skins, the law. The result is that the wine skins burst and the new wine is spilled. And so it is in a lesser degree throughout Christendom. The natural Israel is spiritualized and the professing church is carnalized.

The parable does not mean that the Gentiles have become Israel and that Israel's promises are now accomplished in a spiritual way in Christendom. It means something better. God, after Israel rejected Christ and His Gospel, gives the Gentile world a chance to partake of that which is the root and fatness of the olive tree. Gentiles are now privileged to partake of the grace covenant as established with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Gospel which Israel rejected is offered to the Gentiles.

V. The Solemn Warning to the Ingrafted Branches. A solemn warning follows. It is a warning unheeded, and never before as much as now. It is a warning most important, solemn and timely. The Apostle writes: "Boast not against the branches." Remember thou bearest not the root but the root is bearing thee. These branches were broken off on account of unbelief. You are standing by faith. Instead of being high-minded rather fear. If you ingrafted branches are high-minded, if you do not fear, if you are boasting, if you are unbelieving, the God who spared not the natural branches is not going to spare thee. He will deal with you in judgment as He dealt with the branches of the good olive tree. If thou dost not continue in goodness, that is in faith, thou shalt be cut off. I wish to say first of all that this warning does not concern the true Church. I mean by it that invisible body which is now forming on the earth by the operation of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in each individual member of that body and in the body itself.

That body can never be cut off. Each member of that body is eternally safe and secure. So we dismiss at once the thought that it means the true Church. Many who seem to find comfort in the unscriptural doctrine that a child of God may be lost again and perish forever, cite this parable as an evidence that there is a possibility of being cut off.

It means Christendom, the entire sphere in which the name of Christ is mentioned. It includes Roman and Greek Catholicism, and the numerous sects of Protestantism. Gentile Christendom is warned not to be high minded, boasting, proud and unbelieving, and the threat is made that the God who spared not the natural branches will not spare the ingrafted branches.

The warning is prophetic. Christendom is exactly what the warning declares it should not be. There is boasting and high-mindedness. The great Roman Catholic hierarchy is an imposing institution which aims at political and religious control. Protestantism is becoming increasingly like Laodicea, boasting "I am rich, increased in goods and have need of nothing." The greater part of Protestantism does not continue in faith, but departs from the faith. It is unbelieving. The unbelief of Modernism is far greater than the unbelief of the Jews has ever been in the past. The Lord Jesus Christ is rejected in Gentile Christendom as the people Israel never rejected Him. Let us think of it for a few moments.

What Christ did the Jews reject and what Christ does Christendom reject? The Jews rejected the Christ who walked on the earth in humiliation. They saw His works, they heard His words; they did not believe on Him and finally cried "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" This is Jewish rejection.

What is the unbelief and the rejection of Christ going on now in Gentile Christendom? What Christ does Christendom deny and reject? The Christ who died, the Christ who rose from among the dead and who ascended on high. The Christ who sent according to His promise the gift of the Holy Spirit, and who has manifested Himself for well nigh

nineteen hundred years as the living Christ, whose Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes. This is the Christ who is disowned by a good part of Christendom today. While they speak of Him as a good man, the greatest of all religious teachers and leaders, they reject Him in His supernatural character. They deny His Virgin-birth, they have no use for His sacrificial death, which they brand as pagan fable. The physical resurrection of Christ is equally disbelieved. Such is the unbelief in modernized Christendom. It is far worse than the unbelief of the Jews on account of which God dealt in judgment with that nation.

“And if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee! Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” Such will be the coming fate of apostate Christendom. “There is a judgment coming for those who know not God and who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess. i:8-9). The end of the enemies of the Cross of Christ will be destruction. Boasting Laodicea, proud, high-minded; unbelieving modernism will be spewed out of His mouth.

VI. The Putting Back of the Broken off Branches. The final lesson of the parable is the restoration of Israel; the broken off branches will be grafted into their own olive tree. “And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?”

Here is the hope of Israel. It is true, blindness came upon them; they are judicially blinded and deaf as well. They are scattered among the nations, they are in the state of spiritual and national death, as we have seen. But no-

where in Scripture do we read that this is to be their permanent condition. If it were we might well despair, for then God's promises could not be trusted. But He is a covenant-keeping God and all His purposes will be carried out. He has promised to Israel a future of blessing and glory. The broken off branches He is able to put back upon their own olive tree. The only condition is that they abide not still in unbelief. When Israel's unbelief ends her glorious future begins. But when will Israel's unbelief end? Scripture also answers this question.

In the first place we read in prophecy of a remnant of Israel to be called by the Lord before the times of the Gentiles fully end. The calling of this remnant follows immediately after the true Church has been called away to meet the Lord. Then God in mercy turns to His own people again, and the veil, taken away, a company of them will believe. This time has not yet come. But we know that there is already a stir among the dry bones of the house of Israel. There is a significant awakening, which we may well compare with the budding of the fig tree putting forth new leaves. There is a national awakening. The return to the homeland, Palestine, is an accomplished fact. It is gaining in strength every year. Not that we mean to say it is the promised return through the faithfulness of the Lord; far from that. It is a return in unbelief. But this return is a sign of the coming great restoration and national blessing.

There is likewise a spiritual awakening. A notable change in the attitude of a certain class of Jews towards Christ has often been noticed. Over thirty years ago I often addressed audiences of hundreds of Jews. They listened very respectfully to the testimony of a Gentile concerning their own Messiah and their promised future. Since then this changed attitude has become still more pronounced, and it is said that there are large numbers of Jews who are in their hearts convinced that our Lord Jesus Christ is their Messiah. Such an experience I had a few years ago. A Bible Conference had been announced for a certain city and I was to be one of the speakers. Several weeks before the conference

a letter was received from the president of a Jewish synagogue, inviting me to address the meeting of the synagogue during my visit there. The invitation was gladly accepted. Then another letter came requesting that I should speak on Zionism from a Gentile standpoint. This request was refused. I wrote the president that my text would be "What think ye of Christ?" and he replied that they could not permit such preaching in their synagogue.

While in that city the president of that synagogue called at the hotel by night. After words of greetings had been exchanged, he said "I do not blame you for refusing our request; the text you mentioned is the one which should be preached to us Jews." He then revealed that he believed in his heart that our Lord is their Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel, and we bowed our knees together and prayed in His Name. There may be many more like him.

But their unbelief will end in the day when our Lord comes the second time. It is then that they will look upon Him whom they have pierced (Zech. xii:10) and fall at His feet, as Thomas did when the Lord appeared the second time to the disciples, confessing Him as "My Lord and My God." Then they will be put back upon the root of the good olive tree, and all their glorious future follows.

VII. The Message addressed to the Church. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

This mystery is made known to brethren, that is to believers, to the true Church. Here the great coming change is revealed. The fulness of the Gentiles comes in, which means the completion of the Church and her home call. All Israel living in that day, those who wait for Him, will be saved by His coming again.

And how near this is we learn from the two great signs of

the times in which we live. The apostasy of Gentile Christendom, rapidly approaching the predicted falling away, the complete denial of the faith once and for all delivered unto the Saints. The other sign, the sign among the Jews, the national revival and the spiritual search after Him, who is their Messiah-King. We can look forward to a constantly increasing prominence of these two signs, and as Christendom becomes more anti-Christian, getting ready to welcome the man of sin, the final, personal Anti-Christ, the signs among Israel will also increase and they will get ready for the change when the grafted in branches will be cut off, and when the broken off branches will be put back upon the root of the good olive.

And with these two signs before us, how we should wait and watch for Himself, for "that blessed hope" cannot be far away in its glorious realization.

THE COMING CREED*

The creeds have gone, so speaks the age,
The era of the sects is past.
Forward! In spite of saint or sage,
True freedom has begun at last.

The Christ of God is now no more;
The Christ of man now sits supreme;
The cross is part of mythic lore,
The resurrection morn a dream.

The age's progress fears no God,
No righteous law, no Judge's throne;
Man bounds along his new found road,
And calls the Universe his own.

Not faith in God, but faith in man,
Is pilot now, and sail, and oar:
The creeds are shrivelled, cold, and wan;
The Christ that has been is no more!

Old truth, which once struck deep in hearts,
Fights hard for life, but fights in vain;
Old error into vigor starts,
And fable comes to life again.

Old disbelief becomes earth's creed;
The falsehood lives, the truth has died;
Man leans upon a broken reed,
And falls in helplessness of pride.

He spurns the hand that would have led,
The lips that would have spoken love:
The Book that would his soul have fed,
And taught the wisdom from above.

The ever-standing cross, to him,
Is but a Hebrew relic vain;
The wondrous birth at Bethlehem
A fiction of the wandering brain.

He wants no Saviour and no light;
No teacher but himself he needs;
He knows not of a human night,
Save from the darkness of the creeds.

Eternal light hide not Thy face;
Eternal Truth, direct our way;
Eternal Love, shine forth in grace,
Reveal *our* darkness and *Thy* day.

*When Horatius Bonar wrote this hymn almost sixty-five years ago he spoke as a prophet. Not much of the present day modernistic apostasy was known in that day. This poem gives a true description of the liberal creed so universal in the Twentieth Century.

THE COMING GREAT EVENT

The coming great event in human history will be most wonderful and startling. No pen can fully describe it; no mind can imagine what it will be and what it will mean to all the world. The event will not be a new and great discovery before which all previous discoveries pale into insignificance. Nor will it be a great invention, which produces mighty changes, nor anything else that man does.

The next great event will be the manifestation of the Super-man. For years the world has been speaking of the coming of a super-man. Artists have painted imaginary pictures of him, with a high forehead, showing super-intelligence, attractive face, indicating his moral and sweet disposition. Poets have sung his praises and imagined what the coming super-man would accomplish in the betterment of the race. Eugenics, new educational schemes, hygenics, and different sciences are attempting the production of such a super-man. But he has not made his appearance yet. We are still waiting for the super-man to spring from the race. If he should come, and through him the race should be lifted to a higher plane, the man-made laws of evolution would be scientifically proved correct and unimpeachable. But the super-man of whom the world dreams, whom poets sing, and artists picture and model in clay, will never come forth from the human race. The super-man is an idle, hopeless dream. Sin, disease and death, these laws which govern human existence, not like evolution, a hypothesis, but unalterable facts, shatter the dream of the super-man.

Yet there is a Super-Man, one who is above all and over all. There is a Super-Man, not a spirit or a phantom, but a real Man with a human body. This Super-Man is

the Lord Jesus Christ.

The coming great event in human history is the visible and glorious manifestation of the Son of Man, the Super-Man, far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named; the Super-Man who has all power in heaven and

on earth; the Super-Man whose are the crown rights over all the world.

The Super-Man is the Son of God. He became Man not by natural generation, but by the supernatural process of the virgin birth, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The life He lived on earth demonstrates the fact of His super-humanity. His own witness was, "I am from above . . . I am not of this world" (John viii:23). He was sinless, holy and undefiled. No flaw has ever been found in His life and character; nor was there one. He towers above the rest of humanity. The words He spoke and the works He did are the credentials of His Deity. And this wonderful person, the God-Man, came to die a sacrificial death. He died as the Lamb of God, and then conquered death and the grave in His triumphant resurrection from the dead. Through Him humanity can be lifted from sin and death, and become also super-human. Those who believe on Him, accept Him as their Saviour, who died for their sins, are born again. In this new birth they receive the nature from above and with it eternal life. Like Himself they are then "from above and not of this world" (John xvii:14). Believers, in their spiritual nature, are super-human beings. Sin, death and the grave are for them conquered foes.

And Christ, the Son of Man, the Super-Man, the mighty victor over Satan, sin, death and the grave, is in heaven at the right hand of God, as the head of a new humanity, the new creation. He who always, from all eternity, existed in the form of God, exists now in the form of Man, risen from the dead and glorified. This Super-Man, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, who lived a brief life on this earth, who has been and is the most tremendous factor and power in all history, the same One will come once more into human history. This second coming will be the most wonderful and the most startling event of the future.

The Certainty of It

Future history is uncertain. Many times men have tried to forecast future political events and failed in it. No one

knows if the government of the United States is going to continue as it is now; nor does any one know for certain that France will remain a Republic, or that Mussolini will succeed in reviving the dominion and glory of the Roman Empire. All future events in human history are shrouded in mystery. While it is true, "history repeats itself," no one knows how and when it will happen, or what new forms the repetition of history will take on. But there is a way by which man can know the future. There is a knowledge put at the door of the human race, which is trustworthy, because it is infallible. It is knowledge given by revelation of the omniscient Spirit of God, and this knowledge is found in the Bible, the Word of God.

The Bible forecasts the future. Its forecasts are sure and certain beyond the shadow of even the remotest doubt. History proves it. Hundreds of years before certain empires came into existence, the Bible predicted their coming and what should come to pass. This we find in the prophecies of Daniel. Other prophets of God foretold the fall and utter ruin of Babylon and Nineveh, when these cities were flourishing and in the zenith of their power. Egypt's history is prewritten in the Word of God and all was minutely fulfilled. Still more striking is the pre-written history of the people Israel. This fact no infidel has ever been able, nor will be able, to answer. Fulfilled prophecy demonstrates the Bible as the infallible Word of God.

The crown of all Bible prophecy is what is written concerning the Messiah, promised to the people Israel. For many centuries His coming was announced. "When the fulness of the time (the appointed time) was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal iv:4). He came as the second Man, made a little lower than the angels, the Holy One, the Super-Man. His birth, His life, His words, His works, His sufferings, His sacrificial death, His burial, His physical resurrection, His ascension and His presence at the right hand of God, confirm what the prophets had spoken, for all these events were literal fulfillments of their predictions. Still one great line of prophecy

given by the same men of God, who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, remains to be fulfilled. These are the prophecies which announce His second coming in power and visible glory, the prophecies which predict His enthronement as King, surrounded by the heavenly hosts, and His reign as the Prince of Peace. There was no failure in the accomplishment of the predictions relating to His coming in humiliation; there can be no failure in the fulfilment of His glorious return. The absolute certainty of it is assured.

He Was Not Mistaken

It is a common statement, found among the liberals in protestant Christendom, that the Lord Jesus Christ in saying certain things, was mistaken. They speak of Him as if He was ignorant of certain facts, or that He accommodated Himself to the mistaken beliefs of the Jews. All these dis-honoring expressions are the results of disbelief in the God-Man, the infallible Son of God and infallible Son of Man. Those who walked with Him, and talked with Him, testified, "Thou knowest all things." Could He who is the Truth Himself speak that which is not true? Or could He endorse error? Whatever He spoke and taught is infallibly true. He was not mistaken in anything.

He was not mistaken when He announced that after His passion, after His resurrection and ascension, He would come back to earth again the second time. Majestically, though bound, He stood before the high priest and answered his question—"tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." "Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi:64). Many times before He had spoken in His teachings and parables of His return. He had comforted His grief-stricken disciples, when He had announced His departure from them, that they would soon be orphaned, by promising, "I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am ye may be also" (Jno. xiv:3). What He said about this coming

in glory is in fullest harmony with the unfulfilled prophecies as to the same event. No, He was not mistaken when He announced His return to this earth on which He lived, on which He died, in which His body rested for a little while, and which He left as the risen, glorified Super-Man. Nor has His Church been mistaken in looking and waiting for Him to redeem His promise.

It is true, centuries have come and gone, and the longing expectation of His people has not been realized. It is true the heavens have been silent; they are silent today. But it cannot be thus for all time. That silence will be broken and the hope and expectation of His waiting people will be gloriously consummated.

To this we add, that all Christian doctrines are vitally linked with this great, coming event. The whole system of these doctrines demands His return. Christian service, the Christian's life, his walk, his hope of resurrection, the reunion with loved ones, and much else, cannot be detached from His return. It is one of the great truths of Christianity. Therefore, it is sure and certain. Nothing can be as sure and certain as the re-appearing of the Son of Man on this earth. He will surely come, and be revealed in His power and glory, when once more the appointed time comes. When that time arrives it will bring the consummating event of the ages; His visible, personal and glorious manifestation is the great coming event.

What It Will Mean?

Historians often have found it hard to give an adequate description of some great event, or history making epochs in the drama of human existence. Historians who were eye-witnesses of battles, or the triumphal returns of victorious armies, spoke of what they beheld as indescribable. Though we read in the Scriptures of Truth the events of that coming day of all days, and prophetic vision acquaints us with what will take place, the finite mind cannot fully grasp it, nor can any human pen picture this great coming event. It is indescribable and transcends the most vivid imagination.

What will it mean when heaven above opens and a glory light bursts forth, before which our sun pales, when heaven and earth shake, and He suddenly appears? What will it mean when once more the feet of the Son of Man touch this earth and He comes back to the place where He suffered and died? What will it mean when He receives the many diadems, and the throne of His glory, to reign henceforth as King of kings, and Lord of lords? What will it mean when he manifests in a sin-cursed, ruined creation His almighty redemption power? What will it mean?

It will mean the complete defeat of His enemies and their eternal silence. Never before in the history of Christendom has the question, "What think ye of Christ?" been such a burning question as it is now in our approach of the middle of the Twentieth Century. Books upon books are written about our Lord, generally under the name of "Jesus," "The Man of Galilee," or some other name. His blessed life is being commercialized. One writes "The Life of Christ," and this one is a bigotted Romanist. Another writes a puerile volume on "The Man Nobody Knows," a book which has next to no literary value. Still another modernist writes a new life of Christ, and a Reformed Jew produces "The Story of the Son of Man." Then there are motion pictures, passion plays and theatrical pageants, all depicting Him. And the writers get rich by their unscriptural descriptions of Him, who had not where to lay His head. But all dishonor His blessed, holy and worthy Name.

Worse still are the opinions expressed among those who use His name, and who claim to believe on Him. Thousands deny His Virgin-birth; they speak of Him as a philosopher, a religious leader, a socialist, a fine specimen of manhood, and as a good example to follow. His substitutionary suffering and death is denied; they do not believe that He ever rose physically from the dead. They sneer at the idea that there is a local heaven and that the Christ is seated there upon a throne. The Christ of modernism is the complete denial of the supernatural Christ of the Bible. These denials are crystalized in powerful movements. They are found in all

evangelical denominations and their leading educational institutions. Instead of diminishing, these denials increase. They threaten now to sweep everything before them. There is but a small remnant which is true and faithful to the true Christ, the Son of the living God. The confusion is appalling and many ask, how will it end? Oh! it will end! And the end will be the complete defeat of His enemies. His manifestation will silence every mouth and will for ever prove that Peter was right, and the true Church was right, in believing and confessing, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Such systems as Christian Science, Modernism, Unitarianism, and all the Christ rejecting systems and cults will suddenly terminate with that great coming event, the return of the glorified Son of Man.

It will mean the glory of the Church, the Body of Christ. The Church, the true Church before this great coming event bursts upon the world, will be translated to meet the Lord in the air. This is fully revealed in 1 Thessalonians iv:13-18. Every member of that body will then be changed into the image of the Firstborn. The Son of God and the Son of Man will bring then His many sons unto glory. He will be glorified in them, while the whole body will be glorified with Him. The Church will share His glorious inheritance; the Saints will rule with Him over the earth.

It will mean the end of Gentile world rule. The times of the Gentiles continue till He returns. His return will mean the passing away of the present world government, whether it is autocracy, monarchy or the rule by the people and for the people. Both forms of human government, the one-man government or the people's government, are represented in the two feet of Nebuchadnezzar's dream-image (Dan. ii). The smiting stone is Christ's return. The stone ends every form of government as it is in existence now.

It will mean judgment for the wicked. He comes to judge and to punish according to His righteousness. He comes "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the

presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1:8, 9). All the enemies of Christ, the apostate, among the Gentiles and the Jews will face Him as Judge in that great coming event.

It will mean the conversion of the remnant of Israel. When this great event arrives and He is manifested, Israel's hope will be realized. They shall look upon Him, whom they pierced, and know Him by the prints of the nails in His hands. All the promises made to them as a nation will then be made good. The national blood-guiltiness will be wiped away; He will forgive their sins and remember them no more. A nation will be born in a day. The Spirit will be poured out upon them and they all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest. They will be gathered from all the countries of the earth. Their land will become Immanuel's glorious land and Jerusalem will be a praise in the whole earth, for it is the City of the great King.

It will mean the establishment of His Kingdom on the earth and the conversion of the world. He will receive in that day the throne of His father David and the throne over all the earth. He asks the Father and He gives Him the nations for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. The universe hears the never ending shout, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever"— "Hallelujah, the Omnipotent reigneth." He reigns from sea to sea and His glory covers the earth as the waters the sea.

It will mean the binding of Satan. The Super-Man from heaven, the seed of the woman, when this great coming event has arrived will put His heel upon the serpent's head. The enemy's complete overthrow has come. He is bound to deceive the nations no more. All idolatry and every form of wickedness which flourishes now will end. Righteousness will be for ever enthroned.

It will mean Peace on Earth. All peace treaties, disarmament pacts and national agreements cannot bring permanent peace for this peace-less world. Nor can nations, by legislation or education, be taught to learn war no more. "Peace

on Earth" comes with the coming of the Prince of Peace. Then nations will learn war no more and turn their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. He only can speak peace to the nations and hush the national strifes as He hushed the waves of the Galilean Sea.

It will mean the banishment of oppression, of poverty, of famines and of pestilences. The King upon the throne will rule the world in righteousness. No longer will the hire of the laborer be kept by fraud; no longer will the greater part of the race struggle on in poverty; no longer will famines and pestilences sweep their millions away into untimely graves. The King is righteous. The King upon the throne is almighty. In His humiliation He showed His power over disease; He showed His power in satisfying the poor with bread, so that their hunger was stilled. Oh! the blessing He brings when He has received His own throne and rules in righteousness with all power in heaven and on earth!

It will mean the removal of the curse which rests on all creation. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. viii:19-22). "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (Is. xi:6-7). The curse which rests upon creation now will then be removed. No more devastating floods, hurricanes and storms! No more earthquakes and other physical disasters! Creation's Lord and Redeemer is upon the throne.

Such is the great coming event and what this event, His visible and glorious return, will mean. But not the half of it has been told.

SWEET IS THE HARP OF PROPHECY

William Cowper in "The Task"

"The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which Heav'n has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,
The time of rest, the promised Sabbath comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world. And what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things,
Is merely as the working of the sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest.
For He whose car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon His sultry march
When sin hath moved Him, and His wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious, in His chariot paved with love,
And what His storms have blasted and defaced
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

* * * * *

O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance, and the land once lean
Or fertile in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse repealed.
The various seasons woven into one,
And that one season an eternal spring.
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion and the libbard and the bear

Graze with the fearless flocks. All bask at noon
Together, or all gambol in the shade
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the serpent now. The mother sees
And smiles to see her infant's playful hand
Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm,
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worship man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place;
That creeping pestilence is driv'n away,
The breath of heav'n has chased it. In the heart
No passion touches a discordant string,
But all is harmony and love. Disease
Is not. The pure and uncontaminate blood
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
One song employs all nations, and all cry
'Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain for us.'
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
Till nation after nation taught the strain
Each rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.

* * * * *

Come then, and added to Thy many crowns
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
By ancient covenant ere nature's birth,
And Thou has made it Thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with Thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim Thee king; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy Saints proclaim Thee king; and Thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
The Dawn of Thy last advent long-desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,

And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
The very spirit of the world is tired
Of its own daunting question ask'd so long,
'Where is the promise of our Lord's approach?'
The infidel has shot his bolts away,
Till his exhausted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoiled,
And aims them at the shield of truth again.

* * * * *

Come then, and added to Thy many crowns
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to Thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world."

WHAT TIME IS IT?

Almost a thousand years before Christ a voice cried to the watchman-prophet—"Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" The Watchman answered—"The morning cometh and also the night" (Isa. xxii:11, 12). They wanted to know what time it was. And so today the godly, who believe in the Word of God, who believe all that the prophets have spoken, want to know what time it is. This question is fully answered in the New Testament.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. xiii:12).

These words were written about nineteen hundred years ago. They were an answer to waiting believers in apostolic days, who asked "what time is it?" The answer is even more true and sure in the Twentieth Century. Our generation, more than any previous one, can shout triumphantly—"the night is far spent, the day is at hand!" Let us look at the meaning of these words.

I.

The condition of the age in which we live is night. This present age began with night. The Light of the World had come from heaven to earth to give light, to scatter with His light the darkness of sin. He shone forth into the darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not (John i:5). The Light of the world is the Creator of all, the Son of God. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John i:10, 11). The Life and the Light was rejected by the world, by Jew and Gentile. Satan the prince of this world, on account of it, became "the god of this age" (2 Cor. iv:4). Satan being the prince and the god of this age, has his throne in this age, the age is controlled by him, and therefore lieth in the wicked one (1 John v:19). Under Satan's dominion the age can be nothing else but

night. It began in night; it continues in night, and the age ends in night.

But many voices are raised against such a view. It is not believed in nominal Christendom that this age is night. The common belief is that the age becomes brighter and better every year. They tell us of the better physical conditions. They point to the use of electricity, to the great transformations in communication, the telegraph, the telephone and the wonders of the radio. They speak of the transformations in transportation; the railroads, the steamships and now commercial aerial navigation. They mention the great discoveries and inventions; the better sanitary conditions, the conquest of certain diseases, and other things, as evidences that the age is not night, but is making constantly for a better day. In believing this they reject the plain and simple revelation written in the Word of God. A blind man does not know the difference between noon and midnight. Alas! the mass of professing Christians who are blind and blinded, who think it is day, when it is night!

The question is not about physical progress, but what about the things of God? God is not concerned about what man does with the telescope, the microscope, and how he succeeds in higher education and learning. God is concerned about man's attitude towards His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Is this age accepting Him as the only Savior? Is the age giving Him the rightful place by trusting in His blood, accepting His salvation and walking in the light? Is there, as the result of true faith in the Son of God, a constant increase in righteousness and holiness, a turning away from sin, from the world with its pleasures and greed for money? Is there more true, spiritual worship on earth?

Alas! as God looks upon this world He sees it very dark. He sends forth His angels to walk to and fro in the earth and they come back to heaven and bring the report "It is night down there," for He, whom angels worship and obey, as their Lord, is rejected and by the world disowned.

We look to the lands of heathendom. How dense the night there. The "International Missionary Council," held

in Jerusalem recently, declared that there is good in Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism. Oh, ye blind leaders of the blind! The systems you mention are religions, but they are invented religions, as ye modernists try to invent a "new religion." Behind it all lurks the dark shadow of the prince of this world. Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism may place Christ on the same level with Buddha Gautama, or speak of blind and miserable Gandhi as being like Christ; or put Christ into the same category with Mohammed, Zoroaster and Confucius. But to acknowledge Him as the preeminent Lord, this they refuse to do. Look at heathen darkness! Look at vile India with its disgusting and degrading religious customs! Look at Islam with its licentiousness! Look at China with its never decreasing child murder! Yes, a thousand millions of human beings are in the night of heathendom. De-christianized modernism with its vain efforts to bring "Western Civilization(?)” to heathen religions only increases the darkness.

It is night in professedly Christian nations, like the United States, Great Britain, Germany, the Scandinavian countries, Italy, Spain and others. Look at the night of Romanism! Millions are half pagans, for Romanism is pagan-Christianity. Instead of worshiping the Lord, the Son of God, they worship the virgin Mary; instead of praying to the living Christ, they ask dead saints to intercede. Rome is truly the mother of ignorance, and she can only keep her unscriptural pretensions and authority, by keeping the masses in darkness as to the Gospel of our salvation. It is night there.

Still darker is the night when we turn to apostate Protestantism. Thousands upon thousands turn their ears away from the truth, and under the leadership of false prophets, they listen to fables. Modernism with its boasting of new light, is darkness and leads into endless night. With its denials of the Christ of God, His sacrificial work as our sin-bearer, it is in part responsible for the moral conditions of our times. These conditions of professing Christians, those

who have the form of godliness, and deny the power thereof, are predicted in 2 Tim. iii:1-5. In spite of reformers and religious leaders, who try to better the age by legislation, there is an increase of law-breaking and lawlessness. Lovers of themselves, lovers of money and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, is the divine description of the mass of lifeless church-members. Surely, morally it is night in civilized countries. And in that night you have the dreams and visions of the sleepers. They dream of a war-less world, of a union of all nations, of outlawing certain evils, of banishing ignorance and superstitions. Yes, there are many golden dreams the sleepers have, especially their sleeping leaders. But there is coming a terrible awakening, when they discover—it is night.

Some time ago I had to be out in the night and walk a long distance, several miles, in the night. It was a cold walk, a lonely walk and a dangerous walk. The night air was chilly; it was penetrating. I had no companion; I had to walk alone, looking up to the star-lit heavens, in silent fellowship with Him, whose watchful eye saw me walking through the night. It was a dangerous walk. I took the middle of the street, avoiding dark places, where some bandit, with a deadly weapon, might lurk, to spring upon me. And such is your walk and mine, fellow-believer. It is cold for us in this night and there is great danger that we become cold and transformed to this age. It is lonely, there is but little fellowship, but this should make our fellowship with Him more real. And it is a dangerous time, this night time. It is for us the time of trial and tribulation, affliction and suffering. As we walk with the Lord in separation, the lonely walk, we shall find out the truth of the prayer-words of our Lord “the world hath hated them.” We must bear His reproach during the night of this age.

II.

What time is it? The Day is at hand. There is a day coming when the shades of night will disappear, when “the day dawns and the shadows flee away.” There is a day coming

when sin, ignorance, infidelity, atheism, agnosticism and all other evils will disappear with the rising of the Sun in all his splendor. This day can only break when He comes again. His coming will bring "the day of Christ," and after that will come "the day of the Lord." The day of Christ is for the Church; the day of the Lord is for the world. The day of Christ will usher His Saints into His glorious presence; the day of the Lord will end this age and the prevailing night, for the Sun of righteousness will then rise with healing beneath His wings. The day of Christ will bring to the redeemed their full redemption in everlasting glory; the day of the Lord will bring to the world judgment, but in wrath, mercy will be remembered also. The day of Christ will wipe away the tears from off the faces of the children of God; the day of the Lord will bring to the ungodly weeping and gnashing of teeth. The day of Christ will bring rest, everlasting joy and peace to all who are Christ's; the day of the Lord brings His revelation "from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i:7-8). The day of Christ brings all blood-washed sinners, saved by grace, face to face with Himself, to see Him as He is and to be like Him; the day of the Lord reveals Him as the righteous Judge and King. The day of Christ brings to His servants the promised rewards and crowns, making them ready for the public demonstration of the King; the day of the Lord will bring the King of kings to receive His kingdom over which He and His Saints will reign. The day of Christ is ushered in by the descending Lord with His gathering shout, which will gather all the redeemed to meet Him in the air; in the day of the Lord heaven will be opened and He will appear and all His Saints with Him.

It is then "the day of Christ" which is first of all at hand. This day may come at any time. It is timeless and signless. His purpose set for this present age, the gathering of the Church, the body of Christ, must be accomplished. But the fulness of that body, as to numbers, is a secret with God.

No human being knows the exact number of the elect, For all we know the last members are now being gathered, and when the body is completed, He comes to gather that body home to glory. The dead in Christ will be raised first, and we, who remain, and are alive, shall be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. It may be today.

In reading the apostolic statement again we emphasize one little word—the word “is.” “The night *is* far spent, the day *is* at hand.” The age of night is almost gone; we are living in the fourth watch of the night. The day dawn cannot be far away and therefore we can say confidently “the day *is* at hand.”

Do we not see that day approaching?

We see the day approaching in many ways by what is going on in the world today.

The ever increasing lawlessness shows that the mystery of lawlessness will soon culminate in the manifestation of the man of sin, the son of perdition. He will appear after the Lord has called His true Church to meet Him in the air. *Then* shall that wicked one be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. (See 2 Thess. ii:1-10.) As we see his shadow lengthening we realize our home-call cannot be far away.

The Gospel is preached throughout the whole world. The uttermost parts of the earth have been reached. No new continents can be discovered. All nations and tribes of men, formerly unknown to civilization, are all known now. The Gospel has been carried to every nook and corner of the world, and the Holy Spirit has used it in adding new members to the body of Christ. Some think that the world has to be converted before that day can come, but this view is unscriptural. There is not a single verse in the Bible which promises the conversion of the world during this present age. The Gospel is preached as a witness to all nations, to call out from them the people for His name (Acts xv:15).

As this has been done and is being done, the day of Christ must be near at hand.

The great nations of the world are in the very conditions of which our Lord spoke in His prophecy. "Upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring" (Luke xxi:25). Sixty-one years ago Bishop Ryle of Liverpool wrote: "The mightiest empires on earth have been shaken, during the last years, to their very foundations. Kings, and princes, and great men, have been driven from their high position by scores, and been made wanderers on the face of the earth. There has been no accounting for it by any human reasoning. These movements have taken place in the face of increased knowledge, civilization, and desire of peace. The shock came from beneath. And what saith the Scripture? 'Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows' (Matt. xxiv:7, 8). But since 1867 worse things than ever before have happened. The greatest famines, pestilences and earthquakes swept over the earth since then. And the wars! The Franco-Prussian war, the Russian-Japanese war, the Spanish-American war, and many others, but above all the great world-war with its unspeakable horrors. Today we see the world in unrest. It is not confined to a few nations, it is world wide. A revolution, perhaps greater than the French revolution at the close of the Eighteenth Century, broke out in Russia and resulted in the establishment of an atheistical government, whose program seems to be a world-revolution. The seed of anarchy is being sown throughout Europe and Asia as well as in the other continents. Politically things look very dark. In saying this we do not forget the peace treaties which, under the leadership of Mr. Kellogg, have been signed by so many nations. Signing peace treaties and making peace pacts is nothing new in the history of the world. History records many of them, as well as the fact that they did not prevent war. During the last ten years thrones have crumbled into dust, republics have been formed, the rule

by the people has come to the front, boundaries have been changed and all has been in flux. All seems to point to that final coming great upheaval of which the Word of prophecy has so much to say. Therefore God's people know the day is at hand and must soon come.

And then the movement among the Jews! They are in part at least, a nation homeward bound. The vision of Ezekiel is being fulfilled. There is a mighty shaking among the dry bones of the house of Israel. Their national consciousness has been revived. They are coming to the front and being prepared for the final page of their history of sufferings and tears. Because the fig-tree putteth forth new leaves, we know the day of Christ must be close at hand.

We also think of the revival of the study of prophecy which is now going on among true believers throughout the world. This revival is the work of the Holy Spirit, who wants the Church, the Bride, to join her "Come" to His "Come," for it is written "the Spirit and the Bride say, Come" (Rev. xxi:17). The midnight cry has gone forth for many years. Satan tried to stop it. But in spite of all his inventions, the wrong teachings and cults; like the Millerites, now known as Seventh Day Adventists, or the Russellites, now known as International Bible Student Association, and other errorists, through whom the word of prophecy is maligned; the study of prophecy continues. There are more true believers living today who have an intelligent, spiritual and scriptural knowledge of prophecy than ever before. There are more true believers waiting for His coming and praying for His coming than in all the former preceding history of the Church. This surely is the work of His Spirit and a sign that "the day is at hand."

III.

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. This is Paul's inspired exhortation to the household of faith in view of the fact that the night is far spent and that the day is at hand. Whenever the Holy Spirit reveals Christian doctrine, He follows it with a

"therefore." After the Gospel of God had been fully revealed in Romans we find the exhortation: "I beseech you *therefore* by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Rom. xii:1). After the resurrection of believers had been revealed and the coming of the Lord to gather all home, we read: "*Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor is not vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv:58). In Ephesians the fullness of our redemption and of our calling is made known, and then follows the exhortation: "I *therefore*, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called" (Eph. iv:1). And so here after penning these weighty, though brief words, there follows his "*therefore*," the exhortation to personal holiness, separation from all evil. Prophetic truth, the truth of the coming of the Lord and our future glory with Him is inseparably connected with personal holiness. Some study prophecy out of curiosity. It is not a heart study, but a head study. It does not affect them spiritually at all; it does not change their mode of living, it does not make them concerned for the unsaved nor does it make them liberal in supporting missions and the Lord's work. Better not study prophecy at all and remain in total ignorance about these things if you refuse to have it govern your life and your conduct.

Throughout the New Testament Scriptures the coming day of Christ, when we shall meet Him and see Him face to face, is put down as the greatest incentive to personal holiness. "He that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii:3). The truth of Christ's appearing and our appearing with Him in glory, as written in the epistle to the Colossians, is followed by another Pauline "*therefore*." "Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry . . . put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of your

mouth" (Col. iii:1-10). And Peter after his prophetic testimony writes: "Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless" (2 Pet. iii:13, 14). And again we read: "Let your gentleness be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand" (Phil. iv:5). How else can it be! If we expect to see Him and be some day suddenly brought into His glorious presence, and we believe this with our whole heart, it must change our mode of living and lead to separation. The works of darkness must be cast off. It means, as another has written*—"to lay aside everything in your life and habits, which will not bear the light of Christ's appearing. You ought to make it a principle of conscience to do nothing you would not like to be found doing when the Lord comes to gather His people. This is a searching test indeed. The application of it must be left to every man's own heart. Each must judge for himself. Each must prove his own work. Each must set up an assize within him, and honestly bring his ways to trial. Oh! for a will to deal fairly and justly with ourselves! "We must judge ourselves so that we are not judged. All should be tried by the test of His coming." Place in this balance your amusements, your books, your companions, your manner of conversation, and your daily behavior in all the relations of life. Measure all by this measure—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Am I living as a child of the night, or as one who looks for the day?

Furthermore, we must put on the armour of light. This is not our own armour, but it is the armour which God Himself provides, for it is called "the armour of God." Of this armour of light and of God we read in the epistle to the Ephesians "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of

*Bishop Ryle.

the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. vi: 13-17). Thus girded with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, we must be positive Christians, walking in the light as He is in the light, ever putting on Christ and manifesting Him.

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless *unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Thess. v:16-23).

"And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John ii:28).

"For yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come and will not tarry" (Heb. x:37).

"He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii:20).

ONLY A FEW MORE SHADOWS AND HE WILL COME

It may be in the evening,
When the work of the day is done;
And ou have time to sit in the twilight
And watch the sinking sun;
While the long bright day dies slowly
Over the sea—
And the hour grows quiet and holy
With thoughts of Me—
Let the door be on the latch—
In your home—
For it may be through the gloaming,
I will come.

It may be when the midnight,
Is heavy upon the land,
And the black waves lying humbly,
Along the sand.
When the moon-less night draws close,
And the lights are out in the house—
When the fires burn low and red,
And the watch is ticking loudly,
Beside the bed.
Though you sleep, tired out, on your couch;
Still your heart must wait and watch,
In the dark room.
For it may be that at midnight;
I will come.
It may be at the cockcrow,
When the night is dying slowly,
In the sky.
And the sea looks calm and holy,
Waiting for the dawn of the golden sun,
Which draweth nigh.
In the chill before the dawning,
Between the night and morning,
I may come.

It may be in the morning,
When the sun is bright and strong,
And the dew is glittering sharply,
Over the little lawn;
With the long day's work before you,
You rise up with the sun.
And the neighbors come in to talk a little,
Of all that must be done;
But remember that I may be next
To come in at the door,
To call you from your busy work,
For evermore.
As you work your heart must watch,
For the door is on the latch
In your room—
And it may be in the morning;
I may come.

So I am watching quietly
Every day,
Whenever the sun shines brightly,
I rise and say—
Surely it is the shining of His face!
And look unto the gates of His high place
Beyond the sea.
For I know He is coming shortly,
To summon me.
And when the shadow falls across the window
Of my room,
Where I am working my appointed task,
I lift my head to watch the door,
And ask if He is come.
And the angel answers sweetly,
In my home—
Only a few more shadows,
And He will come.

BRIEF DEVOTIONAL STUDIES

I. Thy Condescension

In the eighteenth Psalm David saith "Thy gentleness hath made me great." A better translation is "Thy condescension hath made me great." This beautiful Psalm has much to say about our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a great outburst of His triumph and victory. Praise stands in the beginning and at the close of this Psalm. We read of the depths into which He descended and how God heard and delivered Him. His resurrection by the power of God, the coming manifestation of Himself, the scattering of His enemies, the victories of Him as King and His headship over the nations are all mentioned in the eighteenth Psalm.

But we must not lose sight of the fact that David's experience is at least partially presented in this Psalm. The superscription tells us that David spake these words unto the Lord when He had delivered him from the hands of his enemies. The Holy Spirit came upon the King and uttered through him this sublime hymn of praise, which finds its full accomplishment in the Lord Jesus Christ, David's Lord and David's son. In 2 Samuel xxii the same Psalm, though with some changes, is recorded, so that we know much of David's experience is given in it. His experience was indeed wonderful. Jehovah had been his rock, his fortress, his deliverer. In Him he had placed his trust. He had delivered him and brought him out into a larger place. He had been his shield and protection. He had made his way clear and kept him that he did not slip. Jehovah girded him and was his strength, he gave him victory over his enemies. But in the center of the experiences of David there stands this blessed word, "Thy condescension hath made me great."

It was not David, but it was the Lord, who, in gracious, unfathomable condescension had lifted him up, taken him

as a shepherd boy, led him on and protected him, guided, sustained, strengthened, upheld him, provided for him, yea, covered his sins and forgiven his iniquity. And now as the victorious King he acknowledges "Thy condescension hath made me great." It was all of Himself.

And so we His people readily and gratefully acknowledge the same. His condescension hath made us great. He came down from Heaven's glory that He might take us up. He came to the dunghill where the miserable ragged beggars are to lift them up to be the sharers of His own throne. How unfathomable that condescension! He had to say, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about, the snares of death seized upon me." This was the path He had to go to lift us up, who by nature are his enemies by wicked works, and to make us great. And in the greatness of His power, in the highest place He now occupies, He is mindful of us. He remembers daily our need and daily He supplies that need. Daily He gives strength; daily He carries us in the arms of His loving patience; daily He bears with us in our failures and shortcomings. What condescension! He who is the upholder of all things, the Lord of Glory, is ever occupied with His own beloved fellows on earth and gives them eventually deliverance from all their enemies.

"Thy condescension hath made me great." We shall know that greatness ere long. How soon it may all be upon us, what He has in store for us. When we shall see Him as He is, when we are with Him in the Father's house with its many mansions, when He makes us sharers of all His glory, then we shall know "Thy condescension hath made me great."

Do we enter into all this? Do we know that His condescension has lifted us so high and leads us on to victory and eternal glory? Is it real to us? Then we will not be satisfied—cannot be satisfied—unless we walk worthy of the Lord and are more fully devoted to Him.

Abide thou, my soul, in the Saviour's love,
For restless thou art as a timid dove;
He seeth thy faithlessness day by day,
Yet bears with waywardness, guards thy way.

He calls thee to come and enjoy His peace,
To learn from His lips that thy fears may cease,
To take of the stream of eternal love
As foretaste of bliss in the home above.

II. His Greatest Gift

There is a word, unrecorded in the Gospels, spoken by our gracious Lord. Paul quotes it in the presence of the Ephesian elders, telling them to remember the words of the Lord Jesus "how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx:35). It is one of many sayings of our Lord handed down by tradition; the Holy Spirit quoting it through the Apostle Paul marks these words as genuine. The blessedness of which this utterance speaks is His blessedness, for He is the great giver. In creation and even more so in redemption His loving, bountiful hand gives untold riches. The One Hundred and Fourth Psalm is a hymn of praise in which His great goodness in nature, His gifts to His dependent creatures, are told out. How beautiful are the Spirit given descriptions!

He sendeth springs into the valleys,
Which run among the mountains.
They give drink to every beast of the field,
The wild asses quench their thirst.
By them the fowls of heaven have their habitation,
Which sing among the branches.
He watereth the hills from His chambers;
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.
He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
And herb for the service of man,
That he may bring forth food out of the earth;
And wine to make glad the heart of man,
And oil to make his face to shine,
And bread which strengtheneth man's heart (Psa. civ).

Wherever we look in His creation we behold His bountiful kindness, as well as His wisdom. He is the giver of all good gifts. By Him and for Him were all things created and in all His creation He manifests Himself as the giver who gives freely all things.

But while this is so true in the physical creation, how much more is this true in the realm of redemption. Not a creature, not an angel, nor an archangel; only He could

redeem. In marvelous condescension He came, as the Father's unspeakable gift, taking upon Himself the form of a servant, so that He might bring His fallen creatures back to Himself. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The great work was done on the cross. There He paid the price, and now "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," bestowed upon all who believe on Him.

What then in this redemption work is His greatest gift? It is Himself. He gave Himself. It was on the cross that He gave all He had, sacrificing Himself that we might be bought back and share His own and eternal riches with Him. Paul in his great testimony in which he speaks of having passed through death in the death of Christ, and sharing His life as well, says "*Who loved me—and gave Himself for me*" (Gal. ii:20). And if Christ loved him, and gave Himself just for him, then Christ must have known him from afar off. And so He did. Often we hear this precious word quoted in this wise "who loved us and gave Himself for us." There is no need for that. In fact it robs us of the assuring comfort connected with this word. We too can say personally, as Paul said, "Who loved me and gave Himself for me." He knew us, He saw us, before we ever existed. Think of it in simple faith! I who was His enemy by wicked works, a poor, miserable, lost sinner; He came and loved me, and gave *Himself for me*. What peace and joy it brings to our hearts! What a mighty, eternal foundation to stand upon! Not what we have done, but what He has done. Not our little love, but His own perfect love.

And again we read, "*Who gave Himself a ransom for all*" (1 Tim. ii:6). Teachers of error and evil doctrines, like the Universalists and self-termed Restorationists, use this scripture to vindicate their inventions. But they forget that our Lord also said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx:28). "Christ was once offered to bear the *sins of many*." This includes only those who believe

on Him. A ransom for all means, for all who accept Him. Those who reject Him, deny Him, live on in sin, have no share and part in the ransom-price He paid when He gave Himself. But it is blessedly true that every sinner trusting in Him is ransomed by Himself.

While He gave Himself to redeem us from the guilt of our sins, from the punishment which is our due, He gave Himself to redeem us also from all iniquity and to purify us unto Himself as His people. "*Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*" (Titus ii:14). This is the other great object of His greatest gift, to deliver us, by giving Himself, from the dominion of sin, and to have us for Himself as His own people, who belong to Him, whom He can love and cherish, whom He can teach and use, whom He brings to His own glorious home to share it and His glory.

Yet His purchased people are in an evil age, surrounded by evil on all sides. The age is controlled by Satan as its god. No matter what discoveries, inventions and startling changes may occur, this present age is evil down to its very end. But while these influences of evil are around and about God's people they need not be controlled by them, for the Lord Jesus Christ has wrought deliverance from this also. "*Who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God our Father*" (Gal. i:4). Inasmuch as He has plucked us out of the present age, separated us from it, to belong to Him and to serve Him, we need not be controlled by it.

In Eph. v:2, we read again "Christ also hath loved us, and hath *given Himself* for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." He is the true burnt offering which God has accepted, in which He is delighted, which pleases Him in His holy and righteous character. As we believe on Him we are identified with Him. God sees us now in His Son, and because He gave Himself as an offering and a sacrifice to God, so pleasing in His sight, we are also accepted in Him. We are accepted in the Beloved One, not in what we do or are in ourselves.

III. Rest in the Lord

One of the most beautiful expressions in that great Book of inspired song and praise is found in Psalm xxxvii:7, "*Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.*" The Psalm is most precious and contains much comfort and assurance for God's children. To David's heart the blessed comfort was given first, and ever since the Holy Spirit penned these words through the Shepherd King they have been the food and joy of the people of God. An old Bible which is open before us as we write, printed in 1657, shows the marks of much reading at this Psalm, and as we look at it we think of the different owners of that Bible, whose souls were cheered and encouraged by the thirty-seventh Psalm. Pious Jews delighted in it and it helped them in by gone days of trouble. Christians of all generations have heard the loving Shepherd's voice in this great Psalm. There is a day coming when it will be still more appreciated. Prophetically the Psalm points to the time marked out as "the great tribulation." The Church will then no longer be on earth, but a remnant of God's earthly people, trusting in Jehovah, will be here, suffering and surrounded by great difficulties. They will see the evil-doers flourishing, while they have trials. Then in the midst of the great trouble they will take hold of the comfort and assurance given here. What a meaning some of these words will have for those pious Jews! "For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (verses 10-11). The Lord will come and all His Saints with Him, and will make an end of the wicked, deliver His waiting earthly people; they will inherit the land and behold the abundance of peace during the kingdom age.

While this is still future, the Psalm has nevertheless the same application, comfort, blessing and cheer for us. The exhortations to be patient and to wait both for the Lord and on the Lord are given to us. We live at the close of this

present evil age. Dark is the night and difficult the path. There is an increase of evil, a fearful growth of ungodliness and wickedness, and along with it prosperity. The ungodly world, the Christ rejecting world, is prosperous. For the saint of God, who truly lives in the enjoyment of his fellowship with the Lord, all this is painful and occasions trial and suffering. He groans within himself. But we are not to "fret." Three times in the beginning of this Psalm we find the exhortation, "Fret not thyself." Instead of fretting, the child of God is to be calm and have his Lord in constant view. Oh never to lose sight of Him!

As the Psalm is arranged in the original according to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, so we find a progression in experience. *Trust* in the Lord; this comes first. It is the great foundation. And why should we not trust *Him* fully! He is the mighty Lord; He is the loving Lord, who died for us on the cross. Then we advance and hear, *Delight* thyself also in the Lord. Trust leads to delight. We will find in Him our joy and pleasure. *Commit* thy way unto the Lord comes next. In the Hebrew it reads "roll thy way upon the Lord." It is the same which the Holy Spirit has given us through Peter, "Casting *all* your care upon Him, for He careth for you." This is a delight to roll our way, our burdens upon Him, and He is delighted with it. He wants His beloved children to bring all to Him. All this necessitates a close walk with Himself. Then comes the climax. *Rest* in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. What a Word this is! Sinners saved by grace, weak, feeble, wandering as we are, invited to make our rest in Him. This is our blessed privilege, our grandest portion. There is nothing higher possible in this earthly life of ours than the perfect rest of faith in Himself. What is service, eager hurried service, without true rest in the Lord! It profiteth but little. Mary rested at His feet. She did not do a single thing. She spoke not a single word. Instead of serving Him, she rested at His feet to receive from Himself. Martha was fretting. The Lord then spoke that beautiful word, the word which is for us as well, "But one thing is needful; and

Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." We, too, may chose that good part, "Rest in the Lord." Service has its place and we all have our service. Blessed are we if it is ever the result of true Rest in Himself. Peter of all the disciples, impulsive Peter, spoke the most; John the least. He was leaning on Jesus' bosom and He loved him. This is our place. Oh to be closer, closer to Himself! Reader, are you not hungering and thirsting for it? Are you satisfied with where you are now? It is our constant need in these last days, a deeper rest in Him, a closer walk with Him, a better spiritual knowledge of our Lord. This alone can satisfy our new nature. Anything short of it will fail. As we rest in Him, walk in closer fellowship with Him, we are above the things about us, and in a day when all seems to be shaking and breaking down we will be "steadfast and immovable," because He keeps us.

But the Lord in whom we rest is the *Coming One*. We wait for Him. Can He tarry much longer? Does not everything demand His soon Coming? We are to wait patiently for Him. We shall not be ashamed; He will come and will not tarry. And here is His own Word to His waiting ones. "Because thou hast kept the Word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii:10-11). Take it with you for this month, Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.

And while we wait thus we can rejoice and rest in Him and in His great love, knowing whatever is our lot, that all is well.

CONTENTMENT

Fierce passions discompose the mind,
As tempests vex the sea;
But calm content and peace we find,
When, Lord, we turn to Thee.

In vain by reason and by rule,
We try to bend the will;
For none but in the Saviour's school
Can learn the heav'nly skill.

Since at His feet my soul has sat,
His gracious words to hear;
Contented with my present state,
I cast on Him my care.

"Art thou a sinner, soul?" He said,
"Then how canst thou complain?
How light thy troubles here, if weighed
With everlasting pain?

"If thou of murmuring wouldest be cured,
Compare thy griefs with mine;
Think what my love for thee endured,
And thou wilt not repine.

"'Tis I appoint thy daily lot;
And I do all things well;
Thou soon shalt leave this wretched spot,
And rise with Me to dwell."

Thus I who once my wretched days,
In vain repinings spent;
Taught in my Saviour's school of grace,
Have learn'd to be content.

William Cowper

IV. The Sweetest Thing

We have heard much about "the greatest thing in the world" or "the biggest thing." Others speak of "the most wonderful thing." What is "the sweetest thing" for a true believer? It is meditation on the Lord and heart communion with Him.

"My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord" (Psa. civ:34). The one hundred and fourth Psalm is a magnificent praise of Jehovah as the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and contains a marvelous description of Creation, manifesting the omnipotence, the glory, the wisdom and the goodness of our Lord. One of the greatest scientists expressed his astonishment to find in a Psalm of so small dimension such comprehensive and deep statements concerning the universe, the heavens and the earth. We read first of the greatness of Jehovah, who is clothed with honor and majesty. He is covered with light as with a garment. The heavens make known His glory. And as we follow through this Psalm we read of many things which tell out the greatness of the Creator and the beauties of His works. The clouds are His chariots; He walketh upon the wings of the wind; the angels are His ministers, to serve Him in this vast universe. The waters covering the deep, the springs in the valleys, the brooks in the mountains, the grass, the herbs, the trees, the birds, the lions and other works of His hands are mentioned. And all is dependent upon Him. "These all wait upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season." In contemplating the works of creation, the Psalmist breaks forth in holy worship. "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all, the earth is full of Thy riches." And at the close of the Psalm he declares, "My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."

A child of God should praise the Lord for His wondrous works. Lessons are written in creation, which few discover. But the highest and most blessed object for our meditation is He Himself. Sweet and delightful are indeed the thoughts

of Him to all who know the Lord. And He, who never forgets His own, who constantly loves and thinks of us, expects that we think of Him. For this the Holy Spirit indwells us, that our meditation of Him may be sweet, so that we can be glad in the Lord.

What an exhaustless theme it is! to think of Him, the eternal Word, who is God and ever was with God! "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." And He, by whom all things were called into existence, the mighty One, the Only Begotten, was made flesh and dwelt among men. He appeared on earth in the creature's form. What sweetness there is for His believing people to meditate on His wonderful Person. The heart is filled with unspeakable joy and assurance, when we think of Him, Who for our sakes became poor and laid His glory by. And what food for meditation we find in His life, His walk down here, His love, His tenderness, His kindness, His lowliness and meekness, His moral glory, His peace and the whole path He went, as the obedient One. Some teachers would confine the reading of the Bible for believers to a few epistles of the Apostle Paul. We need to read the Gospels as much as the Epistle to the Ephesians. We must dwell much on the record the Holy Spirit has given of His walk down here. He is our pattern. How can we walk as He walked, unless we meditate on Him in His humiliation and trace His blessed footsteps? And as we meditate on Him, read over and over again the familiar words and scenes, as given by the Evangelists, we shall always find something new, something sweet and precious to faith. He is altogether lovely! No saint has yet discovered all His loveliness. There is always more to be found in Him, which will make the Lord still more precious to our hearts and our meditation of Him more delightful.

And when we meditate on His sufferings, on the cross of Christ, on the mighty work He finished, when in His own body on the tree He bore our sins, the heart is filled with peace. The story of His love, the love that passeth knowl-

edge, is written there. To remember Him and the love, which went into such depths of suffering, the love, which took our own place in judgment—such meditation is sweet and fills the soul with worship and adoration.

And higher still the believer's thoughts are directed to meditate on Him who was made a little lower than the angels, and who is now filling the throne in heaven, crowned with glory and honor. Faith sees Him there. We know Him as the man in glory; all power in heaven and on earth belongs to Him. More than that. Our life is hid with Christ in God. We are one with Him; one Spirit with the Lord. We are Christ's. How sweet our meditation should be, when we remember all these blessed facts in which we are so blessedly concerned! And how sweet it is to all who love the Lord to meditate on the coming meeting, when we shall meet the Lord in Glory, when we shall see Him as He is, when our eyes shall behold the One who loved us and gave Himself for us. Every night before you retire, dear reader, look up into the sky and think of Him who created the heavens, the planets and stars; remember that He is in the Heaven of Heavens, remember He has gone there to prepare a place for you; remember that He promised to come again, yea, that He will come again; remember, that night He may come. Then your meditation of Him will be sweet and you will be glad in the Lord.

But can you truly say, "My meditation of Him shall be sweet?" Do you really meditate on Him in all the power of faith? We cannot do it and cannot continue in it unless we lead a spiritual life. It is a test of true spiritual progress. If we continue to meditate thus, if our joy in the Lord increases, if we hunger and thirst to know more of Him, we may be assured that our spiritual life is growing. We may do a great deal of service, make plans for a great work, run in many directions and yet be in a spiritual distance from Him. Backsliding always begins with abandoning real, spiritual heart meditation and occupation with Himself. Restoration begins with a heart-return to Him from whom we have wandered. And how many of God's beloved chil-

dren are wandering thus at the present time. He knows all about you, beloved reader. Be assured He waits for and welcomes your return. Self-judgment and confession always bring us back to Himself.

"My meditation of Him shall be sweet!" If gives joy, strength, courage, power to overcome; it sustains us, transforms us, leads us deeper—in one word all our spiritual need will be found supplied in real heart occupation with Himself. We also give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to do His work in us, for He has come to show the things of Christ unto us. Meditation on Him makes Christlike; it means fellowship with the Father; it fills the soul with joy unspeakable and with glory. We feel deeply burdened as we write this message, and even now we pray that it may please God to bless it to some and keep us all close to our blessed and coming Lord.

"I journey through a desert drear and wild,
Yet is my heart by such sweet thoughts beguiled
Of Him on whom I lean, my strength, my stay,
That I forget the sorrows of the way.

Thoughts of His love, the root of every grace
Which finds in this poor heart a dwelling place,
The sunshine of my soul, than day more bright,
And my calm pillow of repose by night.

Thoughts of His sojourn in this vale of tears:
The tale of love unfolded in those years
Of sinless sufferings and patient grace,
I love again and yet again to trace.

Thoughts of His glory: on the cross I gaze,
And there behold its sad yet healing rays;
Beacon of hope, which lifted up on high
Illumes with heavenly light and tear-dimmed eye.

Thoughts of His coming—for that joyful day
In patient hope I watch and wait and pray;
The dawn drawn nigh, the midnight shadows flee;
O what a sunrise will that advent be!"

V. To Be and Not to Be

All exhortations in the Epistles are addressed to believers and not to the children of the world, the unsaved and unregenerate. Nor do we find these exhortations in the beginning of the different doctrinal epistles. The first place is given by the author of these documents, the Holy Spirit, to what God in Christ has done for us. After that the results are stated and the necessity of being and doing what God wants us to be and what He wants us to do. The power to be and not to be is the indwelling Spirit.

“Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter i:5). This is the demand of a holy God to His people. It is the same in every dispensation. When God redeems and makes sinners His children, He redeems unto holiness. In Christ we are sanctified, that is, separated, set apart unto God. Christ is our holiness, our sanctification. Inasmuch as He has sanctified us in Christ, we also must be practically what we are through grace and “perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Entire sanctification is unattainable as long as we are in our mortal bodies; it will be our blessed lot when we shall see Him as He is and when we shall be like Him.

“Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James i:22). This is God’s call to obedience. Our practical sanctification is by the Word. “Sanctify them by Thy Truth, Thy Word is Truth.” Our constant concern must be to hear and to obey His voice. Such obedience to His Word is the test of our sonship. “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

“Be ye imitators of God, as dear children” (Ephes. v:1). It means to express and to commend our heavenly Father’s character, which is Love. We are to walk in love, after the pattern of Him, who has made the love of God, and that God is love, known unto us, the Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us. And therefore we are to be kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven us.

“Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might”

(Ephes. vi:10). In ourselves we have no strength. It is a great discovery every individual Christian must make, that without Him we can do nothing, that all our strength and help is in Him, and that through Christ, who strengthens us, we can do all things. In order to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might we must constantly maintain the lowest place at His feet, own our weakness and nothingness. Then we shall find out that His strength is made perfect in weakness.

“Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (2 Peter iv:7). Sober means to be temperate, self-controlled. No walk in separation, no true obedience, and no walk in love is possible apart from prayer. In order to be what the Lord wants us to be we must pray without ceasing. Without constant prayer we shall have no strength, and instead of walking in the Spirit we shall walk in the flesh, suffering nothing but defeat.

“Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. ii:10.) Dr. Brookes wrote on this verse as follows: “The Lord Jesus never tells us to be successful, but faithful, and He cares nothing for success that is purchased at the expense of faithfulness. Nay, He will disown it, and burn it up as hay, wood and stubble, in that day that is coming soon, and that will astound by the light of eternity many a politic and tricky worker who bartered the truth to please men.” Even so it is. Faithfulness to Him and to His Word counts everything with Him and will have His gracious approval in His own presence.

“Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not” (Luke xii:40). And elsewhere we read, “Be ye also patient; establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” We are never exhorted in the Epistles to be ready for death, for death is not the hope of the Christian, but the coming of the Lord is. If that blessed event is constantly kept before the heart it will lead us into the right life of separation, obedience and service.

There are many more passages telling us what we should be as believers. But there is also the negative side. The

Holy Spirit tells believers what they should not be. We must look to these exhortations and heed them as we do the positive commands.

“Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Cor. vi:14). This is God’s call to His people to be separated from those who do not believe and who reject His offers of grace. It must not be confined to the marriage of a Christian to a non-Christian, as it is so often done; it has a wider application. For instance, no true believer on the Lord Jesus Christ should be yoked together in work for world betterment, reformation and social movements in which unbelievers are so prominent.

“Be not conformed to this world” (Romans xii:2). The grace of God has separated us from this present evil age. We are now not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. Yet we are still in the world and on every turn we are face to face with evil. As we are not of the world, it demands a testimony from our side. The aims and ways of the children of God must be different from the aims and ways of the children of the world. And therefore this exhortation not to be conformed but rather transformed by the power of the Spirit of God. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” The separating power is His cross; it has made us dead to the world and the world dead unto us.

“Be not therefore partakers with them” (Ephes. v:7). This is another call to separation. Preceding this “Be not” are mentioned the evil things of the flesh, including foolish talking and covetousness, besides the other fruits of the old nature. “But ye were sometimes darkness but now are ye the light in the Lord; walk as children of light.”

“Be not wise in your own conceits” (Rom. xii:16). It is also mentioned in the preceding chapter, besides the other exhortations not to be high-minded, not to boast, not to think of oneself more highly than one ought to think, yea, not to mind high things. Intellectual pride and conceit is the chief source of the shipwreck which countless men and women

have made. All teachers of error, who teach perverse things, start with being wise in their own conceits. They try to be original, reject what other gifts to the Church have taught, they become puffed up, sometimes through the flatteries of silly women and equally silly men; then they go down. The safe path is to be humble and seek not after great things or follow the new things, which are mostly the swamp lights of error.

There are other similar exhortations. Happy are we if we obey His words. In these days of indifference and spiritual sleep may we be aroused, "And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

VI. Lord, to Whom Shall We Go?

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John vi:68, 69). It was spoken by Peter in answer to the question of the Lord, Will ye also go away?"

The multitude had listened to His great message concerning Himself as the bread from heaven. "I am that bread of life." Then He explained to them that if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever, and furthermore, "the bread that I will give is My flesh"; and, again, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." In all these words He spoke of His sacrificial death on the Cross and how this death alone can give man life; that He Himself must be appropriated in faith. This is what He meant by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. But all this was the hard saying for them. There were many who professed to be His disciples, as there are many today who take upon themselves the Christian profession. And the multitude which had professed his discipleship left Him; they turned away from His Person and His doctrine. "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." It is so today. The ever increasing attacks upon the Bible lead more and more to the rejection of the Christ of God and His work of redemption. The enemies of the Cross, those who deny "the Doctrine of Christ," that He is come in the flesh, "that God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins," are constantly increasing. It has even come to this, that of late these deniers of the Doctrine of Christ charge those who still cling to it with being "unorthodox." Orthodoxy, according to their definition, means now to accept what is claimed to be "the conclusions of modern science and Biblical scholarship," the findings of the natural mind of man, which rejects God's revelation. According to "these findings," there is no Virgin birth, there is no sin-bearing work of the

Son of God, there is no resurrection, and as to a visible return of our blessed Lord, that is branded as an hallucination.

Thousands of professed Christians follow these pernicious inventions; they turn their backs against the real Christ, though they still continue to mention His Name.

And when in the days of His presence on earth they left Him, to walk no more with Him, when they rejected Him and His blessed words of eternal life, to follow other leaders, mournfully He looked upon the few who still clung to Him, with the question, "Will ye also go away?" But how could that little flock leave Him? There were twelve men, but He knew there were but eleven, for as He said, "One of you is a devil." But the eleven who had tasted of His love, who believed on Him as the Son of the Living God, who accepted His words of life and grace—would they ever leave Him? Could they leave Him? Peter but voiced the heart belief of all. Yes, he voiced the deep conviction of every true believer, of every new-born soul. "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

"Lord, to whom shall we go?" To whom shall we go with our sins? There is no relief from the burden which every conscience feels, the guilt of sins, except in Him who died for our sins. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." Peace with God is found alone in Him "who made peace in the blood of His cross." And that peace is ours as we believe on His Name. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." To what else the human soul may turn, no matter what it is, there is no rest, no peace, no salvation to be found. Modernism, the new religion, the "findings of modern scholarship," whatever it may be, are but wells without water, empty cisterns filled with slime.

"Lord, to whom shall we go?" To whom shall we go for assurance as to eternal life, the life which God's creature with endless being needs? Thou hast the words of eternal life! Yes, Christ, and Christ alone, has the truth, and the power to bestow the life which the immortal soul of man needs to fit it for a heaven of glory and save it from a hell

of eternal woe. "Thou (the Father) hast given Him (the Son) power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." "The gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ." "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." Or, put it negatively: He that does not believe, he that turns away from Christ, he that believeth not that He died for our sins, he that rejects Him—to whatever philosophy, school of thought, religion or cult he may turn—he will remain a lost soul, doomed to spend eternity in the outer darkness. It is forever true, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." Apart from Him there is no life, there is no salvation.

"Lord, to whom shall we go?" To whom shall we go with our sorrows, with our burdens, with our heartaches, with our disappointments, with our pain, with our troubles? To whom shall we go to find comfort, to find strength and help? Certainly not "to the findings of modern science and modern infidel Biblical scholarship." Whatever man has invented, whatever man offers as a substitute for God's truth and revelation, whatever man's explanations of life and its problems, though clothed in words of charm and sweetness, all are like "Job's comforters" which cannot comfort. Christ, and Christ alone has the comfort, the joy and help for the human soul. He is the One, the only One, who bore our sorrows, and who bears our burdens now. Apart from Him there is no comfort, there is no help. The soul that knows not Christ, or turns away from Him, will finally end in unspeakable despair.

"Lord, to whom shall we go?" To whom shall we go for assurance of a home, a happy home of blessed reunion with our loved ones? Eternity is set in every human breast. To whom shall we go to get assurance, the hope, the un-failing hope of heaven and glory? Infidelity has no hope.

Infidelity is the rejection of revelation. Infidels like Voltaire, Thomas Paine, Renan, Ingersoll, the destructive critic, the Reverend D.D., the Professor Ph.D., are all one in rejecting God's revelation, and they have no hope. The Lord Jesus Christ alone has the words of assurance, the words of hope, the words of glory. We may read it a thousand times over and over again, but it is always new, always fresh, always life * * * "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also."

"*Lord, to whom shall we go?*" Where! There is no other place to go to! There is no other Name! There is no other way! Poor shifting mass of Christless Christianity! You follow leaders which lead you away from the one foundation, blind leaders of the blind! You accept their new discoveries and inventions, the infidelity which garbs itself as "Biblical scholarship." You are heading for the pit. Some of these infidels, who, like the professed disciples in John's Gospel, turned away from Christ, refused to believe that He is the Son of God and man's only Saviour, some of these destructive, modern critics, ere they passed away, left behind a testimony of the hollowness of "modern Biblical scholarship," for they died without the assuring peace of the Saints of God.

"*Lord, to whom shall we go?*" Dear reader, what is *your* answer? There is but one answer for the Saints of God. While Christendom turns away from Him, let God's true Church turn more to Him. Let us go more than ever to Him; cling to Him; walk with Him and follow Him. This must be our answer. And let it be seen in life and conduct as well that we have found in Him our all: "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

VII. "He Shall" and "It Shall be!"

"He shall" and "It shall be!" Thousands of times these phrases are found in the Word of God. This little word "shall" is the word of authority. It declares the will of a sovereign God, in which He makes known what is to be done. The word "shall" is the most positive word used in prophecy. What God says shall be, will be and must be. In both Testaments the Holy Spirit speaks of Him, our Saviour-Lord, what He shall be and what He shall do; He reveals what shall be in the future. God's "shall's" are unchangeable.

It is written in Luke i:30-33: "And the angel said to her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou *shall* conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and *shall* call His name Jesus. He *shall* be great, and *shall* be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God *shall* give unto Him the throne of His Father David; and He *shall* reign over the house of Jacob for ever and of His kingdom there *shall* be no end." Seven times the angel uses the word "shall." And when he speaks again to the virgin of Nazareth he uses this word four times more. "The Holy Spirit *shall* come upon thee, and the power of the Highest *shall* overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which *shall* be born of thee *shall* be called the Son of God."

How blessedly positive all this is! It is a re-statement of the message which the Holy Spirit had given over seven hundred years before, when He spoke through Isaiah, the prophet. "Behold the virgin *shall* conceive, and bear a son, and *shall* call His name Immanuel" (Isa. vii:14). "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government *shall* be upon His shoulder, and His name *shall* be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there *shall* be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from hence-

forth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform it" (Isa. ix:6, 7).

And what the Spirit of God had announced so positively that it shall be, what Gabriel in the greatest message which was ever carried from the highest heaven to earth, repeated to the virgin, that has come to pass. The virgin conceived, for the Holy Spirit had said "the virgin shall conceive," and Gabriel said, "thou shalt conceive in thy womb." The Holy Spirit came upon her and by His omnipotent, as well as mysterious action, produced in her the body, the human body, for Him whose ways have been from of old, from everlasting, the true God and the eternal life. The power of the Highest overshadowed her. The "shall" of God Almighty were accomplished in the supernatural birth of the Son of God. What is man that he should question these great facts? They have an undeveloped science called "biology." The few discoveries they have made, they say, force them to reject such a miracle as the virgin birth. But what is biology? Nothing but a nice little toy of the creature of the dust. It is unreasonable and illogical for man with his imperfect and finite knowledge to reject the supernatural, and the sovereignty and power of Almighty God.

"He shall be great," said the messenger of heaven. He was born in poverty, this virgin-born Son of God. His first resting place was a manger. He was born in an obscure little land, and brought up in Nazareth, of which it was proverbial, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" The "shall" of prophecy come true. "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. liii:2). Yet the angel had said, "He shall be great." And the divine "shall" was realized. He is great in every way. Great in His person, so wonderful and unsearchable; great in His moral glory, equally unsearchable, the One who is altogether lovely, whose beauty of holiness is indescribably glorious. Great in the words He spake, for never man spake like this man. So great are His words

that the master-minds of the race have bowed before them and none has ever been able to fathom His divine teachings. And great He is in His works. He who was born in poverty displayed the power of Godhead in His miracles of mercy, in healing the sick, in raising the dead. "He shall be great!" Yea, so great that He can never be surpassed.

"He shall be called the Son of the Highest." He was and is God's eternal Son. This is the only possible explanation of His Person. It explains all. Demons, the unseen evil intelligencies, confessed Him as such. The head of the powers of darkness, knew Him to be the Son of God. The demons believed and trembled before Him. Peter confessed Him as Son of God; so did the centurion before the cross. And since then millions of human beings have believed on Him and repeated with the fisherman of Galilee "Thou art the Son of the living God." And believing on Him they found in Him the soul's direst need supplied, they found in Him life, peace, joy and eternal hope of glory.

But there are more "shalls" in the message of Gabriel. "The Lord God *shall* give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He *shall* reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there *shall* be no end." These are the "shalls" of the future. We wait for their literal fulfilment.

A few nights ago I read a masterly address in the original edition, given by Jonathan Edwards in 1741, the day after commencement at Yale in New Haven, Connecticut. The great preacher spoke on "the distinguishing marks of the operation of the Spirit of God." He spoke of the great awakening which at that time swept over New England. He spoke as an eye-witness, for under his great preaching thousands were converted. Then he declared that the spiritual second coming of Christ was near at hand. That the manifestation of the Spirit was the evidence that He would receive the kingdom over all and be the king on the throne of David. This spiritualization of the future "shalls" is still the leading conception of many who believe the Word of God. According to their view the throne of David is a

spiritual throne in heaven; the reign of Christ is a spiritual reign; His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom.

But the many "shall" in Old Testament prophecy forbid such an interpretation. The Spirit of God speaks through the prophets of the literal throne of David, of a literal reign and a literal kingdom. God, in His sovereign "shall," has promised Him more than a spiritual reign. "Ask of Me, and I *will* give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou *shalt* break them with a rod of iron, Thou *shalt* dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psa. ii:8, 9). "He *shall* have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness *shall* bow before Him, and His enemies *shall* lick the dust . . . yea all kings *shall* fall down before Him, all nations *shall* serve Him" (Psa. lxxii:8-10). "A King *shall* reign and prosper, and *shall* execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah *shall* be saved, and Israel *shall* dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He *shall* be called, the Lord our righteousness" (Jer. xxiii:5, 6). "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which *shall* not pass away, and His kingdom that which *shall* not be destroyed" (Dan. vii:14).

We could fill many pages with the thousands of "shall" which speak of the future. The "shall" of Israel's coming restoration and glory; the "shall" of coming glories for the nations and for all creation.

"He *shall*" . . . and "It *shall* be." For the fulfillment of the "shall" of God's infallible Word we are waiting, yea all is awaiting today, the time when He shall receive the throne of His father David and the promised kingdom.

This little word too is ours, who are waiting for the coming of His Son from heaven. "For the Lord Himself *shall* descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ *shall* rise first; then we which are alive and remain *shall* be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so *shall* we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess

iv:16, 17). "For yet a little while and He that *shall* come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x:87). "But we know that, when He *shall* appear, we *shall* be like Him; for we *shall* see Him as He is" (1 John iii:2). "And there *shall* be no more curse, but the throne of God and the Lamb *shall* be in it; and His servants *shall* serve Him. And they *shall* see His face and His Name *shall* be in their foreheads. And there *shall* be no night there . . . and they *shall* reign forever and ever" (Rev. xxii:3-5). "And God *shall* wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. xxi:4). "They *shall* be priests of God and of Christ and *shall* reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev. xx:6). "They *shall* hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither *shall* the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which 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" (Rev. vii:16, 17).

For this we wait, and we shall not be disappointed in our waiting. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it *shall* speak and not lie" (Hab. ii:3). Blessed are we if we trust in the sovereign "*shall*" of God. •

THE DOUBLE STAR

Long ages came and went;
And, sick with hope deferred;
Israel's voice grew faint; she seemed
Unnoticed and unheard.
At length to her a child was born,
At length a Son was given;
The Dayspring broke on earth,
The Love came down from Heaven.

Long years have come and gone,
And with uplifted eye,
The Church, with calm and silent hope,
Has watched the eastern sky.
At length the voice shall yet be heard,
With which all earth shall ring:
Lo, this is God, our God,
This the long-promised King.

AMEN, AND AMEN!

