

TRUTH FOR THE TIME.

(PART VII.)

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IF ANY ONE BE IN CHRIST THERE IS A NEW CREATION.

GENESIS XXIV. 2-4 ; HEBREWS II. 11.

I THINK, beloved friends, we should take more to heart the greatness of God's purpose with regard to each of us while on the earth, and that His great purpose, and His object now, should be so little known. I am not going to speak on God's present object, but no greater grace could be conferred on you than that you should know that you are united to the One who has glorified God here upon the earth. I do not say that it is when you know it that it is accomplished. It is an immense comfort of heart to every one desiring it, to know that it is accomplished. God has set each in the body as it hath pleased Him. We did not put ourselves there; He has done so. But I ask every Christian, Do you know it? It is lamentable, turn where you will, how little you hear of God's greatest purpose for every believer while on earth, and His own present object—the body of Christ.

You have to begin with your salvation in order to understand new creation. But I desire

to trace, as far as I am able, from the beginning up to the consummation. If the consummation were known in the power of the Spirit the effect would be wonderful. I have read these verses to convey this subject. I believe the one great practical hindrance to your realising union with Christ is that you are not quite sure that you are of His kindred. I do not say that you are not sure of being saved, but you are not sure that you are of the kindred of Christ. You never can know union until you know that you are of His kindred. No one with any moral disparity could be united to Christ. Hence you get in Hebrews ii., "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of one*, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." You could not have a more comprehensive scripture. You could not put a noun to "*one*," or you would limit it. We partake of Him, not He of us. There has been a popular statement, a most erroneous one, that Christ is our elder brother. Never! The wonderful excess of grace is that we are *His* brethren. His brethren after the flesh did not believe on Him, we read in the gospels. I will not attempt to explain the marvellous grace of making us His brethren. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone"—that unique Man—"But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." When he

rose from the dead He entrusts Mary Magdalene with the most wonderful message ever entrusted to a messenger, "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." I know I am addressing those who have often heard these truths, but I also believe that I am addressing those to whose hearts the thought comes with fresh joy, that they are really of the same stock and lineage as the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed One who was here. As another has said—thus we are connected with "all things are of God."

I desire, as briefly as I can, to trace the new creation from its beginning, because I believe there is much darkness here. I shall try to make it simple to the youngest believer. I do not speak of new birth, or what we commonly call conversion. I believe a great deal depends upon the measure of grace first presented to the awakened soul. I see how very fully grace was declared at first in Acts: Jesus and the resurrection. The apostle Paul says to the jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Very many of those who believe the gospel believe only in the sacrifice of Christ. That is the beginning; but they do not apprehend the value of His resurrection. The truth of the sacrifice is found in the Old Testament, but there is no such thing as resurrection in the

types of the Old Testament, There never was a victim raised. If you only know the sacrifice you do not know acceptance. You know that your sins are forgiven; you have assurance I admit, but not acceptance. You know that you are safe, safe as in Exodus xii.; but that is not acceptance, but preservation from judgment. To know the truth of acceptance, we must pass on to chapter xv., where in type you have walked through the Red Sea, which typically is the death and resurrection of Christ. Then you have acceptance, you are brought to God. You have to do with God; the great mark of acceptance is you are occupied with God. Up to this the enemy, Pharaoh and the Egyptians, are before you. It is not only that Christ died, but He rose again. People do not deny His resurrection, but do you *believe* that He died and rose again for you? If you do, there is no disturbing element between God and you. Many are occupied with their own feelings, instead of with God's feelings about them. I quote Romans iv. the end of the chapter, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it (righteousness) was imputed to him: but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification." *God is the justifier.* No soul has peace

with God until he knows that there is no disturbing element between God and him. This is the first sense of the new creation. In the parable the prodigal son knew that his father had nothing against him. This really is the first step, but many believers, I am sorry to say, are more occupied with assurance than with acceptance. When you believe that God has raised Christ from the dead, you are justified, and being justified by faith you have peace with God. Now you are on new ground before God, you are before God in Christ.

This is the first step; you are now on a new footing; you have entered on the new creation. You are accepted in the One who has been raised out from among the dead; you are clear of the man who was under judgment, and you are before God in the Man who has glorified God in bearing judgment. "By whom we have access into this grace wherein we stand." (Rom. v. 2.) It is a never-to-be-forgotten moment when you know it. You have entered on a new history; you are no longer before God in Adam, the man under judgment, but in Christ who glorified God in bearing the judgment on man. In no other way can you solve what seemed incongruous to the elder brother in the father's reception of the prodigal. He says—These many years do I serve thee, and never at any time transgressed

thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid to make merry with my friends; but here is the scandal of the house, and there is no end to the favour you confer on him! The solution is this: the prodigal is received on the ground of another Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who glorified God. The elder brother wants to be received on the ground of a good man who only did what he ought to have done. The abounding grace is that you are received on the ground of the One who has glorified God. Then you are "accepted in the Beloved."

I turn now to the next step, where there is often a long delay before you have taken it. Many a day I knew that I was clear in the eye of God, that the man under judgment was ended in the cross to God's endless satisfaction; it was unspeakable joy to me to look to Him; but when I looked to myself I saw it was not gone from me. I was not in moral keeping with my acceptance with God. You see it illustrated in the prodigal; when he came to know his father's reception he could not say to his father, "Make me a hired servant," seeing the terms on which he was received. But in the next step is the delay with souls. Hence we get in Romans vi. and vii., what we all have to learn experimentally, even that we are set free from sin. I need

not tell you the many methods which have been tried in order to attain this. I think the prevailing error among ourselves is that some suppose that they can be free *by faith*. No; by faith you know that you are free in the sight of God. As to yourself you are not free, but as you are in the Spirit. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free. But there may be a returning to the old man after you have received the Spirit. Look at the Corinthians and the Galatians. See how departure came in even though they had received the Spirit. See what they are brought to; they are powerless. The Corinthian allowed his mind to work; he was thinking of his natural wisdom; the Galatian how he could be religious. There are the two lines; you constantly see Christians in one line or the other. But if you have accepted the resurrection truly you must *change your man*. It is easy to say the words, but I know nothing more practically difficult than to change your man. It is easy in a way to accept the doctrine, but how little have we truly accepted it! It is the subject of the end of Romans v., and in Romans vi. you are committed to death, baptised unto Christ's death. How did you get out of judgment? By death. How do you keep free of the man who was judged? By death. You are committed to death. "Reckon

ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The flesh cannot effect this, the Spirit of God only can. But if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds, you live. You can believe that the old man has gone from the eye of *God*. God never deviates from the efficacy of Christ's work. But you cannot believe that the old man is gone from *you* because it is not always true. Holiness by faith is an unscriptural statement. There is no such thing. God has removed everything from His own holy eye in the cross. It is unspeakable joy to every heart that knows it, and not only that, but He has given you the Holy Ghost that you may be in moral consistency with Himself. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Now I am free! You have acceptance first, and now you have liberty. This is a wonderful step! Now you are in the new order; you have advanced in new creation. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii. 2, 3.) Thereupon comes out a statement which must gladden every true heart in this room. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." God never reverts to the flesh; He has judged it. He never sees

you in the flesh, He sees you in the Spirit; but do you *walk* in the Spirit? In the offerings of the Old Testament the most pious one found relief when he offered a sacrifice, but he had to offer again next day. But now not only are your sins gone, but the man who did the sins is also gone in the sight of God. If you walk in the flesh and do not judge yourself, God will judge you, as we read, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh." There is no more offering for sin. Many do not believe that the old man is gone in judgment. Through grace you are in the risen Man. In Romans vi. you are severed from Adam by the death of Christ; you are alive in Him who by His death has severed you from the old man.

Many are in darkness here. I can feel for them; like myself they are trying to improve themselves, overlooking that as now in Christ, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live." (Rom. viii. 13.) You are committed to this in chapter vi.; you find the way to it in chapter viii.

It is as you grow in the new creation that you are able to appropriate what is yours through grace. It is yours before you appropriate it. It is true that every one who has received the Spirit is united to Christ; but

you might know nothing about it; you must be fitted for it. The one thing Abraham's steward was sworn to was, that the bride should be of the kindred of Isaac. How did he find out that she was of his kindred? By her grace. He asked of God that the right person should not only offer to get water for himself, but for the camels. When the steward asked Rebekah, she immediately offered to get water for him and for his camels. Then he asked of her kindred, and found out that she was the one he sought. But Rebekah does not know union until she is brought to Isaac; and be assured that you must be brought by the Spirit to Christ where He is, in order to *realise* now the greatest distinction which God has vouchsafed to you, and that is that you are united to Christ in heaven. Until you consciously know this, you cannot be fully His confidential servant. You may serve Him and labour much, but you cannot be in full concert with His mind except you realise union with Him.

But to proceed. It is a wonderful day when you can say: "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." But mind the order in which it comes: one man is gone—"I am crucified with Christ"—my own personality is gone in the cross; a new Person comes in—"Christ liveth in me."

I think it is illustrated very forcibly in the case of the weaning of Isaac. (Gen. xxi.) Then Isaac got his right place. There is a moment when Christ gets His right place in your heart; there is a day when He is owned there. Who refused Isaac his place? Ishmael—the cultivated man the child of Abraham, brought up in his house; he mocked. That is a much deeper and more painful experience to go through than Romans vii. In Romans vii. you find that you are incompetent to keep the law; but here (Gal. iv.) you find that the most cultivated sentiment of your nature does not like Christ.

“Who knows thee well will quit thee with disgust—
Degraded mass of animated dust.”

Now you have turned the corner. Here you learn how you are delivered from the Galatian snare. The Corinthians were re-established by beholding the Lord's glory. Beholding His glory you are transformed! Never was there a more wonderful statement. The translators could not catch the full meaning of it. We have it in our hymn:

“Yet sure if in Thy presence
My soul still constant were,
Mine eye would more familiar
Its brighter glories bear.”

Transformed to what? To perfection do you

mean? No; but *into the same image*; the impression of *Himself* at the time. If our souls more "constant" were there—in His presence, we should know it better. I believe you come to a great step now; you have advanced to His own side. You come now nearly to what scripture calls "perfect," which simply means grown up. We speak wisdom among those who are grown up. The Corinthians were only babes in Christ; they were not ready for wisdom.

In John xiii. the Lord speaks of "Part with me." In the Old Testament the highest favour was: "I will be with thee." Now there is something higher: "WITH ME." You shall have part with Me. You cannot know the priesthood unless you know part with Christ risen. Do not reject this because it is a great step, but believe it, and ponder on it. Unless you have known the work of the Saviour—all that He has effected for you, you will not come to Him as Priest. The Priest is not occupied with sins but with infirmities. You cannot be in His company now except with Him risen. Possibly there is nothing more unknown to us than His sympathy. His sympathy can only be known in His company.

We have seen that in Hebrews ii. we are His brethren. We accompany Him into the

Holiest in His fragrance. In type Aaron and his sons go together into the holy place. It is important for you to bear in mind that the Spirit has brought you to this in order to avail yourself of it. You are never behind the Spirit's work in you, and you are never before it. If I could know the Spirit's work in every soul in this room I should know where that soul is; it is not how much you have read, or how much you know, but where *are* you? What is the measure of the work of the Spirit in you?

No one can join the Lord in the assembly except he is outside of man. Many come to the meeting who were never in His presence. His presence is outside of man and outside of the flesh. It is entirely new ground. Priesthood and the assembly are in the one connection.

Now in Colossians you pass not only outside of man but outside of the world, the things here. As far as I see, you have now passed beyond "young men" in 1 John ii. You have passed outside the world. I think a Christian may advance much without being outside present things. "Young men" have overcome the wicked one—Pharaoh, Satan, the power of death; they are strong, the word of God abides in them; but their snare is that they are attracted to things here. Do not *you* like

things here? I suppose you do! I say this, because I know myself! And I tell you that I never clung to any earthly thing that it did not fail; yet you will not lose anything which is of any use to you. You do not change your house nor your place, but you are in the wilderness, morally a new position. You get there through death, you get out of judgment by the death and the resurrection of Christ. You are severed from the old man by the death of Christ.

To return to Colossians. You come to Christ there outside of everything here, where there is no human voice. Now you know Him as the Head of the body, and until you have known that Christ is your Head, you cannot know union with Him. It has been a comfort to me to remember the way the Lord was pleased to revive the truth some sixty years ago. He made known through the scriptures to a clergyman that Christ in heaven was his Head. At that time he did not know the truth of Romans, and hence could not enter as yet into this great light. It is a great thing to see what God is doing. It is a great thing to go like Moses on Mount Pisgah and to see the land. He was attracted to it. Is it not a great thing for any young Christian in this room to be attracted to Christ as Head, in order to know union

with Him? When once you start on this line you will not be happy but as you continue in it. A Christian when he declines always surrenders the most advanced truth first. The top-shoot goes first. But you ask, Will he not get it back again? Yes, surely, if he returns to where he lost it—to the point of departure; but there is no restoration, the cloud is not removed till your feet are washed, until in Christ's presence you get back to the point of your departure.

Christ is the only Head. God does not support anything that is not Christ's. The five foolish virgins some say are Christians. Impossible! They are left behind. Every Christian goes to Christ; every member of Christ must go to Him. "Why persecutest thou *me*?" The body of Christ is formed here to fill up the hiatus consequent on the rejection of Christ. When Christ moves from off the throne every one of Christ must go to Him. That there will be a work of grace of another kind on the earth subsequently I do not doubt. If you do not understand the mystery, you will never understand "all of one." Every trouble which has ever occurred amongst us has been from not understanding the nature of Christ as Man. If you do not understand the nature of Christ as Man you do not understand the

mystery. The church is the complement of Himself. You will go too much one way or the other way if you do not understand Him.

Now I pass on to the greatest step. (Eph. 1.) Verses 1-14 refer to you individually—your fitness. This I have been working out. Until you know you are morally suited to Christ—of His kindred, you cannot know that you are united to Him. We are all united to Him. I want you to maintain that; but I want you also to see the wonderful purpose of God for you on this earth—that you may realise your union with Christ—be brought to Christ, like Rebekah to Isaac; I do not think you can have the sense of union unless you know you are brought by the Spirit to Christ where Christ is. You have to travel in wilderness experience across the Jordan to get there, conducted by the Spirit to that spot, as in the language of the hymn:

“And see, the Spirit’s power
Has ope’d the heavenly door,
Has brought me to that favour’d hour,
When toil shall all be o’er.”

The Spirit can conduct you into the joy of it now. Though you have not been removed from the earth, the Spirit can conduct you into the purpose of God, even to know that you are united to Christ Himself in the place where He

is. You cannot acquire heavenly power until then, nor can you be in concert with His mind until then.

As I began, so I must end. How it should distress and humble us that instead of the church being this day to Christ what Rebekah was to Isaac, as one homogeneous whole, many are contending for their own views and works, while Christ Himself is not the one absorbing object. The church should be a solace to Christ here on this earth, consequent on the failure of Israel. If I move your heart to one silent desire that you may be a comfort to Christ on earth, I thank God for it!

The Lord grant that each of us may understand better the blessed distinction to which we are called, for His name's sake!

J. B. S.

DELIVERANCE.

ROMANS VI. 1-11 ; VII. 4-6.

I DESIRE to say a word in reference to one point which has been before us this morning. It is in connection with the subject of these chapters, namely, deliverance. The point I want to refer to for a moment is that it is of the very essence of Christianity that you must "change your man." I have no doubt whatever that we are all hindered through failing to apprehend the first lesson impressed upon us in connection with the wilderness. It is of vital moment to apprehend that we must change our man; the simple reason for that being that God has changed the man before Him. Scripture presents to us two men; that is a truth so familiar that there is no question about it; and my point is that God is no longer testing the first man, but has revealed the Second. He has changed the man. I think that comes out in Romans vi. People talk about this chapter and about death in connection with it, but they do not understand its bearing. I believe the object is to shew how death is effected in us. We do not apprehend what it is to die except as we apprehend the man that is before God, therefore we must change our man. There is no doubt about what God has

done, and what He has done with regard to us. Our old man has been crucified with Christ. Then of necessity we change our man.

I want to point out, if I can, how it is brought about in us. But whether I can make it plain or not, I am perfectly certain of the importance of the subject. The Spirit of God does not *as to us* bring out the truth of life in Romans until chapter viii. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live." I think that is where we come to life. There are certain things you have to learn before you can enter on that ground; in fact you cannot apprehend it until you see that one man is superseded by another, and that that other man who is before God has to fill the vision of the Christian.

I will try to draw the contrast for one instant between chapters v. and vi. In chapter v. Christ is viewed entirely, and the Spirit too, on the divine side. We have expressed in Christ and in the Spirit the attitude in which God is toward the Christian. Everything comes to the Christian through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is presented as the last Adam through whom all the grace of God is ministered to us, and it is remarkable that even the Spirit of God is brought in, in the same way as on God's side: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit." It is the only allusion to the

Spirit in that chapter. You run down the chapter at your leisure and find how everything comes to us from God, and all through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the last Adam come in. If I want to know what God is to the whole believing family I have to learn it in the One who is Head to the family. I have sometimes said, though it is not always accepted, that I would not admit that the child could be greater than his father, that is, as before God. It is not the way of God, for properly the child derives all from his father. What God is to the head He is to the family. With the head (Adam) of the human family came in sin and the judgment of death, and sin and death became true to the whole family. So also if I want to know what is true to the believer, I have to learn what is established in the Head, the last Adam. We learn thus in chapter v. what God is toward the believer through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In chapter vi. we are on different ground altogether. Christ is brought in as second man, not as last Adam. The same divine person, but in another aspect. In connection with this you have to change your man; the second man is to fill the vision of the Christian. I not only have to learn that I am superseded in God's sight, but I am superseded in my own sight—a much more difficult thing. I am not very apt at illustra-

tions, but I can give you one from scripture. In John iv. the woman of Samaria was superseded in her own sight; she went to the men of the city and said, "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" The proof to me that it was so is in her boldness in going to the men of the city. If her vision had not been filled by another, I do not believe she would have thought for a moment of doing what she did.

There are two points on which I touch in connection with Romans vi. We have there Christ entered in as man in resurrection to the perfect, eternal satisfaction of God, and in divine acceptance. These two points I want to dwell on for a moment. Christ has entered in as man on the ground of the work He has accomplished for God's glory as typified in the burnt offering. He fills the eye of God. He is "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." One could not find a stronger expression. He has entered into perfect acceptance with God on that ground. "He lives to God." People say, Did not He ever live to God? Of course He did, but it is not simply a question here of Himself in His personal perfectness. The point is that He lives to God in connection with having died to sin. How otherwise could we live to God? Because the point of the chapter is to pave the way for the

family to come in. He "lives to God" on ground on which we can come in with Him.

I have sometimes thought that the chapter presents to us the idea of the tree of life, but there is one difficulty to my mind. There is the thought in scripture in connection with the tree of life that it is, so to say, indigenous, it is proper to the scene in which it is. The tree of life was proper to Eden; when you get it again it is in another scene to which it is proper—the Paradise of God. Christ is there the tree of life. But you get the principle, I think, in Romans vi. A man has come in who has perfectly solved the question of good and evil; unvaryingly maintaining the good in the presence of evil. He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; He has been raised again from the dead, and is now to man the tree of life. You have the whole question of the two trees settled, and in this chapter you have the One who is the tree of life to the Christian in the divine, eternal satisfaction in which man is, as raised from the dead. That is God's man. He lives unto God. That brings in the thought of acceptance. I ask you to carry your mind back to the moment when Christ rose from the dead. Do you not think He came out from the dead to the infinite satisfaction of the Father, and that He entered

into the acceptance that was due to Him, on the ground of the work He had accomplished for God's glory? That is the ground for us. But I do not think any one will accept it unless he is delighted with the man who has entered in upon that ground. When it is accepted we reckon ourselves dead to sin. We part company with the first man because we are satisfied with the second man. It is a hard lesson. I know it as well as anybody. It is a long time before we learn it. We are superseded in our own sight by another; and He is the one who has entered in to the eternal satisfaction of God.

Just a word further. In chapter vi. I think sin is regarded as the great dominating principle in the first man. I part company with that man because now the thought in my soul is to join the one who has died to sin and who lives to God. In chapter vii. is another point—we are joined to Him. It is a question of law and husband now, that is, of a bond that God has formed. We die to sin, and we die to the world; but we are “become dead to the law by the body of Christ.” The first bond is dissolved by the death of Christ, that a new bond may be formed that “ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring

forth fruit unto God." It conveys to me a great deal. The Christian is lawfully subject to Christ, and is to take a character from the one to whom he is joined. That is the idea of a wife. She is to take a character from the one to whom she is united. The one who has been raised by the glory of the Father lives to God. It is not only that I have found an object of delight and admiration in Him, but that I am joined to Him, and I am going by Him to bring forth fruit unto God. I am to be a living representation of Him here, because I take a character from Him.

We have to die to sin and to the world in the experience of our souls, because we have lived in them; but in regard to the law the bond is dissolved in order that another bond might be formed.

All here this morning would be very tenacious of this point—that we are joined to Christ. Every Christian is joined to Christ. Can we all say we have taken a character from Christ in order that we might bring forth fruit unto God? Or as it puts it lower down (ver. 6), "That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Not under law, like Israel, but in newness of spirit, all according to the pattern of Christ. I believe Christ inaugurated a wholly new order of things for

man here. He was a man on earth, truly here as man; but such a man as He could not have been unless He were a divine Person. And now He has entered in according to what He has accomplished for God—He lives to God. That is the man for God, and that is the man now for the Christian. To take your character from Him and bring forth fruit unto God is not preaching; it is not testimony (it is testimony in one sense), but it is love. As we read in Galatians v. 22, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, and a variety of other blessed moral qualities.

I am perfectly aware there is now no vine on earth. Christ was the true vine; that is passed away; but I should be sorry to think there was no such thing as fruit to God. We are married to another that we should bring forth fruit to God.

That is all I want to say, taking up what was brought before us by our beloved brother. I am not talking of lack in other people, I feel it in myself. If we want to get a real start in our Christianity we must accept the truth that we have to change our man. Not only has the second man accomplished all for God's glory but the first man is set aside, and is superseded by Him who has entered as man into the glory of God.

F. E. R.

“ALL OF ONE.”

HEBREWS II. 10-13.

THE point, beloved brethren, that I would say a word on, as the Lord may enable me, is this, that we may have the sense in our souls of what God's present call is. It is a marvellous thing when we think of it that we are called to be companions of the Lord Jesus Christ, called into His company as the Captain of salvation. God is not now bringing a people to Canaan, but bringing “many sons to glory” Of old, when God was leading a people out of Egypt, they never rose up to what His thought concerning them was. I can quite understand their singing the song of deliverance, in the sense that they were delivered from the misery and bondage of Egypt; but they did not enter into what it was to be brought to God, and that God had taken them up for His own glory, and that they should be a people on this earth with whom His name should be connected. Here, in contrast to Canaan, He is bringing many sons to glory, and the first thing that comes before us, as to this purpose, is the

death of Christ, as that which was suited to God as well as necessary for us: "It became him." If the thought of His heart is to bring many sons to glory, He must do it in a way that is worthy of Himself. That is my great idea of glory, what is suitable to God Himself. We have also the word perfect, it often means full-grown, but in order to understand what a full-grown Christian is, we must see that he is one who has perfection according to God in his heart. I do not mean that the person is perfect in himself. The apostle says, "Not as though I had already attained or were already perfected;" for perfection is, that we shall be conformed to Christ in glory; but he has this in his heart, it is what he is set for. I need hardly say that is Christ, who through sufferings, has been perfected in glory. Nothing could be perfection that is not suited to God. It is what becomes Him.

If we think of the many sons brought to glory, we see the Lord Jesus Christ has been already perfected through sufferings. He has sat down in the Majesty of the heavens, and the divine satisfaction is expressed in the glory of that blessed Man. When He was here upon earth, He said: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." It has often been noticed that

He gave a motive for the love of His Father in His death ; but His death effectuated the purpose of God. He adds, "*that I might take it again.*" It was in the mind of God that Christ should die, and take life as man in another state and condition, and the Father loved Him for doing it. Man in the garden of Eden was never the purpose of God ; it was part of His great plan to bring about His purpose, but His purpose was always in Christ, and many sons brought to glory in the Paradise of God. The Lord took a body—"a body hast thou prepared me"—in order to carry out the will of God, and having passed through death and sufferings He has been perfected in glory as the Leader and Captain of salvation.

If your eye travels up and sees the Man who is there according to the perfect delight and joy of God's heart, you see that He has reached that place through sufferings. Christianity begins there, as has been said, and I love the thought of it: "it is a new man in a new place." I want to lead your hearts to that new place where the new Man is entirely according to the delight and satisfaction of God's heart. 2 Corinthians iii. 17 has been alluded to: "We behold the Lord's glory"—not only the beautiful characteristics of what He was down here, which we love to trace, but we love to

think He is there to the eternal and divine and infinite satisfaction of God. And everything for God begins with that blessed Man there.

And now God, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, is bringing many sons to glory. The many sons are all to be like Christ. We must read the next verse in connection with the preceding one, and here we find that our sanctification is according to Christ's sanctification. There is no other for us. Is He there, the blessed One in whom God's delight and satisfaction is, made perfect through sufferings? That is the measure of our sanctification, for we also are to be brought to glory. “Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.” I know *we* must go to the death side, for through death the Lord has been perfected. For myself, I did not enter into these truths when first they broke upon me, but I got a wonderful impression that never left me. I thought at first I could take them up. It was a path I would like to walk in. I had to find out what many another has had to find out, as has been said, that “old Melancthon was stronger than young Philip.” Death and resurrection have to come in. But I now see that I am entitled to reckon myself as removed from the eye of God through the death of Christ. There is nothing to expect

from self now. We are of Christ, and our sanctification is according to Him where He is. People try to be holy, and talk of holiness by faith, and so on ; but raise your eye for one moment to that blessed Man in the glory of God, and say, God's thought for me is that I am to be like Him ! When we are raised from the dead, of course we shall drop everything unsuited to Him, and go into the glory and be like Him ; the image of the heavenly could not be put upon anything that belongs to the first man ; all will then be dropped, for you will be in that glory like Christ, but remember, the Christ whom we are to be like is the Sanctifier *now*, and that we are on the way to the glory. "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." What an effect it would have upon us ! He is not ashamed to call us brethren.

Our brother has been bringing before us how we enter into the fact that the old man is removed. It was effected in the death of Christ. I could not remove a bit of it myself. We often try to correct the flesh instead of seeing God has dealt with it in the cross of Christ. We may have tried to do it, but it is rest to see a Man in the glory to God's entire and infinite satisfaction. Christ having done all to secure that glory. He is there the measure of our sanctification.

There is that which has been wrought in us by the Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," that which can appreciate the things of God. I do not leave that out, but I do desire we should go on to the fulness of what we have in Christ, that we are "of Him." We could not be of Him till He was raised from the dead, till the other man was gone, entirely removed from the eye of God. And now we are of Him, and He is the Object before us.

People think of the glory as something very grand and great. No doubt it is, but there is a danger of having a material thought. The glory is that with which God surrounds Himself, and He surrounds Himself with what is according to Himself. When we think of that, and look up there and see the Lord Jesus Christ, who has entirely glorified God, and who is before Him as Man in divine perfectness which has been tested in death, it is a relief and a joy to say, "We are all of one." "He is not ashamed to call us brethren," because we are of Him.

To my mind it is very beautiful that these other quotations to shew that the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one, should be brought in here. "I will put my trust in him." This takes up the truth of Psalm xvi. There we see the blessed Man who was God, but who said, "My

goodness extendeth not to thee." That is, He did not take the place of equality, for He emptied Himself and became a man. In Psalm ii. He is Messiah set upon the holy hill of Zion; in Psalm viii. He is Son of man set over all things; but here He is the One who emptied Himself and led in the path of faith and dependence, and He takes up others. Hence He says to the saints and to the excellent of the earth, In them is all my delight. He found a people whose hearts were turning to God, and His delight was in them, and He led in the path of faith which ends in "Thy presence." The moment my heart turned to God, it brought Christ, so to speak, to my side. I did not know it, nor did I know that He was the vessel of all the grace of God to me, but so it was. He took me up *for God*. That blessed One walked the path of faith down here, and that is the path we have to walk in. He was One who was down here entirely dependent, *wholly* for God, cast upon God from His birth, and trusting Him to shew Him the path of life, a path which lay through death, but ending with the fulness of joy in God's presence. It is beautiful how these verses come in. They shew the youngest believer that Christ has an interest in them. You look up into the glory and see Him in acceptance, according to the satisfaction of God, and yet you know His

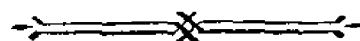
interest in you. He and those He has taken up "all of one." His acceptance their acceptance; His sanctification their sanctification.

The next quotation is, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." I should like every heart to be touched by that! Children were given to Him when Israel was lost to Him. As Messiah He was cut off and had nothing. His disciples were to tell no man He was the Christ. This quotation is from Isaiah viii. At the time when God hides His face from Israel there are those given to Him to be the comfort of His heart. At the time when He spoke of His betrayal into the hands of men to be killed, He said to Peter, "*for me and thee.*" (Matt. xvii. 22, 27.) It is a touching expression. We belong to Christ when His titles and rights are refused on earth. We belong to Him while He is in heaven.

When you go to the breaking of bread, though it is a great comfort to *your* heart to go and remember the Lord, does it ever strike you what it must be to the Lord, in a world where He has been rejected, to see a few of His people gathered in the purpose of their hearts to remember Him whose titles and rights are refused? Is it nothing to Him to look down and see them, "the children given" to Him? Of whom He can say, They think of Me, they remember Me

in My death, they love My company? I do believe it is a joy to the Lord to come into the midst of a few poor saints as those who have been given to Him. He and they "all of one." We may have little entered into it; but the more you get into His company, the more you will find it overshadows you. You will lose sight of yourself in the sense of what He is. At the same time you will be awake to the interests of His heart in those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, the children given to Him of God.

T. H. R.



HEAVENLY WITNESSES.

JOHN III. 12-15, 27-36 ; xv. 22-27.

THERE are two points, beloved brethren, brought before us in these scriptures, and concerning them I desire just to speak to you for a moment. First of all let me say, I will try to speak by God's help so that the feeblest heart may, by His grace, receive some little help and comfort—perhaps some who are not so well accustomed to the terms and expressions which are in common use among ourselves, who feebly indeed know a little more, or at all events are more familiar with the outward expression of truth.

First I would call your attention to the difference between “earthly things” and “heavenly things,” the plain, unmistakable distinction which the Lord Himself makes here ; the “earthly things” which form the subject of the first part of John iii. and the “heavenly things” which form the subject of the verses we have read. It is a great thing to distinguish clearly between these two. If we see that there are the earthly and there are the heavenly it will clear the road immensely for the understanding of

much which perhaps has been difficult of late in the apprehension of many. That is the first thing I desire to dwell upon: "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"

The next, beloved friends, is this: when the Lord speaks of heavenly things He at once brings out a point of the most precious import for us, that there was only One who was competent to reveal heavenly things. There was but One who was competent in the glory of His own Person. No man had gone up to heaven, so that he could know what those heavenly things were, or that he could unravel, or even receive the impression of what those heavenly things were. But there was One competent in the glory of His Person, and knowing all things where He was and whence He came. He could according to His own good pleasure absolutely reveal heavenly things.

I desire earnestly to press that point. There are such statements of scripture as, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Old Testament scriptures abound in statements of "earthly things;" but there is no Old Testament scripture that carries our hearts to heaven that I am aware of. But it was the pleasure of God that when the heavenly things should be revealed here in this world, it

was not merely that they were to be revealed by word of mouth as before, but by One who in His own Person was the centre and object of these things. That is a point of the deepest blessedness to one's soul. The very realities, the blessedness of all that connected itself with those things; all the glory of that scene where He was at home, all that belonged to it, He was the object of, as well as of every affection, of that scene, from the Father's heart down to the lowest angel that uttered His praise there. He was as well the centre of it all in the blessedness and glory of His own Person; it was He who brought these affections in His own Person down here into this world. They were revealed in all the blessedness and in all the perfectness of the One who was competent to reveal them. They were revealed in all the affection and love that He was the object of in that scene. Hence we read in that verse that we remember, and I trust delight in: "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

I ask you affectionately this evening (and I believe the least it could do would be to affect our hearts if they got under the power of it, and if we adequately understand it) have our hearts got under the power of this?—The bosom of the Father, all the blessedness of that scene where

Eternal Life is at home—all comprehended under the heavenly things, has been made known by that blessed Person who was there, who was Eternal Life Himself. If you and I by virtue of all that has been accomplished have been brought to be at home there, just think of how blessed it is. We need to get the sense first of what we are brought into. And that which we are brought into was first of all revealed by the blessed One who was here, in His own Person. That is the second thing that meets one in these scriptures: *the One* who was the object and centre of these affections. He revealed them in all the blessedness that belonged to Himself, revealed them, I say, here in this poor, wretched world. "The Son of man who is in heaven." (Ver. 13.)

The next point is in connection with this word "*must*." I would call your special attention, beloved friends, to what no doubt many here have known and thought of far more deeply than myself, even to the *aspect of the cross* found here, and to the expression "lifted up." I believe these expressions are tied together. I see, by grace, a very close and distinct connection between them. In the serpent of brass "lifted up," (as the Lord says), I am assured He intends our hearts to receive a very distinct and definite sense of that particular aspect of the cross as set

forth in John iii. It is not the blood on the lintel, nor is it even the Red Sea ; but I believe the intention of the Lord Himself in introducing this type and bringing it before us is that man, tried for forty years in the desert, borne with in most blessed patience, man under tested responsibility, would not do for God—no, that man must go. That, I believe, is the mind and intention of the Lord in leading to the cross in the brazen serpent aspect of it. That man responsible and tried in the desert must be set aside for ever.

But there is more than that. I believe that connects itself with the expression "*lifted up.*" That expression must be taken with the whole subject of the passage. What I understand by the "must" is, that the subject is presented on the divine side. That "must" and the "lifted up" is the great testimony that this world here—as well as the man at home in it—is *no place for God*. The *man* will not do for God, nor the *place*.

Let us note it well, "The Son of man must be lifted up"—nothing in the world was good enough for Jesus ; nothing even that God could do in it ; no accomplishment of promise, no bestowal of the throne of David, no universal dominion of the Son of man, would or could suffice as the divine answer to the cross—nothing

but God's right hand in heavenly glory could suffice or meet God's heart. This blessed Man is lifted up between the heaven and the earth as a testimony to the scene in which fallen man is at home.

All this, then, is introductory to the heavenly things. I believe what we have from this blessed witness Himself, who was and is in heaven, who spoke the words of God as He knew them and revealed them, as in the blessedness of Himself who was in them, is a clear and solemn witness to the state in which man was here in this world, and at home in it; and we must be instructed in all that, as the introduction to heavenly things.

I pray God by His Spirit that some feeble heart here may get the sense of the reality and blessedness of it.

Now I desire to link with this the statement as to the Spirit in chapter xv. I think I see a very close moral connection between the way in which the Spirit is presented in John xv., and the way the blessed One reveals in the glory of His Person heavenly things in John iii. In John xv. the Lord anticipates the completion of His work, and His really having *gone to the Father* — a common expression through John's gospel for what we call His death. All through the gospel you will be

struck with that, that His death *as such* is not spoken of, but His *going out of the world; departing to the Father*. It is looked at here as an accomplished fact, and He is regarded as ascended, and from that place of glory He sends down from Himself the Spirit of God, who is dwelling in the believer, the Witness to the heavenly glory, the place, the blessedness which the Lord Jesus Christ has gone into as Man. The Spirit has come down to bring to our souls all the present blessedness of the place Christ is in. Christ came from heaven, "the Son of man who is in heaven," the One who was the exponent, for no man had ever gone into heaven to tell it; but He came and revealed these things in His own Person. Now He has gone back into heaven, into the new place of Man, according to the purposes and counsels of God. It is a blessed connection. A heavenly witness now it is who makes known to us all these things that are connected with the place Christ has gone into. Just as it was the heavenly Witness who made known heavenly things in the glory of His Person, so it is a heavenly witness who makes known to us all those things that surround that blessed One in the place where He now is. How could we know these things if Christ had not come down to shew them? How could we know now what surrounds Him unless a

heavenly witness had come down from Him? A divine Person who has come from Himself, God the Holy Ghost, makes known to us, not as an impersonal power acting on us, but as a divine Person indwelling, acting in us; not that which is spoken of in Old Testament days, namely, that "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." There was nothing that corresponded to the indwelling Spirit in those times, nor will there be in the days that are coming. I do not know anything that has moved one's heart more than that the things which belong to Christ in heaven are now made known by a Person who indwells us. It is not a testimony outside of us but a divine Person who dwells in us. The operation now of the Spirit of God in us—all the making good of things in our souls, all that entering into them in faith, all this and more besides is connected with the Indweller who operates. I feel sad as I reflect how much one has separated the operation from *the Person who operates*. It is not merely an operation, not merely an understanding, clearness, and perception in the soul, but it is in connection with One who personally has come from Christ in glory, and who dwells in the believer now, and carries on that operation in Person in us.

I commend the connection of these scriptures

to you. Judge if it is correct or if it commends itself to your spiritual judgment. I know nothing more arresting than to think that that blessed One who came from heaven, and who revealed these things in His own Person, and that as well in all their fulness and blessedness, has sent a divine Person, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, from Himself, to make them known—and, alas! how little we know them!

Put the question to yourself: How much are they our own very life? My brethren, it is an easy thing to talk over doctrines and truths, but how much are these heavenly things the very life of our souls here? It was just those two points pressed upon me for utterance. May the Lord in His infinite grace give us to see the perfection of the revelation, for His name's sake.

W. T. T.



THE CROSS THE TRUE MEASURE OF THE FIRST MAN AND OF SIN:

(1 COR. II. ; 2 COR. V. 14-21 ; GAL. VI. 12-17.)

WE have in scripture, beloved brethren, the history of God's ways with men ; and the revelation of His purposes in connection with Christ. We have also the history of the believer individually, and God's dealings with him in the pathway of faith, and the results.

Generally, we may say, the responsibility of man is connected with the history of God's ways with man. And this, I need scarcely say, brings out the long patience of God. I am going over what is familiar to most of us, but I wish to speak simply so as to be understood by all.

The first man, Adam, is the responsible man. His testing began in the garden of Eden in innocence. But he falls before the tempter. He is then tried without law, and the wickedness of man, left to himself, is such that he has to be swept off the earth by the flood, which God brought on the world of the ungodly.

A new state of things is then commenced

with Noah, whose sacrifice is accepted, and who is set up to govern on the restored earth; but Noah fails to govern himself, and gets drunk. Then we get idolatry, and Abraham, the depository of promise, is called out into the path of faith. After this his seed goes down into Egypt, and is delivered from cruel bondage under Pharaoh, rescued by the mighty hand of God, who brings them to Himself. They receive the law by the hand of Moses, saying, "All that the Lord hath said we will do;" but instead of keeping the law, they at once made a golden calf and worshipped it, and in Romans ii. the apostle writes of them: "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." Making their boast of the law, through breaking the law they dishonoured God.

Now the law was the measure of God's claim on the responsible man. Man under law was the actor under God's eye, and the question raised was whether he could meet God's claims. In all that we have looked at there was no revelation of God's purposes; but now we get this wonderful thing, that another Man comes into the world. A MAN is presented to us on whom the heavens open and the voice of the Father is heard, saying: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Here is a *new* thing: One who, though born of woman and under law, and "found in fashion as a man," came down from heaven. Jesus is a Man in this world, very Man, "in likeness of sinful flesh," Son of God from all eternity, He is born into time, the true Messiah, Son of David, Son of God, and Son of man. Now we get the last test of the man who had always come short of all God's claims; God had sent His messengers to Israel from the beginning; He had sent prophets one after the other; but "They took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another;" such was the treatment they had received. And now comes the final test: "Last of all he sent unto them his son;" and they said, "This is the heir: come, let us kill him."

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." God was manifest in the flesh. Christ was here on earth, a humble, lowly Man, yet the Son revealing the Father. He is presented to Israel as their Messiah, in fulfilment of promise, and Pilate says to them: "Shall I crucify your *king*?" I am purposely leading up to the cross and His rejection by man. As to His own path of obedience, in contrast with the first Adam, He emptied Himself, taking a bondsman's form, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even

the death of the cross. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many; to hear the cry of distress, to heal the sick, to cleanse the leper, to raise the dead, to feed the hungry, to cast out demons, to give back to the widow her only son, to feed the multitudes, to go about "doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him." Tempted by Satan and tested in all the circumstances which the first man had brought about through sin, He is perfected through sufferings, and becomes the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him. Here was the One who presented all that was perfect as man to God, and all that was blessed in God to man.

But man, as such, the first man, would not have Him. Why? He did not come calling man to account; He did not come imputing offences; He did not come claiming anything; He came bringing God in goodness near to man. It was in this wonderful aspect that He came, but the world knew Him not.

And what was the culmination of the history of the ways and dealings of God with man through all the years of long-suffering and patience? Have we ever really measured what was the answer of man to God? What was the end of it all? There is an end, and that end is

the cross. When we look at the cross we see the final conclusion: "The Son of man is lifted up," as our brother has read to us. *That* is the answer of man to God come down to man in grace, and promises fulfilled in Christ. Would the *Jews* receive their own Messiah? No! "We have no king but Cæsar!" "Away with him!" "Crucify him! crucify him!" they cry. Would the *Gentile* have the Saviour of the world? No! The Roman delivered Him up unrighteously to the Jew to crucify.

Have *we* seen the cross in this light? Have *we* beheld this blessed One come into the world? In His own Person, second Man and last Adam? The One who was ever before the Father, who was His delight from all eternity? None could add to the dignity and glory of His Person, but the light shone in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. Have we understood what this final act of man was at the cross, as bringing out the real nature of sin in the sight of God; when all the malice of the human heart under Satanic energy rose up to its height in this crowning act of sin? And against whom? Mark it!

The wickedness of ~~man~~ was great in the earth when God swept the world away with the flood of waters; but nothing can be compared to what came out at the cross! Where can we get such

evidence of the condition of the human heart as at the cross? This final act of man under trial! This final act of this guilty world, that would have nothing to do with the Son of God. Could there be a greater proof of sin? The devil let loose in the world, leading on the world, and sin so to speak taking its natural course in man's heart, a heart whose enmity came out against God manifested in grace and in goodness in the Person of His Son. Yet all this only brought out the gross character of that moral darkness which could not discern the light, and the deadly hatred of that heart which could not discern the love. It manifested what sin was, and that Holy One hanging upon the cross, with every indignity heaped upon Him, and this, by man who had been made in God's own image! became the true measure of the breach between the world and God.

Can we suppose that after that moment there could be any question as to what the creature was, any question as to what the first man was before the eye of God, after such an act as the crucifixion? Have we, beloved brethren, taken in the gravity of the fact that this act was the product of the human heart? And that this is the end of the history of the first man; the end of the history of the world. What more

could be tried? God can absolutely try nothing else to prove what man is.

Now have we accepted the truth as to what we are by nature? We may know a great deal of theology, about the fall, and so on; but I say, have we reached the conviction that if we accept this verdict *on man* we are writing something on *ourselves*? From that moment, from the cross, this is what man and the world is before God. Do we believe it?

Now, out of a world of such material God is delivering souls and bringing them to Himself. What then must be the miraculous work which can form with such materials anything that can enjoy communion with a holy God and with His blessed Son? Calvary is the immeasurable gulf that exists between God and man—the manifestation of sin, and at the same time its condemnation on the part of God. How is it to be bridged? Who can bring man across the gulf?

There is only One who can do it, and what will He do? There is only one way, only one thing that can be done, and that thing is done in Christ. How will He do it?

We must look for the question of responsibility to be fully settled, and for God to be glorified as to all this which has come out in man. And here is the wonderful thing, that *now* can be said of the cross from God's side, "Now is the

Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Now is the time for God to begin to work, and to begin to work, too, from the place where His Son proved the immeasurable distance between God and sin. The work is done in Christ: there is the end of the first man. We must look now at Christ, we must look at the work that devolves on Him; there the judgment is borne, and the question of responsibility for ever settled. We have another Man now, the work is taken up by Him, and God is glorified in Him, and that in the very place that closes up the history of the first man.

From that very place of immeasurable distance, where the darkness closed up everything before the eye of God, the light breaks forth. What will God do? He begins a new thing on the ground of the cross; we are now on another line altogether. Now that the first man is covered with eternal shame, judged, and set aside, comes out the second Man in resurrection; He has in death glorified God, and has become in resurrection the Head of a new race.

But remember that we have altogether turned away from and left the first man, for God has entirely done with him and with his world; we have done with what belongs to the old order of things. Christianity is a new thing altogether; we are on entirely new lines—on the line of

purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. I see the second Man risen from the dead, and morally everything is settled. I follow Him into the glory; He is the revelation of all that God is; I see Him on the throne, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and I see a new beginning in resurrection: he begins a new history of man in His own blessed Person.

I think you will see in a moment what I am at, what I mean in saying all this. I hear the reading on Romans vi. was thought difficult this afternoon, but it surely should not be difficult to understand "dead to sin" in Romans vi. No one has any difficulty in understanding about the forgiveness of sins: we should not be here if we had; nor about justification through the resurrection of Christ. We can all understand Romans v., and see how we are justified by faith in God who raised Him, and then are reconciled to God through His death. But I ask, Do we realise what came out at the cross? What came out in all the élite of this world in the day when Christ was crucified? and in *human* nature, in *cultivated* human nature? And should it, in view of all this, and of what the Lord passed through in connection with sin, be a difficulty that the believer has to go through an experience as to what

the sin is that is in him? An experience that will shew him the incorrigible evil of his own nature?

What we are in the flesh must be experimentally entered into by the soul before there can be true christian liberty. Are we to believe that singing "Happy day" and "On to glory," and such like, having got rid of our sins, and having heaven for our home at the end: are we, I ask, to believe that *that* is all that the cross brings or teaches, and that your soul is to go through nothing else, nothing deeper? Is forgiveness of sins and heaven at the end to be all? Nay! The moment the soul is born again the conflict begins, and I have to face the fact of *what I am*, that "in *me*, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." I have to discover that that status in which I stood in Adam is judged and set aside for ever in the cross. I have to learn, it may be by bitter experience, that if the sin that is in me had run its course, the only thing it would have done with me would have been to place me among the crowd at the cross who cried, "Away with him! Away with him!" What a light this sheds on the first man, on that which each of us is by nature in the old creation. And this, though not proper christian experience, is not learned in a day.

But now see how all this points to the need of

new creation. I get here a new thing altogether. In this chapter in Corinthians we see how Christ took part in the old order of things here: "We have known Christ after the flesh;" but that whole state of things has been brought to an end in the cross, and now, "Henceforth know we him no more;" we know Him no longer after the flesh. The first order has been brought to an end. Of course there are holy relationships down here after the first order; family relations and affections, which God in His mercy has left for happiness of His creatures but that does not mean that the first creation has not come to an end morally before God. The cross is the measure of the moral distance between God and man; and, when I see that, I understand how everything *must* be new, that there must be a new vessel for the new wine. What sympathy can there be between the new and the old? Look at the cross and see!

This is why I read the passages in Corinthians and Galatians, because in both we get a departure from the truth of Christianity. Both went back to acknowledge the first man, and in both the apostle takes up the cross as the only remedy. In Corinthians they had schools of doctrine giving place to the human mind, or rationalism, and at the same time they were tolerating the lusts of the flesh. And what does

the apostle say? "I *determined* to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." The toleration of the first man was what they wanted, and he would have nothing of it. His speech was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that their faith might stand in the power of God; and the Spirit was the only way of understanding the things that God had revealed.

In Galatians they wanted to use law for the correction of the first man, but he will have no *kind* of recognition of the first man. What does he say? False teachers wanted them circumcised that they might glory in their flesh; but he would only glory in the cross, by which the world was crucified unto him and he unto the world, and nothing availed in Christ but "new creation." Walk in the Spirit, he said, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. If we understand this, if we recognise what the cross is, will it be a difficult thing, will it be a hard thing for me to say I am willing to be superseded? Why on the contrary is it not a *blessed* thing that I can say I am thankful to have done with it?

It presses on my spirit to speak thus. Am I to trifle with the flesh? I ask you, Have you a sense, if you do, of what thing it is that you are trifling with and tolerating? Can I trifle with

flesh if I know what the true character of it is?

Let me suppose a very flagrant case to illustrate what I am saying. Suppose a murderer converted. Suppose that one who in passion had killed another, had by some means escaped the hand of justice, and had become a converted man; do you suppose that man would not dread like fire the very thought of anger, the very first movement of passion, the very idea of any toleration of it?

And have you, have I, a wholesome dread of the toleration of the flesh? Do we dread it? Tell me! Have you now a sense of what flesh is in the depths of your own soul? Have you a sense of what it is that you carry about with you? And mark this! There is no correction for it but death. The fact is we have so little sense of what the flesh is. We do not see that it is so bad that there is nothing for it but the cross and an entirely new creation. Think what a marvellous revelation of the grace of God! Sin has ruined the structure: sin followed to its natural result is murder; the final result and end of the flesh is murder; the last act of man under trial before God was murder. That is what sin is in the world; what it was from the beginning to the end. The world began and ended with murder: it began with the murder of Abel, and

ended with the murder of God's blessed Son. That is the world, and that is flesh. And if I tamper with the world, if I tamper with the flesh, *that* is the world I tamper with, and *that* is the flesh I tamper with. That is the character of flesh before God: it only works one way, and that way is against God. The flesh is always against Christ. And if I trifle with the flesh, if I yield to its temptings, I am sparing the flesh that God has not spared in the death of Christ.

If I can say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" that my own history in my soul before Him is "our old man is crucified with Christ," then I accept death, the judgment of God, on that evil thing that is in me, and the end of the first man. But I have died with Christ. And now, having a new nature, a new scene, a new life, a new Object, having *everything new* and of a different order, though still left as to our bodies in this old scene of the first creation, if I tolerate the flesh, it is what crucified my Saviour I am tolerating.

My main object in saying these few words was to point out that the true measure of the breach between God and the first man is the cross; and then we have a new order, the new creation according to the purpose of God in Christ, and a new power, the Spirit of God dwelling in us.

Though God, after what has come out at the cross, can no longer look down upon man, man, because of the work of Christ, can look up to God through the opened heavens. The One who was crucified in humiliation is the accepted Man, and the Saviour in heaven. Christ has gone up to the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost has come down; and this is the testimony of the Holy Ghost: that that very death of the cross has opened up the way, out of judgment and out of this world, into association with the Man of God's purpose. And out of this very world thus morally ended for God, out of that very material, God is taking souls—justifying, redeeming, reconciling, creating them anew, and uniting them to Christ; souls that form His body now, and that will be His bride in eternity, when He has put all His enemies under His feet.

The Lord give us, beloved friends, to see what a terrible witness the cross is against the first Adam, what a proof of man's enmity to God, and yet what a witness it is to the grace of God, and that it is the only way for us to keep out of sight that old nature that is ever seeking to have some place in us or power over us. The only way moreover of practically being delivered from this old scene that is stamped with the guilt of the cross. And the way out of it all is made for us, that we may enter with Christ into

all the blessedness of the new scene, and enjoy unhinderedly the love of that blessed heart that bore the judgment and the wrath for us that we might be united to Him, might be one with Him where He is, and that He might have us as His treasure for ever, and that we might gaze on His glory, as He Himself has said, "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 hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

J. S. O.



THE CALLING AND GRACE OF THE REMNANT.

(ISA. VI. 13; REV. II. 24, 25.)

I DESIRE before the Lord to say a little to you on what becomes us in this day, what becomes us at the close. You see when the failure is complete in Thyatira it is the remnant who are addressed. I hope to shew you the path of the man of God in this day. When I speak of the man of God I do not limit that to preachers, but I believe that each one is called to be such. I trust I shall be able to shew you from scripture that God always had a remnant and that a remnant does not mean the insignificant end of a thing, but it is characterised by the brightest trait of the original. I ask you to keep that before you. It is an immense help. The more I consider it the more I can see where good men have failed all along the line. There never was a sect formed yet but that it began with trying to improve things. To begin, look at the Reformation. The word "Reformation" shews that it was a feeble work. Reformation

cannot be a remnant. The remnant is the brightest trait of the original, and this may be displayed even in an individual; it does not depend on a company. It is an immense comfort to see this; I thank God for it! The brightest element in any place, the brightest spiritual element gives a character to the place, be it man or woman. Any person conversant with things will admit the truth of this. It is not a question of proclaiming it or anything else; without any effort or any attempt it gives a character to the place.

I read Isaiah vi. 13, because it gives us the principle. God always had a tenth; the tenth is the royal portion. The tithe belonged to the conqueror; that is why Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek—*God is the Conqueror*. He has the right to the tithes. "In it shall be a tenth." No matter how, God will have His right. If you want an illustration in the New Testament, I give you the case of the ten lepers. (Luke xvii.) Ten were cleansed; *one* returned to give glory to God—God is the Conqueror. He has the spoil. Abraham would have nothing for himself; he took the tenth of the spoil and gave it to Melchizedek.

I trace it through scripture. I do not refer to every scripture, but I will give you instances, as far as I can remember, that you may un-

derstand this great principle; because I have this confidence before the Lord that any one who gets hold of it in power will go on in his christian course in a brighter way. Everything is gone, you say! Then there is the more reason for you to stand. When I hear people say that everything is gone, I say that is only a fresh word to me to stand—mind *you* stand. If every one were going on well it would relieve you, but the fewer there are the more important it is that you should stand. I get in profane history a character that ought to mark the Christian. It is that of an Athenian general trying to keep the boat from leaving the shore. First he held to it with one hand; they cut it off; then he held it with the other; they cut it off. Then he held it with his teeth, and they cut his head off. He would keep the boat anyhow. If in natural things, how much more in divine! Where is the divine tenacity, the bravery, that would stand alone? that can say, "Even if left alone, I *will stand*"? Like Paul who stood alone; when all the saints forsook him he stood for God. He was the tithe. That is what you have to learn; that is the great principle. I see people occupied with good things, but I say, it is not God you are occupied with. I see a man who has

a bit of light; but it is the congregation—the good of man he is occupied with, not with God. It is God who is before the remnant.

I do not want to take up the time, but I turn to examples as I remember them. The first I give you is Enoch, the seventh from Adam. What characterised him? “He walked with God.” He was in moral superiority to Adam’s failure; he came out in peculiar brightness where the failure was greatest. “Without faith it is impossible to please him.” By faith Enoch “pleased God,” he “walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” If you read Genesis you will find that every generation to the flood survived Enoch except Adam, and he died fifty-eight years before Enoch, as far as I can calculate. It was Adam who brought in death. Enoch was a wonderful divine trophy: he did not see death, for God took him. He was a man down here who walked with God in the lowest condition of things, because he lived down to the time of the men who had to do with the flood; they survived him and they knew of him. All I want to establish is the fact that there was one man who walked with God before Satan could say, I have carried off in death man seven-fold: the seventh is translated that he should not see death. Why? Because he returned to the brightest trait of the original.

One little word I must say in passing, which is of immense value to ourselves individually. Restoration must always begin at the point of departure. Many a man is truly sorry for his ways who is not yet restored, because he has not begun at the point of his departure. I see it in Peter; in John xxi. 7 his conscience is right, he is full of affection, but he is not in heart restored until verses 15-19. Why? Because he had not gone back to the point of departure. And what is more, beloved friends, let me tell you that when you do go back to that point, it is there you will excel; you are stronger there than anywhere, because you are restored.

I turn now to trace the path. Abraham is called out; failure eventually ensues. Jacob is the remnant at the close. Three things mark him: 1, he worships God, leaning on the top of his staff. God absorbs him. 2, Rachel is dead. I have nothing here; I seek for nothing. Yes; the self-seeking Jacob seeks for nothing here: death had made him a pilgrim and a stranger here. 3, He looks for the future. He blesses Joseph's sons. God is before him. That is the great principle. God must be before you, and you must have God's object. I do not believe any man has power who has not God's object before him. I see that the man of power has God's object before

him. I have looked at the beginning of the sects in church history. Men began with good intentions, trying to correct things. George Fox tried to give the Spirit of God a place, but he did not keep God's object before him, and he made a sect. The same with the Baptist; it was not God's object that was before him but baptism, and thus he forms a sect. I want to shew you where the defect lay.

I turn now to Numbers xiv. Look at the spies. Only two stood for God. They all could say the country is beautiful; here are the grapes. Ten said, we cannot go up, we are not able. But Caleb and Joshua said, "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us." What did that faith effect? What was it frightened the ten? Kirjath-Arba. That means, "the city of the four," the giant and his three sons. What place did Caleb get? (Joshua xiv. 13-15.) That very place! Though he continued with the people in the wilderness, yet he got Hebron afterwards, and he said: "I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me." The place he got was the place that frightened all Israel. If you stand for God, the place where there is the greatest opposition to you, that is the place where you will succeed the best. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine

enemies." I know it myself in a small way. In the place where I have been reproached, slighted, for the name of the Lord, there He has honoured me—prepared a table for me. Where were Paul and Silas honoured? In Philippi by the jailor, in the very spot where they had been dishonoured. "A table" means a meal; I do not mean a material meal, but some distinct honour from God. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." As sure as life you will get honour from God in the very house, the very spot where you have been slighted. It is because we are so little in it that we so little understand what it is. Do not think God overlooks things. And what other honour do you want but honour from God?

I turn now to 1 Chronicles xiii. I may skip a good many—Joshua for instance; in the last chapter of Joshua he says—"As for me and my house we will serve the Lord;" we will stand for Him if all Israel be against us. In Chronicles we have a very interesting scripture. When David is set up in the kingdom, he summons all Israel to bring up the ark of God. They had not inquired of it since the days of Saul. Study it and you will be helped yourself. It is very interesting to see that every one receives from the Lord as he wants

it. But I must go back for a moment; I have left out one scripture that I wanted to speak of—Exodus xxxiii. Israel had all turned to idolatry. Moses was in the mount with God; he is told to go down. It is a remarkable thing that Moses and Aaron were brothers (this has explained a great deal of spiritual history to me); each knew as much as the other; in fact one (Aaron) was the mouthpiece of the other, as well acquainted with the word of truth as the other. Where is Aaron? He is with the people. If you are with the people, you are sure to be influenced by them; the people become your object, and not God. Moses was in the mount *with God*. He comes down and finds Israel taken up with an idol. You get this commented on by Paul in 1 Corinthians x. 7: "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." That leads us to a very painful conclusion, even that many are idolaters in the present day. How do you know? By what Paul designates as idolatry; he does not say a word about an idol, but of their manner of life—"The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Why? Because, as Israel could make merry in the absence of Moses, so now Christians can find an object of interest and engrossment in

the place where Christ died. They have something to occupy their hearts more than the blessed One who was rejected. Not a word is said about an idol. Mind that! "They sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Moses comes single-handed to face six hundred thousand of Israel. Does not that give you courage? Does not your heart encourage itself in God when you see that man? "The righteous is bold as a lion."

He not only breaks the image and grinds it to powder and straws it in the water and makes the children of Israel drink of it, but he tells all who are on the Lord's side, to gird on their sword and go through the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. What a wonderful thing to see one man standing for God!

I am often reminded of a very good natural incident. A young man was finding fault with men and the state of things; his father, a very sensible man, said to him, "I say, J., improve the world by one man!" And I must tell you no man ever did more for God in this world since Paul's day than that man. When any are complaining, I say—"What are *you* doing? If you say all is gone, it is clear that *you* are gone."

Now I return to David, which is more on my mind. David is set on the right thing, to bring up the ark; but there is a breach. Many of us know what it is to have begun with a good intention, and yet fail to carry it out in the divine way. What had David to learn? That none shall touch the ark of God but the Levites. He had to learn God's mind and what suits Him. I do not dwell upon it; but look now at Daniel. Israel had been carried captive to Babylon. In Daniel I see a man for God; he was thinking of God—what suits God. He knows that his doom is sealed according to human judgment, but what does he do? He opens his window and prays three times a day towards Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a heap of ruins, and he was a long way from Jerusalem; but his heart was where God's heart was: God's object on the earth was his object.

Look again at the captives coming back with Ezra. What for? To seek their lands? No; but to build a house for God. Mark well the principle. I shall thank God for this day if any one here gets hold of that principle. Stand for God's object; if you do, it is wonderful how you will get on. You will be characterised by it. I need not say how they failed, I do not dwell on Haggai's time; but they were restored when they were again set for God's object.

I turn now to the New Testament. Our blessed Lord was brought into the temple. (Luke ii.) Who is there to greet Him? Simeon, an old man waiting for the consolation of Israel. He was the remnant, and not he only, but an old woman, Anna, at least eighty-four as far as one can count. She is a beautiful specimen. The man sets forth the energy of the remnant, the woman the affection. Where there is great human weakness there is great divine power. She "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." What did she gain? you may ask. "She coming in at that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord." It is beautiful, beloved friends. All the learned men in Jerusalem did not see Him. And I feel very often, one may be very learned and well up in scripture, but unless you have God's object and interest for the time before you, you will miss the mark. This old woman spake of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Do not excuse yourself because of your age, nor on account of infirmity. All you want is the grace of God, no matter what the age or what the infirmity, and you will surely come out for Him. What an occupied life she had! She spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

I trust you are getting hold of the principle.

I turn now to John xx., which comes nearer home to us. Here is the Lord risen from the dead. Who is waiting for Him? A poor ignorant woman. Is not that a comfort to your heart? As it has been said, she was culpably ignorant; but I should like to have her devoted heart! This world is intolerable to her without Him! I should like to see more like that! She is the pioneer. As another has said so truly—as a woman (Eve) brought in all the trouble to man, so it was a woman who brought in the greatest light. I think God often honours a devoted woman in a special way. Paul could speak of those women who laboured with him. It is like a star in the night which shines unknown to others, but for the benefit of others. She goes and tells the disciples the Lord's message. Who can contemplate the scene without being affected by it!

But I must not delay. I turn now to 2 Timothy. I have already referred to Paul. All the saints forsook him. I say to myself sometimes, Where should I be if all the saints forsook me? Paul was deserted when brought before the Roman tribunal. If the Jews forsook Stephen, all the saints forsook Paul. He writes the second Epistle to Timothy after that, and see what he says: "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me; that by me the preaching

might be fully known." He made known the mind of God, not merely preaching the gospel, but the counsel of God, "and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Do not you feel now before the Lord that if you stand for Him there is no fear of you? All the fear is your *not* standing. If in natural things those who storm a fort succeed well, so in spiritual. **STAND IN THE BREACH!**

In chapter iii. the apostle gives a very important lesson to the servant as to the closing days. It is important to bear in mind that he had come down to a unit; he that was the wise master-builder. But he is not a bit discouraged. It has often been remarked that he never wrote with more courage than in 2 Timothy. "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." In chapter iii. we get the perilous times. Paul did not live until the perilous times. The great characteristic of them is *imitation*. Even amongst ourselves, a little company as we are, if you ask me, What do we suffer from most? I should say from imitation. If those who had connected themselves with us went back when they departed from us to the systems they had come from, it would be comparatively easy

for us; but through imitation of the right thing they have been thorns in our sides. I have challenged them in my small way. I have said often, Give me a page of note paper on the church. I believe I could test every man by his answer to the question—Have you God's mind about the church? The only help for you is, as Paul says to Timothy (chap. iii. 10), "You are fully acquainted with my doctrine, manner of life," &c.; his doctrine includes the gospel as well as the church, and I venture to say you will never understand the church till you have Paul's gospel. The opposition was through imitation. As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses; they tried to do the same thing which Moses did; they could imitate Moses to a certain point, but they could not produce life. Nothing baffles the imitators but life, and here I believe John's ministry comes in in the present day. One great difficulty of this day is the ready way the *form* of the truth is often received, while at the same time there is no apparent divine effect from it, and this I judge is the cause of the unreadiness there is to understand the teaching in John. The objective side of truth can be accepted without any displacement of the old order, but as soon as you are in any measure taught of God as to His work in you, as set forth by John, a new day has broken in on your soul, and a new path

altogether is opened out to you. Paul says, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine," and lower down he speaks of the scriptures, "thou hast known the holy scriptures." That is why I have taken up the Old Testament scriptures. We get there the mind of God with regard to men, and you find there His ways with men.

I pass on now to Revelation. From Thyatira there is no undivided church; the four last run down to the end, and we find the remnant now. I would dwell upon this for a little. We ought to take it more to heart that there should be so many sects. Sardis is the Reformation; the very word shews what it is. What you should seek for is *the beginning*, "Hold that fast which thou hast," *i.e., from the beginning*. If you have departed you must return to the beginning, to the point of departure. You may be sorry for failure, but if you do not return to the beginning, you are not restored. When any Christian declines he surrenders the best bit of truth he has received; and so it is with the church, and consequently there is no restoration until you return to the point of departure. The remnant has been restored to the point of departure. I often say if a man begins to repent at all I accept it, because if he goes on with God his repentance will be deeper every day. He will have a deeper sense of the grace of God in restoring him. Where a bone

knits after it is broken is the strongest part of the bone. As the Lord says to Peter, "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." He would be strongest where he failed if fully restored. And so in Acts ii. he turns round and says to the Jews, "Ye denied the holy one and the just." They might retort, That is just what *you* did; *you* denied Him. Yes, I denied Him; but I am not denying Him now. That is the man; he is up to it now.

Well, to return. Sardis is a poor state of things! Luther was a great servant till he became acquainted with the Elector of Saxony, and got under worldly patronage; then he was spoilt; he was nothing after that. There are two things the man of God has to do; he has to purge himself from the vessels to dishonour, and then the next question is, Who are your associates? "Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace *with them* that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Here many fail: they try to be separate, but they fail to find the right company. Do you say, How am I to find out the right company? First know what is right and associate with nothing less. A pigeon will not go to rooks! That is all I can tell you. If a man is right himself he will soon find the right company; he will not compromise the truth he knows.

Now I come to the last chapter of Revelation.

I see there what should mark us all, and I trust every one of you will find out the true course to reach it. To begin at the point of departure is the true course. John begins (chap. ii.) with Paul's best church—Ephesus. The failure occurred there which entailed the removal of the candlestick. "Thou hast left thy first love." There are two great characteristics of the assembly. One is affection—Mary Magdalene is an example; and the other—responsibility or service. Ephesus had lost the first, "Thou hast left thy first love." You never can know what a person's love is unless you are near that person; you may know benevolence at any distance, but you cannot know love except near.

The resuscitation of the remnant is by John. We get the form from Paul. John writes a letter to the seven churches. The book of Revelation is one letter. I wish every one would read it as one letter and not bit by bit. It is one letter written to shew you the state of things at that moment, because the Lord would not come till the full state of things had come out. John was to tarry till then. This letter shews the full state of things had come out. As I might say, every tree on that lawn was planted forty years ago. They have grown since, but they have long been there. Everything has come out, no matter how small. Now all things

are ready for the Lord to come. Read the terrible state to which man has come, his wickedness, as we had before us last night, where the cross is the measure of man's sin. What is the great attempt of man? It is to obtain possession of the earth, to put God out. They advance things with this object; they can do without Him. If I look at the Pope, I see he is exalting himself *in* all that is called God; Antichrist exalts himself *against* all that is called God, a very great difference. What you see in Revelation is the state of things; the upshot of it all is the Lord comes to reign. In chapter xix. you get the church in heaven—Babylon set aside; joy in heaven; Christ has taken to Himself His great power to reign. Now you get in this closing scene before He comes (chap. xxii. 17) the remnant coming out in the most beautiful trait of the original. In decline the best goes first, but in restoration the best is vigorously re-established. The first love was left in Ephesus; now you get here, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." It is the bride—her heart set upon Christ as her object. You must know union in order to be in the affection of the bride, to be in concert with Him. You could not have either His power nor common thoughts with Him except in union. Now He is coming, and He makes an announcement. What is the announcement? I generally hear the half

of it quoted, but not the whole. Whenever you leave out anything in scripture you have not got hold of the idea. I have found myself out in that way, and other people too! The announcement is, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." After Thyatira the coming kingdom is prominent. The overcomer in Thyatira is better off than in Laodicea. All the latter gets is to sit on His throne—no action, only to sit there. In Thyatira the overcomer rules over the nations with a rod of iron. People speak of the morning star as if it were only the rapture. Any one who knows what it is to be out at night, as I know, would know the morning star is the harbinger of the day. In the old coach days, when you saw the morning star it was the day you thought of, not the star. You say, Will not great things come to pass for *us* then? Yes; but the heart of the bride thinks also of the Bridegroom as well as of herself. He is coming to reign; He is coming to be acknowledged in His rights here. She is a heartless bride, or wife, who is only thinking of her own advantages, overlooking the interests and rights of her Lord. She says, "Come," to the One who is the Morning Star, as well as the root and offspring of David. She is in concert with His own mind, and in the full interest of His concerns.

Then the call goes round to others. If it were so with us, I believe it would have a great effect. I can speak for myself personally, the wonderful effect it had on me when I first heard of the Lord's coming. I am sure if I were to say, "Come," in this practical, perfect way, it would have a great effect on every Christian. Why? Because they would see that I am so affected by what I say that they would be moved by it. The greatness of Christ's appearing is lost sight of in directing your attention exclusively to the rapture; but remember you will be called to account for the way He finds you here at His coming. The holidays come before the examination, I admit; but the examination *will* come. Hence we read, "That ye may be found of him without spot and blameless." I remember the effect the coming of the Lord had on myself. I was about nineteen, and I walked to a reading meeting some miles off. I took a gun by way of recreation. When I got into the house, a young friend, younger than myself, said to me, "You have been out shooting." I assented, but I added, "I see no harm in doing so." He retorted, "Would you like the Lord to find you out shooting?" I replied, "No, certainly; and I will not touch it again." If you were assured that He was coming, you would like to be in every way ready for Him. If you think of

the rapture merely, you think of your relief in being taken out of things here; but you will be taken to account for the way you are found here. Suppose a Christian could say, I have been serving the Lord for many years; but I ask, What has been your course the last six months? You are received in *heaven* in pure grace. Do not let me disturb any one as to that; but your last days here *will* affect you in the *kingdom*. The rapture is mentioned once in scripture, 1 Thessalonians iv., and possibly implied in John xiv. If you read the Epistles to the Thessalonians carefully you will find that the apostle insists on *the day*. "Unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father at the *coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints*."

I need not add more, beloved friends. The last phase of the kingdom of heaven is that ten virgins went forth to meet the Bridegroom, and it is deplorable that there are as many false ones as true. The foolish virgins are imitating the brightest trait of the wise ones; but the Lord will say to them, "I know you not." The wise ones are devoted to the Bridegroom, for Him they are looking. This comes out plainly at the end. "Let him that heareth say, Come." As your heart is set on Himself so will all His concerns interest you while waiting for Him. You will see that the household is well cared for,

getting meat in due season. The unfailing characteristic or mark of every one in conscious union with Christ is that he or she makes Christ's interests PARAMOUNT. This mark was very palpable in Rebekah; when she saw Isaac she threw a veil over herself; her individuality was merged, she was lost in another. You are gone. Many a happy marriage has been marred because the wife's individuality has not been merged in her husband's. In a scene of dislocation and distraction like this, it is an immense comfort (thank God, I know it in some little measure) to retire to my own room, and say, Though we are very insignificant in the eyes of man, yet there are true hearts here looking for the Lord, to whom He is everything. Look at Elijah. I might say his last day was his hardest day. Look at Paul and John. One in prison, the other in Patmos receiving the Revelation. You may not have bright surroundings, yet all is right, for you have a bright prospect, and a very bright present in company with Christ.

The Lord grant that we may each more answer to Christ's mind, and that we may be found, more and more, from affection to Himself, in the true remnant character, waiting for Him, for His name sake.

J. B. S.

ASSEMBLY PRIVILEGE.

(MATT. xviii. 19, 20; 1 COR. i. 2; iii. 16, 17;

xii. 12, 13; 28-31.)

It is on my mind to take up the challenge sometimes thrown out to write a page of note paper on the subject of the church. What I have to say is little in amount and simple in character, as the scriptures I have read will shew you. The first Epistle to the Corinthians does not profess to go beyond what is fundamental. "As a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation." (Chap. iii. 10.) The apostle says in chapter ii., "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect," &c.; but in this epistle we get the church, not in the full light of the thought and counsel of God as in Ephesians, but in a very elementary way, though very important to us here.

It is just that which I wanted to touch upon this evening. The position of saints as gathered to the Lord's name; and then the privileges that are proper to them; and how we may recognise where the truth of the church is—a very important point in this day.

The essence of what I have to say is this: there are two results of the Spirit's presence here, as I understand it, whether looked at in the individual or in the assembly: He excludes and He introduces. The Spirit in the individual is exclusive of the flesh, and on the other hand He introduces Christ. I think the same thing is true in the assembly. The Spirit is here on the one hand to exclude man as to his mind, and on the other hand to bring in Christ; and in this light both chapters iii. and xii. are very interesting. In chapter xii. we have the anointed One, "So also is the Christ." The church, as anointed of the Spirit, is the body of Christ, and thus the vessel for the display and exercise here of all that is of God.

I just say a word in taking up this subject as to the ground of gathering. Collectively, as I understand it, saints are gathered to a name, and to all the import of that name. Sometimes we talk of being gathered on the ground of the one body. I know what it signifies—unsectarian ground—all right as far as it goes, but it does not mean anything very distinctive in the present day. The fact that you are gathered *to a name* is important.

That leads me to a remark in connection with the Gospel of Matthew. As has been often noticed, it alone brings in the truth of the king-

dom of heaven. Luke gives us the truth of the kingdom of God. I think you will find that the truth of the kingdom of heaven centres round the Person of the exalted Christ, who has been rejected here; the truth of the kingdom of God in its present aspect centres round the Spirit given. If you bear that in mind it will help you to the force of the expression, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The kingdom of heaven centres, as I said, round the great fact of the exalted Man. The One who is in heaven is exalted to bear sway over the earth. If you study Matthew attentively, you will find all the first part of the gospel goes on the ground of the presentation of Christ after the flesh to His people here; from chapter xvi. and onwards all goes on the ground of His exaltation. I do not think you will understand any of the similitudes of the kingdom in the latter part of the gospel if you do not bear that in mind. The marriage supper (chap. xxii.) is on the ground of the exalted Man. The ten virgins who go forth to meet the bridegroom (Matt. xxv.) also. The Bridegroom is the One who has rights in relation to the earth according to God, rejected here but glorified above, and He it is who is to bear sway in the kingdom—and the virgins

go forth to meet Him. The economy of the kingdom of heaven is to be found in Matthew xviii. People have made a mistake in going to that chapter for instruction as to the church. I quite admit it is introduced there, and also the point of gathering, "Where two or three are gathered together unto my name." It is the One who rejected on earth is glorified in heaven. It is to His name that saints are gathered. If you examine Christendom, as to all that is under that name there, it will not help you a bit. Though they use the words of Matthew xviii., I do not think it enters into their mind that they are gathered to the name of the One who is rejected on earth and glorified in heaven. But it is the very name to which saints are properly gathered, and to which every saint ought to be true.

In going forth to meet the bridegroom the virgins left everything here—the religious associations in which men were found on earth. The awakening cry is, "Behold, the bridegroom!" A great thought is connected with it—not only that Man is exalted above, but that He is coming again in glory—the saints go forth to meet Him. In the meantime they are gathered to His name here.

I pass on now to Corinthians. I want to shew you the privileges that belong to those

who are gathered to the name of the Lord. In 1 Corinthians i. 2 we find: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." That is the ground on which the apostle saluted them, and the privileges that belonged to such were—what I want to dwell upon to-night—that they were the temple of God, and the body of Christ. (Chap. iii. and xii.) They are very important subjects, and though elementary very interesting in regard to the true place of the church here. The saints who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus are properly the temple of God—the Spirit of God dwells in them, and they are all baptised by one Spirit into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. They are Christ's body.

I will, if the Lord enable me, bring before you in a few words the import of both these expressions, and just add a word as to the vessel of the Spirit. I believe, as I said before, that the object and purpose of the Spirit down here is practically to exclude what God has judged, and to introduce what God has glorified. I think every one would bow to that, and it is seen in a distinct way in the church. Let me ask you, if man's state has been judged of God do you think

that man's mind is competent to judge of the things of God? Hence the apostle says, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." The presence of the Spirit is essentially exclusive, and exclusive of man. In the temple is God's glory, the mind of God is there; His oracles are there—but the mind of man is excluded by the presence of the Spirit.

I go further; I say that the intrusion of what is of man in the temple of God defiles it. The holiness of God's temple is inconceivable to the mind of man; it cannot take in the idea. But that is the very point of the temple, "The temple of God is holy," and by the very holiness of it the mind of man in divine things is excluded. You bring an unconverted man there, he has no conception of the holiness which is of the Spirit of God. "The temple of God is holy, which ye are."

Now I go to the other side, to what the Spirit of God brings in—that leads to the thought of the body in chapter xii. As I have pointed out, the contrast between the two chapters is, that chapter iii. shews the holiness of God's temple and what that holiness excludes; chapter xii. shews what the Spirit of God brings in. The chapter introduces the thought of the Christ, and by that I understand "the Anointed." When

we speak about Christ it has come to be too much a mere name; we want the moral idea connected with it—the Anointed.

One great thought about “the Christ” is this: He is the vessel in which God was brought to man. I speak with all reverence. In becoming man Christ became the vessel in which God was pleased to come to man in grace. We read (Acts x. 38), “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power,” &c. Again (in Luke iv. 18) “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel,” &c. He was to present God to man. If you want a formal expression of it: “God was in Christ.” (2 Cor. v. 19.) Christ was the vessel. The true deity of His Person is not the point for the moment. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses.”

Wherever Christ was there was the fulness of the Godhead. The Father was there. There was no such thing with regard to the Lord Jesus as that He could act independently. “The Son can do nothing of himself,” He says, “but what he seeth the Father do.” In every act and word God was present in a man. The Father was there, the Holy Ghost was there; the blessed vessel of it was the anointed of God, the Christ. I have said it often, He brought to man all the

good of God in grace. It was the form in which God saw fit to approach man, in the Anointed of God.

Now, beloved brethren, what I say is this. All the good that came out there to man was of the Spirit, for it is the Spirit which brings in the good of God. The vessel was suitable perfectly. He could receive the fulness of the Spirit, but the good of God was brought to man in Him by the Spirit. Every miracle was wrought by the power of the Spirit; every devil cast out; and every infirmity healed was by the power of the Spirit of God. I cannot conceive anything more marvellous. The Father was with Him, the vessel in every way suitable, and the fulness of the power of the Spirit present. The works were the Father's works wrought by Christ in the power of the Spirit. The fulness of the Godhead was there.

That is all past; but in one sense it is not all past. We get the continuance of the power when we come to the church as Christ's body. The church is the anointed vessel. "By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body." "The fulness of Him that fills all in all." That is the wonderful truth of this time. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some,

pastors and teachers." (Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12.) Everything, all God's munificence and goodness to man is all set in the church. The world is not given up in that sense. It has rejected Christ personally, but His body is here, the Spirit of God is here, and the manifestations of the Spirit coming out here in the body, a witness of the glory of Christ. That is the wonderful thing. We do not see it in such a public way now. We have not the apostles, the gifts of tongues, and other displays of the Spirit's power, but have we no manifestations of the Spirit? Have we no word of wisdom, no word of knowledge, no helps, no interpretations? That is all the grace of God in the body here. We see very little of it because of the distracted condition of things in Christendom.

I wanted to bring out the privileges proper to the saints gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. The temple where all of man is excluded; the body where all the grace of Christ is. These are the privileges that properly belong to Christians as gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One word more. The Corinthians were that. Their state was exceedingly unsatisfactory, but the apostle says to them, You are the temple of God, you are the body of Christ. They were the vessel. Even at the very best, apart from

the disgraceful things allowed among them, they were but babes in Christ. The apostle says, "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as to carnal, even as unto babes in Christ," but they had the privilege of being the temple of God and the body of Christ; and the manifestations of the Spirit of God were there.

I have spoken of the manifestations. I want just to say a word now about the vessels. The tendency with us is to make everything of the endowment and very little of the vessel. I believe that is why chapter xiii. comes in. It shews the measure of the vessel, the measure of every member of the body. If you have every endowment and have not love, you are nothing! I might be endowed with the gift of tongues, or of healing, or what not, but if I have not love I am nothing. It is everything to see what the size of the vessel is. Your size is measured by your love. How much do you love? Exactly as much as you are conscious of being loved. That is why the truth of the Lord's supper is brought into the subject in chapter xi., shewing how "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it," and exactly in the measure that we apprehend *His love*, we ourselves love, and that is the measure of our spiritual stature.

If I have not love I am nothing. It is a very poor thing to be endowed and to be nothing,

and really it had great application to the Corinthians; their tendency was to make much of the endowment and little of the vessel.

It is a point which might well exercise us—How much are our hearts under the influence of the love of Christ? We are His body which He loved, and for which He gave Himself. The Lord's supper puts us, I judge, in touch with Christ and with one another. We are reminded afresh of the proper title of Christ to be the Head of the church, His body. He is entitled to be in that place, for He loved the church and gave Himself for it. If we are under the influence of His love we very soon begin to love one another. The church is the vessel of all the manifestations of the grace of God. All are in the church as the body of Christ.

Well, beloved brethren, I have sought to point out to you two great functions of the Spirit. The one to exclude the mind of man which tends to defile and cannot conceive the holiness of God, and the other to bring in the good of God in those gathered to the Lord's name.

May God grant that we may know something more of the love of Christ. A wonderful influence to be under! There never was a Christian yet who could work himself up to love. The Spirit will not work to support you, but to bring Christ in, to bring your heart under the influence

of His love. Then the endowment will adorn you. There will not be the painful disparity which we sometimes see between the vessel and the endowment. When I speak of the body, every one has part in that; not only the gifted people—all are members of that one body. Every one is the object of the love of the Head, and is to answer to it in the power of the Holy Ghost.

And, mark you, the righteousness of the Christian is, that he acts according as he has been acted towards. Why ought we to lay down our lives for the brethren? Because He laid down His life for us. We ought to love one another; why? Because we have been loved.

May God grant that we may be so under the influence of the love of Christ that we may be suitable vessels for the manifestations of the Spirit of God here.

F. E. R.

THE HEART ENGAGED WITH CHRIST.

(ACTS VIII. 32-36; IX. 3-5; PHIL. III. 7-11.)

WHAT was before me, beloved brethren, to refer to a little was in continuity of what the Spirit of God has brought before us in a very definite way during our meetings. It has come before us again to-night, and in a way that many of us have hardly looked at before. Perhaps we have all felt how the Spirit of God has really to exclude flesh in our own souls and bring Christ in, but we may have little thought of it as carried out in the assembly. How little the truth of the real character of the assembly is known! There Christ is everything, and the flesh has no place. I would seek to encourage you with the two examples which these scriptures bring before us. I would like also to read two others in order to shew how Christ became everything to these people. We must really get *this Person* before our souls, that we should be drawn to Him so that He may become everything to us; and the first man must be displaced by all that is of Him.

I will speak in a brief way (the truth of it has already been before us, I only want to press it

further home). I turn for the first example to the dying thief. (Luke xxiii.) There you get a man ending his days on the scaffold, the execration of men naturally; but what is remarkable is, that *he* is not the object of their execration, but the One by his side. It is not the hooting of men against a murderer, but the combination of every single character of man against Christ.

I make a remark in connection with the gospel of Luke. You find there more people grouped around the cross than in any other gospel. What came out in the beginning of Luke was, as Simeon said, "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*" (Luke ii. 34, 35.) If that blessed Man is in the world He must test every other man. Therefore I think you will find in that gospel all shades and characters of men around the cross, where for His love He had hatred. There was not one in the whole scene to say, "Do not do it!" All were swept along by the power of Satan; the crowd smite their breasts and return to their homes. It was a dreadful sight, but they go home, and no one says, "Do not do it!" He is the rejected One. This blessed Saviour is the One the world has cast out and will not have.

I return to the thief. He is not execrated by men. Pilate, the priesthood, the mob, are all

against Christ. Even the thief is amongst His revilers at the beginning, as we learn from another gospel. But there comes a moment when his soul was held by the Person by his side. It was the work of God. That Man whom every one was against, and no one stood up for, to Him this malefactor turns round, and his soul is impressed as he looks at the One who is hanging by his side. You may say, How do you know? He turns to the Lord; he owns He was the One who had "done nothing amiss," and yet was in the same condemnation. He brings before the Lord the thought of the kingdom. The desire of the thief was to be with the Lord in His kingdom. I do not say he understood what its character was, but he was impressed with the One hanging by his side; He had a kingdom and he wanted to have a place with Him whom all the world cast out.

Love had brought Him to hang by the side of the thief who had little intelligence, but the Spirit of God produced the impression upon his soul as to the Person of Jesus; his thought was, I should like to get into His kingdom, to be with Him. You know the blessed answer, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The Lord answered this desire in a much fuller way than he had expressed it.

I turn to another scene—Stephen, in Acts vii.

Here again is a man being put to death by his fellow-men, but the reason is quite different. He is no malefactor, but the martyr of Jesus. He has confessed Jesus, and the world is sending him out after the One he has confessed. It was a supreme moment; a moment that might well engage our attention; we might think how we should act at such a time. But I see here a man absorbed with a Person. That is what I want that our souls should realise. I see the dying *thief absorbed with a Person*; I see with all that was transacting round him, there was something between that thief and the Lord at that moment, so that he gave no heed to all that was going on around. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Who can tell what that was to the heart of that poor thief! Or what it was to Stephen when he was suffering there! Only now you get this difference—a man "filled with the Holy Ghost." Not only impressed by Him, but filled by Him, "He being full of the Holy Ghost looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." What a difference from all that was going on around! He looked up stedfastly into heaven. He is now cast out and rejected, as his Master was. Everything that could come upon

him is coming; out of it all he looks up. One Person occupies his soul, and by the power of the Holy Ghost he looks up through the heavens. The word is very strong in the original. "I see the heavens opened through." No doubt it was supernatural power that enabled him to testify to the Jews of where Christ is, "Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." But the point I dwell upon is that a man is absorbed with the Person of Jesus. That Person has possession of his spirit, and all that man can do fades from his view. I believe it also faded from the view of *the thief*; there was only one Person before his soul. So with Stephen; all that man could do faded from his view as he looked up through the heavens and saw the glory of God and Jesus.

Now see the consequence of it; he is like Christ. He says, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." He is leaving the scene of murder and malice, and his spirit going to be with Christ; at the same time he knelt down and prayed for his murderers. Nothing but Christ comes out. Not a bit of the first man, but a heart absorbed with Christ.

Now we come to the passage I read (Acts viii.). No doubt the eunuch was a Jew, though

he came out of the country of the queen of Ethiopia (vers. 27, 28); he was sitting in his chariot and reading *Esaias* the prophet. He does not understand what he is reading, but the Spirit of God was at work impressing his mind with some One, who did not assert Himself in this world, not standing up for His rights; One "led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearers, so he opened not his mouth." He has arrived at the point that "his life was taken from the earth," when Philip joins him. The one thought in his soul is—"Who is this Person?" That thought is working in him. Here is a Person in suffering, one not opening His mouth, taking no place here, *getting no right judgment from man*; and, what man feels more than all, His life taken from the earth: who is He? Philip can tell him. "He preached unto him *Jesus*." That is the answer, nothing more is said.

But what the eunuch says after is very significant. You do not read that Philip explained anything about baptism; but they come to a certain water, and the eunuch says, "What doth hinder me to be baptised?" as much as to say, I would like to take my place with that One in death—as confessing that name, with the One who is gone from the earth. There is the judicial side of His death for us,

but His life being taken from the earth He had nothing here. If He is gone from the earth, we go that way too.

There is the effect again I believe, beloved friends, of the soul being absorbed with Christ. There may be different ways in which the Spirit of God works with us, but it is to make Christ everything. In reply to the eunuch's question, Philip preached to him Jesus.

Now I come to Saul. (Acts ix.) Here you find one, who has been called the Apostle of hatred against Christ—all the enmity of the heart coming up against Christ in a man who said he had "lived in all good conscience before God." In his hatred and opposition to Christ he thought he was doing God service. He is going to Damascus to persecute the saints. A light from heaven shines round about him, above the brightness of the sun: the light of glory appears to him and he is stricken to the earth. He could not deny this light out of heaven. It is not a Person in humiliation now. That touched the heart of the eunuch. Now it is the brightness of the glory that broke Saul down. But the same kind of question comes out: "Who art thou, Lord?" and the same answer—Jesus. "I am Jesus"! Philip's answer was, "Jesus." It is the same here, "I am Jesus." That wonderful Person took possession of Saul's soul.

And now I come to another point which has often been noticed—that was the first revelation that Christ's body was here upon earth. I do not think we could attach too much importance to what our brother has said, that there is the continuance of Christ upon earth in His body being here. It is an immense thing to get hold of. A person who knows it desires the company of the saints. This truth comes out to Paul, that the saints he was persecuting were Christ upon earth. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

The effect on Paul was this—not only was Christ in glory his object, but for that object he counted all things loss. I read Philippians iii. to shew you how that Person filled the eye of Paul's soul. He refers to it in Galatians, "Not I, but Christ;" and in 2 Corinthians iv., "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"—had shone into his heart; and here we may ask, What for? For the shining out, and this is important for our souls: Paul became the vessel of this treasure, but a vessel upheld by no power of man. Not only you cannot bring into God's temple anything that is of man, but you may depend upon it the power in which the witness is borne to Christ cannot be upheld by man either. They tried to stone Paul, as they did Stephen; but

the Lord preserved the vessel. In Stephen's death was the witness of a saint gone to be with Christ. In Paul, God's power preserved the vessel or we should not have known what we do now about that Lord in glory; through him the treasure has reached us. Apparently a stone might have smashed the vessel in a moment—where would then the light have been for us that we get in Paul's writings?

And let me say the true character of the church is a vessel, a living vessel preserved by the power of God—not a mere formal system, but a living vessel. You and I must have Christ for our object, and as the light shines in and the love of Christ is known in our souls, we shall know also what the church is as the vessel of the light. I have brought these examples before you that I may engage your hearts with the Person, and that you may see that that blessed Person is engaged with all that is of Himself down here.

Paul says in Philippians i., "To me to live is Christ and to die is gain," but he thought of the saints. Look at his love to them, "To abide in the flesh is more needful for you, and having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all." Look how Christ and His interests dwell in the heart of that man! He looks up and gets that answer, "I am Jesus,"

and see how the light came out in him down here, and how the vessel was maintained in the power of God, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

May the Lord Jesus lead our hearts into it! May He impress our hearts with that blessed Person, for His name's sake.

T. H. R.



READING.

ROMANS VI.

J. S. O. What is the force of the word "sin" in this chapter?

T. H. R. Sin is the principle of independence of God, insubjection to God.

D. L. H. Does it not suppose a state that expresses itself in deeds, but the state is what is in view?

J. S. O. If I continue to live in that life in which I am found alive in sin, and guilty, the outcome must be sin, because the state is independence of God, and the outcome is enmity against Him.

F. H. B. Is the argument that you ought not or you cannot continue in sin?

J. S. O. You cannot.

F. E. R. If you have died to it.

E. R. Have we not died to it in baptism? You are committed to it in baptism.

F. E. R. I believe you are committed in baptism to death in order to die, you are committed to Christ's death in order that you may die.

W. T. T. What you said this morning is very

important, as to the standpoint of the two chapters, v. and vi.

F. E. R. In chapter v. the Lord is presented to us as the last Adam, in whom God has in grace reached us. In chapter vi. He comes in as the second Man, the first and representative of the heavenly family. The question of sin is necessarily raised, because if you are in company with the second Man you must part company with the first.

D. L. H. We get the expression "in Christ" for the first time in this chapter. Is that what is in your mind?

F. E. R. Yes.

F. H. B. How does a person die to sin?

F. E. R. In reckoning himself dead, verse 11.

D. L. H. True christian ground is reckoning yourself dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

F. E. R. You only reckon yourself alive in Christ Jesus in proportion as you reckon yourself dead to sin.

E. C. Would it not be better to say christian state instead of christian ground?

F. E. R. I do not think you can speak of christian *state* apart from the Spirit, and you do not get the Spirit in that aspect till chapter viii.

F. H. B. What is the ground on which we die to sin?

F. E. R. Our old man has been crucified with Christ, that is judicial. The whole moral history of the man has been closed in the death of Christ, "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

F. H. B. We cannot reckon ourselves dead otherwise than that our old man has been crucified with Christ?

F. E. R. No; you would have no title to reckon yourself dead. Our title to die is "our old man has been crucified with Christ;" but then we *have* to die.

Q. What do you mean by "have to die," passing through it morally?

F. E. R. I think you have to come to that point. It is a point that has a beginning in the Christian. He has to reckon himself dead indeed unto sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. "In Christ Jesus" does not apply to both clauses; you are not dead to sin in Christ Jesus, but "alive to God in Christ Jesus."

J. S. O. It is only as alive unto God in Christ Jesus that you can be dead to sin.

F. E. R. Quite so.

E. R. Is the reckoning to be carried on continually?

F. E. R. I think it has to be maintained.

T. H. R. Sin is the principle of antagonism to

God ; it is a rival principle, and in this way identified with man ; the principle of rivalry and antagonism to God. How shall we who have died to sin live in it ?

F. H. B. The man who says, "I am sold under sin," has not died to it.

A. P. By what power does a man reckon himself dead to sin ?

F. E. R. By the Spirit.

D. L. H. Does not this verse suppose the Spirit, though He is not definitely introduced ?

F. E. R. Yes ; but He has been introduced in chapter v. The Spirit is not prominent in these two chapters. The great thing is to present Christ in a new aspect, but the Spirit underlies it. You do not get the Spirit in the Christian until Christ is in His right place. You are not in a condition to travel that way until Christ is put in His proper place in your soul.

E. C. You would say verse 2 of chapter viii. is a summary of chapter vi. ?

F. H. B. You cannot carry out the reckoning of chapter vi. without this verse 2 of chapter viii.

F. E. R. You cannot ; but a great many try to skip chapters vi. and vii.—to pass on from chapter v. to viii. They have an apprehension of the grace that has reached them ; they have the Spirit and they want to have the practice of chapter viii. without going through these two.

You must change your man ; that is chapter vi. and you are married to Another (chap. vii.) ; you take your character from Him, "that you may bring forth fruit to God." The woman takes her character from the man, not the man from the woman. The expression "in Christ Jesus" puts you in company with Him. You are of His lineage. You were in Adam ; now you belong to another line. You have life in Christ Jesus, not in connection with Adam ; you have changed your man.

T. M. Does not this involve the carrying out what is practical and experimentally true in Another—in Christ ?

F. E. R. It is carrying out what is true *in Christ*.

T. M. It is true of us then as based on that ? (Vers. 10, 11.)

F. E. R. It is carrying out in us what is true in Christ, but the great idea is as to the sense in your soul—we are going to join company with Him.

D. L. H. You get a reference to practice in verse 12, do you not ? "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body."

F. E. R. And you get the answer to that in chapter viii. 2, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free."

F. H. B. If the Spirit of God is in me, sin is

no longer the governing principle. That comes out in the latter part of the chapter.

F. E. R. It is one thing to be set free from sin, and another thing to *die* to it. Many a one has been set free from sin who has not died to it.

F. H. B. There is such a thing as a sort of mental deliverance?

F. E. R. Any man really converted is in a way delivered from the domination of sin.

F. H. B. But what as to Romans vii., "sold under sin?"

F. E. R. He has not yet believed the gospel; he is born again, but hardly what we should call converted.

T. H. R. Conversion implies you are turned right round to God, who has first turned to you.

F. E. R. You have no right to turn to God until then. God must turn to man before man can turn to God.

E. C. Conversion is a very strong term and used very vaguely. To turn to God means a great deal; it is more than being born again.

T. H. R. It is on a different line; you would not turn to God if you were not born again. The Thessalonians "turned to God from idols."

F. E. R. There are two parts in chapter vi.—what is prospective and what is retrospective. In all the latter part of the chapter the apostle

refers to what has taken place, verse 18, "Being set free from sin," but the first part of the chapter is prospective. He is inviting you to die to sin in order that you may join Him who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. You have not come to that yet as things are looked at in the chapter. The apostle is encouraging the saints to it; but in the latter part of the chapter he acknowledges the initial deliverance that has taken place, which I should connect more with conversion. The apostle takes up the subject in this way. Every one must acknowledge that sin is incompatible with grace. You cannot continue in sin if you have apprehended grace; he raises the question in chapter vi. as to how you are to be free from sin.

M. By death.

F. E. R. But to what end? I think death has been taken up in connection with the chapter too exclusively.

F. H. B. There is no deliverance in death itself.

F. E. R. You must die to sin in order to be associated with the One who lives to God. It is in order to live to God; that is the point. Liberty is connected with life; you must reach that through death. It is plain if you are going to join the second Man you must die to the first man.

D. L. H. You say that marks a point in a person's history subsequent to receiving the Spirit?

F. E. R. The idea of the second Man comes into the soul's apprehension, and you are conscious if you are going to have company with the One you must part company with the other.

T. H. R. You find the first man is a positive hindrance. How are you to get rid of it but by death?

F. E. R. We know very little indeed of how completely the first man is eclipsed by the Second! I like a good exemplary man, but that is not the idea; it is another Man of a totally different order, entirely to God's satisfaction.

A. H. Is not this not only what is true of us in Christ, but the experimental realisation of it ourselves?

T. H. R. If any one wants to be to *that* Man (chap. vii. 4), he will find in a moment he must die to sin.

F. C. Is it not because that is true for us in Christ? You see it effectuated in Christ, and there you get it.

E. C. God has found deliverance for us in Christ; you have to fall into the line of God's thought.

J. P. Are not verses 6 and 7 actually true whether we realise it or not?

F. E. R. That is so as to verse 6.

F. H. B. Our reckoning is based upon an actual fact.

J. P. I should like to understand verse 7 a little better.

F. E. R. You are to *know* it, "Knowing this," &c., verse 7 is abstract. The first part of verse 6 is the fact of what has been done; the remaining part is the intention in it; it was with that object in view.

Q. How do you get it?

F. E. R. You have to learn the attractiveness of Christ. He must have the first place in your soul. It is not apart from the Spirit, but it has to be got before the Spirit can lead you on in His line. All this takes us up to the point of the brazen serpent. Chapter viii. begins with that, but you have first to learn death on everything; you are in the wilderness; the practical purpose of it is—you have to surrender one man, in order to join Another.

G. G. Is death the way into life?

F. E. R. Yes; there is no other way. If you are to enter the Holiest you must travel the road Christ has gone.

G. G. That is a daily thing?

F. E. R. Yes; but it has a beginning.

T. H. R. It is an immense thing to reach the point where you reckon yourself dead. It is not

how far one fails in it. What I found in my own soul was, when I got to the second Man I found the other man a hindrance; then the question arose, how could I get rid of him?

J. S. O. Is it not important to understand verse 10? Many see atonement or propitiation, but this is not one or the other, it is something which I am told to *likewise* reckon as to myself.

F. E. R. It is the entering in of the second Man upon new ground to the perfect satisfaction of God. He enters in as the first of the new company. He has entered in through death (Heb. ix.); we enter in in chapter x. If we come in, it must be by the same way—that is, death and resurrection.

J. S. O. Sin barred the way to God; not in Himself personally, blessed be His name. He died to it completely; to all that is comprehended in that word "*sin*," and lives no longer in that order and sphere of things to which it belonged. He has died to it.

F. E. R. Supposing all the grace of chapter v. possible, if Christ had not entered in you could never enter in, and no man ever could have stood there if Christ were not first there. Man could not get there, and if he could get there he could not stand there.

E. C. It is not new creation; it is not what is

said in Ephesians, "in Christ;" it is the path He has trod, and you have to go after Him.

F. E. R. In this chapter you have not christian state; it is what you have in Christ, life in Christ; He lives unto God.

J. S. O. If I am not in a new position and dead to the sin to which He died, I am not in liberty.

D. L. H. When you come to chapter viii. 1 is not new creation involved, though not stated?

F. E. R. I think it is involved, but I do not think this epistle goes so far as that.

E. C. Is not "our redemption" the way Romans brings it out? Redemption is in Christ Jesus, and we have got to reach that point.

Q. What is the force of "we also" (ver. 4)?

F. E. R. The standard is completely changed; "The glory of the Father" becomes the standard for the walk of the Christian. I think the Christian has to walk in the sense that he is in the place to the satisfaction of the Father.

T. H. R. It is not a godly life in connection with the Messiah according to the flesh, but Christ has taken a new place according to the glory of the Father, and that determines the place for the Christian. That becomes the standard of walk.

J. S. O. You begin a new start. He began a new history with being raised out of the dead

by the glory of the Father—that is characteristic of “newness of life.”

F. E. R. Verse 5 helps. It gives you the great idea, it is identification with Him.

E. C. It is the setting forth of great abstract truths that are true in Christ, and that opens up for us the way to God.

Q. What is “that form of doctrine” (ver. 17). Is it what he is teaching now?

F. E. R. Some identify it with baptism.

REMARKED. In Timothy it is said, “Have an outline of sound words;” that is, have it in your apprehension.

T. H. R. I have taken it more as the gospel (no doubt it is what was professed in baptism); the truth as to Christ having died and risen again.

F. E. R. I fancy it might have been the administration of divine righteousness; the death of Christ as the basis on which divine righteousness rests; sin put away to God’s complete satisfaction, and therefore not to be admitted in the believer.

J. S. O. A wonderful contrast—“Alive unto God.” It is the opposite of what characterised the first man as departed from God, and alive in sin. God was not in all his thoughts. This brings in God. Adam gave God no place; set himself up in independence of God. God is shut out

F. E. R. It brings in the thought of acceptance.

J. S. O. Sin does not intrude in that sphere of life at all.

F. E. R. The great point in this chapter is, man has entered in—"He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." If you had this chapter alone, you would not apprehend entirely the truth. John vi. fills it out. John takes one side, and Paul the other. In John it is the inherent excellence of what has *come out*, "Living bread come down from heaven;" with Paul it is the value of what has *entered in*; you must have the one to complete the other. As a matter of fact, John has been learned last; we have got hold of Paul's teaching much more readily than John's.

T. H. R. While we could not apprehend this apart from the Spirit, yet you cannot get on the line of the Spirit till you have this; you are ready then to have John opened out. You must get to this through death and resurrection, the Spirit does not open out the excellencies of Christ, till you are on the ground to receive it. You must get to Christ; then the Spirit leads you on.

Q. Why do saints turn so much to John's writings?

T. H. R. There is a loveliness and beauty in

John that touches the heart, though one may not understand it.

F. E. R. I think people are not in a condition to touch John till they understand Paul's line of truth. The gospel never came to you from John. The gospel comes through Paul, not from John.

D. L. H. It is a little striking that John is given to us last.

F. E. R. John comes in for the filling up. You get the architect in Paul. You see what God was doing. Man has entered in according to the satisfaction of God; but John gives the filling up.

T. H. R. And shews you who that Man is. You get the attractiveness of the Person of Christ. You never get the conscience set at rest in John. You have to go to Paul for solid ground on which your soul is to rest.

F. E. R. I do not believe in short cuts; many try them, but they prove a long way round.

E. C. G. V. W. used to say of some one preaching from John v. 24, he gave no solid ground for a soul to rest on.

F. E. R. You must get the soul at rest on the solid ground of the cross. You must have the line of things Paul presents to get peace; you must have righteousness as a basis. Paul opens out righteousness. People ought to see the distinct place that each apostle has in his ministry.

Paul had the ministry of the gospel and the church. I do not find John had either, and yet his writings are most essential to Paul's for the filling up of his ministry. To me a wonderful truth is opened up in Romans vi., that one Man has entered in to the eternal satisfaction of God. That is our acceptance. Though I have not travelled much that line, I see it, and I am to join that Man. I am identified with Him. It goes on to the resurrection of the body. "We believe that we shall also live with him"—the full result. You would not die with Him unless you knew you would live with Him. If you are going to live with Him you had better begin that life now, and reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. His death was a death in which God was glorified, on the ground of which He was raised; you come in on that ground.

F. H. B. Is not "the likeness of his death" baptism?

F. E. R. Yes.

Q. What is being planted together in the likeness of His death?

F. E. R. I take it up morally as identification with His death. But "Out of the eater came forth meat." The death of Christ is the annulling of the penalty of sin, but God is so glorified that He brings resurrection in. It

yielded something for God ; you have the penalty annulled and the introduction of what is new.

Q. What is "I am the resurrection and the life" (John xi.) ?

F. E. R. You get part in the resurrection by virtue of vital connection with Him. "Christ the first-fruits : afterward they that are Christ's, at his coming."

T. H. R. It all turns on the point—if we are of that Man, everything must be according to Him.

F. E. R. I only feel very much ashamed in common with a great many more, at the practical preference that is given to the first man. If you look at people's deportment, dress, houses, business, preaching, and a great many more things, you see how much the first man is preferred to the Second. We ought to be free of the first man morally. You do not want to die to sin for God. God quickened us when we were dead in sins. That is the divine side. We have to die to sin for ourselves. All is looked at in Ephesians from the divine side.

J. S. O. That shews the importance of bringing in experience on our side.

F. E. R. There are the two sides, that is certain ; if you confound them you spoil both sides.

T. H. R. If we were converted and went

straight to heaven, we should not want this at all.

F. E. R. No; but you would be very small in heaven; you would not have the Spirit's work in the believer—the practical displacing of the one, and bringing in of the other; there would not be much time for all this.

E. C. All this (Rom. vi.) is connected with faith and exercise.

F. E. R. Ephesians i. and ii. are the actings of divine power. Ephesians is divine counsel. Romans is the converse side, the dealing of God in grace with one who has been alive in sin; we start here. Romans is necessary in order to reach Ephesians. When you have got into it, God can unfold to you the truth of things in His sight. God quickened you together with Him; that is the whole matter for God.

J. S. O. Romans vi. is the beginning of the christian course in the wilderness as set free from sin.

F. E. R. Chapter viii. takes up the line of the Spirit. Christ has entered in; now you enter in: that is the great point. You would not be complete unless you had chapter viii. 2.

A. H. What do you mean by "entered in"?

F. E. R. The instant He "rose from the dead by the glory of the Father" He entered in to all the satisfaction of God. He rose into the

eternal satisfaction of God on the ground of the work He has accomplished. That is the ground on which we go in, as far as I understand. No man can understand what Christ entered into as Man when He rose from the dead; it was so infinite.

A. H. Is that "the joy set *before* him"?

T. H. R. "Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." "In thy presence is fulness of joy." If we had the sense of what God's satisfaction is in having Christ in His presence, and that we are to be like Him, we should want the experience of this chapter a little more, in order to be like Him now. Many are clear from their sins, but if you want to be for Christ here you must join Him, you must reach Him. You will be raised like Christ, you will be like Him, that is the joy of your heart; you will not carry a bit of the old man in there; why should we retain him here?



READING.

THE TWO PRAYERS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

EPHESIANS I. 15-23 ; III. 14-21.

D. L. H. Where does the prayer in the first chapter end ?

F. E. R. I think in the middle of verse 20 with " when he raised him from the dead."

Q. Why is the first prayer addressed to the God, and the second to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ?

A. Is it not that the one is connected more with *power*, what is outside, as well as what God is to Him as Man ; the other (in chap. iii.) more connected with what is inward—christian state ?

W. T. T. Christ accomplished all according to the mind of God.

Q. What is the main object of each prayer ?

W. T. T. Is it not in the first, that you may know all that has been accomplished in man for God, and what God has done ; and the second,

that the soul may enter into the conscious knowledge of it?

Q. What is meant by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation?

T. H. R. I think it is connected with the knowledge of God.

Q. Spirit of revelation?

T. H. R. I understand it to be the unfolding of what God is to the soul. What is to be known is characterised by Himself, as we see in *His* calling, *His* inheritance, *His* power.

W. B. Some one was speaking just now of what was "objective" and "subjective." These are terms that simple folk are often at a loss to know the meaning of. How can they be simply expressed?

W. T. T. I understand "objective" to mean what is presented to man as God's testimony. "Subjective," that work in which all is made good in the soul by the Spirit of God.

D. L. H. The saints for whom the apostle prays in this epistle were already well advanced in christianity. Does not this shew that such saints to-day may need the eyes of their heart to be enlightened?

T. H. R. Their hearts were already connected with the new range of things revealed in Christ in heaven. Christ in heaven and the saints on earth are embraced in the circle of their interests.

F. E. R. The first prayer is more that we may know what is in relation to Him, "Hope of his calling," &c. The second, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts," &c., is more connected with us. The first is more in relation to what is *above*—to our place; the second more in reference to our state down here.

Q. What is "the hope of his calling;" what does that embrace?

F. E. R. It refers, I judge, to heaven. You must be put in the place before you can touch the inheritance; that includes things in heaven and on earth. The prayer follows up the course of the opening of the chapter. The calling, as seen in verses 4 and 5, is the first thing: then the inheritance, as seen in verse 11; and then the power, what puts us into it, or more properly what has put Christ into it.

Q. Still, why "the hope of his calling"?

F. E. R. I only conceive because we are not yet in the actuality of it.

Q. "To know," in what sense?

F. E. R. As I understand it, God must first put you above in order that you may enter on the inheritance. A great idea in scripture is that the Christ inherits; that runs through the Psalms, He inherits all things. In His Christ, Jehovah's rights are made good; He will have

possession of all things in "the Christ," and that is where we come in as in Him.

Q. Do you find the idea of the second Man in the Old Testament?

F. E. R. I think so; and from the New Testament we learn "the Christ" is the *second* Man.

T. H. R. It is interesting to notice that in Psalm viii. 4, in Hebrew, there are two words used for "man," as found there. One is "Enosh," that is, the man in the fall and ruin. The other "Son of Adam," applying to Christ as Son of man; Adam denotes headship. The expression "all things under his feet," occurs three times (Eph. i.; Heb. ii.; and 1 Cor. xv.)

F. E. R. It was not possible to get the "Second Man" brought out until the judgment that rested on the "first man" had been removed. The seed of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent.

Q. What is the difference between God's calling and our calling?

F. E. R. What I see is that God's calling refers distinctly to another *place*. "Our calling" is connected with saints as God's habitation down *here*; hence we are in this epistle exhorted to "walk worthy of the calling," wherewith we are called. (Eph. iv. 1.) Great importance is to be attached to the fact that in

chapter i. it is "*His* calling," *His* inheritance "*His* power."

As to God's calling, I regard "sonship" as a relationship which *belongs to heaven*. Quite true, we are according to Galatians iii. 26, "All God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus," and the apostle says, "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, come of woman, come under law, that he might redeem those under law, that we might receive *sonship*;" and we are no more servants but sons, not under the old system, but under the new. None the less sonship properly refers to "heavenly places," so in Ephesians i. 5 it says, "Having marked us out beforehand for *adoption* through Jesus Christ to himself." This is not on earth, but in heavenly places, though we have now "as heavenly light what soon will be our part."

T. H. R. I understand the expression in Romans viii. 21, "*the glory* of the children of God," to be, that we shall be in the place of sons.

D. L. H. Is not the full idea of sonship, that we are to be brought out in that dignity; that is, it is the position we are to enter into in glory?

F. E. R. I think a further thought is, that God will have us in His own place. With Paul, it is all up there; with John, it is more what is true of us down here. Hence I see "sons" refers to association with Christ in glory; children, to

association with Him in the place of His rejection; that I think comes out in chapter iii. of the first epistle of John. "See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God. For this reason the world knows us not, because it knew him not." As children, we are linked with a rejected Christ *here*, but as with Him, so with us, we are at the same time the objects of the Father's affections. Further, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

No one could possibly speak of Christ as "a child," but He is the Son of God, and it is *the Spirit* of God's Son that is sent forth into our hearts crying, "Abba, Father." The divine thought is that you should be in the place of a son, bearing the image of the heavenly, and now you have *the light* of the divine thought, and more than that, you have the Spirit of God's Son, whilst not in the *place* of sonship; you have the Spirit of sonship until you reach *the place*. To my mind it is a clear distinction between the position of sons and children; that the one refers to our place in glory, the other to our place here. We have to remember that anything that has been here for God, can never be lost.

E. C. I understand from Romans viii. that we have the spirit of sonship now, but we wait for

the adoption. Then in connection with the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, we have heirship referred to.

F. E. R. Heirship is linked in Romans viii. with "children." A great point in Galatians is that we "are sons of God BY FAITH in Christ Jesus." We are in that light. I think a very wrong impression may be given to people if you are not careful to shew that "sonship" is connected with heaven. The calling of God has reference to what is neither connected with time nor earth, and God's calling is sonship.

Q. "One hope of your calling," what is that?

F. E. R. I think it is in reference to what is corporate. I judge it is the church in its true place. To be a son of God is to be outside what you are in your responsibility on earth.

There are two great thoughts—what is individual and what is corporate. The individual is after all the higher thing, that is, the relationship of sons.

T. H. R. It is a wonderful thing to contemplate, what it is to be a son of God the Father; besides that, there is what the church is to Christ.

F. E. R. The perfect, full grace that comes out in the Ephesians is that God must have

you in His own place. It is our privilege to anticipate by faith what we are not yet brought into in fact. We are redeemed out of one place to be brought into another, and whilst we are not brought into the place of our greatest blessing we are brought into the light of it. As the hymn we sometimes sing says,

“That gives us now, as heavenly light,
What soon shall be our part.”

D. L. H. It seems to me that the very word in the Greek seems to imply being placed or put down in the place of sons. “Children” brings you to God *here*; “sons” brings you to God *there*.

F. E. R. Galatians is a contrast between two systems—“faith” in contrast to “law,” and “sons” in contrast to “servants”; liberty to bondage, and so on. Ephesians gives that which God has marked us out for, the reality of the thing, and you see the place to which it refers.

D. L. H. The thought of children certainly brings in the idea of suffering and affection in its scriptural connection; and sons, the idea of glory.

F. E. R. The prayer of our Lord in John xvii. concludes with the words: “I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” It is

apparent that this does not refer to heaven, but to our place now. The Father's love would not allow you to lack anything, at the same time would not give you anything that would hinder your blessing.

T. H. R. The revelation of the Father's name by Christ when here on earth, was different from the character in which it is revealed now that He is in heaven; then it was suited to saints on earth, and you will lose greatly if you do not see that the Father's name is connected now with Christ having gone to the Father. I think He could, as the Object of the Father's love and affection on earth, in a way make it known *then*; but now He is gone to heaven it is made known in another way. There is a distinction in the way in which the Lord refers His disciples to the Father in Matthew vi. and in Luke xii. In the former it is said, as to the fowls, etc.: "Your heavenly Father feedeth them;" in Luke it is, "God feedeth them;" and then He leads them on to the heavenly side of things.

Q. As to the second prayer, could a little be said on it in relation to the power that worketh in us?

F. H. B. What is the force of the words: "That *the* Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"?

F. E. R. "The Christ" is a large thought, and takes in all His completeness, the whole

range of His glory. "The Christ" is the equivalent of "the Anointed." The object of the Christ dwelling in your heart by faith is, that you may know what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know His love which surpasses knowledge, so as to be filled to all the fulness of God.

T. H. R. We find in connection with Abraham, when the Lord took him aside, after he had separated from Lot, He said: "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." The whole extent of the land on which he looked, wide and great as it was, had its limits; how different in our case; wherever we look, where faith turns the eye now, it is Christ, and so it is infinitude.

F. E. R. The prayer is addressed to the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." Every family gets its place from the Father. Every family on the ground of redemption comes under the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The church is the inmost circle.

The immensity is here opened up, and the end is, "That ye may be filled [even] to all the fulness of God." (Ver. 19.) In the first

chapter it is "the fulness of him that filleth all in all;" that is in relation to the assembly; here it is "to be filled unto all the fulness of God." One thing that distinguishes the assembly is the formative work of the Spirit. There is nothing of the same character in Old Testament times, that is, no formative power in them answering to this. We find, from Luke xx., that the Old Testament saints come into the place of sons. It states, "They are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." But we have now the indwelling of the Spirit, and I believe we shall know a vast deal more of the power of the Spirit in the glory than we do now.

W. T. T. When the apostle is unfolding the truth of "the mystery," he exclaims at the vastness and gloriousness of it; and we need the might of the Spirit to enter into it.

F. E. R. There is a feature in Ephesians which I think is important to notice; that is, man goes in *to* God, and then comes out *from* God, to be here *for* God; apart from that you do not get full qualification for service. With Christ dwelling in your heart by faith more of this is known. The reason we know so little about true service is because we taste so little of the reality of what it is to have first gone in *to* God. No one can be properly for Him here apart from this. The idea is a great

deal too much abroad of confining this to preachers and teachers, but it is positively essential to all Christians. I want for myself to understand better what it is to have gone *in to God*, according to His own eternal purpose ; then I shall understand what it is to come out to be *for God* here.



READING.

THE LORD'S COMING.

(REV. XXII. 15-21.)

J. B. S. The first thing here is the fact of a distinct communication from the Lord. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Then in verse 17 there is response to it. No one could know that communication but some one near Him. No one could respond to it but some one near Him. I hear people singing about the coming of the Lord who are not feeling the solemnity of it, they have not the gravity of it before them, they are not in a condition to say "Come." No one can say "Come" but the Spirit and the bride. You may say it is individual, but the individual must have condition of heart and the sense of the relationship, to be able to respond to this communication and say, "Come."

REMARKED. Being interested in His interests would be part of it.

D. L. H. The thought here is not our going

up to Christ, but His coming to enter on His rights.

J. B. S. The prominent idea is that Christ is coming to reign. You could not have the day without the morning Star. There is first the rapture, for when He comes, we come with Him. I do not think the wife of a rejected king would be satisfied that her husband should come for her, and not have prominently before her that he was coming to reign where he had been rejected. From Thyatira onward the prominent thought we get is Christ's coming to reign. It is the event looked for.

Q. Is there not the fact of the rapture in verse 17?

J. B. S. The rapture is included, but there is more. The first wave of His power manifests itself with reference to His own. All who belong to Him will be brought under the effect of it. It will gather up every one who belongs to Him. I do not say the church only, but all who belong to Him.

REMARKED. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." He will set them up under Himself.

J. B. S. Yes; according to the different families. We shall meet the Lord in the air.

He is the first-fruits. He is unattended when He comes for the bride.

W. M. You said something of the morning star yesterday, what did you mean?

J. B. S. That the morning star is the harbinger of the day; you know when you see it that you are close upon the day.

Were you ever out before daybreak and saw the morning star? Then you knew that the day was at hand. "The day star arise in your hearts" refers to the rapture. The first mark of His favour is to take us out of this place; but it is not according to the heart of the bride to look only for relief when His day is at hand; the morning star truly is the harbinger of that day.

J. P. Is the day star arising in your heart condition?

J. B. S. I think so, you are looking for Him.

D. L. H. Has the truth of the rapture taken too prominent a place with us so as to obliterate the thought of His coming to take His rights?

J. B. S. Exactly. Responsibility is lost sight of. His coming is looked for because He will take us out of all the trials here. The rapture is spoken of only once in scripture (1 Thess. iv.), and it is implied in John xiv.

J. P. Is it the rapture in John xiv.?

J. B. S. It is so only by inference. It is to take them *to Himself*. It involves the rapture.

J. P. What is the "Where I am," is it the Father's house?

J. B. S. The point is *Himself*, to take them to Himself.

T. H. R. In that chapter it is all carrying them to His side.

F. H. B. In John xiv. you do not get the idea of reigning.

J. B. S. No; but any true heart would not think of being with Him without thinking of His rights. "I will *come* for you," not *send* for you. A faithful heart looks for His rights, not only for its own relief.

D. L. H. If the rapture were not unfolded in 1 Thessalonians we should not have thought of it in John xiv.

F. E. R. If we had not 1 Thessalonians iv. we should know nothing about the rapture.

Q. Is not the rapture in 1 Corinthians xv.?

J. B. S. That is not the subject, but the resurrection. There is more about the day than the rapture in 1 Thessalonians. In chapter i. we have waiting for God's Son from heaven which was to set up His kingdom.

J. P. Does not "all be changed" in 1 Corinthians xv. refer to the rapture?

F. E. R. It does not refer to it. The rapture

refers to our being "caught up," not to the being changed.

Q. What then is the mystery there? "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

F. E. R. The change is not the rapture. The rapture is catching up. The mystery is the change. It all forms part of the victory over death effected here, and does not go on to taking us to heaven.

J. B. S. It only shews how the rapture is before your eye, and not His coming. Where the rapture is the thing prominently before the mind, the rights of Christ are not truly in your heart.

F. E. R. I think putting the rapture in 1 Corinthians xv. spoils the whole force of the passage; it is what takes place on *earth*, not the rapture. The Corinthian epistle is for the earth; the resurrection of the body does not in itself go beyond earth. In 1 Corinthians saints are God's temple and Christ's body, and God gives them the victory over death.

J. B. S. The object is the resurrection of the body.

J. P. Is not the proper hope of the church, the Lord's coming for her?

F. E. R. I would say that *Christ* Himself is the hope of the church, all other thought of His

coming is merged in this, all is merged in Christ. When the hope is realised, the church is merged in Christ; all is found in *Christ*.

J. B. S. I agree with that thoroughly.

F. H. B. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Are there two distinct things in that passage?

J. B. S. They are connected together, but this passage is in a different connection from that of Revelation xxii. The true way is to stick to the scripture before us for the interpretation of itself. It is all one in that verse in Titus ii. 13: "The blessed hope and appearing." Nothing is accomplished till He comes. The bride is looking for Him to come. The great point of the Book of Revelation is that Christ is coming to reign. You must look at the book as a whole, it is one letter. John's ministry went on "till I come." "If I will that he tarry till I come." When the Lord gave the book He could have come from that moment.

Q. Then is Revelation all the kingdom?

J. B. S. Yes.

F. E. R. It is all in harmony with the general spirit of John's line; he brings God in. You cannot understand any of these passages without seeing the point of John, and that is to bring God to earth. It is the very contrast to

Paul, who takes the church to Him in heaven; John brings God to earth in Christ.

J. B. S. Yes; I have often noticed how John brings in Old Testament scriptures, and have said—John is Enoch intensified. Enoch prophesied, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints;" and yet he himself was taken up to heaven.

F. E. R. Yes; Paul must be brought in to complete what John presents.

J. B. S. In the last days in 2 Timothy, in order to meet the state of things, you must be fully acquainted with Paul's teaching.

G. G. The responsibility of saints ends at the rapture.

J. B. S. Yes; but you will have to pass the judgment-seat after that. You must not lose sight of responsibility.

G. G. Will not the judgment-seat be before the appearing, and the responsibility question be gone into there?

J. B. S. Yes. You get your place in the kingdom assigned to you there. Everything in the kingdom is on the ground of righteousness. Everything in heaven is on the ground of pure grace.

J. P. What is the effect of looking for the rapture?

J. B. S. Looking *only* for the rapture pro-

duces laxity, because your thought is that you will be taken out of all here.

J. P. But the Spirit did not reveal it for laxity ?

J. B. S. No, surely not ; but they were full of the appearing. There is no fear but you will be right as to the rapture, if you are right as to the appearing.

F. E. R. I think the right thing is to think of the *Person* who is coming. If the Spirit and the bride say "Come," it is to some *One*.

J. B. S. Yes. *Such an One* is coming. I do not believe any but the bride could understand the communication. You must be near enough to hear it and to respond to it.

G. G. What is the force of the root and offspring of David ?

J. B. S. He is the King. Everything belonged to David, though the rejected king. Christ is of David, and He is about to come and reign. In the address to Philadelphia, He has the key of David, though He be the rejected King. Where the Corinthians failed was, they reigned as kings without him.

D. L. H. Does not "Ye shew forth the Lord's death till he come" associate us with Him as the One rejected from this scene during that rejection till He receives His rights ?

J. B. S. Yes. "Till he come" embraces the

whole interval from His rejection here *till He come* and is owned as rightful King. In the Lord's supper, if I announce the simple fact that He died, I expect nothing in the place where He was rejected, where He died—nothing between His death and His coming.

T. H. R. "Till he come" is His coming into everything that is His. I should think of the coming of the Lord as bringing God into this scene—and what it will be to *Him* to do that, not how it will affect us.

J. B. S. Yes, as Enoch was *looking* for the Lord to come with ten thousands of His saints, and yet he is caught up himself.

F. E. R. A person is not rightly looking for the Lord if he is not in His interests here.

J. B. S. Only two could understand His mind and be here for Him, the Spirit and the bride. You must go back to Paul to see how the church in union with Christ is devoted to His interests.

F. E. R. I thought it was what was characteristic of the Spirit and the bride on the earth to say "Come."

J. B. S. If I have heard His announcement, the natural answer is "Come." I do not ask anything but "*Come.*"

F. E. R. Yes; people might argue that there is very little of bridal affection to be found; but

the point is, it is the natural characteristic response of the bride to say, "Come."

T. H. R. It embraces the whole of what has gone before. The bride hears the whole communication, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

J. B. S. If it were heard there would be an effect on others. If I were practically saying, "Come," I should affect others.

T. H. R. You would take up the characteristic of the bride and affect others.

J. B. S. Every Christian is part of the bride, and the fact is you get into your true place.

F. E. R. It is where we all began. We *hear* it, and then say, "Come." That is how you learn it, how you come into it. You learn what is proper to the Spirit and the bride; you say, "Come."

H. Do we "hear" by the Spirit?

J. B. S. You could not hear in any other way.

J. B. Just go back to John xiv. I am not clear as to what you said about that. He said it to comfort their hearts.

J. B. S. He was comforting them to stay here, not to take them away. He was going to leave them, and to comfort their hearts during His absence, He says, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there

ye may be also." To take them away was not His immediate object.

J. B. But He was going to take them away to Himself after a bit.

J. B. S. Ah, yes, that is just it, "after a bit," we all agree to that; but He leaves you here first. He has left *you* here a good long bit, and He comforts the heart during the time with the promise, "I will come to you," meaning Himself.

F. E. R. It was in regard to feelings about saints who had died that the rapture is brought in. It was comfort about the dead, not about the living.

J. P. What is our "gathering together unto him" in 2 Thessalonians ii. 1? Is it the rapture?

J. B. S. Not exactly. It is included. In John xiv. the rapture is inferred, but not stated. That and 1 Thessalonians iv. are the only places where the rapture is referred to. 1 Thessalonians iv. is the only *statement* of the rapture.

D. L. H. It is important to see that the revelation of the rapture is only *introduced* to comfort the saints about their dead, not to comfort them about themselves.

F. E. R. In Revelation xii. the rapture is involved in the catching up of the man child; it must include the church as well as Christ, but then Satan is cast down. Satan is not cast down

now, or the church would be in heaven. There is no more church here when the church is caught up.

J. B. S. Not a bit of it is left on the earth after the rapture. It is not that there are not converts, but not belonging to the church.

F. E. R. They do not come out of the christian sphere. It is the sphere of enlightenment now, the sphere enlightened by the gospel.

J. B. S. The 144,000 in Revelation xiv. are singing the song which originated in heaven; they are near enough to learn it, but they are not the company who originated it. There will be different families in the future in relation to God. The idea that if the Lord were to come we should be caught up produces laxity, if disassociated from the truth of "the day." He will hold you responsible for the state in which He finds you when He comes.

Q. What is the hope of seeing Him as He is?

J. B. S. What could delight your heart more than to see Him as He is? Hence remember you must be like Him to see Him. This promotes responsibility, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." You lose the sense of responsibility if only the rapture is before you.

H. H. Hence the rapture is a means to an end?

J. B. S. Yes. Who is really waiting for Him? The one who is occupied with His interests here, but you can not be in concert with His interests if you do not realise union with Him.

F. E. R. Many may serve Him who do not know union.

J. B. S. Yes; but not intelligently.

F. E. R. You must have Christ dwelling in your heart to serve Him intelligently.

J. B. S. Yes, you are in identity with His interests then.

D. L. H. Must not the servant be equipped? May there not be too much haste in going out into service?

F. E. R. Yes. You cannot come out from God if you have not gone in to God.

J. B. S. As in John xv., he must abide in Him. It is easy for a man to say, I will go to India and preach; he is taking only one line of Christ's interests—preaching. The test is to stay in a place for the Lord and work it thoroughly. If you are there for God His grace will be given to you, and the qualities of a good servant will be developed *there*. You will be approved unto God.

T. H. R. It is very important to remember the fitting of the vessel; many go out before the vessel is fitted.

J. B. S. I agree with one who said, If you want to break your heart stay in the church. It is the wear and tear of self in preaching the gospel. It is the break down of self to help the church. No one can understand the present state of things who does not understand Paul's teaching. Otherwise you have not God's present object before you, and that object is to have a bride for His Son.

F. E. R. The revelation of the rapture to the Thessalonians proves they did not know the truth of union; they would then have had no question about it.

G. G. Who is one "athirst"?

J. B. S. It is the remnant character here, looking after everybody; a converted person not satisfied is one athirst. You must have God's object. J. N. D. said, "That in John xvii. He first sets us as Himself in the presence of God, and then sets us as Himself before the world." The great defect in service is, that many have not a correct idea of gift. A gift is a distinct impression which the Lord has given you from Himself, by which you are characterised.

J. P. What did you mean by saying we must go in to God before we can come out?

J. B. S. How could you come out if you have not been brought in? You are actually brought into the scene of divine resources, and then you

come out into a scene of contrariety. The English get on better in Russia than the Russians. The latter trust to their furs, but the English take care to go out warm. Christ always came out from God.

F. E. R. If you come out from God you come out impressed from where you have come from.

J. B. S. This properly you get in the assembly; it is not so much what you hear, but the effect of the Lord's presence there. You are impressed by Him. I cannot give you a better illustration than Psalm xxiii. You lie down in green pastures in a scene of boundless resources. You cannot be in power except you are set for God's object. Christ has fulfilled all God had for man. He manifested in divine lustre every desire which God had for man.

F. E. R. The great thing is to see the continuance of Christ in the church.

J. B. S. Yes, His body and His endowment. If you do not understand God's object, you cannot be in the line of His power.

F. E. R. Israel was completely superseded in His Person when He was here—the temple—the vine, &c., and now the wonderful thing is that it is continued in the church; because it is His body it is to be the exemplification of Him here, and the body is according to the Head.

J. B. S. It is not one person who could be an exemplification of Him, but the body.

F. E. R. If you had gone in to God you would understand what God's thought was.

J. B. S. You may know every word of truth, and yet not have the grasp of it.

H. Ephesians i. 17—what is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation ?

J. B. S. God's thought about the mystery in connection with Christ. He was rejected from the earth, and God cannot acknowledge any one but Christ. When Christ was rejected and refused, the secret of God came out, even that Christ's body was here. Wonderful wisdom ! If Christ be refused, God has ordained that millions of saints shall be eventually His COMPLEMENT fully displayed. Satan was utterly outwitted !

D. L. H. Is the spirit of wisdom and revelation the full knowledge of God or of Christ ?

J. B. S. Of God.

F. E. R. I do not think the world has done well for itself in getting rid of the Lord.

J. B. S. Not at all. It has caused nothing but confusion. A wicked man never did a wise thing.

D. L. H. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." You cannot get wisdom outside of Christ. Christ is the wisdom of God.

J. B. S. Yes, we get everything through Christ.

The result of this reading should be that we all are more set for God's object. It is lamentable to me how little His object is before souls. I take up religious papers, and there is not a word about it. If you have not God's object, you can not be in power. It reminds me of the anecdote of the two captains, who met at the entrance of the trade winds. One decided to take the benefit of them and run on in their course. The other said he would try to pass between them, and when the first was returning he found his friend still in the doldrums. It has been a great help to me to see if you have God's object, the Spirit of God is with you. Daniel had his heart where God's heart was; he had God's object before him. When all was gone in Israel, he opened his window and prayed three times a day toward Jerusalem, though it was in ruins. Saving souls is not God's object, it is only a part of it.

D. L. H. Many not seeing this, and not having God's object before them, say all is over now, and only what is individual is left.

J. B. S. It only shews that all is over with themselves. It is wonderful how people see the colour of themselves in others. If you say, "It is all over," it shews where you are yourself. If my house is on fire, that is the time for me to work and to try to save it. Luke xii. gives us the true character of a servant who is looking

for his Lord's return. He is set for Christ's interests now on earth, he is thinking of what concerns Him. In any household if the master be expected home all the servants are on the alert that all may be in good order to greet him. So will it be with you, if you are really looking for Christ's coming.

F. W. B. We should not be rightly looking for His coming otherwise.

J. B. S. No.

READING.

LUKE IX. 22-36.

T. H. R. You have brought out in this gospel the moral characteristics of the kingdom of God. At the transfiguration in Matthew it is "the Son of man coming in his kingdom," it is more the glory of His Person. In Mark it says, "the kingdom of God come with power," that is the power that will put down Satan; therefore in Mark you get more said of the demoniac, Satan's kingdom. In Luke it is simply "the kingdom of God." The moral features of the kingdom are given here. From this moment, in Luke's gospel, the Lord is leading the disciples to heavenly things. Matthew never takes you off the earth, the Lord even does not go to heaven in Matthew. He sends the twelve out from Galilee. (Chap. xxviii. 16.) In Luke is very distinctly brought out the Lord leading their hearts to heaven. In verse 51, "The time was come that he should be received up," and in chapter x. 20 He says to them, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Up to this point in chapter ix., He is seen as presented to man, but here He is rejected. (Ver. 22.) When speaking of His death He always brings in resurrection.

Q. What is the title Son of man ?

T. H. R. The One in whom as Man everything is established.

Q. Does it not imply He is heir of the world ?

T. H. R. If you take Psalm viii. where it first comes in, it is under the Son of man God has put *everything*. So you see God's purposes set up in man. In order to this the Son of man must suffer. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. He always calls Himself the Son of man, never speaks of Himself except to the woman of Samaria as the Christ. He had presented Himself as the Christ come to Israel ; now He is rejected, and He brings in heavenly glory. The kingdom is presented to us here in all its beautiful moral traits and characteristics. Christ is rejected in this world ; now He shews them another. He wanted to impress their souls with another scene altogether apart from man and this scene. Hence the first thing we notice is that *He is withdrawn from men and things here*, and gone up the mount. The character of the scene here shewn us is totally contrary to what is amongst men. The next thing that greets us in this picture of the kingdom is a Man entirely according to God, a dependent Man. He goes up the mount to pray. It is very easy to be dependent when I have a need. We are glad to turn to

God to supply the need, but when we have no absolute necessity, when we have the means to supply what we desire, that is where the test comes, and we are put to the proof whether we are wholly dependent on Him or not. But the Lord had everything at His command, and yet was entirely dependent. He lived by the word of God. The blessed Lord could say, "I was cast upon thee from the womb." He was ever in perfect dependence upon God, and in perfect communion with God; that is the first moral feature in the kingdom, man in dependence on God.

Dependence is the blessing of the creature, for all blessing must hang upon God, and flow from Him; but man has ever been blind to it, and what we get marking him down here is independence.

In Luke you get a Man entirely according to God brought before you. It is dependence coming out most strikingly all through this gospel. He is constantly seen praying. He is praying when anointed with the Holy Ghost; He is praying when choosing the apostles. He did nothing of Himself, but what He saw the Father do. There is another thing connected with His praying; it was not only the expression of His dependence, but also of His communion. He was in perfect communion with the mind of

His Father. He takes everything to God, as well as gets direction as to everything from God. It is the habit of one in perfect dependence and uninterrupted communion with God. As the dependent, praying Man He tells everything to God, lays all out before Him in prayer, and comes back into this world to do everything perfectly for God.

Q. In verse 22 the Lord speaks of the cross, His shame and rejection, then after this, the transfiguration takes place: is that God's answer to it?

T. H. R. Resurrection was the answer to the cross, but I think the transfiguration was God's putting honour and glory on the One who had perfectly acted for God here, the Vessel of God's grace to man, and yet His beloved Son. Here was One He could glorify. He *received* honour and glory as the perfect Man; God could put it on Him here though rejected by men. It was the conclusion of His ministry as Messiah; God had sealed Him at the beginning. If you seal a thing it shews it is something that belongs to you. God sealed Him. He says, as it were, "That is *My* Man," if I might say it with reverence. In Mark vii. 37 they said of Him, "He hath done all things well," then in chapter viii. you get a correct estimate of man, and in chapter ix. you turn to see the Lord's glory. Here I get

my soul imbued with another scene. He shewed it to the disciples that they might be impressed with the character of the kingdom of God. It does not say here (in Luke) that He was "transfigured." Why? It seems a natural thing with One who ever lived in such perfect dependence on and communion with God, that His countenance should express in outward appearance the heavenly glory with which He was in communion. As He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered. You see the blessed One in prayer and communion with God, and somehow you are prepared for glory to sit upon Him. It is not any sudden passage from one thing to another. It does not surprise you to see the glory passing over the countenance of that lowly, dependent, humble Man. It became Him. "His raiment was white and glistening." It is the impress of another scene that sits upon Him, the image of the heavenly steals, as it were, over Him. It is beautiful to see the impress of the heavenly upon Him in that moment, and He engages our hearts. In taking the three disciples with Him up the mount, He wanted as a *present* thing to impress them with another scene, but the character of it is seen in Himself. They see the image of the heavenly sitting on this blessed Man. But we see more, He has companions; there were two *men* who talked with Him; that

is noteworthy as given us in Luke. Men, not angels, are His companions.

Q. Why does it say in one gospel six days and in Luke eight ?

T. H. R. In Luke it takes in the day on which He spoke and the day in which He was transfigured. The glory of the Man is brought in in Luke. Hence in verse 26 He will come as Son of man in His own glory, and here two men appeared with Him in glory. In such a glorious scene we might have expected to see angels, but we see *men* in glory with Him. It is not difficult for us to understand how Moses and Elias were there, the Lord brought them there. The next thing I see is that they are in perfect, holy intimacy with Him, *they* talk with *Him*, it does not say He talked with them ; but they spoke with Him of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Now it is accomplished, and it will be our privilege in glory to speak with Him of His decease. We have the same thought expressed in the hymn we sometimes sing :—

“ And spotless in that heavenly light,
Of all Thy sufferings talk.”

There will be perfect holy intimacy in that blessed scene.

Q. Shall we understand it better then than now ?

T. H. R. Oh, yes. We shall have no hindrance then. He is wanting to impress their hearts with it here. Communion for the earthly people is connected with the brazen altar, but for the heavenly everything hangs upon divine righteousness within the veil. He is gone in in the perfection of righteousness, having glorified God's nature. The altar is where the question of righteousness is settled between God and man; within the veil, all is according to how Christ glorified God. In the account of the building of the temple in the book of Chronicles, you get the brazen altar spoken of, not in the book of Kings; what is specially mentioned in Kings is the oracle, that is where God's mind is, and the veil is not mentioned. In Chronicles there is approach to God at the altar, and the veil is spoken of, but in Kings we have the oracle, the place from whence the mind of God will go out for Israel, though they never go in. We have also chambers mentioned, to which John xiv. 2 alludes.

Q. Does the Holiest represent the heavenlies?

T. H. R. "Heaven itself," but morally for us it is the presence of God. Now we see they speak of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem; instead of reigning it was there He was going to depart out of the scene; the word decease is departure, it is really His exodus—

His death in the sense of going out of this whole scene. What is remarkable is, you have Moses and Elias speaking of it. Moses brought in the law, and he has to go to God and say they have broken it. Elias has to say to God that Israel is apostate; *now* they speak of His decease, they are engaged with One who is going to accomplish everything by His death at Jerusalem.

The moment is come when He is refused here and has nothing; He then impresses them with the scene of the heavenly. We must go up the mount with Christ if we want our souls imbued with another scene; if we are imbued with it, we shall come out and walk in quite a different way down here. You must in spirit go up the mount with Christ, be withdrawn from the scene of earthly association, in order to behold the Lord's glory. The blind man led out of the town was led away from man. In Peter and those with him we see ourselves—how little able we are to look at such a scene. You could hardly conceive their going to sleep, but it was too much for them. It shews what poor things we are, and the weakness of the flesh. You get Moses and Elias *with Him* in glory, that is what we *shall* be; now we are often like the disciples, so little able to behold it. We get a glimpse, and nature is so weak we turn round and look at something else. "When they were awake"—it is "fully awake," it was

no dream, it was a real thing—"they saw his glory." We do need to wake up; we see that in Zechariah iv., the angel came and waked him and said, "What seest thou?" The Lord was about to quit this scene, and therefore He is impressing them with another.

Verse 31. Jerusalem is where He would have taken His rights and reigned. For Jews the earth was a right thing. If the Lord was reigning now, the earth would be the place for us. If He had been received, He would have filled the earth with His presence; but now about to be rejected, He impresses them with another scene. "His life was taken from the earth," (see Acts viii.), and then Paul saw Him in glory.

There is a difference in Matthew and Luke with regard to prayer. In Matthew it is said, "Your heavenly Father will give you good things;" that did not go beyond millennial blessings, because there you are in connection with earth; but in Luke it is "Give the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit connects you with heaven, "My Father, which is *of* heaven, shall give the Holy Spirit;" it shews you have a heavenly gift. Some translate it, "Shall your Father give you the Holy Spirit out of heaven;" it is not good things merely, but I get a heavenly gift.

Now we get a remarkable thing; the Jew was familiar with the tabernacle but had no idea of the cloud being a dwelling place except for the Lord. Peter had not, in his soul, risen up to the glory of the Lord, and he puts the Lord on a level with Moses and Elias. The moment Peter makes mention of a tabernacle, the Spirit speaks of the cloud. (Ver. 34.) That is greater than the tabernacle, the Shekinah; they entered into the cloud. J. N. D. used to say it was the Father's House; it was Moses and Elias and the Lord who entered into the cloud; the three disciples only saw the *manifested* glory in their glorious Lord. There is another glory which is not manifested, but which we are to behold. (John xvii. 24.) It is the glory He re-enters as Man, the glory He had with the Father before the world was; there was never such a thing before as *entering* into the cloud. He wills that those given to Him of the Father shall be with Him where He is, to behold His glory. Moses did not enter into the cloud (Ex. xxxiii. 9), it descended and the Lord talked with him at the tabernacle door; but Moses could not enter into it. Here he and Elias enter in with the Lord. The tabernacle is the figure of an ordered, created scene; but we do not see that in the cloud. It is the difference between God creating a sphere

for the manifestation of His glory and the Father's House, where we are brought into the circle of His affections, which centre in His beloved Son. In worship I get the two sides—what man is to God in Christ, and what the Son is to the Father. I think the tabernacle figures the created scene; as also the New Jerusalem; it is finite, but that in which the glory of God and the Lamb is displayed. The Father's House is another thought. It is where the Father's love to the Son is known, and through infinite grace we have a place there. The Father's name will be known by saints on earth, but that is not the thought of the new Jerusalem. The earthly saints will learn the Father's love by seeing how we are loved. "That they may behold my glory." (John xvii.) I think that is the cloud, it is His own personal glory, which He had with the Father before the world was. He re-enters it as Man. To see *His* glory must be beyond all *we* get. There is the glory of God which is displayed in a *Man*—in Christ; but if you bring in the Father's house you must have the Son; you bring in the sphere of the Father's affections, the Father's house, I think.

The vision passes and Jesus is found alone, and the disciples are told to "*Hear him.*" He had been witnessed to by Moses and the pro-

phets, and it was right to listen to their voices ; but now He has come and they retire, and the Father's voice proclaims who He is, "This is my beloved Son: *hear him.*" The law and the prophets had spoken of the manifested glory, but not directly, I think, of the glory of the heavenly. It is an interesting study, the subject of the glory, as given in Ezekiel and Isaiah. We get two glories there. In Ezekiel it is characterised by the cherubim, and in Isaiah it is characterised by the seraphim. In Ezekiel it is the glory of government, but in Isaiah it is more what God is in His nature. The glory of the government of the earth through Israel is seen returning in Ezekiel, while in Isaiah it says, "Arise, shine for the glory of the Lord is risen *upon* thee." This is different from the glory of government, which they themselves will have as proper to Israel. Isaiah gives you the idea of the glory of the heavenly shining over them, in the light of which they will walk ; the church will take the place occupied by the cloud over Israel. The glory of Christ in the church will overshadow the earth. There is a glory connected with Israel in government, mystically represented by the cherubim, and a glory connected with God Himself celebrated by the seraphim.

Verse 36. "And they kept it close, and told no

man in those days any of those things which they had seen." They could not then speak of the things which they had seen. It needed the death and resurrection of the Lord to make a way of entrance into what was here prefigured. They had been overshadowed by the glory, but a much more blessed portion was to be found in seeing Jesus enter the cloud, and companions with Him. And this is that which is ours through grace.

It is a wonderful thing that all that is known of God and glory will come out in the church. J. B. S. has said—Everything that the Lord did on earth will come out in the church. If all were written, the world could not contain the books. The church will be the book in which all will be read.

The Lord lead our hearts into it and impress our hearts with that blessed Person, for His name's sake.

