

# THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD

By  
JAMES BOYD

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## EXPLANATION

THE Author of these papers is now with the Lord and will write no more, but it is thought that he might yet speak to some through their publication. They are a selection from many that appeared from his pen in the monthly magazine *Scripture Truth*.

The Scriptures were the very Word of God to James Boyd ; he had a remarkable grasp of the truths they teach and could express in robust language what he had learnt from the Word, as this volume proves. His uncompromising attitude towards error ; his love for the Lord Jesus, his Saviour ; his delight in the grace of God that had changed him from an atheist to a child in the family of God are all expressed in these papers and give them a permanent value.

## A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

**F**ROM my earliest days I was of a sceptical turn of mind. I wanted everything brought to the bar of human reason, not realizing how utterly deceptive the reasoning of a mind away from God must be. Had I been able to face the fact of my natural aversion to all that was of God I would not have trusted my mind in the things that concerned my relations with Him. I might have seen that any natural antipathy to a report must always exercise a hindrance to faith in it. Though brought up in a godly atmosphere I absolutely turned away from all so-called places of worship when I left home, and I left home very early in life. To argue the question I was more than willing, but to sit quietly and hear the unfolding of the grace of God was more than my pride of heart would endure.

I wanted, still want, everything proven. It is plain enough that a mind like that can only be caught through a sense of *need*. It betrays a hardened condition of soul, as well as a haughty spirit. It is not that I was at any time indifferent to the great question of a future state. The very opposite was the case. The question was ever uppermost in my thoughts. Indeed, I never could well understand how any one was able to shelve such a momentous consideration. I ate my food without raising questions about how it could be converted into blood, bone, and muscle; but to the Bread of Life I was able to raise more objections than any one who took an interest in my soul was able to meet. For this reason I have said that such a person can only be caught by his need. To my daily bread I had no objection, but the Bread of Life was not palatable: I had no appetite for it. I should have been thankful could I have been assured either of the favour of God, or of annihilation as the alternative; but no one could assure me of either.

The kind of gospel to which I was accustomed was of a very legal type, and though Christ was spoken of as the alone Saviour of sinners, peculiarly enough and to my mind unreasonably, I was given to understand that I had my part

to do. This part was never clearly defined ; and bewildered by this mixture of Judaism and Christianity, I drifted into the region of practical infidelity. I had no light, and judged every one else to be in the same darkness as myself. But an aching void was in my heart which all the pleasures of the world were unable to satisfy.

At length, through the solicitation of a servant of God, I was led to take up the Scriptures and read them, though as far as the text goes I was by no means ignorant of them. But there came right home to my soul the feeling that if the Book was of God it could be like no other book that ever was written, and that I could not read it without knowing that it was His Word, that is, if it was. As I read, I said to myself, No one on earth knows me as I know myself, but the Author of this Book knows me a great deal better than I know myself. I felt that God was speaking. I found myself under His omniscient eye, and I fell at His feet. The hammer of His Word had broken the hard rock to pieces.

Then came the moment when a measure of pure gospel broke upon mine ear. It met every need of my soul. It was just the thing which suited my sinful state. It was not "The Divine within me answering to the truth of God," as some have put it ; but it was the need of a poor sinner's conscience met by the blood of Jesus, and the need of the heart met by the love of God. What rest it gave ! To me it was like sight to the blind, like bread to the hungry, like water to the thirsty, like clothes to the naked. It needed no proving. I would not have crossed the narrowest street in the city to have had the Scriptures proven to be the Word of God. What soul in the warmth and light of the noonday sun would waste his time listening to a debate as to whether or no there is such a thing as the sight of the eyes. As far as I was concerned I felt I was in contact with the living Christ, and that *God is love*.

Before this I knew that my conduct was not what it ought to be, but this was as measured by a human standard, now I saw that what would do for men would not pass with a holy and righteous God. It was no longer a question of human frailty, or of mere mistakes, but of absolute rebellion against God and His Christ. But He who had loved me and had given Himself for me was now my righteousness

in the presence of God, so that it was no longer the query as to what I was for God, but rather what Christ was for Him. This gave solid and lasting peace. By His work on the cross He made an end of my sins, and, *as after the flesh*, the man that had committed the sins, and into a new and eternal relationship was I brought, and made conscious of that relationship by the power of the Holy Spirit who shed the love of God abroad in my heart.

Has this all been a dream, an illusion, an ignis-fatuus and baseless phantasm of a sick brain? If it is, I am to be pitied, for I have been under it for over half a century, and the sweetness, joy and delight of it have steadily increased from the first day until now. Are sight, hearing, feeling, life, love, existence, delusions? Are people conscious that they are alive in flesh and blood? Have they any fears that after all they may not be alive but dead? Would anyone thank you for stopping him on the street and assuring him that he was alive? You say, That would be absurd. So it would, but believers in the Lord Jesus are by the quickening power of God in the life of Christ, and have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Is this life, then, which they have in the power of the indwelling Spirit, not as real as is the life of flesh and blood?

JAMES BOYD.

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## THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

*“ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”* 2 Timothy 3. 16.

THE Holy Scriptures are like no other writings. All other writings have had their origin in the mind of man, and with the conviction and expectation that the mind of the reader shall be able to grasp the meaning of that which is written. But this is not at all true of the Scriptures. It is not only not assumed by the writers of Holy Scripture that the mind of man will be able to seize the thoughts therein recorded, but its inability to do so is very distinctly affirmed (1 Cor. 2. 14; Eph. 1. 17; Col. 1. 9; Luke 24. 45). The Holy Spirit, who inspired the writers, is the only One who can enable us to understand that which He has caused to be placed on record for our instruction in the mind of God.

Therefore a mere study of the Word, however necessary it be to study it, is not of itself sufficient to place us in possession of the thoughts of God. It is necessary that we should read it, pay attention to all that it brings before us, believe it even when we do not grasp its meaning, and meditate upon its precious utterances; but *this should be done in prayerful dependence upon its gracious Author, and in distrust of our own natural reason, which is always infidel, and always infidel just because it is our reason, the reason of fallen flesh, which ever revolves in its own blind orbit, excluding every ray of light divine.*

This should not discourage the student of the Bible, but rather the opposite, for I would point out the true and only way of gaining knowledge; also where, and how it is to be found. It must be found in the Word, for it is there, and nowhere else; and there should be the utmost confidence in it as a revelation from God. Attention must be given to its most minute details, for there is nothing unnecessary placed on record, nor shall we therein find any vain repetitions crowding its pages. Neither must we imagine that any question has arisen amongst His people, unforeseen by Him,

since upon Him, who knows the end from the beginning, it is impossible for the enemy to deliver a surprise attack. Every assault of the wily foe ; every twist given to its evident meaning by the stubborn sectarian, who would compel it to lend its support to his miserable counterfeit of the truth ; every dogmatic display of isolated texts, wrenched away from their proper connection in order to turn the heart from the living Christ in heaven, all was foreseen by the Author of this wonderful Book, and ample provision made for its detection and exposure.

It is a sharp sword for the human conscience, of which the devil himself has often felt the edge. It is a light that lays bare the secret chambers of the heart of man, and manifests its deceitful intentions, with all its bitter enmity against God ; but at the same time it reveals the heart of God in all His fathomless love to the guilty. It guides the footsteps of the pilgrim through this wilderness where there is no way, and discloses before his heavenward gaze that celestial home, in which there is fullness of joy, and where pleasures for evermore reside. In its spontaneous praises, melody made by the heavenly hierarchs and the myriads of redeemed are heard ; and amid the rumbling of the thunders of its wrath can be detected the wailing of those who have passed beyond the borderland of hope and have entered into regions of despair. It gives us a glimpse into the eternity that is past, and also directs our forward glance to the rest of God, and to the day when all things are made new, bathed in the glory of redemption.

The characteristics of the children of the devil it faithfully delineates, and describes minutely those of the children of God. The plottings and the drivellings of the human mind are therein recorded, as are also the counsels of eternal love. The folly of the creature ; the wisdom of the Creator ; the way of falsehood, the way of truth ; the way of righteousness, the way of sin ; the way of life, the way of death ; the way of man, the way of God ; all is therein recorded for our enlightenment and eternal blessing ; and happy is the man whose confidence is in its heavenly origin, and whose heart and mind are well stored with its precious truths.

Its blessings are health-imparting, exalting, and enriching, and its anathemas are blasting, bewildering, abasing, and

impoverishing. Obedience to its precepts purifies the soul, and rebellion against its commandments hardens the heart, benumbs the conscience, and deadens the sensibilities. It criticises its critics, judges its judges, makes liars of its calumniators, and for ever justifies its friends. It will have the last word at the last day, and from its sentence there shall be no appeal. It is a well-spring of living water in this arid waste, and living bread in this famine-stricken land. It makes the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the dead to live. In the might of the Spirit it is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword; piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. God has magnified His Word above all His name; and as to the one who despises its testimony, good were it for that man had he never been born.

Therefore am I far from discouraging anyone who would seek to study the contents of this wonderful Volume. God has given it to us in His marvellous grace, and He would have us approach it with fear and trembling—not because we are not free from its anathemas, for, through the grace of God and the blood of Jesus, every believer is justified from all things and set in new and eternal relationships with Him in Christ—but because of its holy and sacred character. There is no condemnation in its pages for the believer in Christ. His redemption by the blood of Jesus, his relationship to God, and his eternal security, occupy a large place in that sacred Volume; but just because it is a revelation of God, it is to be approached with holy reverence, and not with the lightness with which one may take up any other book.

## THE NECESSITY FOR A REVELATION

*“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”*

Romans 10. 17.

IT is late in the history of the world to be going into the question of the origin of a Book, which began to be written about four thousand years ago, and the writing of which extended over half that time; but late or early, the question seems with some people to be still undecided, and open to debate; and certainly the antiquity of the dispute does not in the least lessen its importance, neither does it tend to diminish the ardour of the combatants, nor the interest of the onlookers.

It is a question which no thoughtful person will ever relegate to a secondary place in man's pursuit of knowledge, for the tremendous claim made by the Book itself, causes the question of its title to that claim, to take the precedence of all others. Nor are men really able to treat the question with indifference. The sang-froid which characterizes some who profess to have settled the matter in favour of thick darkness, as opposed to a revelation from God, bears the stamp of being only skin-deep, and not the outcome of honest conviction.

It scarcely needs to be asserted that the leaders of the world bear the Book no goodwill, but rather the opposite, and therefore has it been subjected to ceaseless hostility, and to a criticism more fierce than that which has fallen to the lot of any other writings. It has been, and is, more fervently loved, and more intensely hated, than all the rest of the world's books put together; and the strange thing about its history is, that the house of its supposed friends is the place where it has been most sorely wounded. Those who have been foremost in their protestations of zeal in the service of its Author have shown themselves to be its worst enemies, and in their custody it had to remain for ages “a prisoner in bonds.” How it survived the persecutions to which it was exposed, is almost as great a miracle as is the way in which it was given to man.

Thank God, the days of its incarceration are over, and it is free to tread its pathway of blessing throughout the wide world. In the days of Luther a moral resurrection took place through the grace of God. The German monk who eventually shook the throne of the proud bishop of Rome, saw in the dim cloister, through its sacred page, a light above the brightness of the sun ; and when his voice arose heralding in the ears of men, the life-giving words of the dusty roll, the wheel of the papal chariot became scotched for ever, the powers of darkness were alarmed, and hell stood aghast before the boldness of this daring man. The power of God made itself felt, and the tiara trembled on the brow of him who trafficked in the souls of men, as he saw the hope of his gains vanishing from before his eyes. Men began to speak their minds more openly, the priestly bondage under which they had groaned was no longer discussed in whispers, and even kings began to breathe more freely, for the epistle of the apostle to the Romans now clung at the throat of the Italian prelate. Such is the power of this most wonderful Book.

It declares itself to be of heavenly origin : the very words of the living God, breathed into the hearts and minds of His servants, and penned by them as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. No other communications on earth make such claim to universal homage. The writers dive away back into the past eternity, before sun, planet, or attendant satellite gleamed forth upon the brow of heaven, and bring to light the secret counsels of the eternal Father. It shows us those counsels worked out in time by the eternal Son, in the power of the eternal Spirit, until the final result of all the activities of the triune God bursts upon our vision in a new heaven and a new earth, crowned with the glory of the tabernacle of God, in the midst of redeemed creation, in which righteousness shall dwell for ever.

It tells us of the beginning of all things, of the fall of the devil, of the fall of man, of God's gracious dealings with the latter when fallen, of the love of God, of the death of Christ, of His resurrection, of His session at the right hand of God, of His coming again, and of the subjugation of everything to Himself.

It leads the heart and mind into things unseen, and regales

the soul with unutterable delights in the sanctuary of eternal love. It opens up before our vision the blackness of darkness, the God-forsaken region of despair, where ceaselessly rage the tempests of almighty wrath. It brings to light the corrupt God-hating heart of fallen man, and the infinite and holy love of a Saviour-God. It guides us to the fountain of all good; and shows us, but brings us not nigh, the source of evil. It describes the ceaseless conflict between these two opposing forces adown the black history of a fallen world, until the day in which the battle is brought to a conclusion by the triumph of good; and the heavens and the earth are purified from the presence of evil, which finds its place, with the Devil who brought it into existence, in the lake of fire, the eternal abode of that "liar" and "murderer."

It declares that God is love. Creation presents Him as infinite in wisdom and power, but we see evil rampant around us, and man beneath its merciless hoof. There are traces of His goodness everywhere; and in the midst of its unutterable woes, gladness of heart visits the most unfortunate. But the fact that the griefs of the human race are so freely interspersed with innumerable joys, only makes the puzzle of man's existence all the more intricate and difficult of solution. If it were all evil one would be in measure justified in attributing the creation to the caprice of a demon, and were it all good the aspersion of the true character of God would be unpardonable; but to find these two principles everywhere, and mixed together in a struggling and hopeless *mêlée*, with evil ever apparently triumphant, is bewildering to the finite mind.

The woes of the human race are beyond the possibility of exaggeration, and seem to rise up at every turn as a witness against the notion of infinite goodness; for if God be all powerful, how is it that for so many millenniums His creature has been left in this corner of His creation to welter unpitied in his wretchedness? Can the Creator be indifferent to the woes of His creature? Who can tell us? Is there no voice from Him?

I am certain if there is no revelation from God, there is no God. But the whole universe around me bears witness to the reality of a Creator, and although the visible things do not contain the secret of the nature of Him who brought

them into existence, there is enough of evidence borne by them, to convince every intelligent being that He, without whom a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, could not leave His poor creature without some ray of light as to how he stands with respect to His holy and righteous will.

The idea of a universe such as surrounds us, without a Creator, is to me unthinkable; and that man should be brought forth to fall a prey to his wretched lusts, and to grope his weary and painful way to the grave in suffocating gloom, squabbling with his fellows about questions upon which none can boast of having one ray of light, and which never can be solved, is just as unthinkable. I find myself so formed that I am unable to get away from the idea of a Creator, and One with whom I have to do; I am also impressed with the fact that my Maker is beneficent, for of this I see abundant traces on every hand; and I am sure of this also that He has not left man in any clime without witness as to His beneficence. I have tried to get away from the thought of a Being with whom I had to do, and I have not been able; I have done my best to get out of my mind the conviction that He has spoken, and in this I have been likewise unsuccessful. Where, and how, He has spoken, is another matter, but spoken He has, of this I am convinced.

Man must have some light, and God will give it to him, even though he is certain to be unfaithful to it. Without testimony I am sure God will never leave him. I am not at present saying from whence such thoughts came to me; I am only speaking of the way I seem to be impressed as I look around me, and meditate upon that which I see taking place on the earth. We would be worse off than the beasts had we no light from God, for they are not burdened with the terror of having to do with Him, and we are. The question is not, Has God spoken? but, How?

I shall be told at once that it is not by the Bible. But I must ask, Why not by the Bible? Shall I be met with the stereotyped objection that it is full of contradictions, and is altogether wrong as to the plan of the universe; that it makes it geocentric, and has spoken of the earth as a plain. It has done nothing of the kind. It is so carefully written, that its statements never jar upon the mind of the most

advanced scientist, nor do they cause the most illiterate to move in the direction of astronomical discovery. But may I ask, what impression does the universe convey to the mind of the ordinary mortal, as he looks abroad into the starry night from his cottage door? Will he not conceive of the earth as a flat plain, and the dome of heaven as a hemisphere, resting upon the rim of the earth? Could He who is infinite in wisdom have made the visible things no other way? The truth is that the heavens and the earth are so ordered that moral impressions are conveyed to the mind. Everything away from earth is upward and above man, and man is made to look upward to God who has His dwelling-place in the heavens. The Bible has a way of its own, by which it leaves these impressions undisturbed. If it gave other impressions, and taught the Newtonian theory, we might with some show of reason conclude that the God of creation is not the God of the Bible. I am not attempting to prove by this, that the Bible owes its origin to the Creator, I am only showing, that if the Bible leaves undisturbed the impression that creation itself gives to the naked eye of the ordinary observer, that is no proof against the divine origin of the Scriptures.

There are many other objections advanced by the infidel mind of man, but they are all equally worthless, and have been disposed of again and again. Man naturally hates the light, and this is why the Bible is ever the great object of attack. But though man may, and does, hate the light, it has come into this dark world for the salvation of his immortal soul. What other light has he which shows him God fully declared? He is of few days and full of sorrow, and in the end has to submit to death, and where it will land him he knows not. It is a foe fronted with terror, blind to the sight of misery, deaf to all entreaties, and dumb with regard to where it conducts its victim. It has been in the world for nigh six thousand years, and men know as little about it to-day, as they did at the beginning. Men hope it will lead to something better than the present life, but what proof have we that the region into which it leads, is not more replete with horrors than is the one out of which it conducts us? Were it an angel of light sent to escort us into a scene of joy and endless tranquillity, would its aspect be so full

of terrors, or its weapon so dreaded? Surely not. We need some light from God, for death gives us no reason to suppose that, however bad it may be here, it is any better beyond. A beneficent Creator will not leave His creature without testimony. A revelation is a necessity both for His glory and our blessing; and this revelation we gratefully recognize in the Scriptures.

## THE FALL

*"By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin."*

Romans 5. 12.

NO other book has ever received a similar amount of attention at the hand of friend and foe. The contentions concerning its sayings have been continuous, cruel, and sanguinary. Hell has stormed at it, earth has hallooed after it, and fires have been kindled with the parchments upon which it was written; but its lovers have succoured it, sheltered it, cherished it, studied its pages, imbibed its life-giving utterances, and with the precious volume clasped within their trembling hands, and its heavenly truths engraven upon their hearts, they have passed away from earth into the presence of Him of whom it speaks. It has been loved with all the love of the human heart under the influence of heaven, and it has been hated with all the hatred of the soul under the influence of the abyss of evil. On its account men have ever been ready to kill, or to be killed. The world will not have it, and yet it remains in it. The more it has been persecuted, the more it has multiplied and grown.

In defence of its sayings the hearts' blood of thousands has been freely poured forth. Its followers have been counted the offscourings of the earth, and have been murdered without mercy. They have been reckoned by the world as sheep for the slaughter, cast out among the unclean, the lawless and the transgressors; hunted among mountains, dens, and caves of the earth, and slaughtered wherever they were found. But when the world was finished with them, God came out and wrote their epitaph, and it reads thus: "Of whom the world was not worthy."

Like Him of whom it testifies it finds itself in a world hostile to its teachings, and therefore is it despised and rejected of men; but like Him it passes onward in its unostentatious pathway of mercy, "Doing good, and healing all oppressed of the devil, for God is with it." Into an evil world it has come, but were the world not evil it would

have no mission here. Had man remained as God made him such a revelation would have been unnecessary, for when he was made he had all the light needful to maintain him in the relationship in which he was placed with his Maker. But fallen man must have light beyond what was required for an innocent creation, if ever he is to be recovered for God.

But the wiselings of to-day will not believe that man is fallen. If he is not fallen he must be as God made him, and if he is as God made him I fail to see how he can be improved. Yet those who contend against the truth of the fall are the people who are loudest in their demands for such legislation as will enable them to set about improving the race. Could I be led to believe that God made man as he is, I would have to discard the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and substitute in His place an evil being. It is impossible to entertain the idea of a Creator, and have any other thought than that everything created by Him has been created for His pleasure. And indeed this is just what Scripture teaches: "For Thy pleasure they are, and were created" (Rev. 4. 11). Therefore if there has been no fall, and men are as He made them, and consequently just in the condition in which He takes delight, and if He takes delight in them as I see them, what kind of a Being is He? Men make things in which they can take delight, and by which they may be served, and no man will intentionally and premeditatedly make anything that will be a grief to his heart. And I am sure the Creator will not. Therefore He must be understood by the state, the moral state, in which His creature is created.

Now the heavens are said in Scripture to declare the glory of God (Ps. 19), but the earth never. Looking upward at the heavens with our natural eyes everything appears to us in the most perfect order. There is no confusion there, no conflict between the heavenly bodies, everything moves in the most perfect harmony together; there is no trespass committed by one inhabitant of the blue expanse against its neighbour; there is no noise of contending forces; one spirit seems to permeate the vast heavenly host, and all is peace. But when we turn to earth it is hell let loose. A pandemonium of discord jars upon the ear. Violence and corruption are seen everywhere. Scenes of horror fill the

vision, and groans of despair grate upon the ear. Hatred, falsehood, outrage, murder, and suicide, stalk naked through the land. Pestilence, famine, hunger, nakedness, and death, cause the shriek of anguish to drown the revelry of gladsome day, and rend the bosom of the black-browed night. And I am told man is not fallen !

We are told that man is just as he should be at the present moment of his history, but that he will not ever be thus. He is struggling upward, and the goal is within measurable distance. Is it ? From my observation of the progress things are making I should say he is struggling downward, and making very rapid progress in his descent. That men are better educated than they were a century ago is not in question. Possibly the poor eat better, and are better clothed also ; but that men are more moral, that they love one another better, that they are more law-abiding, that they are less selfish, that they are more faithful in their relations of life, and that they are more to be trusted than they were a century ago, I do not believe. Take away the steam engine and the dynamo-electric machine ; dispense with railway, telegraph, and telephone, and with all the trappings of the present century civilization, and have a good look at society, and you will find little to boast in above the savage.

We are told that nobody believes the Genesis account of the fall. One often wonders what kind of company these Bible critics keep. I think I might safely undertake to find some thousands of people who have never questioned it ; and these are not men who readily take things for granted. It is asserted that the offence committed by Adam in the garden of Eden was of too trivial a nature to entail such consequences. But this seems to me to be a very superficial and foolish kind of reasoning. I fail to see that it could have made any real difference what test it might have pleased God to apply to man. The gravity of man's offence is not to be estimated by the intrinsic value of the article purloined ; there was nothing in that at all. He might have eaten of that tree as well as of any other had it not been forbidden. The interdiction against eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ought not to have been difficult for Adam to observe ; it was not a heavy rent to pay for such a large estate. He was the vice-regent of God upon earth, made so

by his indulgent Creator, and the tree which was forbidden to him was the witness that the earth and the fulness thereof were the Lord's, and that Adam was not sole proprietor. The tree became a test of his loyalty to his Creator. The tribute demanded from him was a mere bagatelle, but this very fact made his transgression all the more inexcusable.

Had the toll demanded from the creature been a heavy tax upon his resources, compassion for the rebel would have been more pardonable, but the trivial tax upon such enormous wealth brought to light the hidden secret of the rebel's heart, and the creature is manifested in his attempt to grasp Divinity itself. This was the bait which the arch deceiver of mankind dangled before the eyes of his victim, and which tempted him to transgress the commandment. Why should he have desired to be on equality with God? He should have had confidence enough in the goodness of his Creator to have enabled him to refuse such a bait.

But I need not waste words in bringing the gravity of the offence of Adam into light; the reader knows his own natural heart well enough to be conscious of the fact that, if he were able to bring its desires about, no one would occupy the throne of the universe but himself. In this world every man seeks to get all the power into his own hands, and had he the throne of the world it would not satisfy him, he would want the throne of the universe also. This suggestion instilled into the heart of Adam by the devil will reach its culmination in the "man of sin," who will allow no one to worship any god but himself. He will take the place of God upon earth, and will put to death all who resist his blasphemous pretensions (2 Thess. 2 and Rev. 13).

But in spite of man's denial that he is in a fallen condition, and in spite of his claim to be something, he is really ashamed to come out in the truth of his condition. We shelter ourselves from the inquisitiveness of our neighbours, and resent every attempt made by them to scrutinize our affairs. It may be nothing but idle curiosity prompts them to get near to us, but it is not because we know this that we so strongly resent their advances, and determine to hold them at arm's length. Were we certain they could not find anything discreditable about us, we should not be so upset by their unmannered curiosity. Were everything that could be known about us

creditable to us, we would be glad to be manifested before the assembled universe. But we shrink from exposure because we are unfit to be seen as we really are. This is very strange, especially as we know that others are no better than ourselves. They shrink from our penetrating gaze as timidly as we do from theirs.

But the knowledge of this does not help us, or make us bolder, for each of us has got his own secrets, of which he is rightly ashamed. Like Ham we are ready to sneer at the nakedness of our neighbour, but we are all very careful, when in our senses, not to babble into the ear of the world the secrets of our own guilty lives. My neighbour does not know me as I know myself, and I am determined that he shall remain in his ignorance. We keep our respective distances. I do not pry into the thoughts of his heart, and I expect the same consideration from him. This is all "fig leaves." We are very pleased to find that people do not walk about in their naked hideousness; and should one of us expose himself in his moral degradation, we feel it to be an offence against all that is becoming, and insulting to society. Each person is at liberty to *think* whatever he pleases, and he may *do* what he pleases, as long as it does not injure his neighbour, but he must be careful that it does not get abroad. He must wear the "fig leaves," or become ostracized from society.

Some of these haters of the Bible cannot understand any intelligent person continuing to believe in the fall of man as it is taught in Genesis. We are told that the legend was in existence as oral tradition long before Genesis was written. How it could be otherwise I am at a loss to know, and were it otherwise the fact would go far to prove it mere fiction. That the human race could be ignorant of the fall until Moses wrote the account of it is inconceivable. It was bound to travel with the posterity of Adam down the centuries. No doubt it would lose nothing by the telling in its travels, and therefore is it found in distorted forms in various countries, but in Genesis we have it in its simple naked truth.

We are told by some that it is scarcely alluded to in the Old Testament writings. Why should it be? Where was the need for constant repetition? It is referred to, however,

but had I found it very frequently referred to by the prophets, it would greatly have depended upon the setting in which I found it, whether my suspicion as to the writers' faith in it would not have been aroused. Indeed it is seldom referred to in the New Testament, and when it is referred to, it is not hard to see the writer takes it for granted that those to whom he writes do not question the fact. It has no need to be proven in a world like this.

The difficulty with the philosophers of the world seems to lie in the fact that, whether man be fallen or not, his moral state is far from being satisfactory. As a general thing God is either altogether left out, as regards the theories of these men, or everything is God, whether it be man, bird, beast, reptile, or sponge. A God who is objective to His creation, neither of them confess. The evolutionists have got the whole creation upon a ladder whose top and bottom are both alike enveloped in impenetrable gloom. What he came from and what he is to arrive at are wrapt in obscurity. They think man is advancing toward a perfect state, but what that state is to be they know not. Some of us are quite certain that man is retrograding. That those who call themselves Christians are on the down-grade, no one will question who reads the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and believes it to be a true account of the state of things in the Church at the beginning.

That men in these Islands are better governed than they were in the middle ages goes without saying, but if the crowd were let loose to-day, who would not tremble for the consequences? The deeds of the French revolution, if not worse, would be repeated. I fail therefore to see how men are better morally. I may be told that the fact that good laws exist is in itself a proof of a better moral state. I cannot accept it, for men do not make laws for themselves but for their fellows. Those who make them are often found guilty of breaking them. The lustre of the world is artificial; what is natural is corrupt. Under an apparently well ordered community smoulders a veritable hell of horrible rebellion, and this the powers that be will learn one of these days.

Those who think they see God in everything are, in their own imagination, themselves God; and the fall is the incarnation of God in nature, so they tell us. This mysterious Power,

which is themselves and the sponge, and all that lies between in the way of life, is finding expression in the universe, and they tell us that it is only as we read Him in the universe that we can know anything about Him. God, we are told, can only know His own capabilities as He is confronted by opposing forces, therefore He creates the forces that He may become known to Himself. If I could so degrade myself as to accept such a horrible idea, I would be very much interested to know what He thinks of Himself, when He sees Himself in the universe ! Is this great mysterious Power contemplating Himself in the battle field, where men, who know not why they are pitted against one another, maim and murder until their feet slip in the hot red heart-blood of friend and foe ? I wonder what the " god " of these men's imagination thinks of himself as he looks at the violence and corruption which fill the earth, and at nature foaming at the mouth and " red in tooth and claw with ravin " !

How strange it is that man will have anything as a god, rather than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The reason, surely, is that if I confess Him, I must myself go down in the dust in His presence, and confess myself to be a poor, fallen, unworthy sinner, dependent upon His mercy and grace for my salvation. Pride has no place in the presence of the true God, and therefore must the proud heart of man be ever in deadly hostility to Him. Blessed be His name, He can so work in His grace in our hearts that we are made to acknowledge the truth of the Book which discovers us to ourselves, and, turning to Him in the judgment of ourselves, to leave the decision of our eternal welfare in His own hands.

## IS JESUS GOD ?

*“ If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son ? ”*

Matthew 22. 45.

**I**F we think of the Scriptures as a revelation given to us from God who cannot lie, and if we have them as He gave them to us, we cannot give harbourage to the notion that the smallest untruth can be found therein—or any statement which, taken in its connection, would be calculated to leave a false impression upon the mind of the reader. Were it possible that an honest seeker after light could be deceived by them—were it possible that they could lead the soul who trusted them as the truth of God into darkness and error, they would prove themselves to be but the corrupt production of the fallen mind of man, and valueless as a guide to the knowledge of God. They would bear witness against themselves as not the offspring of One who cannot lie, but of one who was both a liar and a murderer.

And if we think of them as written to the poor and the illiterate and not to the wealthy, the wise, and prudent, we shall not expect them to be full of dark sayings and mysterious theories, couched in great swelling words, to be understood by none but clever and educated minds. The gospel is preached to the poor, and as far as that which relates to the universal testimony of the grace of God is concerned, nothing could be more simple. True, the deep things of God can only be known by those who have the Spirit, but that is not because they are very learned, nor because they require colossal intellects to grasp their meaning, but because they relate to things which lie outside the circle in which the natural mind of man exercises itself.

The Scriptures are the only light we have with regard to the knowledge of God, and we must either take them as they are, or reject them altogether. They speak of all the relationships in which man is placed, whether in Adam or in Christ, and dilate upon the responsibilities connected with these relationships in such a way that nothing is overlooked,

disregarded, or epitomized; and whether we understand the things of which they speak, or whether we do not, the language in which they are set before us cannot be held to be bewildering nor capable of double meaning. In them the trumpet gives no uncertain sound, and there, without a jar, from pipe and harp breaks forth the glorious music of eternal truth (1 Cor. 14. 7, 8).

As far as it is necessary, and indeed as far as it is possible for us to know the One in whom we live and move and have our being, we have Him placed before us in the written Word. If He is not learned there, where can He be learned? Not in the material universe, not in providence, not in the state of this world, for everywhere we turn we are confronted with contradictions; and had we nothing else than these we should be compelled to dwell in darkness and uncertainty. The world is now almost six thousand years old, and though it has made immense progress in the knowledge of the resources of nature, it has made none in the knowledge of God; indeed, it knows less about Him to-day than it did in its infancy (Rom. 1. 21-25).

The history of every testimony committed to man has always been down-grade. The Antediluvian, Noahic, Judaic, and Christian dispensations tell the same tale. Departure from the living God, corruption of His truth, darkness and chaos, followed by the intervention of God in judgment, mark each successive dealing of God with men. Nor will any future dispensation be otherwise. Everything will prosper in the hands of Christ, and during His reign there will be no failure in the government of the world, for everything undertaken by Him will be fulfilled to the glory and praise of God, but that reign, however beneficent it may be, will not change the hearts of men, for at the close it will be seen that nothing but a leader is necessary to rouse the whole earth into revolt against the authority of the Lord.

There is an innate aversion in the human mind to everything that is of God; though, of course, this solemn fact is known only to those in whom the grace of God has wrought. The truth has been persecuted since the world began, and against Christ, who was the embodiment of that truth, the powers of darkness stirred up, and brought into evidence, that aversion in a way hitherto unknown. From the beginning

He was God's testimony, and therefore has He ever been the object of attack. His atoning work, His miraculous birth, His spotless nature, His real manhood, His Deity, His resurrection are openly denied in that which professes His name, and Christendom is at present fast drifting back into heathen darkness. And it is on this account I seek to draw attention to the answer furnished by Scripture to the question at the head of this paper—"Is Jesus God?"

Apart altogether from the answer given by Scripture to this momentous question, one can very easily understand that were one person both God and Man, such an One would be, by the very nature of His being, beyond the understanding of men. Indeed, God Himself, apart from incarnation, is beyond our understanding, for the creature never can perfectly comprehend the Creator. It is our privilege and joy to know Him in His nature, so that we can say *God is Love* (1 John 4. 16), and this is the highest knowledge the creature can possess. But as to essential Deity, it is beyond the ken of man. He dwells in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen, nor is able to see (1 Tim. 6. 16). We know Him in the way in which it has pleased Him to declare Himself, and that is in His infinite love; but in His essential being, and in the mystery of His wondrous existence, we know nothing, can know nothing, and need to know nothing. What He has in His grace caused us to know fills our cup of happiness to overflowing.

But what must be the mystery of incarnate God? One truly Man, born of a woman, advancing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men (Luke 2. 52); omniscient (John 2. 24, 25; Luke 11. 17; John 16. 30), yet limited in knowledge (Mark 13. 32); the Upholder of the universe (Col. 1. 17; Heb. 1. 3), yet in weakness here (John 4. 6); Creator (John 1. 3; Heb. 1. 10), yet taking a place in creation (Col. 1. 15). How could such contradictory attributes be reconciled by the finite mind of man, or by the mind of any creature, whoever he may be?

But this is just what the Scriptures assert as regards Jesus: "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. 11. 27). And though the reference to this text may be ridiculed as but a refuge for an unreasonable dogma, it is nevertheless the teaching of Scripture, and the only conclusion that a

reasonable mind can come to regarding such a Person. The Father is said to be declared, and that in the very passage which tells us that no one knoweth the Son: "Neither knoweth any one the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." We are never said not to know the Father, for this knowledge is the portion of even the babes in Christ (1 John 2. 13); but though we may come to the full knowledge of the Son of God, so far as He has been revealed (Eph. 4. 13), there are mysteries about His person which are impossible for us to know; hence we have, "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father." Indeed, were this statement absent from the page of inspiration, our reason would compel us to admit what it asserts, and of ourselves we would come to the conclusion that such a Person was unknowable by the creature. *Seeming* contradictions, which are matters of revelation, we can well believe, but not one of them can we understand. Indeed, it is little that we do know perfectly, possibly nothing at all, for our knowledge of the very simplest things is very limited.

But if we know that every question that was between us and a holy and righteous God has been gone into and settled to His satisfaction and that we have been brought into new and eternal relationships with God in Him who bore the judgment which rested upon us on account of our sins, and if that love of God which was declared in His death has been shed abroad in our hearts, and if we know the Father, and are able to take account of ourselves as the children of God, and confidently look for the coming of Christ to take us to the home He has prepared for us in the Father's house, we shall be very happy; we shall also be very thankful for the revelation He has so graciously given to us, and we shall be careful to approach that revelation with the reverence that springs from the knowledge of the holy character of that love that has made known to us everything that is for our good, and who has also given to us the Holy Spirit, in order that we may be able to enter into the deep things of God, so far as they are revealed.

That Jesus was a Man every true Christian will confess—a real Man—as truly a Man as was Adam or any of his race. A Man with spirit, soul, and body. A Man so like every other man in Judæa that, as He sat by the well of Sychar, the

woman who came to draw water took Him to be an ordinary Jew, resting from His journey, and waiting upon some one to come and draw a little water to quench His thirst. But "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee," marks Him off as very different from all other men, as does also "that holy Thing" (Luke 1. 35), and Him "who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5. 21). Still, that "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the *Man* Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2. 5), settles the question of His manhood both in humiliation and also glory.

Nothing could be more plainly stated than the fact of the existence of Jesus previous to incarnation. He says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world" (John 16. 28); again, "The glory which I had with Thee before the world was"; and, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (chap. 17. 5, 24); also, "Before Abraham was, I am" (chap. 8. 58); again in chapter 6. 38, "I came down from heaven"; also verse 62, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" I might quote many other scriptures on the same subject, but any one of these is quite sufficient to prove the existence of Jesus before He was born into this world.

Now what was He before He became Man? What say the Scriptures as to this? In Philippians 2 the Holy Spirit of God carries us back to the point of departure, when He began that journey of humiliation which ended in the death of the cross. And what was He before He took the initial step upon that downward path? He was "in the form of God." Now, no one who was not God could be in the form of God, for the only other form we know of is that of a servant. A servant should have no will of his own; all his actions proceed from the will of another. But God acts from Himself, from His own will, without reference to another. Authority, dominion, and might belong to Him. The form of God is incompatible with that of a servant; indeed, the word here is *bondslave*. Hence, when in the form of God, the act of emptying Himself and taking the form of a servant is viewed as proceeding from Himself: He "emptied Himself, taking a bondsman's form." It could not be otherwise, for He was under no other authority or obligation.

This is not true of any creature, for the most exalted

creature is by the very fact of his creation a servant, and nothing but a servant. But the moment this glorious Person takes upon Himself the form of a servant obedience characterizes His every act: "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." While in the form of God His every action must proceed from His own will; He could be neither influenced nor controlled by anything external to Himself; but when He became a servant everything is changed. His acts are as consistent with the form of a servant as they were with the form of God. For a creature to leave his first estate is to apostatize, but this the Son did, for to no one was He responsible.

But this emptying of Himself was not in any way the renunciation of Godhead, which could not be, but the giving up of the whole position that appertained to Godhead, and the becoming a servant to the Godhead for the Godhead's glory. This was not done by the Father, who remains in His eternal status and position unchanged. It is true of the Son only, who came to do the Father's will, and who did it at all cost to Himself. Tested to the very uttermost, His obedience was perfect. He took a servant's form, in order that He might do the will of God; and He did that will so perfectly that, in the judgment of God, no other place than the highest in the universe would be an adequate answer to the work which He accomplished. And this place He has as Man and the Servant of the Godhead.

John also, in the first chapter of his Gospel, carries us back before incarnation, right into eternity itself, that we may behold One who had no beginning, the Word, who in the beginning *was*, and was with God, and was God. And God, of course, He must be if He had no beginning. Next, "All things were made by Him." Then we have, "The Word was made flesh." Then John the Baptist's testimony is, "He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me." He declares the Father, and baptizes with the Holy Ghost. In chapter 2 He turns the water into wine, and thus manifests forth His glory; speaks of raising up the temple of His body when men have destroyed it; and knows what is in man. Chapter 3: He "came down from heaven." Chapter 4: He is omniscient—tells the woman of Samaria all that ever she did. Chapter 5: He

“ makes Himself equal with God,” and must be honoured even as the Father is honoured. But I need not go over more passages from this Gospel.

In Colossians we have the same statement made as in John 1. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and in 1 John 5. 20 He “ is the true God, and eternal life.”

But I will come to His *Name*. His name is Jesus, which means Jehovah the Saviour. And the reason He has been given this name is because “ He shall save His people [Jehovah’s people] from their sins.” He is the object of angelic worship (Heb. 1). He is addressed as God by God upon the throne. He is the Creator : “ Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands : they shall perish ; but Thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed : but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.”

Need I quote more scripture ? Surely not. The Word of God presents Him as a Man, a true, real Man, begotten of God, born of the Virgin, Son of God as begotten in time, and Servant to the Godhead. But the same Word of God presents Him as God over all, Eternal, in the form of God, acting from Himself without respect to any other authority, the Creator, Preserver, eternal Son with the eternal Father. Neither His Godhead nor His Manhood shall ever be given up. From the standpoint of the creature’s finite mind innumerable mysteries and apparent contradictions connect themselves with His Person : for “ no man knoweth the Son, but the Father.” But the believing, subject soul knows very well that in connection with such a Person apparent contradictions must exist, and he is prepared for them : for indeed His person is just like His love, it *surpasses knowledge*.

## THE UNCHANGING ONE

*“ Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”*

Hebrews 13. 8.

**H**OW cheering, refreshing, and establishing it is to be brought into contact with One who is infinite in goodness, grace, righteousness, holiness, and love ; and who never can be different to that which, at our earliest introduction to Him, we found Him to be : One upon whom the lapse of ages leaves no mark of change ! Such is Jesus, the subject of this Epistle, in which the old order, like a dissolving view, melts from before our vision, leaving to fill the scene that which is new and eternal, radiant with the glory of God.

And how often has the passage at the head of this paper spoken peace to the soul disquieted by the capricious and changeful nature of the selfish principles of fallen man who no longer ago than yesterday may have been brimming over with evidences of most tender affection, and to-day may, in spirit and deportment, have become as cold, cutting, and severe as the January east wind. It has ministered comfort, consolation, and encouragement to thousands perplexed and weary with the ever varying condition of things with which we are compassed in this world of restlessness, confusion, envy and falsehood. It presents to the shipwrecked and hopeless mariner an island of peace in the midst of a turbulent and treacherous ocean. It is a shelter for the battered and toil-worn wayfarer, alone and lost in the pathless and storm swept wilderness. It is an invulnerable citadel, into which the besieged and war-broken may retreat, and thus escape the anguish which is invariably the lot of those who foolishly trust their happiness to the vicissitudes of a world in rebellion against God and agitated by the fell destroyer of the human race.

How good it is to be brought to the knowledge of this changeless Jesus ! He came into this world, which was without moral foundations, that man should have a firm

rock upon which he might plant the foot of faith, and be assured that amid the crash of everything that seems stable in the universe, it could not be shaken. He came to illuminate the benighted vision with the gracious light of God, and to warm into life the cold dead human heart with the holy love of God. See Him at the well of Sychar, and hear Him speak of the gift of God to a poor sinful creature, for whom no one else had a word of comfort. There He is the Giver of the living water, which alone can give satisfaction to the thirsty soul. See Him in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7), the Creditor in the midst of His debtors, speaking only of forgiveness.

See Him at the grave of Lazarus, the Resurrection and the Life, mingling tears of sympathy with those of the two bereaved women, before His almighty voice awoke the echoes of the dull domain of death and Hades, and called back the dead man to life. See Him amid a multitude of publicans and sinners, and hearken to the words of grace which proceed out of His lips, until you hear the throbbing of the heart of God, as He enfolds in the arms of His immortal love a prodigal come back from the far country, naked except for those rags which bore witness of his rebellious and disgraceful career. See Him in the temple and synagogue, and in the streets and lanes of the city, and hear Him tell in the ear of devil-deceived men and women the grace and love of God.

See how He feels for the diseased, the demon-possessed, the blind, and the broken-hearted, until you learn what those mean who say: "*Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.*" See Him amid the gloom of Golgotha, dying for the ungodly, and praying for His murderers; and as you contemplate Him, "stricken, smitten of God and afflicted," may you be able to say: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53). And then think of Him as *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. Oh, the deep, deep blessedness of knowing Him—learning Him in His pathway down here, and knowing that He is just the same blessed, living, lowly, gracious Saviour now that He is on the Father's throne. May both reader and writer get to know Him better every

day of our pilgrim journey through this world, until we see Him face to face in courts of light.

But consider the setting of this short, simple, peace imparting sentence. In verse 7 we are exhorted to remember them who had (not *have*) the rule over us, who spoke to us the word of God. They have gone from our midst. Their voices are no longer heard amongst us ministering the living Word, but we are to call them to mind; and considering the issue of their conversation we are to imitate their faith. Then in verse 9 we are warned against those who would introduce divers and strange doctrines. Between that needful exhortation and this very wholesome warning we have the brilliant and comforting truth shining like a silver star: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Whether it be the Gospel to the world or ministry to the saints, Christ must ever be the subject (Rom. 16. 25; Acts 28. 31). He is the living Word, the spirit of all Scripture. It was Christ the apostles preached and taught, and there is nothing else for saint or sinner to-day; and *He never changes*. John, writing to the babes, says, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning" (1 John 2. 24). The devil brings in novelties, and the human mind loves them and revels in them. And just because men love them, they flatter themselves that they are parts of the truth, but alas, they are but "sporting themselves with their own deceivings." That which turns away the heart from Christ is a snare of the devil. We are told we must not hold too obstinately to old forms, but must advance with the times; but the whole truth has come to light in Jesus, and there is no change in Him.

It is affirmed by men of science that signs of decay are visible in some of the heavenly bodies. The sun seems to be giving evidence that he has passed the meridian of his years; the moon is a defunct world, and the earth is in the sear and yellow leaf. This is just what Scripture tells us in those remarkable words which were addressed to Jesus, when in the sorrow of His soul He drew near to the gates of death, stricken for the transgression of believing sinners: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish, but Thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as

doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed " (Ps. 102. 25-27 ; Heb. 1. 10-12). Peter tells us that the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements melting with fervent heat, and that the earth also and all the works that are therein shall be burned up, but that we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness (2 Peter 3).

The nature of the change which will pass over the universe has not been revealed to us, we do not need to know it. We are confident, however, of this, that He who built it at the beginning to serve His purpose, and Who in infinite wisdom allowed the enemy to defile it with the stain of sin, is able to cleanse it from the presence of that which is so hateful to Him and so ruinous to the creature, and to fill it with light and blessing, and make it the abode of righteousness. To accomplish this, and to set man in new and eternal relationships with God, He laid down His life. The Creator is the Redeemer. He who stooped down to know what human weakness was, and who had His days shortened, is the same One who then, as now, was upholding all things by the word of His power. What creature mind could compass such a thought ? No man knoweth the Son.

But not only must the material universe undergo a change, a much greater change must pass over man himself. The old order no longer occupies us ; angels, Moses, Aaron, the tabernacle, the sacrifices, the covenant—in a word, the whole earthly order disappears before the face of Jesus, and we are exhorted to abandon the shadow for the substance, types which pass away for realities which abide for ever. And for this state of things a change must take place upon *us*. We are heirs of a kingdom which cannot be moved ; but except a man be born again he shall never see it (John 3). Man must have a new nature, as born of God, or perish for ever.

The wonderful thing about man is that *he can be changed*. I do not for a moment doubt that God, who knew the end from the beginning, and had His counsels formed with regard to all His works before He put in operation His creative power, so made man that he could be changed in the whole principle of his being. We are not told anything about angels to lead us to suppose such beings capable of being

changed. Some of them have fallen away from God, and an opportunity of salvation does not seem to be granted to them. *Man* is the creature chosen of God in whom His workmanship of grace is to be displayed. What He has wrought as a Saviour will be brought to light in ransomed *human beings*.

And what a change He is capable of making in His rebellious and ruined creature! Hear what He says to the headstrong, intractable Simon Peter: "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" (John 21. 18). And what made that change? Age? Never. As to nature it is ever true: "*The child is father of the man.*" That change was wrought in Peter in the school of God, and by Him who Himself changes not.

And consider the insolent overbearing Saul of Tarsus; that proud, self-righteous, Christ-hating Pharisee. Wolfish in his nature, and getting the first taste of blood at the martyrdom of Stephen, he ever after seeks to satiate his ravenous appetite with the slaughter of the sheep of Jesus, until met on the highway of his merciless career by Him before whose subduing power nothing is able to stand. What meekness, gentleness, patience, tenderness, and lowliness were wrought in this striking subject of the grace of God! What ceaseless solicitude for the salvation of the lost! What care for the flock of Christ! What devotedness to that holy Name once so hated and persecuted by him! And this wonderful change effected by Him who is *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!*

And has not the reader, as well as the writer, come under the changing influence of this changeless Person? From that throat, which was once *an open sepulchre* is exhaled the perfume of immortal love. That *mouth*, once "*full of cursing and bitterness*" is now replete with blessing. That *tongue*, long accustomed to "*deceit*," now spreads abroad the word of truth and life. Those *lips*, which once concealed the deadly "*poison of asps*," are now pregnant with life-imparting grace. Those *feet*, once "*swift to shed blood*," now "*shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*," run joyfully in the pathways of mercy. A new power, that of the Holy Spirit, has taken

possession of the earthen vessel, the members have become instruments of righteousness, the will of God is done, and the soul finds eternal rest. The glory of the Lord, with all its life-giving and attractive power, shines full upon our hitherto benighted hearts, and we become *changed* into the same image (2 Cor. 3).

## THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

*“ For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”* 2 Cor. 8. 9.

THE Spirit of God directs us in the Holy Scriptures. It is there we learn of Him who is our life. It is there that heavenly life is portrayed before our renewed minds and hearts ; and it is there we are assured that that life is our own. It is seen in perfection in Him, unadulterated by the intrusion of sinful flesh, for in Him there was no taint of evil ; but whatever it may be mingled with in our practical ways, by our forgetfulness to keep the judgment of the cross upon our rebellious wills, it is ours by the quickening operation of God, and we have, in God’s account, no other life. And all the exhortations, injunctions, and commandments are to give direction to that life, in order that in its own spotless purity it may be reproduced by us in this evil world.

And it is just the transcendent qualities of this life that the Apostle labours to bring to light in these Corinthians, to whom he writes this epistle. He would have them think of the poor Jewish saints away in Jerusalem, and not only to think of them, but to send them a thankoffering, seeing the Gospel had come out from them to the nations of the earth. And to stimulate that which was of God in them Christ is brought forward as their great example. “ For ye know,” he says, “ the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

This was not some new doctrine he was bringing under their notice, which they had never before heard of. It was not a thing they did not know, for he tells them they did know it. But though they had heard of it when the Gospel had been first proclaimed in their ears, they required to be reminded of it. We are, alas, too much like Pharaoh’s chief butler, who forgot the service rendered to him by Joseph,

and left him languishing in the prison, while he enjoyed the favour of his royal master.

We need to be constantly on the watch lest we forget the One who has so greatly befriended us. We know His grace. We heard of it first in the Glad Tidings, of which He is the subject; and it was that grace that attracted us to Him at the first. And how often since then we have told Him:

“We know the grace that brought Thee down,  
Down from that bliss on high,  
To meet our ruined souls in need,  
On Calvary’s cross to die.”

Yes, we know it, but let us not forget it. And may it have all its own wondrous power over our poor forgetful minds and hearts!

“*Though He was rich.*” Think of those riches. Men imagine themselves wealthy when they have grasped a little more than others of the perishable treasures of earth, the possession of which is often their ruin bodily and spiritually. But who could rightly estimate the wealth of the Creator Himself? And all things owe their existence to Jesus. What wealth of glory, dominion, power, and blessing was His! What dignity, majesty, greatness, grandeur, magnificence! What unspeakable happiness, immaculate affections, goodly fellowship, in light unto which no man can approach! There, in the serene, secure, unassailable unparagoned, and ineffable sweetness of the Father’s love, He had His eternal abiding-place! That home of infinite and unparalleled delight, where love eternal is met by love eternal, in the infoldment, reciprocity, and intransmutability of its own infinite and deathless nature! A scene into which no creature curiosity could penetrate, nor imagination call into existence, but best described in the words addressed by the Son to the Father: “The glory which I had with Thee before the world was”; and, “Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world” (John 17. 5, 24). And yet for our sakes He became poor!

And into what depths of poverty did His grace cause Him to descend! At His birth He was laid in a manger, while the great people of the earth, who were but the work of His hands, and in addition to that rebels against God, poured

noisily and haughtily into the comforts of the inn, where there was no room for Him; an early indication that the heart of this great world would be found securely locked against the entrance of this heavenly stranger.

Later on He could say that the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had roosting-places, but that He had nowhere to lay His head. There was to be no brightening of His circumstances. From a human standpoint the way before Him seemed to darken into impenetrable gloom. The barrenness of desert places, the loneliness of Olivet, the silence of Gethsemane: these all were privileged witnesses of the Man of Sorrows. Bethany alone sought to make up for the carelessness and base ingratitude of a thankless and hypocritical nation; but the very solitariness and extreme isolation of that sweet and hallowed spot became, on this account, the greatest witness of all to the utter poverty of Jesus, for it was all He had down here. And it was all *for our sakes!*

But the terrible and unparalleled nature of that poverty must draw its grim, terrific folds still more closely around this lonely Man. The arid waste of man's indifference to the precious dewes of heavenly grace, shed with such lavish hand in word and work upon a crushed and degraded people, must to its utmost boundary be trodden by those weary feet, whose every movement preached to deaf and disdainful ears the Gospel of peace.

For love, sown with prodigal extravagance, He must reap hatred. The desertion of many of His professed followers He must with sorrow of heart witness. The treachery of one of His most intimate followers, who with hypocritical kiss betrays Him to His enemies, He must bear in silence. Another, who professed the greatest devotion to Him, He must hear denying Him with oaths and curses. The plight of the rest of His poor disciples, like sheep in the presence of the wolf, beats in upon His breaking heart with merciless severity. He gives His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and He hides not His face from shame and spitting. And it was *all for our sakes!*

But the depths of poverty that were yet to be explored by this Divine and blameless victim open up before His soul with a terror that infinitely excels all that the imagination of

man has ever pictured. A horror beyond all human thought appalling confronts this lonely Sufferer. Nailed to a gibbet, numbered with transgressors, surrounded by the rude Roman soldiery, His cross girt about by a mocking, insulting, blaspheming, howling rabble, He looks for some to take compassion, and finding none, He turns to God, and by Him He is abandoned. Horror heaps itself upon horror; but this, the greatest horror of all, overtakes Him in the midst of His deep distress and anguish of soul. This is the climax of that poverty which began in the manger at Bethlehem. Here the lowest rung in this fearful ladder of humiliation is reached. Here the bottomless is bottomed. Poverty reaches its limit, a limit without a limit. Betrayal, desertion, denial, ingratitude, reproach, spend their utmost and most merciless fury against the Son of God. In the barren, weary, wintry waste of a God-hating world, impaled upon a gibbet, without a disciple, without a sympathizer, without a friend; in the unutterable loneliness of abandonment by earth and heaven and with a heart broken by reproach, the storm of divine wrath against sin beats with infinite power upon His defenceless and thorn-crowned head.

#### AND IT WAS ALL FOR OUR SAKES!

“That ye through His poverty might be rich.” This was the cause of His wondrous journey from Bethlehem to Golgotha; from the manger to the gibbet. The grace of His heart was the fount from which flowed forth all this down-stooping; this self-forgetfulness; this self-abnegation; this renunciation of uncountable riches; this self-abasement; this un murmuring acceptance of the servant’s pathway, with all that was involved in it; this submission to the cross, the wrath, the judgment due to sin. It was all undertaken, and patiently borne, that we through His poverty might be rich.

And O, what infinite wealth has come to us through His great poverty! We have been enriched in righteousness, in eternal life, in holiness, in the gift of the Holy Spirit, in sonship, in the possession of all things, in union with Christ, in fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and in the hour of His coming again to find our eternal home with Him in the Father’s house, where we shall see Him as

He is, and be like Him, to the eternal satisfaction and delight, not only of our hearts, but of the heart of the Father and the Son.

But in Philippians this grace of the Lord Jesus is presented in another way. It is not what He has done for our sakes, but for the Godhead glory, but with a similar object in view is it brought to our notice, that is, as our great example. "Let this mind be in you." What mind? The mind that was in Christ Jesus. The grace that came to light in Him down here is to be a mighty power in our souls, reproducing Him in this world out of which He has been rejected. He was full of grace and truth, and of His fullness all believers have received. Hence that grace is to give character to our lives down here. It is to be operative in our souls.

How has it come to light in Him as presented here? This is most beautifully brought under our notice. "Who being in the form of God." Here, first of all, we are privileged to contemplate Him in the outward position and semblance of God; the embodiment of might, authority, majesty, supremacy, and everything else that belongs to God. Yet not counting this a position to maintain at all costs, but necessity having arisen for the intervention of One mighty enough to undertake a work for the glory of the Godhead, He divests Himself of this outward form, and takes the form of a servant.

Here He stands in opposition to the first and fallen head of the human race, who, though created by God and placed as His servant in a very exalted position, grasped at Divinity, and fell headlong under the power of death. Jesus when in the form of God empties Himself, taking a bondsman's form, taking His place in the likeness of men. And this is the mind that is to take possession of us.

Then, having been found in fashion as a man, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, and that, too, the death of the cross. When He took the form of a servant there was no unreality about it. When He was in the form of man He was just as truly a servant, as when in the form of God He was truly Master. And as obedience—unquestioning, uncomplaining obedience—is what is due from every servant, so was He obedient to God in all relations of life. He says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own

will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John 6. 38). And this He did perfectly without any respect for the consequences to Himself. He uttered no word but that which was given Him from the Father. He did no work but that which the Father gave Him to do. He went nowhere but at the express command of the Father (John 3. 34; 12. 49; 10. 32; 6. 57).

In Him I learn man's true place as set in intelligent relationship with God. Humility of mind, and unqualified obedience to God, regardless of where the path, marked out by God for my feet to tread, may lead to. The will of God is to be done irrespective of the consequences. There must be no murmuring, no complaining. We are not to reason why we are led in certain directions, nor why we have been plunged into circumstances that are both difficult and painful. All we require to be assured of is, that these things are God's will for us. The issues are entirely His concern. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

In Corinthians what He did is said to have been all *for our sakes*. Here in Philippians it is all for the sake of the Godhead. But, as I have already intimated, we learn in both cases the effect God would have this grace produce in us, which came so perfectly to light in Him. I learn in Philippians that I am to place myself at the disposal of God, and to tread the path He has marked out for my feet, regardless of where it may lead; and in Corinthians the saints are, under God, to be everything to me, and for them I am to lay down my life. But for all this we must draw from the inexhaustible supply of grace that is found in Himself.

In the answer of God to this self-sacrificing life of Jesus we learn His infinite appreciation of it. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Here we have His estimate of the devoted, faithful, self-sacrificing spirit in which that work was undertaken, and carried through to the finish, without the slightest semblance of regret that it had been undertaken, or of failure in the accomplishment of it. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15. 22).

## 46 THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD

What an example for us the Son of God is! May we keep our eye steadily fixed upon Him, and may we be ready at all times to pass unsparing judgment upon the slightest departure from the path marked out for us, whether that path be with reference to obedience to God, or love to His people. These are difficult days, and to be here for His pleasure we require to be “strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

## THE CROSS

*“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Galatians 6. 14.*

IT has been truly said, there is nothing like the cross. It stands and shall stand for ever, in all its solitary greatness and grandeur, in the centre of the circle of eternity, the wonder of every intelligent creature, and the pillar upon which is indelibly inscribed the evil and the hatred of the fallen being, and the goodness and love of God. Out from amid the dim shadows of the past it looms upon the vision, in all its brightness and blackness, truth and treachery, sunshine and shadow, faithfulness and falseness, righteousness and sin, judgment and mercy, compassion and cruelty, love and hatred. By its light the heart of heaven is revealed, and the deepest depths of the abyss of evil are discovered. The blessing and the curse there lift their voices together.

There welters foul the inky sea of human guilt, and there the unsullied ocean of divine grace swallows up everything with its swelling tides. Nothing in the past can compare with it, neither can anything in the future arise to rival it.

There appears the greatest sin that man ever committed, and there is the mightiest display of infinite mercy on the part of God that ever came to light. It is the place where man was tested in every spring of his moral being, and it is where the compassions of God were sounded to their depths. It is where the hostile fallen creature lifted impious hand, and struck at his Creator with deadly intent, and it is where the answer of the Creator was given in unspeakable and infinite love. It is the witness of wickedness impossible to be exceeded by man, and it is the evidence of favour which God Himself could never repeat. The volume of wrath, curse, judgment, and woe which encircled Golgotha, not the regions of the lost could enclose; and heaven itself shall not be vast enough to circumscribe the love, the grace, and the mercy which have been there expressed.

There the whole question of good and evil has been gone into, solved, and settled for ever. There all the forces of good and evil were gathered together. There sin rose up in all its power against God, and there God came out in judgment against sin. Never before had the rebel creature dared so much. Never before had sin so behaved itself in the universe of God. Its opportunity had come: the Son of God was in the hands of sinners. All hell was moved. The fit moment had arrived to cast off the restraint of heaven. The raging of the nations, the plotting of the Jews, the malice of the world, all were directed against Christ. They will not have this Man to rule over them. The infernal forces were rallied. The principalities and powers mustered all their might for the final combat. The infernal regions sent forth their last warrior, and the whole phalanx of wickedness prepared for this desperate encounter, in which quarter was neither to be given nor taken, and by which the victory for good or evil was to be finally decided.

“MAN’S HOUR.”

Jesus speaks of it as *man's* “*hour*” (Luke 22. 53). From the fall until that hour man had been held in check by the restraining hand of God. Previous to this he had been mercifully prevented from carrying out the full thought of his heart. He had corrupted the earth, filled it with violence, shed innocent blood, broken the law, worshipped demons, slain the servants of God, and hated Christ come into the world in grace and love. But his enmity had been under the control of God, and he was prevented from doing all that he felt inclined to do. Moved by the causeless hatred of his hard and godless heart, he had been often ready to stone Jesus, but somehow he found himself unable to carry out his murderous intention. But now his “*hour*” was come; the limit which had been assigned to his wrath was removed; the avenues through which his evil nature was to show itself were thrown open; the bit and bridle, which had in measure been a check upon his impious goings, were cast aside. He felt for the first time in his fallen history what real liberty was, as far as freedom from the intervention of God went. From divine control he is free and unfettered, and the universe must be spectators of the use to which his liberty is to be

put. Alas, for poor man! His liberty was his ruin, as it ever is. Like the Gadarene herd of swine, his race was down a declivity, reckless, rapid, ruinous; and it was the same power which drove both to destruction.

What characterized man's "hour" was the "power of darkness," he must be guarded by the power of God, or driven to destruction by the devil. What did his liberty profit him? In his freedom he was the tool of the devil. Proud, ambitious, rebellious, and devoid of confidence in Him who had sent His only begotten Son to save him, he would look after his own happiness. He objected to God's concerning Himself about him. He would go his own way, and take care of himself. Horrible insanity! It was, in one sense, true that he had never before been as free, but yet, in another sense, it was equally true he never had been such a slave: his very freedom threw him completely into the hands of Satan.

The malice of the Jew astonished the pagan governor, and the vacillation and cowardice of Pilate have astonished the world. In the betrayer the treachery of the human heart comes so terribly into evidence, that even natural self-respect abominates the deed; and so loathsome is the action, even to the man who committed it, that when it is consummated, his very existence becomes intolerable to himself, and in despair he goes out and hangs himself.

Ere man's hour had dawned, lanterns and torches and weapons, borne by men of strength and determination, were to Peter little more than rotten wood, but when that hour had really set in, the innocent question of a maid belonging to the high priest's palace, which would have placed him in his right relation to Jesus, fills him with indescribable terror; and this son of Jonas, pre-eminently courageous at other times and a real lover of the Lord, denies that ever he knew Him, and that with oaths and curses. The other disciples, though also boastful on the Mount of Olives, are now nowhere to be seen. The disciple whom Jesus loved is with his Master at the trial, but is there under the patronage of the high priest (John 18. 15). It was *man's hour, and the power of darkness*, and no one could stand then except in the might of God. What an hour it was!

Every type of humanity was there, and every human soul

insane in his enmity against the lowly Sufferer. We see Pilate subjecting Him to the indignity of stripes, though compelled to confess he had found in Him no fault at all; Herod with his men of war setting Him at naught, crowning Him with thorns, and bending the knee in mockery before Him; priests, whose place was intercession, judging and accusing Him; the law, which He had honoured and magnified, turned against Him with the object of destroying Him. A robber is preferred to the One who with lavish kindness had showered benefits upon the people, and a murderer is chosen rather than the Prince of Life. For the bread He fed them with, they repay Him with buffets; and for the healing of their sick, they requite Him with a languishing death upon the cross; and for the words of grace which fell from His blessed lips, they heap anathemas upon His thorn-crowned head. What was the meaning of it? Not one of them could have given an intelligent answer to the question. In that "hour" the high priest's palace was truly pandemonium, for there the council of demons was convened.

Man was controlled by a power of which he knew nothing. He had cast off God who had hitherto restrained him for his good, and now he is under the control of one who drives him headlong to destruction, but in a way which, after all, is the way he rejoices to travel. Terrorized by his fears, inflamed by his lusts, maddened by his hatred, carried away by his pride, hardened in conscience by familiarity with sin, pitiless in his dealings with everything divine, and all his fallen, cruel, and corrupt lusts and passions wrought upon and lashed into fury by the influences of hell, nothing will satisfy him but the humiliation, agony, and death of Him who had gone about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil. It was man's hour indeed and it was an hour of unrestrained wickedness.

#### "THE POWER OF DARKNESS."

The spiritual world comes to light in the material. We hear no trumpet blast from the prince of darkness; no rattle of artillery wakes the echoes of Zion; no thunder of demon-driven chariot of war shakes the midnight cloud; no martial tread of troops in armour clad salutes the ear: yet never since the creation of the worlds was there a moment in which

spiritual forces were so agitated. The abyss of evil poured forth its myriads. Golgotha swarmed with forces innumerable; but no more noise was made than is made by the planets in their courses around their fiery centre. The roar of their thunder, if heard at all, is heard in the false and baseless accusations made by Israel's rulers, and in the howling of the ignorant and brutal rabble, who surged around the palace of the high priest, crying, "Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" and in their ribald jests and rowdy blatter as they hurry to the place of execution.

It has been said that *hell laughed*, but it is not quite correct. In the estimation of the powers of evil it was no doubt a triumph to have man so thoroughly blinded to the fact that he was committing soul-suicide, but laughter was, at that moment, far from the heart of him who was directing the battle against God and His Christ. Hell has never yet been able to laugh, nor will it ever be able. Hell has been too busy hitherto to have time to laugh, and it has never been so confident of victory as to hold the enemy in such supreme contempt. God laughs at the impotence of man and hell combined, for He is omnipotent and can never know defeat. But Satan has too often seen his plans frustrated and his wisdom checkmated, and his power annulled, to be able to have the laugh of God. At the cross no one laughed but man, the guilty, giddy tool of the devil, and his merriment was all indulged at the expense of the infinite sorrow of the Son of God, his Saviour and his Friend.

#### THE SORROW OF JESUS.

And how great was His sorrow! It is said the higher you go in creation, the sensations of pain are ever more acutely felt, and the lower you go down they become gradually less distinctly felt. But what must it have been to the First-born of all creation, to Him who felt everything perfectly! There was nothing hard or callous in the blessed sensitive nature of Jesus. He felt to the utmost every indignity that was heaped upon Him. He was the song of the drunkard, despised and rejected of men, laughed to scorn, insulted and derided by those for whose woes His compassions knew no bounds. His betrayal by Judas, denial by Peter, desertion

by His followers, wounded Him to the quick of the soul. In such calamities men are often supported by their pride. Ingratitude, insult, and blow, are often endured with an apparent equanimity that is surprising. It may be that *within*, the heart is like a furnace of fire, but a haughty spirit and indomitable will batten down the hatches upon the inner workings of the soul, so that there is no escape for the fury that rages inwardly. But in the meek and lowly Jesus pride had no place. No vengeful feelings needed to be suppressed; no angry spirit required to be controlled. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa. 53). He says, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isa. 50). In Psalm 22 we hear Him recounting all His enemies, and pouring the burden of His griefs into His Father's ear. "*Bulls of Bashan*" were there; "*Dogs*" had compassed Him about; the "*Assembly of the wicked*" had enclosed Him; there was the "*Lion's mouth*"; and there were also the "*Horns of the unicorns*."

As I have intimated, all the evil of the universe was drawn together against Him. Satan was there in all his might, man was there as his willing instrument of wickedness, God was there in judgment against sin, and the holy Sufferer was there, made sin, and dealt with by God as sin deserved. The fountains of the great deep of divine judgment were broken up, the windows of heaven were opened, and the mighty tempest of wrath, and curse, and vengeance against sin beat upon His devoted head. He sank in deep mire where there was no standing. Like Jonah, only in spiritual woes, He went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about Him for ever. Deep called unto deep at the noise of God's waterspouts, all the waves and billows went over Him, the waters reached to His soul. But all His infinite and unutterable woes are embodied in that cry, which was wrung from His heart amid the three hours of thick darkness: "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*"

But there, and then, every evil principle was judged. *Satan* was discovered as the prince and god of the world, and his power was for ever broken. *The wisdom of the world* was seen to be foolishness with God; it had never arrived at the

knowledge of Him, and when He was revealed before its eyes it knew Him not. *Man* was seen to be incorrigibly wicked, and at heart a hater of God. *God* was declared in perfect goodness and love on behalf of man, in spite of the hostility with which it was met by those whom it had singled out as its objects. *Jesus* was there, the obedient One, glorifying God even when abandoned by Him. He had come to do the will of God, and let the cost be what it might to Himself, He would not be turned aside. It is not for the creature to find fault with the Creator; it is not for the servant to dispute the wisdom of his master's will; it is not for man to call in question the ways of God: and the place of a servant, and man, *Jesus* had taken, and He was perfect in all. To Him be everlasting praise!

#### THE GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS.

At that cross the Son of Man was glorified (John 13. 31). There the offering was parted in pieces, the springs of His moral nature were all laid bare, and nothing but infinite perfection was brought to light. Not a pulse in His whole moral being but beat true to Him who sent Him. In Him there was found no selfish consideration, no estimating of things by the way in which they affected Himself. With Him everything was viewed in relation to God. The work given Him to do was done without a murmur. There were no reasonings and disputings found with Him: "That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do" (John 14. 31). Blessed, perfect Master and Lord.

Before He took the place of a servant, before a body was prepared for Him, He knew what was involved in it. He knew all beforehand. He fully understood the dread weight of that judgment, which He gave Himself to bear, before ever He was made in the likeness of men. He was well aware that to take the form of a servant meant that He must obey without question every commandment which He received; but at all costs the will of God must be done, and therefore, He, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a

man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2. 6-8). How brightly the moral glory and excellency of the Lord Jesus shine amid the darkness of Golgotha. Let me remind the reader that there betrayed, denied, deserted, beset by a lawless world which was influenced by the power of darkness, mocked, insulted, and above all, forsaken of God, He stands absolutely ALONE; and in that hour, and when alone, He bore up in might divine the pillars of the moral universe, and laid a basis upon which they could be established, beyond the possibility of ever again being shaken by any enemy of God.

#### AND GOD WAS GLORIFIED IN HIM.

His righteousness was established, His holiness maintained, His authority respected, His truth vindicated, and His love declared. That dread battle between the forces of good and evil was fought out in the cross of that lowly humbled Saviour, who gave Himself that all might be there and then gone into and settled to the glory and praise of God, settled never to be opened again. The conflict is over, the powers of evil crushed. God has triumphed.

Every enemy has been smitten. God has wrought righteousness, and the field is His. The devil has been annulled, death destroyed, sin has been dealt with, our sins put away, our old man crucified with Him; the ground has been as completely cleared of every enemy as though no enemy had ever existed. The cleansing of the heavens and the earth from the *presence* of evil is now only a matter of detail, angelic power will be able to accomplish that (Rev. 12. 7-9; Matt. 13. 49, 50). The *moral* question has all been settled in the cross of Jesus; and the believer is now identified in life and nature, relationship and favour, with the One who stood, in that terrible hour, faithful to God.

The nature and character of God have, with respect to evil, been vindicated and cleared. The fact that the *creature* is the author of it, and that it remains with him, is placed beyond all question. That *good* is alone with God, that He is good; and that He has ever dwelt in goodness, grace, and love toward man has been abundantly proved; as it has also been demonstrated that the man after the flesh, of the order of Adam, the fallen head, would not have God in

any character in which He might present Himself. But the cross is the end of that man judicially before God. His trial came to an end there. He was proven to be, in his very nature, enmity against God, and now no longer is the man of that order, and in that standing, in any relationship with God ; he has been already condemned and set aside judicially.

But the cross has also been the crucible in which the moral worth and excellencies of the second Man and last Adam have been tested to the very uttermost, and where the blessed fact has been established beyond all dispute that in Him there was no dross, no substance offensive to God, but everything in the highest degree acceptable. From that cross such a sweet savour went up before God as has effectually taken the place of the obnoxious odours arising from a corrupt world. God has been glorified in the spot where He was dishonoured, and the gain to Him, through the cross of His Son, has been infinitely greater than all the loss He had sustained through the first and erring head, as well as through the wickedness of all his descendants.

And our place, portion, and relationship are all in and with this exalted Christ, risen from the dead. He is our life. We are to be in His image. His Father is our Father ; and His God is our God. The love, and grace, and favour in which He is, we are in also ; for we are graced in Him. " As He is, so are we in this world " (1 John 4. 17). May we follow in the footsteps of that blessed apostle and disciple who could so truthfully say, " What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith : that I may know Him " (Phil. 3). And also, " God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world " (Gal. 6). The *person* and the *cross* of Christ were everything to him : may they be everything to us.

## PROPTIATION

*“ Jesus Christ the righteous : He is the propitiation for our sins.”*

1 John 2. 2.

**T**O us, who are by nature Gentiles, the whole fabric of Scripture authority hangs upon the truth of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. If He is not risen we are in our sins, and all that have placed any hope in Him in past dispensations have perished (1 Cor. 15). But if the resurrection of the Lord Jesus witnesses to the truth and greatness of His person, it also bears witness to the perfection of the sacrifice which He offered to God.

### THE DEATH OF THE BELIEVER.

We know but little of all that the death of the body involves, and it becomes those who feel that they are justly liable to it, to speak of it with that reverence with which it should be treated as the judgment of a holy and righteous God. Short of the coming of Christ it is the most blessed thing that could happen to a believer, for it is “ to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord ” (2 Cor. 5. 8); but this does not alter the fact that it was brought into the world by sin, and that it is sin’s wages, and the just conclusion of a life which is in its nature enmity against God. Thank God we have a life in Christ which is beyond its power. Were it not for this it would be an unparalleled calamity. Through the mercy of God it is gain to the one who has Christ as his Saviour (Phil. 1. 21).

As to the second death, the mighty witness to that is Golgotha. Had there been nothing there but the cruel death of crucifixion, most thoroughly would it have been proven how little that holy Sufferer was in the power of His own exhortation to His disciples, when He told them, “ Be not afraid of them that kill the body ” (Luke 12), or when He said that he who did not hate his own life could not be His disciple (chap. 14). In a book published not so long ago it is said, “ Many a British soldier has died as brave a death as Jesus.” If it were only a question of being undaunted in

the presence of death, why not say, "Many a murderer"? There was not anything, nor could there be anything of the nature of bravery or heroism in the death of Jesus. He, though the Creator and upholder of everything, had taken the place of the servant to the Godhead, that the counsels of the Father should be fulfilled, and this involved the meeting of God about the question of sin.

Hence the "strong crying and tears" in the garden of Gethsemane. No heroism comes to light in that lonely hour, when beyond the torrent of Cedron He encountered the powers of darkness, and entered into conflict with him who had the might of death. All that He was to meet in the three hours of darkness on the summit of Golgotha was anticipated in spirit, when the sorrow of His soul told itself out in a sweat of blood, which in great drops sprinkled the ground upon which He knelt in supplication to the Father.

#### THE STATE OF MEN AND THE WORLD.

I have already pointed out a fact which is patent to everybody, and that is, that man is an evil being. This requires no proving; the state of the world proves it to the hilt. And the strange thing about it is, that the life of each man is largely taken up with laying the blame of the state of things at his neighbour's door. The rich blame the slothfulness and improvidence of the poor, and the poor blame the avariciousness and niggardliness of the rich; and the verdict of every human being is, that the world is hard, selfish, and cruel, and to be cast upon its mercy is a fate too terrible to be expressed in words. Men may go on with their inventions, which are supposed to decorate the system of things down here, and ameliorate the condition of the human race; but death goes on with his work, and hearts go on breaking, and people go on murmuring against one another, and violence, oppression, falsehood, and corruption characterize everything—and *after this the judgment.*

Has God done anything to meet this state of things? Some tell us men are working out their own salvation; others, that mankind is a kind of mirror in which God (which is the Universal Life) is contemplating Himself; others, that He is doing the best He can, experimenting as a potter with the clay, making vessels, scrapping them, and

always improving ; but the theories advanced to quiet the consciences of men, and lead them to destruction, are almost innumerable.

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ?

“ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life ” (John 3. 16). This is the life spoken of in the gospel ; a life in relationship with God known in the love of His heart ; a life untainted by sin, selfishness, lust or pride ; a righteous, holy, spotless, divine life. What a burst of sunshine, comforting, health-giving, life-giving ! How powerful to rejoice, and gladden the heart ! How priceless and how peace-imparting, compared with those pretentious sparks struck from the atheistical brain of men grovelling in their native gloom ; those wretched ignis-fatui which allure the unwary multitude to destruction !

But before this life could be communicated to man there was the question of sin to be gone into ; for it lay between God and the blessing of the fallen creature. This is the way things are presented in Scripture. The judgment of sin, which lay upon the sinner, the righteous Judge could not ignore. He could not treat it as of no account : it must be atoned for ; the judgment which was its due must be borne. If the creature be made to bear it he is lost for ever ; he could never come out of it ; God would lose His creature, and the devil would gain a victory.

This cannot be. But from whence is the relief to come ? Man is under sin, the slave of the devil and of his own lusts, without strength, wandering in darkness and error, and in his nature enmity against God. Can God do anything on his behalf ? Can He intervene as deliverer, and at the same time maintain His righteousness, holiness, truth, and majesty ? That He will not act arbitrarily in moral questions, so as to upset and overthrow all the trust that His elect, holy, and intelligent creation have in Himself, can well be believed of a Creator who is supremely good. If these questions, which affect the very foundations, as well as the structure of the moral universe, have been raised, they must be settled in a way that will bring a sense of security into the heart of every created intelligence who desires to be faithful to his Creator.

## GOD'S INTENTION.

And these questions have been raised—sin has raised them. And though it would have been easy enough for God to have cast man from His face, and left him to the consequences of his rebellion, there was that which never would have been brought to light, which the blessed God intended should be the supreme joy of every heart, and the subject of worship and of song through eternal ages; and that was His unspeakable love. The fall of man furnished the occasion of bringing this to light, and in the way in which God has taken to redeem His creature—the only possible way—every moral question has been gone into and settled to the glory of God, and to the peace and assured confidence of every faithful heart. And that way has been by the cross of His Son, who gave Himself a ransom for all, that a way of salvation should be opened up for all; and thus have the kindness and love of God to man been expressed. But let us see if this is a new idea, belonging only to that which has been called the gospel age, or whether it has been testified beforehand in prophetic writings.

## GOD'S WAY ANNOUNCED.

No sooner did the fall of man take place than a Deliverer is announced; but He was to be a suffering Deliverer; Satan was to bruise His heel. He was to break the power of the fell destroyer, but in doing this He was to feel the might of the adversary. The next thing we find is, that it is God who provides clothing for the nakedness of the sinner. He clothed Adam and his wife with coats of skins. The one who dies for man becomes his covering under the eye of God. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15. 4).

When we come to Abel we have the approach of man to God; and here we see that there must be on the part of man the acknowledgment of the righteousness of the judgment which lies upon him, and he must approach in the strength and excellency of the victim which dies in his stead. Abel comes in this way, and is accepted; while Cain's altar was the denial of all this; neither to him nor to his offering had God respect. The offerer is identified with his offering.

The acceptance or rejection of the offering means the acceptance or rejection of the offerer. How important therefore it is to have a perfect sacrifice! (Genesis 4).

#### THE MEANING OF ATONEMENT.

The word *atonement*, which is the word found in the Old Testament, as *propitiation* is found in the New, means simply to *cover*. It is first used in Genesis 6. 14: Noah was told to *pitch* (cover) the ark within and without with pitch. It is used again in chapter 32. 20: Jacob said he would *appease* Esau with a present; his fault would be covered by the present. We have it in Ezekiel 16. 63: God there speaks of a time when He would be *pacified* toward the children of Israel for all that they had done. When Israel had sinned in making the golden calf, Moses said he would go up to the Lord to try and make *atonement* for their sin (Exod. 32. 30). It is not difficult to gather from these scriptures the meaning the word has in the Old Testament. The *offence* is put out of sight by the *offering*. An equivalent is rendered to the aggrieved party which covers the cause of aggravation.

#### THE BLOOD IN EGYPT. (Exodus 12).

The deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt preaches to us the same gospel. God was about to execute His righteous judgment upon the Egyptians, and took the firstborn as representatives of all the people. But the Israelites whom He had set Himself to deliver were equally subject to the judgment which He was about to inflict upon their enemies. How was He to pass over the one, and destroy the other? Anyone would tell us, He could easily do that, as He is omniscient, and could make no mistake that would imperil His people. But He was about to leave upon record something for our instruction, and we must, in reading the account, keep this in mind. He instructs His people to take a lamb, and to kill it, and to strike its blood upon the lintel and door-post of their houses; and He says, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." The blood of the lamb met the eye of the destroying angel, and was the witness to him that the judgment which he was executing had preceded him; the firstborn had died in the death of his substitute. Paul says, "Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us."

Why did God take this way of delivering His people? Wherefore this crimson stain upon lintel and door-post? When He sent the plague upon the cattle He required no mark, by which to distinguish those belonging to His people from which belonged to the servants of Pharaoh. It was the same during the plague of thick darkness: no sign directed the cloud where to settle. Why all this to-do in connection with the last act of this terrible drama? Let my reader hear what those have to say who know what it is to be sheltered by blood: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1); "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" (chap. 5. 9); "Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1. 19). This is the foundation of all blessing, the keynote of every song that shall thrill with its glorious melody the glad heart of redeemed creation, and that throughout all eternity.

#### THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT. (Leviticus 16.)

The great day of atonement, which was held in the seventh month, is full of instruction. We see that almost all things were by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood was no remission (Heb. 9. 22). At the same time we are given to understand that the sacrifices had in themselves no intrinsic value, therefore they were of yearly occurrence. Thus, while typifying the sacrifice of Christ, they were in great contrast with it; for by *one* offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified (chap. 10. 14). It was impossible that the blood of beasts could take away sins; a better sacrifice was needed for that. Therefore there was a remembrance of sins every year; and the conscience of the worshipper, instead of being taken up with the grace of God, was altogether occupied with the sins he had committed. Such a state of things was not pleasing to God, whose desire was to have man in His holy presence without a shadow of fear in his heart, and therefore He found fault with that order of things (Heb. 8. 8).

#### THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

In the tabernacle God was shut up within the veil: on His part there was no coming out, and on the part of man

there was no going in. Now the veil represented the flesh of Jesus (Heb. 10. 20), therefore when on earth He spoke of His body as the temple (John 2. 21): God was within the veil in the body of Jesus. On the cross this veil was rent. The death of Christ was the rending of the veil. And this came to light in the type; for the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom (Matt. 27. 51). In the execution of the judgment of sin upon the cross, all that God was came to light. His righteousness was there declared, but His love also was brought to light. God has come out to man in perfect love; and now man can go in to God by that way which has been dedicated through the veil. And by that precious blood we have boldness for entering; for it is not only the witness to us that our sins are gone, but it is also the great witness of the perfect love of God to us; so that, not only are our consciences purged, but our hearts are won; and God's presence, which we so much dreaded, has become our eternal home; and nowhere in the universe are we so welcome.

Moreover, the work of the cross has glorified God, and that in a way in which He never could have been glorified had that work not been done. His righteousness, holiness, truth, majesty, authority, and above all, the love of His heart to us has come to light; and every attribute has been vindicated, and maintained by the obedience of His beloved Son to the death of the cross. No one could have done such a work but a divine person; neither could anyone have taken such a work in hand but the One who gave Himself for us. Who could suffer the abandonment of God, and glorify God when abandoned by Him? To be forsaken of God for a single moment would be the eternal ruin of any created being. But Jesus could stand when absolutely alone, and when from no quarter was sympathy or support forthcoming. And therefore God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, earthly, and infernal things; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2).

I may be asked what justice I see in making a righteous person suffer for the unrighteous. I would only reply that this is not a question of righteousness, but of grace and love.

What righteousness is there in one person paying another's debts? None; it is all a matter of pure grace on the part of the one who does it. But there is no *making* about it; it was a matter of divine counsel. The Triune God is *One* in all that is done. Counsels belong to the Father, the Son is the One who accomplishes the Father's will, and the Spirit is the One by whose power everything is accomplished. The Son was as delighted to come as the Father was to send Him; and the Holy Spirit has His delight in working the pleasure of God in the hearts of believers.

This is the way things are presented in Scripture, and one mind pervades the Book. Christ is the subject from beginning to end; but we have His sufferings foretold, from the very first intimation of deliverance by Him. And the Holy Spirit who moved holy men to write the prophetic word never loses sight of the sacrifice of Jesus. On the one hand, His resurrection is the witness to us of the greatness of His person; on the other hand it is the witness to us of the perfection of the sacrifice which He offered for our sins. God has accepted the sacrifice, and the soul who comes by that sacrifice is accepted in all the value of it.

## THE RESURRECTION

*“Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.”*  
Romans 6. 4.

**A**S the authority of Scripture hangs upon the truth of the Person of Jesus, so does the truth of His Person hang upon the fact of the resurrection. It was by the resurrection from the dead He was declared Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1. 4). The power by which He passed through this evil world, untainted by its defiling influences, was the power by which He offered Himself without spot to God, and by which He proved Himself victorious over death and the grave. One who has to do with death must attest his power over it, or it will attest its power over him. He must annul its might, and come back scathless from its gloom, or it will hold him prisoner in its strongholds of corruption, and thus declare its superior prowess.

From the entrance of sin into the world all who descended into those impenetrable and mysterious regions of fear had to remain there. In a few isolated cases the might of God was exhibited in bringing back again to life upon earth those who had fallen into the clutches of the fell destroyer, but such were never placed beyond the reach of the terrific foe. They were bearers of what might be likened to a “ticket of leave,” the time limit of which having expired they were once more compelled to enter the land of shades. We read of two men who escaped altogether the fate common to the sons of Adam. By the intervention of God on their behalf they were translated to heaven that they might not see death, and thus became witnesses of the hidden resources of God, which He could put forth for the complete deliverance of the people of His choice. With these two exceptions all in Adam died, and in death they remain.

Death is to man the most appalling evil that can come upon him; it is the most heartless and horrible mischief which one man can inflict upon another; and it is the most

severe sentence which the law of the land can inflict upon a criminal. Satan has said that a man will give all he possesses for his life ; and he is very well acquainted with the way in which men regard things which refer personally to themselves. Those who enjoy a fair share of the mercies of the present life, and to whom death seems far distant, may be found discussing the dissolution of the earthly tabernacle with a certain amount of calmness ; but let the dread shadow of the grim monarch fall across their threshold, and you will find their tranquillity brought to an abrupt and speedy termination.

We seem never to become accustomed to its ravages. Familiarity with its silent footfall has not enabled us to hold its presence in contempt. It is to-day the same hideous, hateful, horrible invader of hearts and homes as it was at the outset of its reign on earth. He who guides it upon the track of his neighbour is branded as most wicked, and he who invites it to his own embrace is held to be insane. To the appeal for mercy it is deaf ; to the question as to whence it comes it returns no answer ; as to why it strikes it is dumb ; as to whether it conducts the vital principle of its victim it has no information to convey to the unhappy and broken-hearted mourner. It strikes out from impenetrable darkness ; and is only known by the certainty of its aim, and by the violence of the blow which needs not to be repeated. It has no more respect for the autocrat upon his throne than it has for the peasant in his humble cot, and it is equally dreaded by both. Its heart is harder than the flinty rock, and the only music it has ever heard is the lamentations which arise from the souls of those who feel the burden of its iron sceptre. It is swifter than those who flee from it, and stronger than those who stand up to contend against it. It is the monarch of all evils, and is either the executioner of a righteous governor, or the pitiless slave of a being who revels in murder.

But after all, is it indeed a foe which has never known defeat ? Has it proved itself victorious in every engagement ? Has no one risen up on behalf of man with might enough to grapple with this terrific monster and lay in ruins his apparently impregnable fortress ? Has no one been able to track him to his lair, and heap destruction upon the head of

the destroyer? Is there no one to deliver us from this ruthless enemy of mankind? If not, our lot is indeed deplorable.

That it is a terrible evil none but a dreamer will deny, and when it is denied no one will believe in the sincerity of the person who attempts to minimize its horrors. It has been designated by every name that the ingenuity of man can invent, from "a bend in the road" to "annihilation," all to relieve it of its hideous and repulsive appearance; but bitter death, call it what you will, is still the "King of terrors." It is the just conclusion of a life of rebellion against God. And this is the very thing that makes it so terrible. Why should human life be so beset with sorrow? and why should the way out of it be so fenced with terror? Without the Gospel of the grace of God the present life is an enigma incapable of solution.

Here the Scriptures come to our relief, and set before us the Son of God as our almighty Deliverer. In grace He goes down into death to break its power. That He might be able to die He took flesh and blood: "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2. 14, 15). Again we are told: "For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15. 21). It is impossible that such a person as the Son of God could be held by the cords of death. We should not require to be told that death must give way before such a glorious Personage. That Jesus came into death is a matter of profane history; that He came out of it is not. If He was compelled to remain there He was no stronger than any other of the human race.

There is nothing so persistently kept before our minds as resurrection—I may say death and resurrection. We have it every twenty-four hours set figuratively before our souls. The day declines, and noiseless night advances and wraps an unconscious world in her inky mantle. The morning breaks, night vanishes, the song of birds is heard, and man arises from his sleep refreshed, the toils of yesterday forever gone. The seasons run their course, the winter comes, the flowers are dead, the leaves fallen, the trees are bare, snows

mantle the earth, and desolation broods over a lifeless world. The spring appears, the winter frosts and snows are gone, nature awakes, the daisies deck the field, the budding woods are full of life, and everything beneath the azure dome of heaven with bounding pulse, and bright brow, and gladsome heart, instinct with life, gives witness to the God of resurrection.

But when we come to the Scriptures, we find that from the entrance of sin into the world, resurrection is the hope of fallen man. Adam and Eve are no sooner brought under the power of death than they are made to hear of a Deliverer, One who was destined to bruise the head of their fell destroyer. Still they have to take their sorrowful journey down to the dust out of which they were taken. Where then would their deliverance come in? Of what value was a Deliverer to those who were compelled to submit to the penalty of their offence? How could they be made to profit by this Deliverer? As far as we know they knew nothing of a state of bliss for their spirits apart from the body. And even if they did, how could they be in the favour of their Creator, and in the enjoyment of that favour, while their bodies lay under the judgment pronounced by God on account of their transgression? There was only one way by which their deliverance could be effected, and that one way was by resurrection.

I may be told that I am taking the early chapters of Genesis for granted, and that this is begging the question. I am taking nothing for granted. I am simply putting before the reader the things of which Scripture testifies, and the setting in which the things borne witness to are placed. A Deliverer is announced to those who are told they must return to dust, and I see no way in which they could hope to benefit by that Deliverer except on the principle of resurrection. If the whole matter recorded in the early chapters of Genesis be but the imagination of the writer, then the idea of resurrection must have had such hold upon his soul that it never occurred to him there might be a doubt as to it in the mind of the reader.

Enoch the seventh from Adam is translated, not passing through the article of death; another proof that resurrection is the way of deliverance for man: man is to have his body

in his perfectly delivered state. Enoch has his body, and shall have it for ever ; for I suppose no one imagines that death still lies before him, and if he is to have his body it is unreasonable to suppose other men can be blest without theirs. If we are not to have our bodies in our eternal condition, what confusion must arise from translation. I may be told Enoch never was translated. I have not affirmed that he was ; I am speaking from Scripture. But I do affirm this, *resurrection was in the mind of the writer of the book of Genesis.*

Abraham and Sarah are childless until nature becomes withered and dead, and then God tells him that his seed shall be as the stars of heaven or the sand upon the sea shore for number, and Abraham read in this promise the character of the God who had appeared to him, the God of resurrection. This faith of the patriarch had a severe test applied to it when he was told to offer up this child of promise as a burnt-offering upon Mount Moriah ; but his faith rose up strong in answer to the demand which was made upon it, and he bound his son upon the altar confident that God would raise him from the dead. It is the same God of resurrection who is preached in the Gospel to-day, but brought to light in raising up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead ; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

It is brought before us typically in the dividing of the Red Sea, through which Israel passed out of Egypt into the wilderness ; and in the parting of the waters of the Jordan, through which the same people came into the promised land. The Red Sea was not the usual way out of Egypt, neither was it necessary for them to cross the Jordan to come into Canaan. But just as death and resurrection were in the mind of him who wrote Genesis, so also was the mind of the writer of Exodus filled with the same idea. Then we have the budding of the rod of priesthood ; the dry, dead staff which was laid up before the Lord, buds, blossoms, bears fruit, and thus witnesses that priesthood must be established upon the basis of resurrection.

At the cleansing of the leper the live bird let loose into the open heaven, bearing upon its wing the red stain of its identification with the one killed over running water in the

earthen vessel, also Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, set forth the same principle of divine operation. The fact is, if in reading the Old Testament the idea of resurrection is expunged from the mind the Bible is a book of unrivalled contradictions. That great principle pervades every sentence uttered by prophetic lip from the entrance of sin into the world.

Could anything be plainer than that resurrection was that which was the hope of the One who speaks in Psalm 16? "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (sheol), neither wilt Thou suffer Thy holy One to see corruption." Here is One who goes down into death in the utmost confidence that the power of God will not allow His soul to abide in sheol, nor His flesh to see corruption. The apostles of the Lord tell us that this Psalm refers to the Christ of God. He could not be held by that dread power. By going into it He broke its might. Does not the whole heart and soul of the reader rise up in praise and thanksgiving to God for the victory which He has gained, gained at such infinite cost, but nevertheless gained on behalf of poor things like ourselves that we might no longer be in bondage to Satan on account of the fear of it.

As I have already indicated, resurrection is, according to Scripture, a great witness to the glory and greatness of the person of Jesus. During His earthly career, instead of being as every other man under the power of death, He is seen to have power over it, for at His word it was compelled to deliver up its prey. But above all, His own resurrection furnishes the most complete evidence of His dignity as Son of God. When Moses smote the waters of the Red Sea they became parted hither and thither, their power was broken, and when Jesus smote the waters of death in His own death upon the cross their power was broken; His resurrection is the witness to this stupendous fact.

" He hell in hell laid low,  
Made sin He sin o'erthrew,  
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,  
And death by dying slew."

The witnesses to this mighty victory are overwhelming, and I do not therefore marvel at men, who wish to get rid of the fact, and yet do not feel that they can safely impute

deceitful practices to the disciples, suggesting all sorts of theories which they consider sufficient to account for their belief in the event without it being really true. But I would like to ask these men a very old question: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead"? Had fallen man been the one declared to have gained such a victory, it would have been very reasonable to doubt it, but as it is declared to have been brought about by the power of God I see no reason to question it. No doubt the enemy would desire to treat the report as a fable. He is not likely to foster the notion in men's minds that his stronghold has fallen before the assault of the Son of God, but the witnesses are so many and of such unquestionable integrity that not to believe the fact is a terrible evidence of sheer self-will.

Paul tells us that Jesus was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. After that He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of Paul himself. Luke tells us in his Gospel that He appeared to two of them on their way home from Jerusalem to Emmaus; and was made known to them in the breaking of bread, the symbol of His death; that He ate and drank with His disciples, and that when they thought it was a spirit they were looking upon, He invited them to handle Him and see, telling them that a spirit had not flesh and bones, as they saw He had. Next, he tells us that He led a company out as far as Bethany, and that while, with uplifted hands, He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven (Luke 24). And in what a pure and guileless atmosphere of holy affections this short history of the victory of God is enshrined. Never in the universe has appeared the liar who could set the baseless inventions of his corrupt imagination in such a framework of tender grace and evident piety. Had I no other testimony than that which is furnished by the writer of the third Gospel I dare not question the glad tidings of the overthrow of the king of terrors.

And Paul tells us he saw Him on his way to Damascus, when he thought to wipe out the blessed name of Jesus from under heaven. That this remarkable convert was neither

a deceiver nor a liar is evident from the whole spirit of his writings. Whatever else was true of him he was conscientious, and was certain that he had seen the Just One and heard His voice. Was he mistaken? Was it the effect of sunstroke? Was it hallucination, or some insane wandering of his excited mind? That he was a man with determined will is not to be questioned, but that he was nervous, hysterical, mentally deranged, and subject to hallucinatory attacks, no one who studies his profound, pure, and wholesome disquisitions will be willing to admit. What insight into the mysteries of God he possessed, things which eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor which ever entered into the heart of man—things which God has prepared for those who love Him. What an immense grasp of his infinite subject, what profound reasoning, what ability for anticipating the cavillings of the corrupt human mind, what terrible earnestness, what self-abnegation, what deep piety, and what boundless affection for the souls of those to whom he writes. And all this resulted from that visitation which he encountered on his way to Damascus.

And yet some of the leaders in Christendom tell us Paul never saw the risen Jesus at all, and neither did His disciples, for such a thing as the resurrection never took place. And how do they know? They do *not* know. They are servants of his who desires to keep poor man in the dark as to his own defeat. And yet they call themselves Christians, at least some of them do, while they deny the foundation upon which the whole truth as to Christianity rests.

It was not in this way the apostles of our Lord instructed their converts. They gave them to understand that a lie was a lie, and that a lie against God was the greatest of all lies (1 Cor. 15). They tell us: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised: and if Christ be not raised your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

This is wholesome doctrine compared with the corrupt ethics which the leaders of the people, to-day, seek to foist

upon us. How can the truth be respected in secular things when the religion in which they attempt to instruct the people is founded on a falsehood, which is by them justified, and declared to have been concocted or connived at by the Saviour of the world? If I could not believe in the resurrection I should abandon the profession of Christianity as a system of unparalleled deceit, hypocrisy, and soul-destroying error.

## GOD'S GREAT GIFT

“ *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*” Romans 5. 5.

THE greatest gift God has conferred, or can confer, upon His beloved people is that of the Holy Spirit. A vast inheritance is ours, which is beyond the ability of the most powerful mind to grasp, and which baffles the most prodigious imagination, for what mind is able to grasp the vast inheritance of God? And we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. But the earnest of that inheritance is the Spirit of God, and the earnest is greater than the inheritance itself.

This great gift was in promise for His people in the past dispensation. And in the day in which God will recover His earthly people from among the heathen, He says that He will sprinkle clean water upon them, so that they shall be cleansed from their idols; a new heart also He will give them, and will put a new spirit within them. But He also says, “ I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them ” (Ezek. 36. 25-27). That will be a wonderful day of blessing for Israel, and bright with the glory of God.

But the Lord also speaks of this great gift on the eve of His departure out of this world, and gives His disciples to understand that they would be better off in the possession of the Spirit than they were in having Him corporeally in their midst. While He was here upon earth, He could only be said to be *with* them, but when He should be glorified and the Spirit here He would be *in* them. He says, “ At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you ” (John 14. 20).

He could not be given until Christ was glorified, because the new order of relationships and blessings for man were not brought fully to light until redemption was accomplished and Christ set at the right hand of God. The Spirit was not promised in connection with Adam, either innocent or guilty, but with the new sphere and order of things which lay in the

purpose of God before the world was. He is given in connection with the determination of God to head up everything in Christ, and to set up the poor fallen creature on the ground of redemption, and in His own power before His face, in the light of His love revealed in the person of His beloved Son.

Think only of the intimacy with God into which this wonderful gift brings the recipient of it! I need not ask a saint of God if he thinks anything could *exceed* the holy familiarity with the Father and the Son into which we are brought by this unspeakable power, which has taken possession of our bodies on behalf of the Christ of God, but I would ask if anyone thinks such a favour could be *equalled*. The question is asked by the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 2: "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him?" There can be only one answer to such a question, and the answer is, No man. Had I the spirit of another I should know all about him. I should know him as well as he knows himself. There would be none of his thoughts, feelings, or affections hidden from me. Nothing of that man would remain a secret from me. But we have got the Spirit of *God*. What for? That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Could we not know them without the Spirit? No: for they are things the eye has never seen, nor the ear ever heard, nor the imagination ever pictured. But the Spirit knows them. He searches all things, yea the deep things of God. There is nothing hidden from the Spirit, nor is there anything hidden from the one who has received the Spirit. The very babes in Christ are said to have an unction from the Holy One, and to know all things (1 John 2. 20). The depths of God are known to the Spirit, and we have received Him that we might know these depths.

By Him we become acquainted with the counsels of the Father. By Him we are enabled to enter into the greatness of the revelation God has made of Himself in Christ. By Him we are in the enjoyment of the love of God that was declared in the cross of His Son, for by Him it has been shed abroad in our hearts. By Him we know that we are children of God. By Him we are enabled to address God as our Father. By Him we are able to reckon ourselves dead to sin

and alive to God in Christ. By His power we are made free from the law of sin which works in our members, and by His power we are enabled to produce righteousness. He is also the power for all worship and service. In fact He is the power of all our relationships with God, for He is the power of the life we have from, and in, the risen Christ. How very thankful we should be for such an unspeakable gift! Were we able to communicate our spirit to another person there is not a soul on earth to whom we would give such a gift, for we do not wish people to know us too intimately. We are too evil to wish to be well known. But God desires us to know Him, that all our delight might be in Him; and the better we know Him the more closely do we draw to Him, and the happier we are; but the better we know men in their natural condition the more we recoil from more than a very limited degree of familiarity with them. With Him who knows us best we are most at home, and that we might find our home in His presence He has bestowed upon us this gift of His Holy Spirit.

But if we contemplate for a moment the greatness of the gift He has given *for* us, we shall not be so much surprised at the gift He has given *to* us. To take our place under the judgment due to us on account of sin, He has given His only begotten Son. This is beyond everything else that He has done on our behalf. Nothing greater could He have done. It is in this that the whole extent of His love toward us has come to light. It is there we learn it. Surely all His dealings with us spring from the great love of His heart toward us. But it is not in His care for us in our pilgrim pathway, not in the mercies that we daily experience, not in His tender grace to us, meeting our every need, and giving us abundant proof that we are ever in His mind, and that He ever does the best thing possible for us; but it is in that cross, and in that cross alone, that we are to learn the greatness of that love that is just as deep and wide and boundless as is the heart from which it springs. It is to that cross, and to it alone, that we shall look back from an eternity of unspeakable happiness, as the one, solitary, unique place where, from the hitherto pent-up fountain of the heart of God, flowed forth in infinite volume that love that chose such worthless things as we for its objects.

What a day it will be for us when we stand in the Father's house in the likeness of the Son of God ; when as we look around on that glorious company nothing but Christ shall meet our eye, for, as regards us, the counsels of the Father will all have been fulfilled, and we shall be just that which He purposed we should be before the world was. But not that which shall meet us in that house, not our circumstances there, not the glory in which we shall find ourselves, not the wealth, magnificence, and splendour of that palace of delights will we gaze upon as the mighty witness of the love of God to us, though every bit of it will be designed by the wisdom, and fashioned by the hand of love ; but from that circle and sphere of everlasting pleasures we shall cast our minds backward to that lone and cloud-swathed Golgotha, swept with the tempest of devouring wrath, but radiant with love that, as we sometimes sing, no tongue could teach, nor thought be able to reach, for there alone has it had its perfect expression. From the crown of that lonely mount the living light shall fling its deathless rays throughout the whole vast universe of blessing, waking up everlasting praises to the Father and the Son.

Can we, as we contemplate that love, wonder that He who gave His Son to die our death and save us from our woe, should give His Holy Spirit to us ? Surely not. Seeing He has given up to the judgment of the cross His well-beloved, we need not be surprised at anything He may give us after that, for " He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things ? " (Rom. 8. 32). In the light of that cross must all His dealings with us be estimated.

But as the gift of His Son was the only thing that could meet our deep need, as sinners, so was the gift of the Spirit the only thing that could meet our need in view of the position given to us in divine counsel, for it is only by that power we can occupy that place. " What ? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own ? For ye are bought with a price " (1 Corinthians 6. 19). Therefore, " Grieve not the Holy Spirit or God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption " (Ephesians 4. 30).

## THE LOVE OF GOD

*“ God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son.”*  
John 3. 16.

THE Scriptures speak to us of the love of God, of the love of the Father, of the love of the Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the love of the brethren ; and though all this love is divine, and not the affection which is natural to the creature, nevertheless it is the same love that we find in the man who is born of God as that which is in the Persons of the Godhead ; for he is, by virtue of this heavenly birth, a partaker of the divine nature. But the direction this love is described as taking in each of these divine Persons and in the brethren is very different. Neither the Father nor the Son are said to love the world, but God is ; neither is the Father said to love the church, but Christ is. And all this is full of interest and instruction. I would therefore, by the help of the Holy Spirit, attempt to point out to the reader the way in which the Scriptures present this love in connection with all in whom it is said to be active. Let us first examine what is said as to THE LOVE OF GOD.

In John 3. 16 we get this love presented in all its greatness and universality. It is a love that no man had hitherto been called to contemplate in such fulness, power and blessing. It is a love that rises above every barrier thrown up to stem its invincible current. It is a love that no angel knew, and a love that no creature could declare. By an angel the intervention of God for the deliverance of the oppressed sons of Jacob could take place, and by angelic tongue could the duty of man to love God be declared ; from out of the midst of devouring fire, and from blackness and darkness, could angelic voice utter the claims of God ; but to bring the love of God to man, so that we might be able to say, “ We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love ” (1 John 4. 16), was beyond the power of the highest created intelligence.

The fall and ruin of the head of the human race furnished the blessed God with an opportunity of retiring upon the counsels of His eternal love, which involved new relationships for man, and a new life by which these new relationships could be enjoyed ; a life that was no more in Adam innocent than in Adam guilty : eternal life, the life that is in the Son of God, a life that could never be defiled by sin, and that could never come under the power of death.

But if men were to possess this life, and if they were to stand in these new and eternal relationships with God, it was necessary that satisfaction should be rendered to God for the dishonour done to Him by sin in this evil world. It was necessary that our sins, and the evil and corrupt nature that produced these sins, should be met by the unsparing judgment of a holy and righteous God. It was necessary that One should give Himself for us, should stand in our room and stead, should bear our blame, suffer the consequences of sin by being made sin, in order that the majesty, authority, and nature of God might be vindicated and glorified, for apart from the accomplishment of this no way of salvation could be opened up for guilty man.

Who was there in all the universe of God whose love for our guilty race was strong enough to induce him to intervene on our behalf ? and who, even supposing the love existed, had the ability to take up the work of our deliverance ? Not certainly any of the creatures of God, for, for them to have manifested compassion towards us, would have been treason against their Creator and Governor ; but even had they desired, and had it been right and agreeable to God that they should so desire, they had not the ability to accomplish anything.

No one could help us but the One against whom we had sinned, and it took Him to put forth all His power to bring about our deliverance. Nothing less than the death of His only begotten Son could enable Him righteously to take the place of a Saviour toward guilty man.

What mere creature could undertake such a work as that of redemption ? Who could stand in the presence of incensed Deity, and bear the brunt of wrath's terrific storm broken loose against sin ? Who could answer to God for the rebellion of His apostate creature, and stand in the breach when He

was giving expression to His righteous judgment and holy abhorrence of that of which the devil was the author and man the willing slave? No mere creature could do this. None but the incarnate Son could enter into this awful question with God.

But why not let man perish for ever? He preferred the service of sin, the darkness of alienation from God, the rule of the devil, to any renewal of relationships or acquaintance with God. Why not take hold of the earth, and shake the apostate race out of its corrupt lap into the lake of fire, and leave him thus to the eternal consequences of his mad rebellion against his Maker? Why trouble any more about such a good-for-nothing creature? Why, for no other reason than that it had pleased God to set His heart upon man. He was not constrained to intervene on behalf of His creature by any good that He saw in that creature, nor by any object external to Himself, but just because it was His pleasure to take up such a sinner and make him a vessel of His praise.

The sinful and utterly lost condition of man put God to the test in a way in which He had never before been tested, and in a way in which He never can be tested again. If God loved man, the state in which man was as a rebel sinner put His love to a test that no one, had anything been known about it, would have believed love capable of bearing. But that love proved itself to be well able to answer to the demand made upon it: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

That love has opened up a way of salvation for the lost, and the report of that salvation, and where all are to find it, is proclaimed world-wide. God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth; and the Mediator, whose death was the witness of that love, gave Himself a ransom for all, and all are called by the gospel to make haste and avail themselves of that salvation while the day of salvation lasts.

In the heart of the believer that love is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost who is given to us (Rom. 5. 5). We are made conscious that it is our present portion. To the way in which it has come to light the Holy Spirit ever directs our attention: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time

Christ died for the ungodly ” ; and in contrast to the greatest exhibition of human love, which has occasionally caused men to lay down their lives on behalf of those who had shown them kindness, the love of God was expressed to us in the death of Christ *when we were yet sinners*.

In the 1st Epistle of John this love of God is viewed in connection with a circle narrower than the whole world. In the Gospel its aspect is universal, but in the Epistle it is confined to the family of God. We read in 1 John 4 : “ In this was manifested the love of God toward *us*,” and “ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved *us* ” ; and in chapter 3 : “ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for *us*.” But in the Epistle, as in the Gospel, whether it be to *us*, or to *the world*, the death of Christ is that in which it has been declared.

We get another beautiful reference to this love in Ephesians 2. There we are contemplated as dead in sins. Not a movement of our hearts Godward. We are said, as Gentiles, to have been “ without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” Such was our state as sinners of the Gentiles. Also, ruled by the prince of the power of the air, fulfilling the desires of flesh and mind, and by nature children of wrath, everything that was loathsome and abominable to God.

This is what we were under His eye : “ But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.” What a marvellous intervention of the power of the living God, moved by the wonderful love of His heart ! And not only has He quickened us, but quickened us in the life of Christ ; and also raised us up and made us sit in Him in the heavenlies ; and that, too, in order that He might, in the ages to come, show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

From this love there is no separation. Once it is believed—once it gets into the heart in the power of the Spirit—it is there *for ever*. The Apostle says : “ I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate

us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8. 38, 39). In the first verse of this chapter *we* are in Christ, and in the last verse *the love of God* is there, so that where the love of God has got its eternal resting-place, we have got ours through grace; therefore, until Christ can be separated from that love we never can be; and as nothing can separate Him from it, nothing can separate us.

It is this love which casts out all fear from our hearts, and gives us boldness for the day of judgment. We are loved with the love of which Christ is the Object—“as He is, so are we in this world”; and we know that that love will never be thoroughly satisfied until it has us, like Himself, in glory. It is that love which has predestinated us to be conformed to His image; therefore, in the day of judgment we shall be like the Judge, our very bodies fashioned like His; ourselves not the subjects of judgment, though our works shall be. Then we shall receive loss or gain for all that we have done upon earth. Where we have been faithful we shall be rewarded, and where we have been unfaithful we shall suffer loss; but before ever we appear there we shall have been already glorified.

I turn to another passage of Scripture: “Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God” (Jude 20. 21). In these days in which evil abounds, such as is depicted in this short Epistle, the tendency is to be unduly occupied with it, and the soul is in danger of coming under the power of it. Here is the antidote to all that. The natural and healthful element of the child of God is this love declared in the gift of Jesus; and in this love, in the worst days of the history of the church, it is our privilege to keep ourselves, and we are exhorted so to do.

May the Lord Himself direct our hearts into the love of God.

## THE LOVE OF THE FATHER

*“The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me.”*  
John 16. 27.

**I**F we examine the way in which the Father's love is presented in Scripture we shall not find the thought of sovereignty connected with it as we find connected with the love of God ; nor, indeed, shall we always find it to be set upon the same objects. God is said to have loved the world, the Father never. The Father has a world of His own outside of which His affections are not said to travel. It is a world, or sphere, or order of things, not yet brought to light ; but it exists in His counsels, and is of Himself. This present world is not of Him. All that is in the world is lust and pride, and it is not of the Father, but is of the world (1 John 2. 15, 16). With the love of the Father we find the thought of complacency, delight, satisfaction. His love is confined to things which are grateful to His nature. The Son is said to have been the Object of the Father's love before the foundation of the world (John 17. 24). And when upon earth, as He was about to take the place of public testimony for God, the Father's voice is heard declaring His delight in Him. This voice from heaven was a witness of the pleasure the Father took in the first thirty years of the Son's sojourn here below. Again, on the mount of transfiguration, we are privileged to hear the same powerful testimony rendered by the Father to the place the Son had in His blessed affections.

Jesus Himself says : “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand” (John 3. 35). The Son had the love and confidence of the heart of the Father. The Father could confidently put everything into the hand of the Son, knowing that everything would be faithfully held for His glory. Again, He says : “The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth” (John 5. 20).

And "what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (v. 19). In this way the Father came to light in the Son, and in Him He was glorified. How dear the Son was to the heart of the Father no creature mind shall ever be able to understand.

In John 10. 17 we read: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again." His obedience and His love to the Father carried Him down to death, even the death of the cross; and there was laid a firm foundation upon which could be established the eternal counsels of the Father; and having laid in the blood of His cross this firm foundation, He in resurrection gives effect to those counsels to the glory of the Father. He says: "Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee" (chap. 17. 1). And because of this wholehearted devotedness to His glory the Father's heart goes out to that blessed Son of His in infinite love.

There is nothing of the nature of sovereignty or grace in all this, for here there is a reason for the love of the Father lying outside of Himself; a reason existing in the Object of that love; the excellence of His person, and the obedience which comes to light in His lowly life on earth, calling forth that love as One perfectly worthy of it, however infinite it be. And how readily the Father responds to the claims of the One who presented Him with such a motive for love. He says: "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53. 12). And "wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2. 9-11). The blessedness and excellence of the Son is beyond all creature thought, and indeed it is a joy to us that it is so; nevertheless, it is also a joy to us that there is One who fully estimates His infinite worth: it is not, blessed be God, unknown.

But *we* also are objects of the love of the Father. Jesus

says : " The Father Himself loveth you." It is not merely that we are called to contemplate the love which the Father has to the Son, though this would be an unspeakable privilege ; but we are to know ourselves as objects of that love. But even as regards us this love is not presented in its sovereign character. The Lord gives a reason for this love being lavished upon us, though surely we have no claim to the least of His favours. And yet if the Father loves us there is a reason why : " The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God " (John 16. 27). There is something in us which draws out the Father's love to us. It is something which is of the Father Himself, and which He implanted there. It is not what is natural to man at all, and it was not natural to us. The natural man sees no beauty in Jesus. By the natural man He is always despised and rejected ; but " they shall be all taught of God," and " every one therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me " (John 6. 45). This affection that is in our hearts for Jesus has been begotten by the teaching of the Father, and to His heart it is exceedingly precious. In this world, that is hostile to the Son, the Father finds us lovers of Jesus, and by this, if I may so speak, the heart of the Father is profoundly affected.

Feeble fellow-believer, you love Jesus. Perhaps you say your love is so weak, and your ways are often so wilful and crooked that you hesitate to speak of your love for Jesus. You feel He is worthy of so much, and you render to Him so little. Yet you do love Him. Possibly you wonder why every one does not love Him, for, as regards yourself, you feel you must love, reverence, and confess Him, even if by doing so you stirred up the wrath of the whole world against you. Well, is this nothing to the Father ? Can He be regardless as to the attitude assumed by you toward the Son of His love ? Impossible.

God loved you when there was nothing lovable about you. He loved you because of what was in Himself. But the *Father* loves you because of what is in you. He has found something in you in which His heart has unbounded delight. What is it ? Nothing but the little spark of love to His Son, which He has kindled there for Himself. Here, where His Son has suffered every ignominy that the profligate heart of

man could invent, you are found on His side, lifting up a feeble testimony in His favour, and the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Him, and have believed that He came out from God.

There is nothing so precious to the heart of the Father upon earth as that little spark of love to Christ which has been kindled by Himself in the souls of His saints. Where this is not, darkness and death reign. And the Father loves to cherish this little vital spark, and by the power of the Holy Spirit fan it into a mighty flame. Satan would seek to quench it, and upon it the world has a baneful influence; but "we love Him because He first loved us," and the better we know His love, the more shall we love Him; and if we love Him we will show this love by keeping His commandments, and treasuring His word in our hearts; and if we do this Jesus says we shall be loved of the Father, and both Father and Son will make their abode with us (John 14. 23).

We read these things in the Holy Scriptures, and we treasure them as the sayings of Jesus, but what do we know about them experimentally? Can the reader say: "Ah, I know what that means. I know what it is to have the Father and the Son dwelling with me. I know something of the joy that springs from having these divine Persons as my honoured guests." But if we find that we have not embraced this unspeakable privilege, and if we have to confess that we know, in an experimental way, little or nothing about it, are we to continue in this condition of spiritual destitution? Are these pearl gates which are even now swung open that we may enter into the joys of the Father's house, before we leave this scene of lawlessness, darkness, and death, to remain unused by us as though we had no right of entrance or as though they were guarded by cherubim and a flaming sword? Surely not.

Worldliness increases on every hand. Almost every day brings to light some apparently spiritual Samson falling under its deadly influence. The atoning death of Christ is scoffed at, and to His words those who profess His name are becoming stone deaf. His saints who have received much light boast of it as an intellectual attainment, and attempt to turn the edge of the Spirit's sword against Christ's members. And all this has come to pass because we have not kept the commandments of Jesus, treasured His word, and been more in

company with the Father and the Son. The Lord says, speaking of the religious enemies of the gospel: "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me" (John 16. 2, 3). This is what is lacking to-day, the knowledge of the Father and the Son. I do not mean to infer that any true believer is without this knowledge, but what I do mean is this, I fear we have not these divine Persons as our continual guests. We know forgiveness, and, like Martha, we may be cumbered about much service; but what do we know about the unutterable sweetness of entertaining in the secret of our own souls the Father and the Son?

Oh, how infinitely sweet it is to sit down alone, or to walk in solitude apart from every other human being, and let the Father and the Son draw near to us, as Jesus did to the two sorrowing disciples on their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, that we may breathe for a little moment the very atmosphere of heaven. What a health resort we shall find this to be.

And all this remains for us to-day as truly as ever. Everything may have become corrupted ecclesiastically. That house which was intended for a house of prayer may have become a den of thieves, but all these things remain for the individual as certainly as though there was no failure at all. The writings of John are intensely individual, and the privileges opened out to us in them are not dependent upon the faithfulness of the Christian company. If no other in the whole world enjoyed these things I may. To-day they are the portion of the *overcomer*. And there is much to overcome, but there is infinitely more to be entered into and enjoyed.

How unspeakably sweet it is to go through this world with the sense of the Father's love keeping the heart. If the reader does not enjoy it, then I would entreat him to go in for it, for it is his privilege as a child of God. May both writer and reader know it better.

## THE LOVE OF CHRIST

*“To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.”* Eph. 3. 19.

THE love of Christ is said to surpass knowledge, and the more we meditate upon it the more we become conscious of our utter inability, even with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to seize the immensity of that infinite, self-sacrificing, knowledge-surpassing love, which led the eternal Son from the eternal Father, and the form of God to take a bondsman's form, being made in the likeness of men, and to subject Himself to the contempt, rejection, scorn and derision of His rebellious creatures, and in the end to take the place of the Sinbearer, suffer the forsaking of God, and give up His life upon a malefactor's gibbet. It was a journey of love, from the highest heights to the lowest depths, unpunctuated by one backward look, one moment of hesitation that might suggest uncertainty, or reluctance to go forward; no complaining word escaped those lips, through which only the voice of the living Father made itself heard; no curse was hurled against the heads of those that accepted His favours and in the end clamoured for His crucifixion. One word from His lips would have brought more than twelve legions of angels against His miserable, thankless, and wicked antagonists, but that word was not spoken: “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” (Isa. 53. 7).

No terror that rose up in the pathway of that love could turn it aside from the goal to which it was steadily advancing. Beset by every sorrow, anathematized by the leaders of the nation, regarded as mad by His relatives, misunderstood by everybody, friendless and afflicted He pursued His pathway of unspeakable love, though the woes that encircled His lonely Person steadily increased, until they reached their culmination in the cursed death of the cross, and the abandonment of God; and there that love, that for the space of

thirty-three years had made this valley of death redolent with its odours, poured forth in infinite volume and in omnipotent power its everlasting and unutterable sweetness : love to His Father in the first instance, but love also to all given to Him of the Father.

The unapproachable light in which the Godhead dwells contains its own unfathomable secrets ; but the things that are revealed belong to us, who have received the Holy Spirit in order that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God ; which things have been spoken to us in words taught by the same Spirit. We can therefore be in the full light of the revealed will of God, and more than that we know nothing ; nor into unrevealed mysteries have we any desire to penetrate. The light that the sun gives us is all that we require for light and health. A little more might be destructive to us, so the revelation that God has made to us is all that we need for our eternal happiness, and the subject mind desires no greater revelation, but only to know that revelation better.

The revelation that we have of God conveys to us the great truth that He is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; three persons, yet one God, and *God is love*. This is what He is in His nature, what He is in His very being. There is nothing but love between those Divine and Eternal Persons. "Thou lovedst Me," says Jesus to the Father, "before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 24). "*God is Love*" is the only absolute appellative that is used of the supreme Being ; and what a wave of infinite happiness and indescribable joy overwhelms the soul as we meditate upon the marvellous fact that love is the nature of the One with whom we have to do. That "*God is light*" the Word also declares, but we are also said to be light, and therefore I take it that light is a more relative term, and not so absolute as love.

But as my object is at present to meditate a little upon the love of Christ, I must seek to engage the reader's attention with One of these Divine Persons in His manifestation here upon earth, the Son divested of the form of God, and clothed in the form of a Servant ; no more to exercise authority as a despot, accountable to no higher power for His actions, but to be under the authority of another, and to do the will of the Father that sent Him. What a change of circumstances !

How wondrous to behold the Creator of the worlds in the form of a Servant, a Man amongst men ; in outward form not distinguishable from other men, thus in order that He might accomplish the will of the Father !

By the way in which we have the truth presented to us in the Scriptures we learn that counsels belong to the Father (Eph. 1. 3-14) ; the Son becomes Man, in order that through Him those counsels may be fulfilled (John 17) ; and the Holy Spirit is the power by which all are brought to pass (Acts 10. 38). In proof of each of these statements many other texts of Scripture might be adduced, but they can be easily found by the reader, and this exercise will be full of both interest and spiritual profit.

The presence of the Son here upon this earth in humiliation is the witness of His love to the Father. Those eternal counsels of love were as dear to His heart as to the heart of the Father ; and in the laying of a foundation upon which all those counsels could be righteously fulfilled He knew all the horrors that such a work entailed. But such was His great love to the Father, such His infinite desire that those counsels should have their fulfilment, such His delight to do the will of the Father, He would go through all those horrors, let the cost to Himself be what it might.

And having become a Servant He will be a Servant for ever. The descent from the form of God to that of a servant may be immeasurable, His lowly birth humiliating, His death upon the cross ignominious, His descent into hades dishonourable in the extreme ; but it was the hand of the Father that had marked out that path for His feet to tread ; and He also knew that beyond the reproach, and the shame, and the gibbet, and the darkness, and the forsaking, and the death, there was for Him " Thy presence, where there is fulness of joy, and Thy right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore " (Ps. 16. 11). Therefore for the joy that was set before Him He could endure the cross and despise the shame (Heb. 12. 2). His words when going to that cross were : " That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do " (John 14. 31). In His great love to the Father, and that the Father might be glorified, even to the giving up of His life He did everything that could be done upon earth, and then asked

to be glorified, in order that He might still glorify Him upon the platform of resurrection. And when all those counsels of love have been fulfilled, and when every enemy has been subdued, His subjection to the Father shall be as eternally perfect, and His love as undiminished as it was when tested by the death of the cross.

But how can we speak of the Father's appreciation of that self-sacrificing love of His beloved Son? We can only estimate the delight that the Father has in Him, as we are able to estimate the place of exaltation given Him of the Father. He could say when here below: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again" (John 10. 17). Because of that mighty work that He accomplished to the Father's glory, and at His commandment, He has been highly exalted, and a Name given to Him which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2. 9-11). The Son has loved the Father above all else, and His love has been proven, by His taking the place of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and the love of the Father to the Son is proven, by the place which as Man He occupies on the Father's throne, and by the fact that the Father is determined that His Son shall have the same honour as Himself from every intelligent being; for all must honour the Son, even as they honour the Father (John 5. 23).

But in His becoming man, and in all the work that He has done, as well as His present activities on our behalf before the face of God, we see His love for those given Him of the Father. It is our privilege, as individual believers, to take up the words of the apostle into our lips, and confess: "He loved me, and gave Himself for me"; and as part of that wondrous organism of which He is the Head, rejoice in the fact that He loved the church, and gave Himself for it. Whatever He did, He did for the glory of the Father, but He did it no less for our eternal blessing. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage" (Heb. 2. 14, 15).

It is with holy adoration that we draw near in contemplation of His taking the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, for the glory of the Godhead, and that the counsels of the Father might be carried out; but that He should set His affections upon such rebellious worms of the dust as we all are by nature, this is just where we lose ourselves in utter bewilderment, for it surely surpasses knowledge. Perhaps it is not always that we are in the blissful contemplation of its glory and its infinity, but when the reality and greatness of it breaks with overwhelming power over heart and mind, we begin to realize that though we know it, and rejoice in its quickening beams, and that with a joy unspeakable, its sweetness, its vastness, its marvellous mystery, can never be fully known.

The blessed God has graciously given to us the power of speech, by means of which we can express the thoughts that rise up in our creature minds. We speak of eternity, infinity, and such-like words, but these terms are much more the expression of our own creature limitations, our utter ignorance of the things we know to be realities rather than an exposition of the things themselves. It is thus with the great verities of revelation, things that are much more to be felt and enjoyed than to be set forth in human parlance. When we think of eternity we have the thought of endless duration of time; and when we think of infinity, that which has not bounds or limits is before our minds. But what know we of either? May I not also ask, What need we know? We know that the love of Christ is our sure and lasting portion: ours while we have our being, and that its magnitude is beyond all our ability to grasp. And we know that it is not only the little of it that we can grasp that is ours; it is all ours. It has all been lavished upon us, and it is all ours to be enjoyed.

We know "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8. 9). What amazing down-stooping on His part we see in His advent into this world! What marvellous self-abnegation! From form of God into form of servant, from despot to slave, from

omnipotence to infant weakness, from the adoration of angels to the contempt of men : love incarnate in a world of incarnate lust !

“ Come now and view that manger,  
The Lord of glory see,  
A houseless, homeless stranger  
In this poor world for thee.”

Love brought Him there—sovereign love. He had come forth from the Father, and was come into the world. He had come forth from riches, and was come into poverty. He had come from the throne of the universe, and was come to a manger where the cattle fed. He had called the creation into existence by the word of His power, He was now in that creation in the form of a creature. He had been accustomed to give commandment, now He must hearken to, and execute, the behests of Another. In His presence seraphim veiled their faces, now must He meet the proud and persecuting stare of His rebellious creatures. How altered are the circumstances of the Lord of glory !

See the poverty into which His love has brought Him ! An outcast in a manger ! A stranger in His own world ! His delights had ever been with the sons of men (Prov. 8. 31). And now He is with them, and in their likeness, beginning where man begins, come of a woman, born into the world, love come down to heal sin-ruined souls. To the human eye the expression of weakness, but really the Upholder of the universe, which is the work of His own hands. Here under the protection of the Father, never to use His own power for His protection from insult or injury, but ever to commit Himself to Him that judges righteously ; well knowing that His career upon earth must begin in a manger and close on a gibbet, while all His history between must be marked by the scorn, derision, and persecution of His rebellious creatures.

But is it not just this that has endeared Him to our hearts ? It is in the evils that beset His path that we see His infinite moral perfections brought to light. We know Him where He is on the throne of the Father, but it is in His sojourn down here that we have learned Him. His present circumstances are very different to what they were in the days of

His flesh, but there is no change in Him. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever" (Heb. 13. 8). It is He who was here that we look forward to see face to face, and to be with at His coming again.

But it is His lowly grace, His poverty, His meekness, that has attracted our hearts ; because all this shows us the extent to which He was willing to go to make us His own. And what else, O Lord, could have won our heart's affections ? Not the worship of angels ; not Thy works of mighty power ; not even the Father's voice from the opened heavens. These wonders might have awed and terrified our creature souls, but they would not have led us to confide in Thee. No !

" We cling to Thee in weakness,  
The manger and the cross ;  
We gaze upon Thy meekness  
Thro' suffering, pain, and loss."

Thou didst speak words the like of which never before had saluted the ears of men. They expressed that which lay in Thine own heart of unfathomable love for such as we know ourselves to be. They came through Thy lips warm from the bosom of the living Father, where Thou hadst Thine everlasting dwelling-place. As had been traced on the two tables of stone that which man should be for God, so Thou didst trace on the dust of this world that which God was in grace for man. And also Thou didst manifest in Thy lowly life the order of man, and the only order of man, that can live for ever in relation with God.

Surely Thou art all-powerful. Thou knowest all things, and Thou canst do all things. There is nothing too hard for Thee. But it is to Thee in weakness we cling—the deep weakness of the manger, and the deeper weakness of the cross ; yet the Upholder of all things in both manger and cross as Thou now art on the throne of the Highest. What unfathomable mysteries surround Thy holy Person !

Only the Father knows the Son (Matt. 11. 28). It is utterly impossible for our creature minds to fathom the mysteries of the incarnation, nor should we have the least desire to do this. We should be perfectly satisfied with the revelation given to us, for all that the creature could receive, even with

the aid of the Holy Spirit, is given to us in the Holy Scriptures. Not to frankly enter into that which is revealed is to greatly hinder the growth of our souls, and to attempt to go beyond the Word is to wander into dangerous error. But God would have our souls enlightened and nourished by the Word of truth. He would have us grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Therefore, while we must be careful not to go beyond the limits of Scripture, we must just be as careful not to allow our natural timidity to rob us of that which is vital to the welfare of our souls. Let us search the Scriptures diligently, but let us search them prayerfully also, and in distrust of our natural minds in whatever form they may assert themselves.

I make bold to say however, that the soul who has not learned the excellencies of Christ as manifested in His lowly life, has never yet learned them. It is the humbled Christ that has won our hearts. The way in which He entered this world and the way in which He went out of it, shall never be forgotten by His redeemed people. Whatever else we may have learned, these are the great verities that have won our affections. And the brightest hope we have is to be with Him who ever had His delight with the sons of men, and who in infinite grace, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor ; in order that we through His poverty might become rich. May He be daily the study of our souls and the great light and joy of all our hearts.

## THE LOVE OF THE BRETHREN

*"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."* 1 John 3. 14.

THE love of the saints to one another is no less divine than is that of the Father and the Son. This love is one of the great distinguishing marks of the children of God. Of this family there are two characteristics which unfailingly declare their lineage, and these are *righteousness* and *love*. As *lawlessness* and *hatred* of the brethren mark the children of the devil, as do *righteousness* and *love* of the brethren mark the children of God. In 1 John 2. 29 we read, "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him"; and in chapter 3. 12 we read, "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." Then we have in chapter 4. 7, "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God."

The ability to take the place of children of God is only the portion of the saints of this dispensation. We have this place by the Father's call (1 John 3. 1), we have it as a right given to us by Christ (John 1. 12), and we have it in the witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8. 16). But "*born of God*" itself is not dispensational. It was true from the commencement of the activities of the grace of God in this fallen world, and for an example of one born of God the Apostle goes back to Abel; his works were righteous, and "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." If we find a man practising righteousness or loving the brethren we know that that man is born of God. He is not a mere child of Adam, nor is he of the devil, but of God. Every one brings forth after his kind, whether it be the devil, fallen man or the blessed God Himself.

It is of the utmost importance to see that these characteristics are the outcome of the divine nature, the nature of the children of God. They are not qualities which can be put on or imitated by the mere child of Adam. Righteousness here

is not what the world calls *honesty*, which is only measured by men's dealings with one another. This may be rightly enough called righteousness, but it is not that which is spoken of here. Abel's righteousness is seen in his taking his rightful place in the presence of God. In himself he is nothing but a guilty sinner, but this he most fully admits, and he approaches God in the way opened up to him in boundless grace. It is in a man's dealings with God more than in his dealings with men that his righteousness or lawlessness becomes apparent.

Nor is love mere natural affection, a thing found sometimes stronger than death amongst men; and not only amongst men, but even amongst the lower orders of creation. As originally formed, man was set in intelligent relationship with God, and in an unfallen state his affections would have happily flowed in the channels dug for them in the wisdom and goodness of his Creator; but as fallen they have burst all bounds, and at the direction of corrupt and lawless flesh, they wander where they will regardless of the consequences. This shows man to be at the level of the irresponsible beast of the field, if indeed not at a lower level.

The notion of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is not new, but lately it has been brought into more prominence than heretofore; and indeed it might truthfully be said that the great mass of professing Christians are fighting their battles under this banner. But such a notion has no place in the Word of God. No one is a child of God apart from the new birth. This is hinted at, perhaps I had better say figuratively declared, in the Old Testament; and the Lord seems to infer that Nicodemus should have known it. He says, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3. 3). And when the unbelieving mind of the Pharisee raises questions regarding this mysterious operation of the Spirit of God, Jesus says, "Art thou a teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Ezekiel had said, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36. 25, 26). It is to such words as these the Lord evidently refers when He says, "Except a man be born of

water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

In the past dispensation man was under probation, and while this was so it would not have been consistent to have plainly declared his hopelessly lost condition, which the reference to new birth does ; because if man is so hopelessly lost that he must be born again, when this verdict is given his trial must be concluded. Therefore, while it was always necessary from the fall, if man was to be in right relationship with God, while his trial was running its course it was only hinted at ; but now that the resources of God put forth to influence the flesh in right ways have been exhausted, the plain truth as to the incorrigible wickedness of the flesh is declared, and the necessity of new birth is frankly insisted upon.

This new birth is produced by the Word of God, which is incorruptible, living and abiding. On earth everything perishes but the Word of God. The Jew is grass, the Gentile is grass—all flesh is grass, and the glory of man the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower of it passes away. What, then, remains ? “ The Word of our God shall stand for ever ” (Isa. 40). This Word has been brought to us in the gospel (1 Peter 25), and by it the believer is born again. His life and nature are divine.

Therefore the one born of God does not practise sin but righteousness. Had he nothing but the divine nature he would be utterly incapable of sinning, for that nature cannot sin. But as long as he is in this world he has also the old nature of the flesh, and it can do nothing but sin, and in this nature he is liable to act, and will do so if he be not watchful. When we are glorified there will be no more need for the vigilance that is now necessary. We will then be like Christ, and free from the presence of the flesh, and failure will be a thing of the past.

But the One who is begotten of God loves Him that begat. We love the Father and the Son, and we love the brethren. It is natural for us to do so. That which the law, by all its threatenings, could not get from the mere child of Adam, God has gotten by His work of grace in our hearts. The law demanded love from man, but never got it. But God has got it by the revelation of His great love to us in the death

of His only begotten Son : “ We love Him because He first loved us.” It is not because we are compelled to do it by threatenings of wrath. This never produced love in any human heart. Terror it did produce, but not love. Love begets love where that love is appreciated ; and when the love of God, as it has been brought to light in the death of Jesus, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, we love Him.

It may be that we feel our love so feeble that we are almost ashamed to say anything about it at all. This may be all right, for when compared with the infinite love of God, feeble indeed it must ever appear. Still, we love Him, if we are born of Him ; and well He knows it, for He searches the heart and knows all that is there. And we also know it, however we may bewail its feebleness. Peter could appeal to the omniscience of the Lord at a time when his actions were sufficient to raise doubts as to the reality of his affection for Christ in the minds of his brethren. He says, “ Thou knowest all things ; Thou knowest that I love Thee ” (John 21. 17). It is well to have to do with One who knows the most secret thoughts of the heart. He knows us even better than we know ourselves, and this is a great comfort. He has not to wait until we make known to Him our inmost thoughts. He knows what is there, for every bit of good that is there is there by the working of His fathomless grace. And it is there even before we are aware of it ourselves. It is a great surprise to all of us when we first come to the consciousness of our readiness to stand in the face of the whole hostile world in confession of Christ. Those born of God may seem to the eyes of the world either too contemptible to be taken seriously, or, like a few noxious weeds, to be taken up and given to the flame ; and they, if they think of themselves at all, will only regard themselves as cumberers of the ground ; but the enjoyment of the favour of God gives them a sense of superiority above all the power and glory of the world.

The love of the children of God is self-sacrificing. We are told we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren ; that is to say, all the children of God should lay down their lives for one another. The One in whom that love has been expressed laid down his life for us ; therefore we should lay down our lives for one another. It is the love of God that

is in the hearts of His children, and that love came to light in the death of Christ ; and if God so loved us, we are told, we also should love one another. We would be most likely to say, we should love Him ; but we never find love to God demanded in Christianity. Under law God says, "Thou shalt love Me" ; and, "Ye are cursed if ye do not." But under grace God says, "I love you, believe it and live."

The test of that love being in us is our love to the children of God. We might say that we love God, but it is that which is of God in the world that tests us ; and if we love not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen ? (1 John 4. 20). We may go about looking for love from our brethren, and murmuring because we do not seem to get as much of it as we would desire, but this is a sad state to be in, and manifests a heart not in the enjoyment of the love of God. Love is the very life of the children of God, and is the spring and fountain of all their activities. It is the new commandment. It was the thing that was true in Jesus when He was upon earth, and is now true in His own in the power of the Spirit (1 John 2. 8).

In this we are to be imitators of God, and walk in love as Christ also has loved us, and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. As His children we are to come out in His moral characteristics, and become known to be the disciples of Jesus, as He says, "By this shall all men know that ye are disciples of Mine, if ye have love one to another" (John 13. 35). No teacher but Himself ever taught this, hence those who love one another are known in this world as His disciples.

How far above the plotting and working of the enemy God has shown Himself to be. Satan, no doubt, considered he had accomplished something that would act as an eternal vexation to the Creator, when he overthrew the creature in transgression, who was made in His image and likeness. But he little knew the wisdom and might of Him whose implacable foe he had become. That evil has been made the occasion of Satan's everlasting downfall, and of infinite and eternal glory to God. Through infinite grace fallen sinners have been brought to know the Creator in His nature, and to stand before Him in the relationship of sons. Earth has been lost, but heaven has been gained, and all the glory belongs

to God ; and blessed for ever be His name, we can say GOD IS LOVE. May we be kept in that love, and may we grow in the divine nature, and be better able to imitate Him whose name is LOVE. Nothing but love is of any value under the sun, but it must be divine love, the love of *God*, the love of the *Father*, the love of the *Son*, and the love of the *brethren*. Without this nature, which in us is the result of new birth, all else is worthless.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,  
*and have not love,*

I am become as sounding brass,  
Or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy,  
And understand all mysteries,  
And all knowledge ;

And though I have all faith,  
So that I could remove mountains, *and have not love,*  
I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,  
And though I give my body to be burned *and have not love,*  
It profiteth me nothing.

Love  
suffereth long,  
is kind,  
envieth not,  
vaunteth not itself,  
is not puffed up,  
doth not behave itself unseemly,  
seeketh not her own,  
is not easily provoked,  
thinketh no evil,  
rejoiceth not in iniquity,  
rejoiceth in the truth,  
beareth all things,  
believeth all things,  
hopeth all things,  
endureth all things,  
never faileth.

Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these is LOVE (1 Cor. 13).

## THE SON OF GOD AND THE SCRIPTURES

“*The second Man is the Lord from heaven.*” 2 Cor. 15. 4.

“*The Scripture cannot be broken.*” John 10. 35.

AS regards ourselves, who are by nature Gentiles, the whole fabric of Scripture authority rests upon the basis of the greatness of the person of Jesus. The Answer of my faith to the question: “What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?” must regulate my thoughts regarding this all-important subject. And as a matter of fact, I find that the way in which people do answer this question makes all the difference as to their ideas of inspiration. I never knew a man sound upon the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, who harboured the least doubt in his mind regarding the divinity of Jesus; neither have I ever known any one who looked upon Jesus as the Creator incarnate, and who relegated the Bible to a lower place than the Word of God. I am sure it will be found that these two convictions are inseparably connected, and that where any one of them is not welcome, the other will refuse to enter.

One who has recently apostatized from the faith of Christianity questions if we ever would have heard of the Old Testament had it not been for Jesus; and though it may be very difficult to say what might, or might not have been, had the light of the gospel of Christ never reached us, we certainly would not have had any real faith in it apart from the Son of God. We have received the Holy Scriptures solely through faith in Him. He has authenticated to us the writings of Moses and the Prophets; and the writers of the New Testament declare their epistles to be *the commandments of the Lord* (1 Cor. 14. 37); and that not only the *thoughts*, but the *words* in which those thoughts were conveyed to us, were words chosen by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2. 13).

If these statements of theirs, which lay claim to such authority, are falsehoods, then they are the most wicked

falsehoods ever told to men, for they are lies against the living God ; and as they concern the most important matters with which the human race has to do, they are the inventions of soul-murderers. These statements of the avowed followers and servants of Jesus are accompanied, on the one hand, with the promise of eternal and unspeakable blessedness for the believer ; and, on the other hand, the most terrible consequences of unbelief are announced as hanging over the head of the impenitent rebel ; and all these things are placed before the reader in language which is absolutely simple, natural, unstrained, and bearing no resemblance to that which rises from the frenzied imagination of crack-brained zealots. If what they affirm of their words and writings be not true, they were a crowd of wicked and bad men, and they can be believed in nothing. And yet we owe to those men all that we have ever heard of Jesus ; and my knowledge of men gives me the most perfect assurance that such a person as He of whom they testified could not be created in the mind of a child of Adam.

His story touches the most tender chords of the human heart, and His moral excellency so mightily appeals to the soul of the faithful disciple, that his most blissful moment is when he is at the feet of this adorable Person as a worshipper. So great is Jesus, so morally different from every other human being, so completely free from all the unworthy motives which govern others, so gracious, guileless, gentle, meek, lowly, compassionate, merciful, self-sacrificing, righteous, holy, harmless, good, so completely unique in all His characteristics, and so unlike man, as we know man, in every solitary way, that some have questioned if such a person ever really existed.

But if His disciples invented Him, they must have travelled for their conception outside the sphere in which the thoughts of men revolve ; and if they ever took such a journey, we have to ask ourselves what power it was which carried them into those hitherto unexplored and unknown regions of purest thought, and imprinted upon their imaginations the moral glories with which they decked Him of whom they spoke as the SON OF GOD.

If Jesus were an invention of those who called themselves His disciples, then His disciples were not ordinary men, for

they have certainly gone beyond all that can be understood by men of the world. Leaving this world, after having revealed the Father, Jesus has to say, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee" (John 17. 25); and again, "They have not known the Father, nor Me" (16. 3). The *Father* cannot be known by a mere child of Adam, nor can the second Man be known by the first. There is no analogy between the *Father* and the *world*, nor between the *man made of dust* and the *Man out of heaven*; both Father and Son are beyond the ken of the men of this world.

The gods of the heathen are by the makers of them indued with passions such as men have; they are morally like men, but with greater strength. And if I take the heroes of the novelist, pride and self-reliance are the prominent features, for these are the characteristics in which men delight, but not one of them is like Jesus. There is nothing in common between men, as I know man, and the Son of God. It is only in the Bible I can find Him. How is this? If those fishermen of Galilee invented Him, how is it that no one has been able to invent another who can be compared with Him? and how is it that, now that He has been invented, He is so little understood that the greatest minds on earth, even when well-intentioned, cannot reproduce Him? Their frequent attempts have been at best but miserable caricatures. Apart from the holy anointing, the indwelling Spirit of God, no one can know the Father and the Son.

Read the best written life of Jesus ever produced by the uninspired pen of an unregenerate man, and then turn to the four Gospels, and see if it is not an emergence out of thick darkness and the domain of death, into marvellous light, and the radiant sphere of everlasting life. As you read the nine beatitudes which introduce the sermon on the mount, you are made to feel as though a door were opened in heaven, and the whole atmosphere about you at once becomes redolent with the perfume wafted from the paradise of God; then pass on until you hear the bells of heaven pealing forth the welcome of a returning scape-gallows, who in broken utterances sobs out his repentance into the gracious ear of a Saviour-God, and you must feel that all this is outside the sphere in which the thoughts of men revolve, and that you are made to listen to the pulsations of immortal love.

When you have finished with this, if you ever can finish with it, turn to John 13 and behold the grace of that lowly Son of God, doing the most menial service for His disciples which it is possible for one man to perform for another ; and listen to those counsels of grace, wisdom, and holy love which fall from His blessed lips upon the ears of His humble followers ; and follow Him until He is done speaking to them, and turns His eyes up to heaven, and pours into the ears of His Father His desires for them, and for all who will believe on Him through their word ; and hear Him demand on their behalf, as One who has a righteous claim upon the wealth of power, and grace, and love, which in the Father dwell. Then follow Him to the judgment hall of the Roman governor, and hearken to the leaders of His earthly people howling for His heart's blood ; and follow the crowd to dark Golgotha, and behold Him who made the worlds led as a lamb to the slaughter, nailed to a gibbet as a malefactor, and that between two robbers ; and watch to the close, until He is taken down dead, while darkness enfolds the land, and under your feet you feel the earth reel beneath the weight of the corpse of Him who was its Creator, while the rocks are rent and the graves are opened ; and if, after witnessing these things, you can flatter yourself that Jesus was a man like other men, or that such a Person either was, or could be, the invention of His disciples, you have a way of judging and arriving at conclusions unknown to me. From the benighted heart of the pagan centurion who had charge of the crucifixion was wrung the confession : " Truly this Man was the Son of God " (Mark 15. 39). May the reader's heart be at least as impressionable.

This is the glorious Person who has authenticated to us the Old Testament, of which He is the Subject, as He is also of the New. As to Israel, the law was given to them by Moses, and accompanied by such visible manifestations of majesty and terror on the part of God, that its divine origin could not by them be called in question ; and as to the prophets, their word was proven to be of God by the sanctity of their lives, by its harmony with that which was given through Moses, and by the signs and wonders with which God was sometimes pleased to send it forth ; though generally speaking, the prophets who after Moses were used

of God to build up the canon of Scripture, do not seem to have been miracle workers. Men like Elijah and Elisha, who were characterized by miraculous manifestations, have not been used to put anything on record, though their words and works and manner of life have been recorded by others. The Jewish Scriptures were well authenticated to the people.

But we Gentiles were outside all those special dealings of God. We were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2. 12). We have come into this rich inheritance through having to do with God revealed in Jesus. He came to His earthly people in fulfilment of the promises made to the fathers, but they rejected Him, and slew Him with the sword of the Romans. God raised Him from the dead, and in answer to the prayer of Jesus from the cross on their behalf (Luke 23. 34), offered to send Him back to them if they would repent (Acts 3. 20). The stoning of Stephen was their answer to this, and closed the door of hope to the nation; therefore devout men made great lamentation over his death, for in his grave every hope of Israel after the flesh was buried.

Then the Gentiles come up for blessing before God, and the persecutor of the Church is converted and sent to them. The perfect revelation of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God in whom the Jews boasted, came in the Word made flesh, so that believers from among the Gentiles find themselves linked up in the worship of the true God with Abel and all the faithful from his day until the coming of Christ. In this way we have a title to the Old Testament as well as to the New, and to us the two volumes become one Book, both equally inspired of God; the authority of the old established for us in the submission of Christ to every jot and tittle, though a better thing has been brought in by Him, for the Old was but the *demand*, whereas the New is the supply.

The subtle way in which men who call themselves Christians put before the public theories which are in direct antagonism to the plain statements of Scripture, is a plain proof of their determination to undermine in the thoughts of men whatever bit of confidence they may still possess in the Bible as the Word of God. If they would tell us plainly that they

had abandoned Christianity as a useless encumbrance in the pursuit of knowledge, one might be grieved and sorry for them; but they would not be sailing under a false flag, neither would their ways fill one with the same measure of disgust and loathing.

I may be told that these men think there is much in the Scriptures that is really valuable, and therefore they do not feel justified in casting them aside as altogether useless. But if the Bible be not the word of God, and if Jesus be not a divine Person, and if we have no revelation from God, and if the apostles were a set of deceivers and knaves—. But here I am interrupted at once, and reminded that the writers are considered to have been good and true men. Are they? *Did* Jehovah say to the prophets the things which they spoke to men as His word? Was the burning bush a fact in the life of Moses? *Jesus* said it was, but was it? Is the Exodic account of the deliverance of Israel from the power of Pharaoh true? What about the passage through the sea? the desert? the manna? the water out of the rock? Whose Son was He who said: "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness"? (John 6. 49).

Did Jesus work the wonders which are recorded of Him? They are recorded by the Evangelist, that we should believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through His name (John 20. 31). Is the greatness of this Person built upon a foundation of falsehood, and is it upon a raft of lies against the living God we are to float into the harbour of eternal life? Did these *good and true* men who wrote the Gospels and Epistles concoct the baseless wonders with which they accredit Jesus, and leave them on record encased in a framework of piety as hypocritical as false? This is not what I should expect from men who are good and true.

And yet they do commend themselves to the conscience of all men as both good and true. No one can question that they believed the things which they have put on record. And how could they have been deceived? They were not men easily convinced, and the deeds were not done in a corner. They were neither credulous nor easily imposed upon, and though their persistent unbelief was failure, and had to come under the rebuke of their Lord, it gives additional

weight to their testimony, which they gladly bore for His honour and for our eternal blessing, when the last cloud of unbelief at length yielded to the gracious influence of that eternal day, which broke upon their souls as they stood beside the empty grave of Him who could not be holden of death.

## THE MAN OF GOD'S COUNSELS

“ *We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour.*” Hebrews 2. 9.

**I**T is impossible to connect the idea of *chance* with any of the ways of God. Not even a sane man will commence a work without having in his mind the image of that upon which the labour of his hands is to be employed. A man may not be able to perfect his idea ; he may find, as his work proceeds, that it will not answer the purpose for which he intended it, and therefore he may have with reluctance to abandon it ; he may even learn something in the midst of his toil which may cause him to make considerable alterations, so that the thing when finished is very different from his original conception. This comes from being unable to grasp at the outset every detail connected with the subject in hand, and everything that will be necessary to do, in order to arrive at perfection.

But this can never be the case as regards the activities of God. It is impossible to think of Him as limited in wisdom, skill, or understanding. He must be infinite in every one of His attributes. The man who thinks otherwise, if any such man exist, can have no true thought of the Creator in his soul. Man is only a finite being, and, as I have suggested, while he proceeds with his work, new ideas strike his mind, for though perfection be his ideal, he can never arrive at it. He does not know the power and value of the elements with which he has to work, neither does he perfectly know their relation to one another, nor always the result of certain combinations ; hence he is ever astonishing himself with his new discoveries, and bringing out new inventions.

Not so God. The Creator can learn nothing from His creation. The universe is the conception of His infinite mind, and it is impossible that He could receive any instruction from it. “ The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth ; by understanding hath He established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew ” (Prov. 3. 19-20). “ Who hath known the

mind of the Lord ? or who hath been His counsellor ? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ? for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever ” (Rom. 11. 34-36). He has not, as some suppose, been from the outset doing the best He can, contending with the inroads of evil, meeting the adverse power to the best of His ability, and ever, through the growth of intelligence, improving upon the past. “ Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself ” (Ps. 50. 21), is the charge He makes against the wicked, and it is a charge of which all are guilty who have not learned Him in Jesus.

It is impossible for me to imagine the Creator forming a universe like the one of which I form a part, without having distinctly before Him its whole history, and the ultimate result of all His activities in connection with it. His plans must all have been formed before He began His work ; and when we come to Scripture this is just what we find. The Book of those counsels is alluded to more than once (Ex. 32. 32 ; Ps. 40. 7 ; Ps. 139. 16). We have counsel, promise, choice, and purpose referred to again and again ; and the central object in all those counsels is the Man who was predestined to give effect to them. As Adam was the man set upon the footing of responsibility, and who, failing to fulfil that responsibility, fell under the power of evil ; so Christ is the Man of divine counsel, who upholds everything by the power of God. It was ever the thought of God to set up all things in His own power. Nothing can stand but that which is upheld by the might of God.

If this be kept in mind, it is easy to see that the Man of God's counsels must be a divine person. No creature is capable of maintaining himself in blessing on the principle of obedience, and none but a divine person could carry out the thoughts of the Godhead. Christ is not a development of the race of Adam. He is not the best man of that race that ever lived, or the most perfect that ever walked the earth. He is not of the old order at all. He is the “ last Adam,” and the last Adam is not a mere improvement upon the first. The first man was of the earth, made of dust : “ the second Man is out of heaven.” The first Adam was made a living soul ; the last Adam is a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15).

The first had his origin from earth ; the second had His origin from heaven. The first man was made to bask in the goodness of God ; the second had His place in the bosom of the Father. There are mysteries in connection with the Son which no creature can fathom : “ No man knoweth the Son but the Father ” ; but that, on the divine side, He was equal with the Father is fully revealed in Scripture ; and that, on our side, He was Man is just as strongly insisted. He is spoken of as “ The Man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts ” (Zech. 13. 7).

A recent writer, who for a little while made a great stir in the religious world, tells us that the truth about the person of Jesus is to be the great question for religion in the near future. The truth is, it has been the great question since the hour in which He took His place in public testimony for God. The Baptist bore testimony to Him as the Son of God, the thong of whose sandals he was unworthy to loose (John 1). The Father also bore witness to Him, opening heaven upon Him, and saluting Him as His beloved Son, in whom He had found His delight (Luke 3. 22). The Old Testament bears witness to the greatness of this wondrous Personage. Isaiah speaks of Him as the One whose rebuke dries up the sea, and makes the rivers a wilderness ; who clothes the heavens with blackness, and makes sack-cloth their covering ; and yet One to whom Jehovah had given the tongue of a disciple, whose ear He had opened to hear as the instructed, who gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and who hid not His face from shame and spitting (Isa. 50). He is the object of the worship of angels (Ps. 97, *cf.* Heb. 1. 6), saluted as God upon the throne (Ps. 45), addressed as the everlasting Creator of the heavens and the earth (Ps. 102), and yet called up from the depths of death to sit upon the right hand of God, until His enemies should be made a footstool for His feet (Ps. 110).

Now it is true that “ No man knoweth the Son but the Father ” (Matt. 11), yet there is a way in which He is to be known by His people. It is life eternal to know the Father, and Jesus Christ His sent One (John 17. 3), and believers are all to come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 4. 13). There are mysteries about

this Person that no creature mind can grasp, and it is exceedingly dangerous to allow the human reason a loose rein in the contemplation of such a sacred and profound subject. When we think of the "*fulness of the Godhead*" inhabiting a human body, a divine Person for thirty-three years confining Himself to the limits of a man, yet never less than the omnipotent Creator, we become convinced that in such a contemplation the imagination of man can have no place, and that to move a single step one way or another without divine support would be to court disaster, land us in the depths of error, and expose us to the attack of the enemy of our souls. We are only safe when we keep close to the revelation we have of Him in the Scriptures of truth. That He was, and remains, a Man, these Scriptures affirm; that He is the Creator is also affirmed, and that He was always fully conscious of who He was is also maintained.

The truth about His person may be the question in the near future, but as I have already said, it is as old as His advent into the world. Jesus put the question to the Scribes: "What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?" and discovered them to be without any true light on the point. They had no higher idea concerning Him than that He was the Son of David; but the fact that David had in Spirit called Him Lord was more than they could understand. This was the question of the day for the Jews, and it was because He bore witness to this truth that they condemned Him to the death of the cross (John 19. 7). It is also the question of to-day, and it will be the question until the day of His manifestation in glory. Believers can say: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This (Person) is the TRUE GOD, and ETERNAL LIFE (I John 5. 20).

During the time in which the first man was under probation, and while, by every trial to which he was subjected, it was being clearly demonstrated that he was utterly untrustworthy and unprofitable, the positions of trust in which he was placed—which tested his ability to hold the position for God—shadowed forth the offices which would be taken up by the second Man, and fulfilled to the glory and praise of God. Hence for two reasons the trial was never repeated. When

God committed to man a position of trust and he failed to hold it faithfully, he had no second opportunity. In the first place, the trial was perfect, and the circumstances under which the trial took place were always most favourable to the probationer. To have given a second occasion would have been to admit that something had been overlooked in the first, which should have been kept in mind, and that because of this, the evidence was not quite conclusive. In the second place, in all those prominent men in the past dispensation, to whom positions of trust were committed, Christ was being shadowed forth; and this being so, no more was required than that the picture should be drawn, and the position indicated; when this was done its purpose was served, and it disappeared.

This explains things which often seem inexplicable to the superficial reader of Scripture. Men are sometimes installed in a position of dignity and trust with as much ceremony as though they were to abide in it for ever, and in connection with this position an order of things is established with as much care, exactitude, grandeur, and glory as though it were never to be shaken, and the next thing we are called to witness is the complete collapse and ruin of everything, and the announcement of something fresh seals its complete and final rejection. It was but a picture drawn by the Spirit of God to illustrate a position which the Man of God's counsels would one day take up and maintain to the honour of God. Hence Christ is the One set forth in such men as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, and many others, for in every one of these men was set forth some position, office, or headship, which would be filled by the One whom God had in reserve, and who was to come to light when the worthlessness of the first man would be perfectly demonstrated. In the dispensation of the fulness of times (Eph. 1) all these men will be seen to have been figures, as Adam was, of Him that was to come (Rom. 5. 14). He will hold for God everything in which these men failed.

Fallen Adam was head of the old fallen race; Christ is head of the new righteous race. Adam brought in sin and death; Christ brought in righteousness and life—Adam through his disobedience; Christ through His obedience.

Adam's act of disobedience had its bearing toward all men in the way of condemnation; so the obedience of Christ, proved in His death, has its bearing toward all in the sense of justification. Sin and death came in by Adam, and have their bearing toward all men; and righteousness and life came in by Christ and have reference to all. If all are lost in Adam, God has raised up a righteous Head for men, so that all may be saved in Him. He gave Himself a ransom for all, for God would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2). Therefore the Gospel is preached world-wide that men may turn to God through Christ and find salvation. Christ is to be everything to every man—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. 1. 30).

But then it should be understood by all, that if Christ was to take up the position of life-giving Head toward all men, the question of righteousness cannot be ignored. There was the question of sin between man and God, and who could touch it? Christ will not ignore all the rights which God has over His creature. Even between men satisfaction must be offered to the offended party before right relations can be established. It may be the offended party is magnanimous enough to forgive everything, but relations thus established are never of the happiest or most lasting nature. There must be a basis of righteousness if confidence and quietude of soul are to exist undisturbed for ever. If this be so with regard to the relations of men with one another, how much more is it true with respect to our relations with God, seeing that the slightest friction between us and Him would make every thought of God a terror to us, and our very existence one of utter misery.

In the Book of divine counsel, to which I have already referred, we get brought to light, not only the One who was to accomplish those counsels, but also the fact that a *body* was to be prepared for Him. The sacrifices and offerings belonging to the law were valueless to take away sins, therefore if the will of God is to be done a sacrifice of infinite value was necessary. This was furnished by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10. 10). In the Psalm (40) which speaks of this Book, and of the Accomplisher of the will of God, we have this wondrous Person crying out of

the horrible pit and the miry clay, and heard in resurrection, when His feet are placed upon a rock, and a new song put into His mouth. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives us to understand that one reason for His taking a body was, that through death He might destroy the Devil, who had the might of death, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2. 14, 15). Another reason given was, that we might be set apart to God in the value of that offering (chap. 10. 10), our consciences perfected and our hearts won, so that we might be at home in the presence of God. His death is the basis of all blessing, and is the foundation upon which will be built up the whole fabric of the new heavens and the new earth, a universe secure from the invasion of evil.

## THE SON OF MAN

*“What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man, that Thou visitest Him”* Hebrews 2. 6.

**T**O prove that a God of infinite goodness is not the author of this world in its present state requires no elaborate argumentation, nor does it make any demand upon the least ratiocinative ability. It is everywhere, and in everything, abundantly manifest that a beneficent Creator would not voluntarily give His creatures, whom He has endowed with intelligence, affections, sensitivity, accountability to Himself and to his fellows, into the darkness, the distress, the sufferings, the sorrows, the woes that are the portion of the whole human family.

There must be some terrible reason for the state of things we find in this world—the pestilences, the horrors of war, the hatred, the murders, the corruption, the fear of death, the silence of heaven, the shrinking from the grave to which all are hastening, and the dread of something after—these evils cry out against our attributing to a benevolent Creator the invention or origination of such a woeful state of things.

Yet even on this earth we have indications, many and varied, that it is a beneficent Creator who watches over the history of the earth's generations and teeming multitudes. The sunshine warms and comforts our bodies, and between its kindly influence and the rain from heaven the hearts of men are filled with food and gladness. The seasons come round in their appointed courses, and fulfil their several functions of mercy. Under the night-cloud man lies down to rest, and his weary frame becomes thus refreshed and ready to answer to the demands of another day. And all this bears testimony to the goodness of God, and is given that men might feel after Him, and find Him; for He is not far from any one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17).

Thank God for His Word, the revelation He has given us concerning Himself. Where would we be without it? Would

we be able without it to pick out of all His ways with us the witnesses of His faithful and generous care for our welfare, and, in spite of the innumerable evils that afflict our souls, to encourage our hearts in such a sense of His desire for our welfare that we would put out the hand of faith in the midst of the surrounding gloom, that it might lay hold upon His ?

No : we require this precious revelation of Himself which He in His infinite love has given us, that by it we may be made wise to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3. 15-17). And how beautifully this revelation sets before us the great thoughts of God, and how all His purposes, even before the beginning of His works, centred upon *man*. Man whom we supposed He had neglected, and to whose sorrows He was indifferent, is supreme in the eternal thoughts of God.

But for almost six thousand years men have groaned under the oppression of the enemy, and as far as any public display of power is concerned it is all in the hands of the enemy, and deliverance seems as far off as it was at the beginning. Man is still under death, still dominated by sin and the devil. Through what mighty man is the deliverance of the oppressed to be effected ?

We are, blessed be God, left in no doubt as to this. Almost the first words that fell upon the ears of our fallen parents from which they could derive any hope were those that were spoken to the serpent that deceived them : the Seed of the woman was to bruise his head. Adam could effect nothing. His own deliverance, as well as the deliverance of any of his posterity, depended upon the Seed of the woman. Not Adam, but *the Son of Man* is the One whom *God has made strong for Himself* (Ps. 80. 17).

He is to be supreme in the universe of God. Everything is to be put under His feet. The only exception to this is God Himself. He is to be pre-eminent in every department of the universe, for this is the decree of God from all eternity. Around Him all the thoughts of God centre. He is the object of all prophetic scripture. The prominent men in past dispensations were only figures of Him, shadows of the Man that filled the vision of God.

When the Psalmist looked up into the heavens and

contemplated the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars which He had ordained, the littleness of man came before him, and he wondered that God took such account of him. But if the littleness of man filled the vision of the Psalmist so that he was forced to exclaim: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" it was Christ that filled the vision of the Spirit: not Adam, but the Seed of the woman, the Son of Man, the object of divine counsel, and He saw everything put under His feet; and though this is not manifestly so yet, the same Spirit fixes our attention upon the Man in heaven, who is crowned with glory and honour, having tasted death for everything. If we see not yet all things put under man, we see the Man under whom everything is to be put, and we see Him in the highest place in glory.

We find a most interesting reference to Him in the eighth of Proverbs. There, speaking as Wisdom, He says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old . . . : then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."

Now when we come to the truth regarding the greatness of the Son of Man we find that He is the Creator Himself: all things were made by Him (John 1; Col. 1; Heb. 1). And yet He is viewed here as "*by*" the Creator, when He made the heavens and the earth. The reason of this, I have no doubt, is that He is there viewed solely as the Man of God's counsels, and that He was the object or purpose with regard to creation; and everything was made with regard to its being taken over by this Son of Man who gave direction to the whole character of the work. "As one brought up with Him" is translated in the Revised Version: "A master workman" (v. 30), and it has also been translated: "His artificer." The meaning, I am persuaded, is that everything was created in view of Christ taking it under control as Man on the ground of redemption.

For we must keep in mind, as I have said, that He is Creator, and that He made the universe and all that is in it *for Himself* (Col. 1. 16); and when it became necessary for the glory of God, and for the fulfilment of divine counsel, that He should take the place of Leader of the salvation of

the many sons that God was bringing to glory, and when it was necessary for the exigencies of that glory that redemption should be wrought, He tasted death for everything: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Therefore the One who created everything has tasted death for everything, that everything might be placed on the ground of redemption to the glory of God.

His sufferings were first of all for the glory of God; that in the creation where God was so dishonoured through sin, sin might receive its judgment, and that when and where sin would receive its judgment God would be glorified, not only in every one of His attributes but in His very nature. In the second place, He suffered the suffering of death in order that the devil, who had the power of death, might be annulled, and that deliverance might be effected for those who, on account of the fear of death, had been all their lives subject to bondage. In the third place, He suffered to make propitiation for the sins of those who were to be His companions in the day of His glory. And in the fourth place, He suffered, being tempted, in order to be able to sympathize with our weaknesses, and to be able to succour us when we are tempted (see Hebrews 2.)

In the Old Testament, and in the New, by all the writers except Paul, the use of the title "*The Christ*" connects, as far as my memory serves me, the Saviour with the people of Israel. I know that the woman of Samaria connected the Christ with the *world*; but though this be true, the Lord had already told her that "salvation was of the Jews," and the salvation of the world really depends upon Jehovah's resumption of relationship with His earthly people. To this great truth the prophets bear abundant testimony, and so also does the Apostle of the Gentiles in Romans 9. 12-15.

But under the title of "*Son of Man*" He is not viewed in connection with any special family upon earth. It is a title that speaks of universal headship and blessing. At the same time we must keep in mind that the application of this title to the Saviour and the order of things that are connected with it do not set aside, disarrange, or alter the conditions of blessing that are brought before us under the title of the

Christ. It is simply that the title Son of Man extends the field of vision to the utmost limits of the universe, including all that is brought before us in the titles "*Son of Abraham*," "*Son of David*," "*King of Israel*," "*The Christ*," or any other.

In the Gospels, rejected by the Jews, He will not allow Himself to be called the Christ, but tells His disciples that the *Son of Man* must suffer many things, and be rejected by the priests and elders of the people; and be delivered to the Gentiles, who would expose Him to every indignity, and in the end put Him to death. To Nicodemus He testifies that— "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the SON OF MAN be lifted up," not for the sake of Israel only, but that "WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH ON HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life." The title *Son of Man* carries with it universal power and blessing.

But not only must the Son of Man come under the suffering of death, but He it is who breaks the power of death, for since by *man* came death, by *Man* came also the resurrection of those that are dead (1 Cor. 15. 21). If man in the person of Adam brought in death, the Son of Man has broken its power and brought about resurrection in the power of God.

But the first to be raised is Himself: He is Firstborn from the dead (Col. 1. 18), and God has set Him far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and given Him to be head over all things to the church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1. 20-23).

And all that are His who have passed away from earth shall be raised in His likeness, for He is the pattern of the redeemed family. He will raise His sleeping saints in glory, and change the living along with them into His own image: for we shall bear the image of the heavenly Man.

And because He is Son of Man all judgment is committed to Him; and the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5). He has authority everywhere. And He has a right to this authoritative position in the universe: first, because

He created it ; second, because He redeemed it ; third, because for the glory of God He was humiliated in the sight of it.

What a multitude of varied glories cluster around this title of Son of Man—the Man of divine counsel, the Architect of all creation, the Creator Himself, the Seed of the woman, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, the Man whom Jehovah has made strong for Himself, the Destroyer of the power of death, the Resurrection and the Life, the Bread that came down from heaven and which gives life to the world, the One who shall bruise the head of the devil, the Judge of living and dead, Lord of angels, Lord of living, Lord of dead, Lord of all, the One under whose headship everything in the universe shall be gathered together—yet obedient to death, and that the death of the cross ; made sin, a curse, the song of the drunkard, a worm and no man ; mocked, derided, buffeted, abused ; His face marred more than any other man's, His form more than the sons of men ; groaning, sighing, weeping in a world of sin and rebellion against God ; despised for His grace, hated for His love, martyred for the truth ; He drank the vinegar and gall of human ingratitude, and the bitter chalice of divine judgment against sin ; rejected by the Jews, crucified by the Romans, betrayed by a friend, denied by a disciple, abandoned by His followers, forsaken by God. Whose sorrow ever equalled the sorrow of this Son of Man ?

But shall not the glory be equal to the sorrow ? Yea, God hath highly exalted Him, and hath given Him a name that is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of heavenly, earthly, and infernal things, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father (Phil. 2. 9-11). Every one must honour the Son as the Father is honoured (John 5. 23). Well may we prostrate ourselves in His presence and rejoice as we confess Him.

## IN CHRIST

*“There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”* Romans 8. 1.

**T**HIS is the grand and glorious conclusion arrived at by the Holy Spirit, after having traced, for the benefit of the Roman saints, the manner and result of the intervention of God on behalf of His poor creature, who in his natural and responsible condition lay helpless and undone under sin's cruel slavery, and subject to the infliction of eternal wrath.

In Adam there was nothing but death and condemnation for the sinner. The head was fallen, and all the race was of necessity also fallen. Far off from God, ungodly, transgressors, rebels, enemies, children of wrath, are some of the terms employed in the Word of Truth to set before us the terrible nature of our natural condition as in the first and fallen Adam. In the abominable corruption of the flesh we wallowed, with no confidence in God, suspicious of all His gracious advances on our behalf, preferring darkness to light, hatred to love, curse to blessing, war to peace, earth to heaven, the creature to the Creator, even the oppression of the devil to the sway of infinite and eternal love. We were at a distance from God, and at that distance we were determined at all costs to keep ourselves. We would not seek Him, and should He come out as the seeker after us, every corner of the universe would be ransacked for a hiding-place. If we looked backward dark was the history of the world, dark and deceitful our own personal history, darkness lay upon everything around us, and before us loomed the blackness of darkness for ever. Without God we were miserable, and the thought of God made us ten times more miserable. Our money was given for that which was not bread, and our labour for that which did not satisfy. We snatched occasionally a momentary pleasure from the indulgence of our carnal appetites, but our seasons of depression were terrific, and the thought of having to meet God and to render

account to Him was intolerable. As hell and destruction are never satisfied, and the grave and the barren womb never say, Enough; so was the bottomless pit of our corrupt nature ever demanding fresh novelties supplied from the hell-invented markets of a godless world, and so were we finding that the whole universe would be of itself insufficient to fill one human heart.

What could it be for a soul away from God but unhappiness? No creature is sufficient for himself, nor indeed is the creation itself sufficient for the creature set by God in intelligent relationship with Himself. God alone can suffice for the heart of man; and woe, unutterable woe, must be the portion of those who, having said to God, "Depart from us," shall be compelled to hear Him in the day of judgment say to them, "*Depart from Me, ye cursed.*" The souls that will not have Him in time need not expect Him to have them in eternity.

But for the soul in Christ there is *no* condemnation. The condemnation has been borne by Him in whom I am placed before God. The sins, the sin, the judgment, the death, and the slavery to sin—all are gone, and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." New relationships, new hopes, new life, new objects, and new power have come to pass in and through Him who is my righteousness, my life, and my salvation before the face of God.

In Him I am *of God* (1 Cor. 1. 30). I derive my new moral, spiritual existence from God: I am born of Him. Nothing of Adam enters into that which is in Christ. They are two different orders of men. One made of dust, the other out of heaven. The cross is the end of my connection with the former—"I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2. 20). There I have been brought to an end judicially. I could not have been *mended*, therefore have I been *ended*. Apart from law I was lawless, under law a transgressor, visited by God in grace in the person of His Son I was a God-hater, ungodly, a rebel sinner, an enemy of God. Such was the flesh. Such it is, for it is incorrigible. Such was I. Such is the flesh still in me. But I am not in it, thank God. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8. 9). I am of Christ's order.

“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” and not “the law of sin in my members,” is now the principle and power which regulates my conduct on my way to glory. “What the law could not do” God has done; not by mending the old—that could not be done—but by ending for me the whole condition of flesh, and giving me the Holy Spirit to rule, regulate, guide, and empower the inward man, so that I might walk after the Spirit and fulfil the righteous requirement of the law, and thus “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.”

In Christ is *new creation* (2 Cor. 5. 17). There “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”; new nature, new life, new relationships, new affections. And all these things are *of God*. The man in Christ is of God, and everything connected with him. In Adam is old creation: old, fallen, sinful, defiled, dead, and lost. In Christ is new, and “as He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4. 17).

“Of such an one will I glory” (2 Cor. 12. 5). It is well to know that to them that are in Him there is no condemnation; but that does not exhaust all that there is in Christ. We learn this to begin with; but we have in Him an inexhaustible wealth of blessing that will never be all learned while we are upon earth. Who could fathom the bliss of being “holy and without blame before Him in love?” or fully estimate the dignity and delight of being before the Father’s face, as sons along with, and in the likeness of, His Son? We read these words in our Bibles, and we believe them too, but we may well ask ourselves what power they possess over our souls.

Paul boasted of the man “*in Christ*.” He tells the Philippians that if any one thought he had whereof to boast in the flesh, he himself had more. And when he had for a moment decorated himself with these virtues, that the Philippians might get a look at what he was in the flesh, he tears them off, and in utter disgust throws them upon the midden of corrupt fallen humanity, counting them dung that he might have Christ for his gain and be found “*in Him*.” When arraigned as a prisoner before King Agrippa, in the presence of Festus, the chiliarchs and great men of the city, the sense of the dignity of his place in Christ does not for a single instance fade from his heart and mind. Confronted

with all the pride and pomp of royalty, the awe of authority, the glitter, glamour, and fascination of a gaudy, voluptuous court, and with a charge of inciting the populace to riot hanging over his head, he answered the haughty monarch, who, scoffing at his attempt to get at his seared and benumbed conscience, breaks forth into that expression which many have taken to be the language of a soul on the point of surrender to Christ, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," in those words which so forcibly set before us the way in which his soul entered into the infinite wealth of blessing that was his in Christ: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26. 29).

It has often been remarked that he does not say, "Such as I shall be when glorified," but "Such as I am." Dragged out of the temple by the multitude, who sought to murder him, rescued by the military, bound with two chains, almost torn to pieces by Pharisees and Sadducees, once more forcibly taken out of their violent hands by the soldiers, brought before Felix as a "mover of sedition" and "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes," and thrown again into prison, where he lay for two years. To be brought in such a state as all this must have reduced him to, into the presence of such magnificence and dazzling splendour as shone that day in the court of King Agrippa, one might have thought his apparently wretched and miserable condition would have so pressed itself upon his spirit that all the enthusiasm produced in him by his new-found faith would have died in his soul. But no. The happiness that was his in Christ, the dignity of his heavenly calling, the favour of God, the knowledge of the Father and the Son, all that God was to him, all that Christ was, the love of God declared in death, the joy of bearing in a small measure the reproach of Christ, of suffering shame, blows, and imprisonments for His name, the privilege of confessing Him before these haughty rulers, as well as before the meanest of the creatures of God—these sweet and glorious considerations made good to his soul in the power of the divine Spirit exalted him and maintained him upon an elevation as far above the garish circle that surrounded Agrippa as heaven is above earth.

He pitied them. And indeed they were to be pitied. Their rank, their glory, their greatness, the honour paid to them by their inferiors—what availed it all with death at their elbow, and a hopeless eternity looming in front of them? They were now having their “good things” (Luke 16), and Paul his “evil things,” but Paul’s evil things were infinitely better than their good things. His evil things were the reproach of Christ, and that was greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Miserable, from a human standpoint, was his lot. His property, his reputation, his distinction in the flesh, his scholastic training, his easy circumstances, his liberty—all were gone, and his life was in peril. What more is needful to be added to make the picture of utter desolation complete? And yet his soul’s desire for king and courtier was, that they might come to be as he at that moment was. Marvellous man! How deeply he had entered into the blessedness of the man in Christ.

Another thing I would notice in connection with this subject before bringing this paper to a close. We have the believer in Christ in Romans 8. 1, and the love of God in Christ in the last verse of the same chapter. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, neither is there any separation from the love of God, for that love is there also. In unfathomable grace God has brought us to Himself in Christ, and set us before His face in all the value of that work wrought by Christ, and in all the acceptability of His person. But it is in Christ that the love of God has had its full and blessed expression, and it is in Him also it has found its eternal resting-place.

## THE HEATHEN

*"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right."* Genesis 18. 25.

THE question of the heathen, who have never been favoured with the message of the grace of God, will naturally arise in the mind of the reader. That they will never have to give account to God for the way in which they have treated a gospel which they have never heard goes without saying. It is a principle of Scripture that where little has been given, little shall be required; but to whom much has been given, from him much shall be demanded (Luke 12. 48). The heathen can only have to give account for the way in which they have treated whatever light they may have had given them of God. The difficulty which arises in the minds of men in connection with their accountability to God has its origin in the fact, that in the heart of each lurks the latent desire to at all costs justify himself. It is natural to him as a sinner, and is a great proof of his fallen condition.

Surely the Creator has a right to do as He pleases in and with His own creation. If man has not answered the purpose for which he was created, God must please Himself as to how He shall deal with him. He may condemn him without giving him any opportunity of salvation, as He has done with fallen angels; or He may act toward him in the way of grace, as He does to men generally; or He may save him by His sovereign mercy, as He does the elect; and who can call His ways in question? He made man, to begin with, and His rights over him are supreme. He can kill and make alive, and He does so without consulting His creature. The whole universe is completely in His power, and it must be so, for it is the work of His hands. The fallen sinner may rebel against His decrees, and attempt to grasp the authority which can be His only, but whether as an object of mercy or of wrath he must learn that the fear of the Lord is the thing for him to cultivate, for this is true wisdom.

It is important to get right ideas of God. I do not mean only in His grace, which must be learned in the gospel, but

as a Creator. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest Thou? or Thy work, He hath no hands?" (Isa. 45. 9). I have not yet come to consider what God makes, or what He does with what He makes; I am only seeking to show, that if you allow the idea of a Creator at all (and a man must be mad who does not), you must allow that He has a right to do just as He pleases; to make what He pleases, and to do that which He pleases with the thing that He has made. No one ever yet gave God this His rightful place but Christ, who, having taken the place of man, maintained that place consistently, to the glory of God, from the manger to the cross. He held Himself here at the disposal of God, and though He did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, yet He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. That it was the will of God was a sufficient explanation of every circumstance in which He found Himself.

I have dwelt long upon this principle, because of its importance in our consideration of God's ways with men in His dealings with the world. That no man has been, or could be, clothed with unlimited authority, and be so free from outside influences that he could carry out the desires of his heart I suppose no one will question. Many considerations conspire together to prevent the greatest despot from working out the conceptions of his evil mind. There is the fear of degrading himself in the eyes of others, or of how the thing may recoil upon his own head. There are always outside influences at work which prevent men having their own way completely. Were it not so, a man with unlimited power would destroy the whole human race, and end all by the destruction of himself.

But God cannot be brought under any influence whatever. And yet man's thought of God does not rise higher than himself: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Ps. 50. 21). Naturally we think of God as an evil being, and fear to have to do with Him. Being evil ourselves we cannot take in the thought of a Being supremely good: we think of Him as niggardly in the dispensing of His benefits, and vindictive in the execution of His judgment. The god of man's conception is a demon, an evil and cruel

being, endowed with the same kind of passions as himself, and influenced, in all his ways with men, by selfish considerations. To come to know God in Jesus is to be brought out of darkness into marvellous light.

Another thing I would say before referring to the light Scripture gives us as to the heathen. Nothing can be perfectly known by the creature. This is so self-evident that I need do no more than mention the fact. The creation itself is beyond us. I know that it exists. I see it, feel it, am part of it. I see the relation which certain things bear to others. The sun, moon, and stars appeal to my senses as the handiwork of an all-wise, almighty, and supreme Being, and from them I drop down to the consideration of a globule of water or a grain of sand. But what do I know of these things? What are they made of? I may be told water is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen. But what are these gases? I may know a great deal about created things, how they will behave under certain conditions, the uses I may be able to put them to; but what they are in themselves I know not. The Creator does, but the creature cannot know what the creature is. We know all that is necessary for us to know, or perhaps I should rather say, we are capable of knowing all that God deems good for us to know. May we be content with this.

Had man remained in innocence he would not have needed a revelation from God. It was when he sinned this became necessary, and he gets it at once. God has never yet left any of His creatures without witness regarding Himself. Man being like a planet out of his orbit, nothing remains for him but destruction, unless he can be recovered and brought into right relationship with his Centre. When man wheeled wilfully out of his appointed course, His Creator at once intervened, and pointed the way back to righteousness, peace, and salvation. Abel took that way, and found it paved with the favour of Jehovah; Cain refused it, and became a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. Cain had all the light that Abel had, but he was unfaithful to it; and the whole antediluvian world was not less favoured, though with few exceptions the testimony of God was scorned.

There does not seem to have been any practice of idolatry until after the deluge. It may have been the tradition of the fallen angels which Satan took up, by which to ensnare men,

and entice them into demon-worship. Anyhow, almost immediately after the flood mankind fell into idolatry, and idolatry is demon-worship (1 Cor. 10. 20). The idol itself is *nothing*, but what is behind the idol, and which fills the heart and mind of the worshipper, is a demon. The gods of the heathen are evil beings, and the worship of demons became universal after the flood.

It was not any lack of testimony on the part of God, which brought about this state of things, but the hatred of God natural to the human heart. We have the downward career of the sons of Noah into the moral quagmire of corruption brought graphically before the vision of our souls in the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. They sinned against the light which they had from God, and they were, the Apostle says, "*without excuse.*" They had all the light possessed by Abel, Enoch, and others, and these had found it sufficient to guide their footsteps back to the Source of life and happiness; and indeed they were still more favoured, for they had seen by the intervention of God in the deluge how well He was able to deliver the godly, and judge the rebellious. Added to this they had the testimony of creation, the visible things bearing testimony to the invisible. The eternal power and divinity of the Creator comes to light in the works of His hands, leaving those who bow down to the idol without excuse.

This is just as true to-day as it was then. The heathen have the heavens declaring the glory of God, and the firmament showing His handywork: day uttering speech unto day, and night unto night teaching knowledge. There is neither speech nor words, yet is their voice heard through all the earth, right to the extremity of the world (Ps. 19).

There are also evidences of His goodness in the fact that He gives sunshine, rain, and fruitful seasons, "filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14). The object of it all is that men might feel after Him and find Him, for He is not far from any one of us (Acts 17). Man has gone far from God, and his great desire is always to increase the distance, but God has not gone far from man. The distance lies in alienation of heart and mind, and therefore man being a *God-hating* sinner, the distance to which he has gone is immeasurable; but God pursues him in the grace and love

of His heart, ready to fall on his neck and cover him with kisses (Luke 15) the moment he, in the sorrow of his soul, turns round and begins to feel after his Creator, whom he has so heartlessly abandoned.

We are told by Paul (Acts 17) that the times of this ignorance God winked at (overlooked, or dealt with in no special way), but left man to the testimony of the visible things, against which he sinned grossly and provocatively, while wallowing in every abominable pollution that suggested itself to his corrupt and devil-deceived heart. He had sufficient testimony given him by God to light his way back to Him from whom he was gradually drifting farther and farther away; but to this he paid no regard, for the service of Satan was connected with a licence for the flesh, which the idea of a holy and righteous God forbade. Because of this, the service of their fell destroyer was considered easy, his bondage was delightful, God was forgotten, and darkness reigned supreme.

It has been thus from the beginning. The testimony of God by Noah was despised, the law was trampled under foot, the prophets were stoned, and those who foretold the coming of the Messiah were murdered. And has it been any better under the gospel dispensation? The Jews despised it, it went out to the heathen and there few believed it, and in Christendom, which is supposed to be the result of the preaching, comparatively few believe it with their hearts. Men seem more concerned about what is to be the fate of the heathen than they are about their own souls, or about the multitude around them, who, with the gospel ringing in their ears, go heedlessly down to a lost eternity.

The state of the heathen is brought forward by many to discredit the Scriptures. They foolishly imagine that because they have had no testimony of the grace of God presented to them, they cannot be held amenable to the judgment of God. But this conjecture arises from the erroneous idea that men shall be judged for the rejection of the gospel only. That men shall be judged for the rejection of the gospel is true regarding those to whom it has been preached, but all men are amenable to the judgment of God, whether they have heard the gospel or not.

We are told in 1 Thessalonians that the Lord Jesus shall

be revealed from heaven with the angels of His might, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This will take place at His appearing, and is spoken of as the judgment of the living. It is "*When He shall come.*" Here we have two classes of people upon whom the judgment falls, namely, them that know not God, and them that obey not the gospel.

But in Romans 2. 12-16 we have a very plain statement made by the Apostle referring to this very question. He says, "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." The Gentiles sinned "*without law,*" the law was never given to them. They shall be judged by the light given by creation, natural conscience, and the goodness of God manifested in His providence. They shall perish: they have been altogether unfaithful to the light vouchsafed to them. The Jews to whom the law was given shall be judged by it. Christians are not supposed to come into judgment. If they were truly that which they are by profession they would not come into judgment, for in Christ the believer is already justified from all things. Still because of the unfaithfulness of those favoured with such abundant light, the time has already come when judgment must begin at the house of God (1 Pet. 4. 17).

Judgment will be according to privileges enjoyed. Therefore the soul who has heard the gospel and rejected it shall have the heaviest sentence; the Jew comes next in responsibility, as having the law, priding himself in the possession of it, and dishonouring the Lawgiver by the breaking of it. Last and least in responsibility come the heathen, who have had neither law nor gospel. He who knew his Master's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knew not, and yet did commit things worthy of punishment, shall be beaten with few stripes (Luke 12. 47, 48). The judgment of God will be according to truth against such as do evil: "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality (or incorruptibility), eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every

soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile ; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile ” (Rom. 2. 7-10).

That the Judge of all the earth will do right there ought to be no question in any mind ; but whatever He does the wisdom of the creature is to submit himself to it. The creature cannot be the judge of his Creator. In the way in which the Creator has been pleased to declare Himself, in that way both reader and writer must come to know Him. I take the perfect account which He has given of Himself in the Word of truth ; I contemplate Him in His love, grace, righteousness, holiness, power, wisdom, majesty and might, and my heart is filled with thanksgiving that I have found Him to be such as the gospel reveals Him, and such as my natural heart never for a moment thought Him to be.

I think of Him in His mercy on the one hand, and in His judgment and wrath on the other, and I am not terrified before Him, for I see nothing even in the lake of fire inconsistent with His holy love. He has come to light in Jesus : there His heart is revealed, but from those lips from which rivers of grace flowed forth, there came the testimony of a judgment which in its severity turns the most terrible utterances that ever burned upon prophetic lip into tides of mercy. His enemies had to say “ *Never man spake like this Man,* ” and surely no one ever did, for no one knew what He knew. When He spoke, the breathings of the heart of God were heard, but mingled with it all the tempests of eternal wrath broke upon the ear. He brought everything to light. The heart of God, the heart of man, the heart of heaven, and the heart of hell. All is in the light now, and men everywhere are seen to be without excuse, and all will find Him justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges (Ps. 51. 4).