

SALVATION *from*
START TO FINISH

~ JAMES · M · GRAY ~

SALVATION

From Start to Finish

**Bible expositions covering the new
life of the believer from its inception
in faith to its consummation in glory**

—BY—

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

After the Chapman-Alexander Simultaneous Evangelistic campaign in Chicago, it was thought desirable to conserve the results by a series of popular Bible classes, interdenominational in character, to build up the young converts in the great doctrines of the Christian faith.

The author of this book conducted two such classes in different parts of the city, where each week, from a thousand to fifteen hundred persons of different ages and spiritual attainments gathered, with Bible in hand, to follow their teacher in the exposition of the Word of God.

Some of these expositions are here collected for wider and more permanent usefulness, and will be found attractive to pastors as samples of a style of preaching desired by and needed in many of our churches. Evangelists also will find the book suitable to recommend to their converts, and where a generous supply is left in any community, it will inspire confidence in the germination of the seed they have faithfully planted.

The title of the book is suggested by the scope of the first chapter, or first lecture as originally given; and yet it appropriately covers the whole, since the subsequent lectures were but amplifications of dif-

ferent features of the scheme of salvation which the first set forth in outline.

The chapters are not uniform in length and perhaps not in literary style, which is explained by the fact that some were copied from stenographers' notes taken at the time, while others had been written out by the author and published in magazines like *Our Hope* and *The Winona Review*.

If the contents of the book shall prove as interesting and helpful when read as when spoken, the publisher's hope will be attained.

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A Salvation Classic;
or,
From Nature to Grace

CHAPTER I.

A SALVATION CLASSIC; OR FROM NATURE TO GRACE.

An Exposition of Titus 3: 3-8.

As the basis of this study, attention is called to Paul's words in his letter to Titus, especially in the third chapter.

Titus was a young minister set in charge of the churches on the island of Crete, in the Mediterranean, near the mouth of the Ægean Sea. But Paul, now advanced in years and soon to finish his course, is traveling in Macedonia, and addresses this letter to his son in the faith, telling him how he ought to behave himself in the house of God. In other words, he is exhorting and instructing him as to the way in which he, in turn, should exhort and instruct the different classes of Christians under his charge.

It is in connection with these exhortations and instructions that he gives us in chapter 3 this wonderful salvation classic, as it might be called, and which, in a few verses reveals the whole scheme of the Gospel, from the beginning to the end, from the start to the finish.

It commences thus:

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready

to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

I

Here we have first, *our condition by nature*, as stated in verse 3:

"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

Such is the condition in which these people of Crete were before they became Christians, Paul including himself also in the description. He says: "We ourselves." And this indeed means every one of us as we were by nature, and before we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour—a description too, of every man and woman and child who is yet out of Christ.

Look at it in detail. "We were sometimes *foolish*." "Sometimes" really means "all the time" from our physical birth to our spiritual re-birth in Christ. We were foolish, not in the sense of imbecility, but in that indicated in the next word—"disobedient." No man is so foolish as he who disobeys God in anything.

But we were disobedient to God because, we were "*deceived*," deceived by sin, by Satan, by the glamour of the world, by the darkness and ignorance of our own hearts. It is because we were thus deceived that we were disobedient to God.

But being deceived, we were doing what? "*Serving divers lusts and pleasures*." In other words, instead of serving God we were serving ourselves. The word "lusts" must not be taken in the limited sense now used of unchasteness, but in the broader sense, as including all desires and gratifications contrary to the will of God for us. We were seeking to do our own will, and to please ourselves in all things.

As the result, we were "*living in malice and envy*." This must be true in the very nature of the case. If I am serving my lusts and pleasures, and you are doing the same, of course I am crossing your lines continually and you are crossing mine. And if this be true, then necessarily, we are "living in malice and envy." And because we are thus living we are "*hateful*." Full of hate ourselves, and objects of hate on the part of others. And so the picture concludes with the declaration that we were "*hating one another*."

Let no man say that this is not a true description of what he was before he found Christ. Indeed if he has really found Him, he will admit its truth to the uttermost, and if he denies it, it might well be regarded as an evidence that he is still in his sins.

An illustrative incident occurs to me. I had my picture taken with a group of gentlemen on a certain occasion, and on seeing it was particularly impressed with its good appearance. Now like most public men in these modern days, I am called upon frequently for a photograph for advertising purposes, so that it has become necessary to have a supply on hand. But also like many of them, I dislike having a picture taken. Therefore on beholding this, an idea came to me. If the artist could cut me out from the group in some way, and run off a number of copies of myself alone, it would save me the inconvenience of sitting again for several years.

Entering the studio and laying down the picture, I explained the object of my visit.

"Oh," said the lady in attendance, "if you will give us a sitting we will obtain a much better photograph of you than that."

"No," I replied, "I believe it impossible. That is the best photograph of myself I ever saw. In fact," I added, my pride rising to the occasion, "my picture is the best of the group. See my friend, for example,"—pointing to a gentleman in the group by my side,— "how he squints!"

“Oh, but you also squint,” she said. “Please look at yourself through this,” handing me a small magnifying-glass.

I looked, and happily, just then another client entered the room, attracting the lady’s attention. Whereupon, improving the opportunity, and leaving the picture on the counter, I turned my back upon it, walking down the stairs as quietly as if they were carpeted with velvet. The Spirit of God taking advantage of the occasion also, seemed to be hammering into my conscience those solemn words of Romans 3:19: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” I had a revelation of sin, the sin in my own heart and life, brought home to me that day, such as I had not for many days.

And it is something like that I would do for you just now. I would put the magnifying glass of God’s Word, so much of it as is found in this single verse, upon your hearts and consciences, that you might see yourselves by nature as God sees you, and be thus prepared to hearken to and appreciate the offer of His grace.

II

We have here in the second place, *our change from nature to grace.*

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of

righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

Observe the *source* of our change—the kindness and love of God; the *means*, the regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; and the *ground*, the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Let us consider the source. The "kindness" of God means His kindness in a general sense towards all. The "love of God our Saviour toward man" means that kindness in the special sense of the salvation He has provided for lost sinners. The word "appeared" is interesting. God's kindness and love were seen in the Old Testament days as well as in the New, but it was then like the dawn of a new day which now has reached its noontide. It has now appeared. That the kindness and the love of God is expressed in mercy is emphasized by the declaration that it was "Not by works of righteousness which we have done . . . he saved us." In other words, His salvation is a free gift, without merit or deserving on our part.

Let us consider the means. There are two things which the Holy Ghost does, or is doing, to bring about our change from nature to grace: the first is our regeneration; the second, our renewal. The first refers to our new birth, our becoming new creatures in Christ Jesus; while the second means the maintenance of that **new life thus begun in Christ Jesus.**

Take the analogy of our physical life. A child is just born into the world. He has life, but it must be maintained and continued from day to day, and week to week, and month to month, and year to year, if he shall live; and his Creator has made provision for it. But what is true in the physical is true as well in the spiritual sense. When God begins this new work in us He perfects it unto the day of Jesus Christ. He not only regenerates, but renews from day to day, and week to week, and month to month, and year to year. Ah, no unsaved man need hesitate to commit himself to Jesus Christ for salvation! God not only regenerates the believer, makes him entirely over, creating within him a new heart and renewing within him a right spirit, but continually gives him a supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus, that he may be able to please Him in all things.

This leads us to consider the ground. This regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost is what God has shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. You remember that John the Baptist, in witnessing to Jesus as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," said that He was the One who baptized with the Holy Ghost. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

These words just quoted were spoken by Peter on the Day of Pentecost—and from that day until this

God has been pouring out the Holy Ghost as the result of the finished work of Jesus on the cross,—regenerating and renewing his people.

Notice therefore how our change from nature to grace is the work of the triune God. God the Father, loving us and expressing His mercy towards us; God the Son, dying for us upon the cross, and purchasing us with His own blood; and God the Holy Ghost, taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto us, regenerating and renewing us in the strength of God from day to day.. What a God and Saviour we have! What a salvation is this which God has given us in Christ!

III

Finally, we have *our condition by grace*:

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

Observe that our condition by grace is one of *freedom*, we have been “justified by His grace”; second, one of *hope*, “we have been made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”; and third, one of *obligation*, “that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.”

Look at the condition of freedom: “That being justified by his grace.” What is the meaning of “jus-

tified"? Some think that to be "justified" is simply to be forgiven. But the word represents something greater still. The justified man, and he is every man who has come to God in Christ, is not only forgiven, but regarded in God's sight as though he had never sinned. He is a man against whom God has no charge to lay forever.

I have seen this illustrated by the case of the French military officer, Captain Dreyfus. You remember that he was charged with selling French military secrets to the German army and court-martialed for it. And because he was a Jew his hearing was utterly unfair, and in the face of evidence he was accounted guilty, and banished to Devil's Island. But there were friends who kept agitating for a second trial, and when this was had, again in the face of evidence, he was found guilty. Now however, the President of France, to save the face of the nation, pardoned him. Captain Dreyfus is free. He may go where he pleases and do what he likes.

But he is not satisfied with pardon; nor are his friends, nor a large portion of France satisfied with it. The whole world, indeed, has awakened to the unfairness of the judgment, and cried out for another trial that the pardoned man might be justified. The third trial is granted, and at last Captain Dreyfus is justified of the crime. He is not pardoned now, but something different and something better. He is now regarded in the eyes of France and of the world as one who never committed the crime.

There are only two ways in which a man can be justified of a crime. One is on the ground of innocence, the other on the ground of paying the penalty for it. Captain Dreyfus was justified on the ground of innocence, for he *was* innocent. You and I cannot be justified of sin on the ground of innocence, for we are not innocent, but guilty. But we who have accepted Jesus Christ are justified on the other ground that we have paid the penalty of our sin, every particle of it,—not in and of ourselves, but in the person of our substitute, Who died, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” Glory to God for a salvation that not only pardons, but justifies!

But our condition by nature is also one of hope. We are “made heirs according to the hope of eternal life,” or, as the Revised Version puts it, “that we might be made heirs of eternal life, according to hope.” That is, we are already heirs of eternal life, only as yet we have not entered into the full consummation of it, nor shall we do so until our bodies are raised from the dead, and glorified, like unto Christ’s own glorious body. But although we have not as yet entered into that fulness of eternal life we are, nevertheless, heirs of it, according to hope. We have the hope of it in our hearts based on the promises of a God Who can not lie.

Now God might have forgiven us without justifying us, and He might have justified us without making us heirs of eternal life; but He has been pleased to do all

that, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Of what is Jesus Christ heir? The Scriptures tell us that as the God-man He "hath been appointed heir of all things." If then we are joint-heirs with Him, what He has we have throughout eternity!

Finally, our condition is one of *obligation*. And how simple and practical the obligation is, namely, "that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."

He does not say "*great* works." There are few of us who could maintain them. We cannot all build hospitals and churches, or give up our lives to work on the foreign field. But while we cannot do great works, there is none of us who cannot maintain good works if we desire.

Moreover, the Spirit of God intimates just what He means by good works, which are the common, everyday things that you and I have the opportunity and ability to do, if we will. He does this in the preceding chapter.

Here are the "good works,"—sobriety, temperateness, soundness in the faith, in love, in patience, not falsely accusing one another, not being given to wine; loving one's husband and children, being discreet, chaste, workers at home; not purloining, if servants, but showing all good fidelity; obedient to employers,

pleasing them well in all things, and adorning the doctrine of our God and Saviour.

And notice another thing. Notice where the Spirit of God puts the good works! He does not put them before salvation, but after it. In this we see the difference between the religion of God and the many religions of men. Every natural religion, every religion of the world, puts works first, and salvation afterwards. God only puts salvation first, and good works afterwards.

He does not say: "Be careful to maintain good works, that is, cease being foolish, disobedient, deceived, and serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another, and I will be kind to you, and love you and show mercy unto you." The world and its false religions would say that.

But He says: "You *are* foolish, you *are* disobedient, you *are* deceived, you *are* serving divers lusts and pleasures, you *are* living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. Yet nevertheless I love you, I have mercy on you, I give my only begotten Son to die for you, I save you, I regenerate you, I renew you, I justify you, I make you an heir of eternal life—now be careful to maintain good works!"

He puts us first in a place where we can do good works, and then says: "Be careful to do them."

This is salvation from start to finish, from the beginning to the end of it.

**The Most Important Fact
in the World**

CHAPTER II.

THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT IN THE WORLD.

An Exposition of Galatians 3:13, 14.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; . . . That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

We have here a declaration of the most important fact in the world. “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.*”

What law? The Ten Commandments? Yes, and every other commandment written in the Scriptures, which dispensationally belongs to us to keep. And not only the commandments written in the Scriptures, but those inscribed on the fleshly tables of our heart as well. The law of conscience as well as the law of Holy Writ.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the ‘*curse*’ of the law.” Curse means penalty, and it is penalty which gives significance to law. Where there is no penalty there is no law.

And what is the curse of the law from which Christ hath redeemed us? The Scriptures answer: “*The wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23), “*The soul that sinneth it shall die*” (Ezekiel 18:20). Nor is

this death merely the dissolution of the soul from the body and the cessation of existence of the former. The impenitent sinner might well wish that this were so. But death is more serious than this. Death is a continuance of existence on the part of the soul, but in conscious, and that means woeful separation from God. Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16) ought to satisfy as to this. And if that were not enough, His own death on the cross might be convincing. Can anyone believe that the death He came into the world to die for sinful men, the cup whose contemplation in Gethsemane caused Him to sweat great drops of blood, and the essence of whose agony was heard in the cry: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me,"—can anyone believe that this meant only the dissolution of the soul and body? A strange conception of the divine curse on sin must he have who believes that.

But Christ hath "*redeemed*" us from the curse. Redeemed! We know the meaning of the word, to ransom or buy back again. You are in straitened financial circumstances, let us say, and must have a certain sum of money at once. The pawnshop is your only hope. And yet you have nothing to hypothecate except something which in a sense is not yours—a precious ring, an heirloom which must be handed down to another generation. But you have a friend who understands your circumstances and sympathizes in your distress. He enters the pawnshop at the moment and

places upon the counter the sum which has been given you for the ring. He redeems, he buys it back again.

Now there is not one of us who has not pawned his soul to Satan, or sin, as you may choose to have it. It was not ours to pawn, but pawned it we have for all that. But there is "a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother," who knows all about our circumstances, and sympathizes with us in our distress. At the critical moment He has appeared and laid down the price of our redemption. It is not corruptible things such as silver and gold He has paid, but His own precious blood "*as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*" (1 Peter 1: 18, 19).

Christ "*hath*" redeemed us. The past tense is so important. It is not something Christ will do in the future, or is even doing at the present time, but something He has done. This man, by one sacrifice for sins hath perfected forever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10: 14). This work has never to be done again. O, the preciousness of that thought that Jesus' work for us is a *finished* work, once and forever.

For "*us*." "Christ hath redeemed *us*." Of course this pronoun applies to Christians, and in the first instance, to those at Galatia. But in the last analysis it means *all*, not only all Christians but all men. The whole world has been redeemed by Jesus Christ. His atoning sacrifice is sufficient for all (1 John 2: 2), and "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10: 13).

But this is not to say that all are *saved*. The friend may have redeemed your ring and handed it back to you again, and you may have declined to take it. Bought back it is, but still not yours. Your will alone, however, stands in the way of its being yours.

It is so in the case of the lost soul. All are redeemed, but only they are saved who receive the redemption in receiving the Redeemer. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power (or authority) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). Have you yet received Him? Have you yet believed on His name? Have you yet taken from Him by a definite act of faith that redemption which He purchased and which He offers you? To do this, but nothing less or other than this, is to be saved.

"*Being made a curse for us.*" This is what Christ became on our behalf. He was not merely accursed from God (in the concrete), but He became a curse, in the abstract, bearing the universal curse of the whole race. As another scripture says: "*He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). He was made not a sin-offering merely, but *sin*, the representative sin-bearer of the aggregate sin of all men, past, present and future. The sin of the world is one, though its manifestations are many, and hence it is said of Him that He is "*the Lamb of God Who taketh away the 'sin' of the world.*" (*Bible Commentary.*) It is difficult, if not impossible, for the

finite mind to take this in, but it can be taken in far enough to make it plain that there is no sin on him, and no penalty to be exacted from him who has found shelter under this atoning sacrifice.

THE OBJECT AND SCOPE OF REDEMPTION.

But the object and scope of our redemption, what is that?

“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

The blessing of Abraham? What *was* his blessing? And what has he to do with us or we with him? Abraham was the founder of the Jewish race, and he lived in Asia 4,000 years ago, and it seems so unlikely that he should have any blessing to be coveted by us in these modern times. And especially a blessing of such prime importance that it were worth the sacrifice of the Son of God to make it ours!

The man who sawed off the limb of the tree on which he himself sat is the proverbial fool; but close kin to him is that professedly Christian teacher who in the light of this declaration about Abraham's blessing will try to make us believe that Abraham was a myth, and that the story of his life in Genesis is in the sphere of allegory. If there are any historic facts on earth we need to be sure about it is these of the Old Testament, on which in a real sense our hopes of heaven depend. And if there are any parts of the Bible as to whose inspiration we need to be the more clear it is these parts

which both support and elucidate the most vital doctrines of the Christian scheme.

THE NATURE OF ABRAHAM'S BLESSING.

The blessing of Abraham was justification before God. He was a sinner by nature like all the rest of us. He was born into a state of wrongness, and needed somehow to get into a state of rightness if he were to enjoy God's fellowship either here or hereafter. And how did he get there? Simply by faith, simply by believing the testimony of God on a certain matter.

And what was that matter? It concerned the son and heir that should be born to him. God had promised this heir a long while before, and had said that in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed.

But Abraham was an old man, and Sarah his wife long past the natural time of child-bearing, and yet the heir was not born. Was there some mistake about it? Had Abraham misunderstood? He seizes upon an occasion to put that inquiry to God when he is once more assured of it.

"Abraham, look up into the heavens tonight. Canst thou count the stars for multitude? Even so shall thy seed be, the seed that shall come out of thine own bowels, the seed born of Sarah thy wife. Canst thy faith measure up, to that promise, my child?" (Genesis 15.) Yea, it can. *"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he*

had promised, he was able also to perform . . . it was imputed to him for righteousness” (Romans 4:20-22).

This is not to say that Abraham in that moment was made righteous as to his personal experience or character. There were many things thereafter for which he needed to be rebuked of God. But he was made righteous in point of law, and so far as his judicial standing before God was concerned.

When in a conflict of arms, an enemy surrenders on the terms of capitulation offered, no change may have taken place in his character, but a tremendous change has taken place in his relation to the foe, and vice versa. And on the basis of this relationship they can get together on a new plan which will work a quiet but thorough revolution in other respects. Something like this was true of Abraham after he became righteous by faith, and something like this is true of every man who receives the blessing of Abraham in the same way.

THIS BELONGS TO US.

For as Paul says, continuing his words in his letter to the Romans just quoted :

“ It was not written for his (Abraham’s) sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification ” (Romans 4:23-25).

Now, as a matter of fact, Abraham knew nothing about Jesus our Lord. Jesus, indeed said, in John 8: 56: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." But this can hardly mean that Abraham knew the person of Jesus, or understood about His atoning work as we do. The name or the work of Jesus was not so much as mentioned or proposed to Abraham. *In God's mind* that name and that work were all potent as the reason for the justifying of Abraham or any other man from the days of righteous Abel until now (Romans 3: 25); but that name and that work have only been fully revealed to men as the real and ultimate ground of their justification in our time. That which was required of Abraham to justify him was His belief in God's testimony. In his case it was a testimony merely about his (Abraham's) son and heir.

In like manner God now comes to us. We are concerned about a greater and deeper matter than the earthly heirship that troubled Abraham. It is the question of eternal life that concerns us. Our cry is: "How may a sinner be just with God?" And God reveals a way. He gives us His testimony about His Son, He of whom the son and heir of Abraham was, after all, the type. He says: "My Son was delivered for your offenses, and the token of the efficacy of His work on your behalf was His resurrection from the dead. Will you accept My testimony concerning Jesus as Abraham accepted My testimony concerning Isaac? If so, it

shall be imputed unto you for righteousness, as the like faith was imputed unto him."

This is what Paul means when he adds: "*that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.*" That Abraham should have this heir was the promise of the Spirit of God to him, and he received it by faith. He believed it before it was actually realized in his history. His faith grasped the promise.

That Jesus died for our sins and rose again for our justification is the promise of the same Spirit, and if we receive it by faith, the righteousness imputed unto Abraham, or the position of rightness which God accorded him will be imputed or accorded unto us in like manner. That is, we will be made just in a legal sense, the sense that God will have no charge of sin to lay against us for evermore. Is this not simple enough for even a child to grasp? Would to God that some of us were again children that we might grasp it!

FAITH WITHOUT FEELING.

The difficulty with the average adult is that he cannot be satisfied without what he calls *feeling*, something different from faith. But a very simple illustration may serve at once to show how unnecessary such feeling is, and how really dishonoring to God it is, to say nothing even of its harmfulness to our own peace.

General McClellan wrote his wife that he had been commissioned as Major-General of the army. "But," said he, "I do not *feel* any different than I did yester-

day. Indeed, I have not yet donned my new uniform. I am sure that I am in command of the army, however, for the President's order to that effect is now before me." Would the General have suffered disobedience to his command or dishonor to his position for the lack of this feeling? Were not the President's order sufficient for him to act the part? How foolish it would have been for him to wait for anything further, and how disrespectful to his superior! This is not to say that the conviction, or the feeling, of his being the commanding officer may not have grown upon him as he *did* act the part from day to day, but was not the fact as true on the first day of office as the last?

It is just so with the man who is justified by faith. He is at peace *with* God in that moment, and the peace *of* God follows in due time. The first represents his state or position before God, the second the experience or realization of it. Whether the second ever becomes his or whether it does not, the truth of the first-named fact is not affected. Let us praise God for this, and not dishonor His Word by doubting it.

Christ Our Sin-Bearer;
or,
The Nature and Scope of the
Atonement

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST OUR SIN-BEARER;

OR, THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE ATONEMENT.

An Exposition of 1 Peter 2: 24, 25.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

I. The Nature of the Atonement.

“*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.*” Suppose we had just heard these words for the first time; and suppose we had no prejudice or preconceived opinions as to the truth they taught, what idea would we obtain from them? Could the English tongue put the thought of substitutionary or vicarious suffering before us in plainer terms?

To quote the language of one of our theologians: “When a sovereign graciously allows one person who is under no obligation to do so, to discharge a service or suffer a punishment for another on whom such obligation rests, that is substitution. And when that service is discharged or that penalty suffered by the substitute, the service of the suffering becomes vicarious.” The second of these two ideas is stated, and the

first is clearly implied in these words of Peter: "*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.*"

This then, is the *nature* of the atonement of Christ; it is substitutionary and vicarious. And the thought is all the more confirmed by the light thrown upon it in the Old Testament. Take the whole sacrificial system of the Mosaic dispensation, for example, which every Bible student knows to have been symbolical of the person and work of Christ. Is it not based on the idea of the substitution of one life in the place of another? The offerer of the sacrifice laid his hand on the head of the victim and confessed his sins over it, thus identifying himself with it in the first instance and transferring his sins to it in the second. Here is substitution, and here is vicarious atonement.

Take the teachings of the prophets, the words of Isaiah particularly, so familiar to us all, and from which Peter quotes:

"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. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (53: 5, 6).

Here again we have substitution and vicarious suffering. Or, take the Psalms, the 32nd, for example:

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto

whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

Paul, in the fourth chapter of Romans, quotes these words to show that the psalmist apprehended the great truth of substitution and vicarious suffering, and that he was praising God for the non-imputation of his sin to him because it had already been imputed to another.

Of course, the New Testament is filled with declarations of this same truth. We hear Jesus saying in Matthew:

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (20:28).

And in John:

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (10:11).

It is the warp and woof of the teachings of Paul:

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Romans 3:25).

"He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

But to return to the text. When Peter says that Christ "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," he means, of course, that He bare the guilt of those sins which were laid upon Him. But this is not to say that

He suffered the very same sufferings in kind and degree, or duration which would have been inflicted upon us in whose stead He suffered. Doubtless, the truth is however, that He suffered precisely that suffering which Divine justice demanded of His Divine Person standing in our place. A suffering which satisfied God's justice and which rendered the exercise of His love consistent with His righteous and holy character.

WHO STANDS FOR YOU?

In Dr. Bainbridge's *Around the World Tour of Christian Missions*, written now twenty years ago, there is a curiously interesting and suggestive incident.

When in his journey he had reached Tokio, Japan, intending to remain there some little time, he was waited upon one morning by an official, with this singular inquiry: "*Who stands for you?*"

Supposing it to be a question of passports, he presented his, but that was not what was wanted. He then offered some letters of introduction he had, but they also were unsatisfactory, and the question was repeated, "*Who stands for you?*"

It was finally explained that there was an ordinance in that city to the effect that no foreigner could take up his residence there for any length of time, unless he provided himself with a "substitute." And as a matter of fact there were natives who hired themselves out to foreigners for this purpose. If the foreigner transgressed any law the substitute suffered the penalty for

it. If the penalty were even death, the substitute suffered death. Dr. Bainbridge secured a substitute, and was thereafter permitted to remain in peace and security as long as he chose.

The analogy does not hold good at all points, of course, and, like many another so called "illustration" of divine truth, if pressed too far it may hinder as much as it helps. But in this it is true, that all men are, by nature, alien from God through sin. That their standing before Him, or before His law, is only obtainable through the substitutionary work of His Son. That, (and this by contrast with the present illustration), the merits of His Son are obtainable by faith, and "without money, and without price." And finally, that once obtained, they secure to the believer eternal acceptance, perfect peace, complete satisfaction and glorious liberty.

May the reader of these words believe it and act upon it at once, if already it has not been done! Dr. Bainbridge could not satisfy the law of Tokio in his own person, and without a substitute must be banished from its privileges. No sinner, such as we all are, can satisfy the law of God in his own person, and without Christ he must "*be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power*" (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

II. The Design of the Atonement.

The design of the atonement is stated in the words: "*That we being dead to sins, should live unto right-*

eousness," a two-fold design, as we see. The thought of God was not only punitive but remedial. He gave His Son not only to take away our guilt but to change our lives. Shall we then, say, that the design has both a negative and a positive aspect? Let us consider these words with the greatest carefulness.

1. That we should be "*dead to sins*." Rather a baffling and mysterious phrase this. What does it mean? It is almost identically used of Christ in the sixth chapter of Romans, and if we can grasp the meaning in His case we may in that of His believing people. In what sense is Christ said to have "*died to sin*"? Evidently, in the sense that sin, (not His own sin, for He was sinless, but our sin which He bore), caused Him to be crucified; and that, when once He paid its penalty by death, it lost the power to bring Him into the place of penalty again.

There is a man in prison, let us say, awaiting the gallows or the electric chair to expiate the crime of murder. But when he has once expiated it, when he once dies in accordance with the law, the crime can never again bring him to judgment. He is dead to it forever, even though afterward were it possible, he should arise from the dead. So in the case of Christ, when He expiated human guilt He did so once and forever, and became dead to it thereafter.

But the believer on Jesus Christ, as we learn from this, and even more plainly from other scriptures, is so identified with Christ in God's purpose, is so entirely

one with Him as his representative and substitute, that when Christ died to sin upon the cross the believer also died in Him. And if sin can not again bring his substitute into the place of penalty neither can it bring the one whose representative He was. Hence the significance of that word in Romans 8: 1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." This means no judgment, no penalty, no guilt to them that are in Him, i. e., bound up with Him in identity and substitution.

2. But Peter's phrase is in the plural: "dead to *sins*"—it is not "sin"; and this is even better yet, and more gracious and more satisfying to the soul.

For our present purpose, the difference between "sins" in the plural and "sin" in the singular may be stated thus: "Sin" refers to our sinful nature, the sin *in* which and *into* which we were born, while "sins" refers to the consequences or fruits of that nature in the actual transgressions of our lives.

How wonderful therefore, that the atonement of Christ not only covers our sin but our sins! That in Him we are not only dead to sin in our nature but dead to sins in our everyday life, the transgressions we have committed or even *may* commit! Neither sin nor *sins* can bring the believer on Jesus Christ into the place of penalty in the sense of eternal death. *Chastised* he will be for his sins and his transgressions, chastised it may be even to the extent of the taking away of his physical life (1 Corinthians 11:30), but judged in the

sense of eternal death he can not be. The merits of the sacrifice of Christ have been imputed unto him not only for the putting away of sin but *sins*.

3. But the thought is not yet quite complete. Christ's work on the cross merited for us something more, even the gift of the Holy Spirit and all the operations of His grace within us. The moment we receive Christ by faith, we do also receive the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, regenerating us, creating within us a clean heart and renewing within us a right spirit, so that we become "dead to sins" not only in the judicial or imputed sense just referred to, but in the actual and experimental sense as well. That is not to say that sin becomes eradicated from our hearts and no longer dwells even latently within us (1 John 1:8); but that its power over us is broken. We do really come to hate the sins we used to love and to love the holiness we used to hate.

4. It is just here that the *positive* aspect of the design of the atonement presents itself. Christ died not merely that we should be dead to sins judicially and experimentally but that we might "*live unto righteousness.*" As our substitute and representative He both died *and rose again*. And when He arose from the dead it was to live an entirely new kind of life as the God-man. New with reference to His relationship to God and to the question of sin. He had been obedient even unto death. He had glorified the Father. He had finished the work given Him to do.

He had put away sin. The cross was behind Him and the throne of glory was before Him.

Now Paul tells us also in the sixth chapter of Romans already quoted that if we are united with Christ in the likeness of His death, we are also in the likeness of His resurrection. If we died with Him we also live with Him.

This is not merely that we *shall* live with Him by and by in a physical state of resurrection glory, but that we live with Him *now* in a spiritual state of resurrection glory. The death He died He died unto sin once, but the life He liveth, He liveth unto God. He liveth it unto God *now*. Even so we are to reckon ourselves not only to be dead indeed unto sin as we have already considered, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus (6: 11), alive *now*.

In an imputed or judicial sense then, every believer in Christ Jesus is now walking before God in newness of life. Whether he is aware of it or not, whether it is the conscious possession of his soul or not, whether it is clearly manifested in his experience and daily history or not, he is now alive unto God, whereas before he was dead. He is now living a resurrection life in Christ his substitute, and with Whom he is identified as his representative. His is a new life compared with what it was before. Like that of Christ, new in relation to God and to the question of sin. It is a life unto righteousness in an imputed sense. Death, the penalty for sin is past, and glory is in the future.

5. Nor is it *only* in an imputed sense that this is true; but, as in the other half of this declaration, in an experimental sense as well. As we have just seen, the Holy Spirit within the regenerated man, not only enables him to hate sin but to love holiness and follow after it. No longer yields he his "members (as) servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity," but as "servants to righteousness unto holiness." He crucifies the flesh with its affections and lust. He not only puts off all these: "Anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of his mouth"; but he puts on, as the elect of God, "a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, and above all these, love, which is the bond of perfection."

It is thus that "*by His stripes we are healed.*" Perfectly healed. God having begun the good work in us perfects it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6). The man who receives Christ as his Saviour, and confesses Him as his Lord, need not fear as to whether he shall be "able to hold out." He need not wonder whether he will be tomorrow the same wilful sinner he was today. Let him commit himself unto God, let him take of the means of grace, let him feed on His Word, and wait. It is thus by "*His*" stripes, we are healed.

My sins laid open to the rod,
The back which from the law was free;
And the Eternal Son of God
Received the stripes once due to me.

Nor beam was in His eye, nor mote;
Nor laid to Him was any blame:
And yet His cheeks for me were smote—
The cheeks that never blushed for shame.

I pierced those sacred hands and feet
That never touched or walked in sin;
I broke the heart that only beat
The souls of sinful men to win.

That sponge of vinegar and gall
Was placed by me upon His tongue;
And when derision mocked his call
I stood that mocking crowd among.

And yet His blood was shed for me,
To be of sin the double cure;
And balm there flows from Calvary's tree
That heals my guilt and makes me pure.

III. The Need of the Atonement.

"For ye were as sheep going astray."

1. Ye were "going *astray*." The Greek word in this case (*planaomai*) like so many other words in that wonderful tongue, is full of figurative suggestion.

It gives us not only the picture of a wanderer, but an erratic wanderer. One who is moving about without any fixed destination. He is a wanderer lost in winding courses of labyrinthian ways. The idea of mental aberration is in the word, and with aberration, agitation. One may be mentally deranged without any conscious disturbance of his peace, and some of the most confirmed of the insane are apparently among the

most happy of mortals, but it is not so in the case of a soul which, while normal in other respects, is astray from God. "The wicked are like the troubled sea; for it can not rest; . . . There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:20, 21, R. V.).

And finally, the thought of deception is in this word, i. e., the idea that the sinner has been seduced into his present straying and lost condition, precisely as we read in the story of the fall.

How perfectly true are all these figures to describe the sinner as we know him, as we have known ourselves! Seduced by Satan, he is now, like Cain, "*a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth.*" His mind reprobate, his eyes blind, his soul restless and ill at ease, seeking good first in this direction and then that, and finding it not.

2. Ye were "*as sheep*" going astray. A sheep goes astray differently from any other animal, it is said. When once it wanders away its tendency is to pursue its wandering, never returning again of its own accord. Should it ever come back, the shepherd must go out after it and bring it back.

The domestic animal, the cat, the dog, even the horse will return to its old home, if given liberty to do so. Yea, "*the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib,*" but the sheep does not know and does not seem to consider. Hence the pathos of those parables in the 15th chapter of Luke and the 10th chapter of John.

What a type of the lost world have we here! There are those, wise in some other things, who are foolish enough to say that the world does not need a Saviour. Left to itself, it is affirmed, it will return to God of its own accord. Perhaps it has never wandered, but if it has, let it alone and it will come back again. Education will bring it back. Experience will bring it back. In fact, it is going back all the time, these prophets say. The world is growing better and better with every generation or every century, is their unthinking song.

And this in the face of history. Did not God leave the world to itself for 4,000 years to prove it whether it would return or not? Did He not send His prophets to it, rising up early and sending them, and with what result? Did not His merciful judgments fall upon it, and was not His goodness flowing towards it in streams of benefaction without ceasing, and did the world return and repent?

What is the witness of the centuries? What is the story they have to tell from the garden of Eden to the garden of Gethsemane? Did the world return to God at any time between the defeat of the first Adam and the victory of the Second? Had the world by searching found Him out in all these days?

HISTORY AND REASON CORROBORATING.

Let the first century of the present era answer. When Jesus came what a paradox did the world present! It had reached its highest point of intellect-

ual development, for it was the Augustan age. But it had reached its lowest point of moral degradation for it was the age of Nero, and of Herod, and the age that crucified the only holy man Who ever lived. It was going astray, the world. Like a sheep it was going astray.

And is it different now, or will it be different in time to come? "*What saith the Scriptures?*" Christ teaches that the tares will grow with the wheat till the end of the age (Matthew 13). Paul teaches that in the last days perilous times shall come (2 Timothy 3). Peter teaches that "*the earth and the works therein shall be burned up*" (2 Peter 3). All the New Testament prophets are a unit here.

But the world, in this sense, is only an aggregation of individual souls. If the world is going astray every individual soul out of Christ is going astray. If the world is like a sheep going astray every individual soul out of Christ is like a sheep going astray. If the world is getting farther and farther from God, every individual soul out of Christ is getting farther and farther from God.

God's Word needs no corroboration on this point from either history or reason, and yet the latter corroborates it as well as the former. For example, is it not an essential characteristic of moral evil that it grows by what it feeds upon? And is it not one of its fatalities that it renders impotent the very faculties by which alone it can be eradicated? Even Maurice, in

his skeptical fulminations on future punishment, admitted that there were times when the possibilities of resistance in a human will to the loving will of God seemed to him, even in his own case, almost infinite. Had he not been wiser to have left out "*almost*"?

And Canon Kingsley, writing from the same point of view, affirms: "I believe it possible for me and for other men, to commit acts of sin against light and knowledge which would plunge me into endless abysses of probably increasing sin, and therefore of probably increasing and endless punishment."

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil . . . saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 13: 23, 25).

What a motive to stir men to heed the warning; "Now is the accepted time"! and to obey the exhortation: "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart"!

IV. The Result of the Atonement.

"But are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

Of course, Peter is speaking to Christians throughout the whole of this text, as indeed the whole of the epistle. He has in mind only such as have believed on Jesus Christ and have been regenerated by His Spirit, when he says, ye "*are now returned.*"

But that word "*returned,*" how much it means! If one has returned to a place, the presumption is that he

has been at that place before. And if one has returned to God it would seem that he had been with God before. But whenever, it may be asked, was man at home with God? Whenever was he in fellowship with "*the Shepherd and Bishop*" of his soul?

The only answer to this is the garden of Eden. Man was at home with God there. He had fellowship with the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul before he fell, and while he was still innocent. But he has had no fellowship since then.

The question therefore arises, whether the reconciliation effected by the atonement puts the believer back into as desirable a relationship with God as our first parents knew, prior to their sin?

The answer is, "Yes, and even a more desirable relationship." The relationship of Eden was based on a contingency. It was, "Do this, and live," or rather, "Fail to do this, and die." And man failed to do it, he failed to obey, and he died. But our new relationship through Christ is based on no contingency. It is believe, and live.

The noblest quality of man is his free-will, by virtue of which he attains a certain independence even from God Himself. But this his greatest glory is at the same time, his greatest peril. The prerogative is priceless, but as Tertullian once said, it can only be obtained at the hazard of an everlasting downfall. Free-will in the person of the first Adam met that fate.

The great Huxley is reported to have said, that if there were some being, or some power, to whom he

could turn over his nature, by which of course, he meant his will, to have it regulated like a clock, and kept regulated, he would hand it over immediately and absolutely.

This agnostic did not know that there was such a Being to Whom his nature, or his will, might be thus surrendered, to be set right and to be kept right.

That being is the Eternal Son of God, Who cries, and need such as Huxley's, is the occasion of His cry: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28, 29).

The man who believes on Jesus Christ in the Gospel sense of that term commits and surrenders himself to Him absolutely, eternally, irreversibly. And Jesus Christ takes him and regulates him. He regenerates him, in other words, and then keeps him regenerated by the renewing of his mind, through the Holy Ghost. And the man finds rest, and he has peace.

If his will were still his own, the risk of loss would be his own. But since his will has been handed over to Jesus Christ, he is persuaded that He is able to keep that which has been committed unto him against that day (2 Timothy 1:12).

But there is something more than bare commitment and preservation here. The One to Whom we are returned is "*the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.*"

A shepherd not only keeps his sheep, but tends and feeds it. He causes it to lie down in green pastures and leads it beside still waters. He restores it when wounded. He comforts it in danger. He defends it when attacked. He showers his love upon it. His goodness towards it never fails. All this our reconciled God and Saviour is, and does, to us. All this is involved in our being returned to Him; all this is included in the work of the atonement, and all this has been purchased for us by the merits of His shed blood.

Who would not commit himself unto Him to be saved, and to be kept?

The Security of the Believer;
or,
The Sum of Our Blessings in Christ

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER; OR, THE SUM OF OUR BLESSINGS IN CHRIST. An Exposition of Ephesians 1:3-14.

God has never revealed a profounder truth than that in Paul's inspired letter to the church at Ephesus. A more important one for the unregenerated man is that of Romans, which tells how we may be right with God. But presupposing that we have become right through receiving God's own rightness by faith in Jesus Christ, then the greatest thing we can know and realize is the nature of the blessings in Christ which have thus become ours. And this is the theme of Ephesians.

THE THEME STATED.

After the usual greeting or salutation in verses 1 and 2, the theme is stated in verse 3, in these words:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

“Us,” of course, means Christians. But a Christian is not merely a moral man or even a church member, but a new creation in Christ Jesus. In the Gospel sense a Christian is one who has been born again, having received Jesus Christ as his Saviour and confessed

Him as his Lord. Such an one God "hath blessed." Notice the past tense. It is not something God is now doing for him, or is about to do, but something He has already done. To lay hold of the significance of this is the secret of assurance, and peace, and holiness, and power.

He "hath blessed us with *all* spiritual blessings." Not a single blessing is omitted. There is nothing which God has for us in Christ throughout all eternity that is not ours already potentially in Him. It is as when a child is born into the world in a physical sense. He is small, weak, and helpless, but the man is there nevertheless, and all his future years will mean simply the development of that man. Thus already we have in Christ an eternity of grace and glory, and our joy in the countless ages upon ages will be the apprehension and realization of it in increasing measure.

We have these blessings "*in Christ.*" The pregnancy of the phrase is seen in the figure of the human body which the inspired apostle so frequently employs to illustrate it. He tells us that Christ is the "head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (1:22, 23).

My head not only governs and controls my body but lives in it. On the other hand, every member of my body lives in my head. This is the vital and indissoluble relationship between Christ and them that believe in Him. He is the Head and we are the members of the body of which He is the Head.

My eyes, my ears, my tongue, my hands, my feet, have certain privileges or faculties—blessings, let us call them, because they are in me, and separated from this vital relationship to me they do not possess them. It is I, living in them, who give to them these faculties, and sustain them in their possession and use. So the blessings of the Christian believer are those which he has because he is in Christ as the members of my body are in me.

The spiritual possibilities of such a fact are beyond finite conception, but even the faintest apprehension of them on the part of Christians would mean so much to both their inner and outer life, and go so far to offset, and contradict and render nugatory the vain philosophies and empty deceits of the new religionists of these days!

Let not the phrase "heavenly places" mislead us in the interpretation of these words. It does not mean that these blessings are not to be realized until we die and go to heaven, but only that they are in "heavenly places" in the sense that the source of them, the HEAD, is there.

I have sometimes illustrated it in this homely way: Suppose one were standing in water up to his neck. And suppose the members of his body in the water were discoursing with one another about their benefits and privileges. Could we not imagine them saying: "We possess all these blessings *in the air* in our head?" So our blessings are in "heavenly places" be-

cause there is our Head who is exalted on high. They are *spiritual*, but still they are literal and real, and to be enjoyed in our physical experience on this earth.

THE FIRST BLESSING—CHOSEN IN CHRIST.

The sum of these blessings we have in Christ is just four, the first being our choice or election in Him:

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (1:4-6).

It were as though God first chose the head and then the members to be united to that head in the formation of the body. Such is the significance of the words “in him.”

But notice *when* we were chosen. Not even before we were born, or were regenerated, or before the earth was created, but before the world was founded! When an athlete is about to make a high jump he takes a long start, and we may imagine the great purpose God has for us in Christ when he began to choose us for it so long ago.

Notice what that purpose is—“That we should be holy and without blame (or blemish) before him.” Nor does this mean merely that at some future time, and in some future world, He will look upon us with such

complacency, but that it has already become true of us in Christ. If the Head is holy and without blemish in God's sight, then every member of the body united to that Head is equally so.

What a wonderful privilege this is, to know that at this moment in Christ Jesus I stand before Him holy, and without blemish and uncharged! What a privilege to know that all the preciousness which God the Father finds in His Son Jesus Christ, He now finds in me as a believer on His Son, and a member of the body of which He is the Head!

And think of His motive in it all as "the good pleasure of his will." We have often wondered why God saved us and have sought the answer in John 3:16. But after all, how inadequate that seems to be. It is not enough to know that "God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son" to die for it, until we know *why* He loved it so. What was there in the world, or in you or me, to waken such love as this? The salvation of my soul, or for that matter, the salvation of the whole world, is not worthy of one drop of the blood of the Son of God. Why then did God give His Son for the world? The only answer that satisfies is this answer, that it was "according to the good pleasure of his will, *to the praise of the glory of his grace.*"

O, what a ground of peace and assurance we have here! Had God saved me merely for my own sake, sooner or later He might have wearied of me because

of my sin and my unloveliness. But when I know that He has saved me for His own sake, I have the same reason for believing that He will *keep* me saved as that He saved me at the beginning, and so I have peace, perfect peace.

THE SECOND BLESSING—REDEEMED IN CHRIST.

It were not enough, however, that God should have chosen us in His Son unless He had gone further and made that choice operative through the cross. We were sinners whom He chose, and our sin must be taken out of the way to make His choice effectual. Hence we read:

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (1:7-10).

Notice again the phrase “in him.” It is in Christ we were chosen, and in Christ we have been redeemed. And notice that the redemption is “through his blood.” It is not the life of Christ that saves men, but His death. Had He come into the world and lived the life He did, and said the wondrous things, and done the mighty deeds, and had not gone to Calvary,

no soul would have been saved from the first Adam until now.

Every other man comes into the world to live, but Jesus Christ came into the world to die. "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," and it is for this reason, and this only, that we have redemption and the forgiveness of our sins.

But this redemption includes something further than forgiveness. We are now his friends, and He makes known to us "the mystery of his will." And what a mystery this is, that "in the dispensation of the fulness of times" He will gather together "all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." There is no restorationism here in the universal sense, for the things in hell are not mentioned. But so far as the things in heaven and the things on earth are concerned, Christ is not only the head of them, but "in the dispensation of the fulness of times" we are to be the head of them as well in Christ. As this same apostle says in another place: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6: 2, 3). O, it were well worth while being a Christian, and it were well worth while really to know *what it is to be a Christian*.

THE THIRD BLESSING—INHERITED IN CHRIST.

Truth so transcendent lacks analogy, but though it seem base and sordid, may attention be called to the

property transaction which these verses bring to our mind? First, God chooses us to be His own possession, then He redeems or buys us back to Himself, and being thus redeemed or bought, we become His inheritance. This is the teaching of the verses that follow:

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ” (1: 11, 12).

The words “We have obtained an inheritance” are rendered in the Revised Version, “We were made an heritage,” which is a stronger affirmation. It is true indeed, that we have obtained an inheritance in Christ as other scriptures indicate, notably 1 Peter 1: 3, 4, but this is not the truth which Paul is setting before us here. We call this a stronger truth because it means so much more to us. If only I have an inheritance in God I might ultimately, through fault of mine, lose it altogether, but when I know that God has an inheritance in me, I am with Paul, “persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Timothy 1: 12). The ground of my assurance in other words, is not my inheritance in God, but His inheritance in me. And here again we are comforted by the revelation that this is true concerning us to the end that “we should be to the praise of his glory.”

THE FOURTH BLESSING—SEALED IN CHRIST.

Here we reach the climax of the transaction. God has not only chosen, and then redeemed, and thus inherited us, but to make sure of his property has taken possession of us. Such is the significance of the words that follow:

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” (1: 13, 14).

The sealing with the “Holy Spirit of promise” we take to be identical with that indwelling of the Holy Spirit of which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 6: 19, and to which he refers again when, in the 12th chapter of the same epistle, he speaks of Christian believers as having been baptized by one Spirit into the body of Christ.

This indwelling of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is an earnest or pledge of our inheritance: that is, of the inheritance which God has in us. In English law an earnest is something of value, it may be money given by the buyer to bind a bargain, or ratify and prove a sale. The parallel cannot be pressed too far, but the truth is clear that God has made us his own beyond a peradventure. The context indicates this by the remark that this earnest has been given us until “the re-

demption of God's own possession," quoting the Revised Version. If we ask what this redemption is, we find it described in the 8th of Romans as the redemption or, in other words, the resurrection and glorification of our bodies at the second coming of Christ. That this great result will be realized in our experience is made sure to us by the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

A TRANSACTION IN REALTY.

The following incident, commonplace as it is, may help to make this clear. A certain New York gentleman purchased from the government the right and title to a large part of the water front on the upper end of Manhattan Island. When the tide was in, scarcely a foot of his property could be seen, and even when it ebbed there was nothing but marsh and mud. To the uninitiated the investment represented nothing of value.

But long since, the waste has been filled in; streets and avenues have been laid out in it, great blocks of buildings cover it, two trolley lines traverse it, and one of the elevated railways runs alongside of it within say 400 feet, for a distance of some blocks. Millions upon millions of dollars now represent the value of the property to the heirs of the original purchaser or its present owners. Of course, the former is supposed to have seen these results when he made the purchase, and to have made it with them in view.

But an interesting point is this: At one period in the history of the transaction there was a rival claimant in the person of one who thought he had discovered a flaw in the owner's title, and who endeavored to wrest it from him. A tedious and expensive lawsuit was begun lasting a number of years, when one day the defendant's counsel said to him: "You cannot retain the title to your property, unless you take possession of it."

And this is what he did. He drove piles into the mud, erected upon them a small two-story frame building, just large enough to afford accommodation for a keeper who remained there day and night. Various devices were used to dislodge him, firearms among others, but in vain. He "held the fort" with absolute fidelity until the legal battle was ended, and the rightful owner entered upon the full enjoyment of his possession.

Although this is a prosaic chapter in the history of a city's material development, yet it is a kind of parable as well of what God has done in our redemption.

In the first place, He has chosen us in Christ to be His possession, not for what He has seen in us as we are by nature, but for what He has purposed for us in His Son. In the second place, He has redeemed or purchased us, "not with corruptible things, such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood" of that same Son, "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1: 18, 19).

But there is a rival claimant to his property—"Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31). And to protect Himself God has taken possession of what belongs to Him. He has put His Spirit within us as our keeper, and by whom we are "sealed" as His, "unto the redemption of God's own possession unto the praise of his glory!" (Ephesians 1:13, 14, R. V.).

Well, therefore, may the writer of the Epistle to the Romans exclaim: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (8:35, 39).

How Christians Grow;
or,
**The Place of the Bible in the
Believer's Life**

CHAPTER V.

HOW CHRISTIANS GROW ;

OR, THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE.

An Exposition of 2 Peter 1:1-11.

In the first place, we must determine that Christians are here addressed. This is a subject however, on which we can have no doubt on general principles, because all the New Testament epistles are so addressed. There is not one written to the unconverted, the unregenerated, the unsaved, but either to a church, a collection of churches or an individual believer.

But there is a particular reason for believing so in this case, judging by the words of greeting or salutation in verse 1 :

“ Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

A Christian is a man who has “obtained” something. It was not born with him in the natural sense, he did not create or merit it in any way, it was just given to him.

That which he has thus obtained is “faith.” As Paul says to the Ephesians (2:8): “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it

is the gift of God." No wonder therefore, that Peter calls it "precious faith." It can not be picked on every bush. "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord."

But how blessed to think that you *can* get it if you really want it! If we know how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more shall our Heavenly Father give good gifts to them that ask Him? Jesus taught us this in the sermon on the mount, and we can never be too thankful that if we ask we shall receive.

But what is the object of this faith by which we become Christians, what does it rest upon? "In the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." I am quoting the Revised Version here which is slightly different from the King James. To begin with, it substitutes "in" for "through" before "righteousness." Very slight, but very important after all. "Through the righteousness of our God" might mean only that it was because He was righteous we obtained the faith. But this would be the cause or ground of it, and not the object.

Now, of course, if God were not the righteous God He is, no such offer of salvation as that which comes to us through Christ ever would have been made. But this is not the meaning of the text exactly. "Righteousness" there does not mean the righteousness which God *is*, but the righteousness which God *gives*.

The idea is something like this: Every man by nature is born into a state of sin which is one of wrong-

ness before God. But to live in God's sight he must be in a state of rightness, or righteousness before Him. How may he get there? How may he obtain a condition of rightness or righteousness that will satisfy God? Only in one way, by receiving it from God Himself. And this God gives to him freely, the moment he receives His testimony concerning Jesus Christ.

This is what is meant by "faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ," faith to accept the righteousness He gives to them that believe.

Our theme is "How Christians Grow," and this of which we have been thus speaking, might be called *the basis of growth*. There can be no growth at all in the physical sense, for example, unless there is physical life as the basis of it. And it is so in the spiritual sense too. There can be no spiritual growth without spiritual life preceding. And there can be no spiritual life except through the new birth. And the new birth comes as we obtain this "precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

I. The Means of Growth.

But just as the basis of growth is the life of God so the means of growth is *the Word of God*. Observe how beautifully and simply the inspired apostle works this out:

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our

Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (verses 2-4).

He who has obtained the precious faith just spoken of, who is a real Christian in other words, has both grace and peace. But there is such a thing as his having more grace and more peace, having them "multiplied" unto him. And the means by which this is accomplished is "through the knowledge of God."

But this does not mean that "knowledge of God" obtained in creation or from His handiwork in nature, but only that which is found in the revelation of His Word. We know this because it is coupled with the knowledge "of Jesus our Lord," and there is no other place than that in which such knowledge is obtained.

But it is not only "grace and peace" that come to us in this way but all things else "that pertain unto life and godliness." What is it that possibly we can want as Christians in order to grow? Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, self-control? It matters not, God gives them to us in this way, i. e., through the knowledge of Him, through the understanding of His Word.

And if it be asked, How? If the method of operation be inquired into, it is very plainly revealed.

In other words, in this Word of God are given to us "exceeding great and precious promises," and as we come to know and desire them the process has a cleansing and separating effect upon our lives.

The text sets this before us by a contrast. In the world there is "corruption," death, decay, waste, blight on everything, and this "through lust." It has its source in the desires and appetites of our old carnal nature, tainting our life, physically, intellectually, morally; the end of which must be all the horrors of what the Scriptures call the "second death," "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power."

But over against this "corruption" in the world are these promises in the Word. And they are alluring in the extreme to the man who already has the new life of God in him to appreciate them. In fact, he feels that he *must* have them, that he can not get along without them, and in the stretch of faith to get them he relaxes his hold upon the things that have occupied him hitherto.

He is like a child with an apple in his hand, who sees you coming toward him with an orange which he desires very much more. And in opening his hand to take the orange he easily drops the apple. The figure the apostle uses is that of a bird in a snare. He says,

we *escape* the conception, we are delivered from the death.

THE TWO COLLEGE BOYS.

I can set this before you by an illustration:

Two college lads were seated together one Sabbath evening in the room of one of them whom we will call George. The name of his guest was Robert.

The former was reading the Bible—a good thing for any boy to be doing in college or out of it, on the Sabbath evening or any other time—while the latter was swinging back and forth in a rocking-chair by his side. He seemed quite inattentive, and yet boy-like, he was all attention. Suddenly he exclaimed:

“Hold on there, George, you’ve made a mistake. You just read, ‘He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life.’ You meant to say, ‘*Shall have* everlasting life.’”

“No, I didn’t,” replied his companion, “that’s the way it’s printed in my Bible.”

“Well,” said Robert, “I don’t believe it; I’ll get my Bible.” Which he did, but the word was there also.

“I don’t believe it yet,” said Robert, “it can’t be true; I’ll borrow another Bible.” But out of the mouths of the three witnesses that word of Jesus in John 5:24 was confirmed.

Then said Robert, “George, if by hearing the words of Jesus and believing Him that sent Him I can have everlasting life, I’m going to have it now.” And im-

mediately falling on his knees by his friend's side, he received the Saviour by faith and confessed Him as his Lord!

Twenty-five years of a consecrated Christian life, most of them spent in the ministry of the Gospel, have proven the genuineness of his act that night, and the truth of that promise on which He had come to trust. In that instant, and forever, he "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

But this, remember, is only an initial promise, and that by which we enter the new life in Christ. There are other promises farther on, and as we come to know and act upon them in the same way we "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3: 18).

II. The Nature of Growth.

The Holy Spirit is a great teacher who when He begins a subject completes it. That is the reason we should always study a text in the light of its context in order to learn the mind of the Spirit.

For example, in this place, He not only tells us the basis and the means of Christian growth, but also describes its nature. In the simplest terms He reveals how we may know whether it is being accomplished in us or not, saying:

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to

knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness: and to brotherly kindness charity" (verses 5-7).

Here is a superstructure of seven stories we are to erect upon the great, broad, deep foundation of our faith.

This faith has been given us of God underlying our whole spiritual life, and now we are to add to it *virtue*. This does not mean that we can add to it by our own strength or ability, but only through the grace of God assisting us; and yet nevertheless, there is a real and important sense in which the work is ours, or we could not be exhorted to it in this way.

The Revised Version states it thus: "Yea, and for this very cause, adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue."

That is, on account of these "exceeding great and precious promises" of God, because of their help to you, because of what they are meant to accomplish in conforming you to the divine nature, because of your need of them to escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust," "*for this very cause, adding on your part all diligence.*"

That which *we* add in other words, is not virtue but diligence. The first comes from God, but the latter is the means we should exercise to obtain it. We add the diligence and the result is a "supply" of virtue.

Notice the peculiar phraseology of the Revised Version, "in your faith supply virtue." We have the faith, and it is the sphere in which the virtue manifests itself.

But "virtue" here is not to be taken in the limited sense of chastity, or even in the broader sense of moral excellence in general, but as many commentators think, in the sense of fortitude or courage, perhaps also firmness, energy. Of course it means firmness or energy in our new life in Christ. The steadfastness of one who knows whom and what he believes, has the courage of his convictions in witnessing therefor at all times.

And in our virtue we are to supply "knowledge," the knowledge of God of which we have spoken before, and yet that knowledge now considered in a practical sense. The knowledge of what it becomes a Christian to do in the various relations and duties of life.

And in knowledge, "temperance," which here means self-control. Not merely temperance in the limited sense of abstinence from intoxicating drink as it is now used, but in the broadest sense of the government of all our appetites, and not only our appetites but our judgments, our tastes, our speech, our habits and our conduct in all things. "Temperance" here calls for an equipoise, a calmness, a moderation in thinking and acting that bespeaks a well-balanced mind as associated with a clean heart.

And in temperance, "*patience.*" Much like "virtue" is this, except that it is steadfastness considered from its gentler and quieter side. It is the steadfastness that endures suffering and withstands temptation, whether it be the opposition of the world or the assaults of Satan. It is the undistracted mind of the man who has come to trust under the shadow of the divine wing.

And in patience, "*godliness.*" The meaning of this is not easy to determine, unless we shall say with some that it qualifies, or rather designates, the patience that is meant. A patience that thinks of God, that draws its strength from Him; a "patience of hope" as one expresses it, and which like that of Moses endures "as seeing Him who is invisible," or that of Jesus Christ Himself, "who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2).

And in godliness, "*brotherly kindness,*" or kindness to them that are our brethren in Christ, and for that reason. And in brotherly kindness "charity," which here and in corresponding places in the New Testament, should be translated "love." Perhaps "love" is here distinguished from "kindness" in the sense merely of its deeper intensity, unless we shall take the view of some that "it extends the sphere of our affections beyond the limits of the Christian brotherhood and includes all men." That love of the world for example, which God had in that He gave His only begotten Son to die for its redemption.

This is the nature of Christian growth. These things constitute its character in us. How important for us to inquire if we possess them?

That fortitude and courage, that firmness and energy in the acting out of our Christian life which leave no doubt in the minds of men as to "whom we are and whom we serve," do we possess this virtue? That spiritual understanding that enables us to properly determine the questions of casuistry that are coming up every day. That restraint of passion, and judgment, and taste and habit that marks us of another world. That long-suffering and meekness, that hope and trust in God, that love for one another and that sympathy and compassion for the lost that brought the Lord of glory to the cross.

Are these things ours? Are we giving diligence to attain them? If the means is the Word of God, how much time and attention are we giving to that Word? To what extent do we "desire" it that we may "grow thereby"?

III. The Result of Growth.

Finally, to stimulate us to this diligence, the writer sets before us the result of growth, its real and present value to the man who experiences it. That result is threefold:

First, there is the result of fruitfulness.

"For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor un-

fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and can not see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (verses 8, 9).

"For if these things be in you." What things? Manifestly the seven just enumerated, which include the whole scope of Christian conduct. *"And abound."* It is not enough to have them except as we have them to the full and overflowing. But perhaps the word "increase" expresses the thought better than abound. It is as we have these things in us and are growing and *increasing* in them that we are neither *"barren nor unfruitful,"* or *"idle and unfruitful"* as it might be translated. It is the thought of the parable where the men were standing in the marketplace doing nothing, "all the day idle." *"Barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Here is the sphere of our fruitfulness. But how are we to understand the words? Do they mean the knowledge of His life, and character, and work and teaching? Or that of our standing and position before God in Him? Perhaps both, for certainly it is as our practical holiness deepens the range and clearness of our spiritual vision extends.

"But he that lacketh these things is blind"—and yet not altogether blind, he is still a Christian though an indifferent and unfruitful one, but blind in that he *"can not see afar off."* He is a near-sighted Christian, in other words, only his near-sightedness does not so

much affect his look forward as his look backward. He "*hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*" The cost of his redemption, and the meaning and significance of it, to say nothing of its one-time joy and power has practically faded from his mind, lost its potency in his heart. When these things go, when mercy, and love and peace have ceased their operation what is left for us? Well, may we covet fruitfulness!

Second, there is the result of assurance.

"Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." (verse 10).

Some Christians are always asking how they may know they are saved. Here is their answer. Others are questioning the possibility of such knowledge this side of heaven. Here is their rebuke. It is not only our privilege but our duty to possess assurance, and in its absence there is something wrong with us.

Observe, the same "diligence" is to be brought into requisition here. That which produces the growth and the fruit in other words, brings with it the feeling of security. "It is up to us," as the saying is, to make our "*calling and election sure.*" Not sure so far as God is concerned, it could not be surer in His mind than it was from the beginning, but sure so far as we ourselves are concerned.

And thus to make it sure is just to "do these things," and keep on doing them and increasing in them. Then we "*shall never fall,*" or "stumble," as the Revised Version puts it. If one is walking a narrow path on a dark night, if he knows that there are stones and a ditch on either side, and yet he is never tripping over the one or slipping into the other, he must be pretty certain he is on the right road. And in the same way, if we are never failing in these things, if virtue, and knowledge, and temperance and patience, and godliness and brotherly kindness and love, are in us and abounding, we experience little anxiety about the things of greatest concern. We know that all is well, and peace that floweth as a river is our continued portion.

Third, there is the result of reward.

"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (verse 11).

There is such a thing as just an entrance into that kingdom, and then there is such another thing as an abundant entrance, a figure which suggests that of Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (3:12), where he speaks of a building of wood, hay, stubble, and another of gold, silver, precious stones. The first shall be burned and the man shall suffer loss, though "he himself shall be saved." It will be a salvation though, as of fire. And so this may be an entrance, if

the man is a true believer, and regenerated, but only an entrance and nothing more if he be not diligent. The gate will close behind him and that is all.

But the word "*ministered*" is full of meaning. It is the same as that rendered in verse 5 by "add," and which the Revised Version translates "supply." If you supply in your faith those evidences of growth spoken of, even so will there be supplied to you an abundant entrance. It is not exactly a "*quid pro quo*," which the thought of grace excludes, and yet it is undoubtedly a sowing bountifully which reaps also bountifully. What a thought for us to keep in mind every day!

And the "*everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*," what is meant by that? The kingdom bequeathed to Him by His Father, and yet to be established in manifested glory throughout the earth? Yes, doubtless, for He has promised to come again and bring His reward with Him. And "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:4). There is joy in that kingdom and degrees of joy, there is honor and degrees of honor, there is power and degrees of power. There is everything to accentuate the thought of the abundant entrance.

And still, I like the thought of Calvin, that Peter is here referring to supplies of present grace. In a sense the kingdom is here now. Not in its manifested state, of course, but as represented in the lives of those chil-

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dren of the kingdom who through faith have accepted the King and are waiting for His coming.

There is an entrance into that kingdom now, and an abundant entrance. There are Christians who know what the abundant entrance means today. "Great peace have they that love thy law," the psalmist sings. This is the abundant entrance and the cause of it. "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11). Here we see it again. The Bible is rich in these intimations, and the experiences of the saints corroborate them.

Ah! it is worth while for Christians to grow! And it is worth while to read the Word of God, to believe it, to obey it, and to feed the soul upon it, that they *may* grow.

The Christian's Hope and Ambition

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE AND AMBITION.

An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 5: 1-10.

I

We begin with the motive:

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (1-4).

Here is something we *know*. It is no surmise, nor probability, nor uncertainty. If we are looking for positive teaching and definite facts in this age of doubt, here is an affirmation to tie to. And how many such there are after all, and concerning the most vital affairs of men, if only we are willing to take God's word for them!

And this is what we know—“That if our earthly house of this tabernacle,” by which is meant our bodily frame, “were dissolved, we have a building of God,” i. e., a resurrection body, “an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

"If" it be dissolved. It may not be so necessarily. There is a passage in Hebrews which says: "It is appointed unto men once to die." But it is not so appointed unto *all* men, and *absolutely*. There is one generation of men who shall never see death, and that is those, who, being alive in the flesh and remaining on this earth till Jesus comes, and believing on Him, "shall be caught up in the clouds to meet him in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17). "We shall not all sleep," said Paul to this same church of Corinth in his earlier epistle (15: 51), "but we shall all be changed." This change may take place in one of two ways, by death or by translation, and for many it will be the latter and not the former way.

Now the early Christians were expecting the return of the Lord in their own day. They were not looking for death, and for dissolution in that sense, but for His coming. Nevertheless, Paul says, if we should be disappointed in this hope, if the Lord should tarry longer than we expect, and our bodies should be dissolved by death, still it remains true that we have a resurrection body awaiting us, "a building of God, an house not made with hands."

Notice the contrast between "tabernacle" and "building." Perhaps the inspired writer had in mind the tabernacle in the wilderness where Israel worshipped God, and the temple of Solomon's erection afterwards in Jerusalem. The first was just a temporary affair, a tent that could be taken down and

moved anywhere at short notice. But the temple was intended to be permanent. So our present bodies are merely tents for a fleeting moment, but the bodies that are to be are "eternal," and their location is "in the heavens."

"Forever with the Lord,
Amen, so let it be!
Life from the dead is in that word,
'Tis immortality."

THE GLORY COVERING.

In these bodies "we groan," the apostle says. Ah! there is so much to make us groan, the ills that flesh is heir to, the burdens and perplexities of the mind, the sorrows and bereavements of the heart. But the special object for which the intelligent Christian groans is "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23); or as the text expresses it, that we may be "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," that we may receive our resurrection body. It is then that we are delivered "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty (or the glory of the liberty) of the children of God."

It is important to keep in mind that it is not *death* for which the Christian groans, but the resurrection from the dead. Death is a "naked" and "unclothed"—a disembodied state, but resurrection is just the opposite. In resurrection we are "clothed upon," and "mortality is swallowed up of life." This is the signif-

icance of the words: "If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked." There is no doubt that we shall be clothed, the apostle says: the reception of the resurrection body is a certainty; but what we desire is that we may not receive it after we have passed into the naked or disembodied state, but even now while we are alive in this state and occupying our present bodily frame!

The fourth verse of the text is very beautiful. We give Murdock's translation from the Syriac:

"For while we are here in this house we groan under its burden; yet ye desire, not to throw it off, but to be clothed over it, so that its mortality may be absorbed in life."

At death the Christian "throws off" this body, but at the translation when the Lord comes, he does not throw it off, but the resurrection body clothes him "over it," that which is mortal, "in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye" becomes "absorbed" in that which is immortal.

Therefore the hope of the Christian is the coming of Christ. It is for *Him* he is looking, who when He comes shall change these bodies of our humiliation "like unto his own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Philippians 3:21, R. V.). This is the motive that stirs the Christian to that aim or ambition of which, a little later, the apostle speaks.

II

Let us look at the assurance of this hope, or the strengthening of the motive:

“Now he that hath wrought us for this self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (5-8).

“Now he that wrought us for the selfsame thing is God.” A more terse, complete and satisfying statement of the Christian's ground of hope than this could scarcely be expressed. It were as though the apostle said: “The very object God had in view in your redemption and regeneration through Christ was this, that you might be raised from the dead and glorified with Him.” Shall God fail of His object? Is He likely to change His mind? If it were but a man's purpose, would not he bend every energy of his will, and strain every nerve of his strength to carry it into execution, and shall we predicate less of God? Who can doubt, for a moment, that if this is the purpose for which God has planned all His work of salvation in us, He will ultimately see it through?

But there is something even stronger than this, for God “hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.” The

Holy Spirit is here meant, Who dwells in us as regenerated believers in Christ Jesus, and Who is God's earnest, God's security, God's pledge or promise that this thing shall come to pass. Macbeth was hailed thane of Cawdor "for an earnest of a greater honor," and we have received the Holy Spirit to dwell within us as an earnest of the glory we shall have when we appear with Christ.

This helps us to understand what Paul means when he says in the text: "Therefore we are always confident," or rather, "always of good courage." "We are now at home in the body," to paraphrase his words, "and absent from the Lord"; we are on earth rather than in heaven; we are walking by faith rather than by sight; nevertheless, we are of good courage. We are willing rather to be absent from the body. We are pleased were it the Lord's will to be even in the disembodied state, and present with Him; but whatever our present condition or experience in this respect may be, we are of good courage. We are of good courage in view of God's purpose concerning us and the earnest of His Spirit, that we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, and that we shall be clothed upon therewith, and our "mortality swallowed up of life."

The author of the *Bible Commentary* takes pains to notice that to be "with the Lord," i. e., in the disembodied state, is distinguished here from the Lord's coming to take us to be with Him in soul and body

both (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), and adds this interesting comment: "Perhaps the disembodied spirits of believers have fullness of communion with Christ unseen; but not the mutual recognition of one another until clothed with their visible bodies at the resurrection. It is then that with joy we shall recognize Christ's image in each other perfect."

III

We have now reached the apostle's aim:

"Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (9-11).

"*Wherefore,*" i. e., because of our confidence concerning the resurrection of the body at Christ's coming and the glory that shall be ours, "we labor," i. e., we make it our aim, as the Revised Version puts it; we are ambitious, in other words, that whether present here in our body on the earth when He comes, or absent from the body and in the unclothed state, we may be accepted of Him, or well-pleasing in His sight.

The principle governing the lives of the great is always an interesting and profitable study. What governed Napoleon, or Bismarck, or Garibaldi? What was the secret of Tolstoi's life, what made Abraham

Lincoln? How can you account for the success of a wizard like Thomas A. Edison? What makes a great merchant like Marshall Field, or a financier like Pierpont Morgan?

But here is a man greater than any one of them. What statesman, warrior, philosopher, man of affairs can measure up to the apostle Paul in his influence upon human history? Has any greater man than he lived since Jesus Christ? Could all the great men of these nineteen centuries rolled into one, be said to have affected their race for good in comparison with this consecrated missionary to the Gentiles? As Martin Luther said three hundred years ago, so can we still say: "His words are not dead words, they are living creatures with hands and feet," touching in myriads of hearts at this very hour the same chords of feeling which vibrated at their first utterance! The Lord Jesus Christ gave life to His church, but the apostle Paul by His grace has given it its form.

Let the strong young men of this generation study this life. Let them concentrate their attention on the *best*. What governed Paul? What stimulated this giant in intellect and moral power? What was the secret of his enduring success? The goal of his ambition, the prize he sought, the aim towards which his energies were bent? Was it gold? Honor? Material power? Was it any gain of sense or time?

Paul was not a fool. He was a clear-headed, warm-hearted, far-sighted man. He had the highest educa-

tion of his time. He had the greatest influence among his countrymen. He possessed the unusual privileges of a Roman citizen. His ancestry, surroundings, training, character, position, made him, at the zenith of his youth, the most enviable of his generation. But these things he counted loss for Christ, they were refuse in his sight in comparison with what the Lord of glory had to offer. He "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." He walked "by faith, not by sight." Jesus was coming again to bring His reward with Him, and the aim of this greatest and mightiest of men was to be accepted, to be well-pleasing in His sight. It was this that made him glory in his infirmities, in his troubles and his labors, his beatings and scourgings, his perils by the land and by the sea, his famine and his nakedness, and the daily care of all the churches. What a lesson for us today! What an example! What an inspiration!

If Paul's testimony may be taken, it were worth while to await the coming of Jesus Christ for His saints and the resurrection of the dead. It were worth while to be accepted and well-pleasing in His sight when He comes, for "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that then shall be revealed in us." This glory is so great that the whole creation, animate and inanimate, is groaning and travailing in pain together until now, awaiting it (Romans 8: 18-23).

THE DOCTRINE OF REWARDS.

But there is a certain qualification to this thought of glory, for the apostle says:

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

There can be no objection to the most inclusive application of the word “all” in this case for it is clear from other scriptures that no individual soul can escape passing in judgment before the Son of God. But nevertheless, we believe with others, that Paul is here limiting it to Christians. The judgment seat of which he speaks is that which shall be set up when Jesus comes “a second time without sin unto salvation,” and when the church shall be caught up to meet Him in the air. It is the judgment seat before which Christians only shall appear. The context seems to demand this.

But the question arises as to why *Christians* should be judged, since the scripture says, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Roman 8:1). And the answer is that they are not judged as sinners but as saints. It is not a question of their salvation that is to be determined, but a question of their fidelity as disciples, in order to the adjudication of their rewards. The text parallels perfectly, for example, with such a parable as that of the talents or the pounds (Matthew 25; Luke 19). It is

the return of the nobleman, having received his kingdom, who is now reckoning with his stewards before he punishes his enemies, and assigning to each the place in the kingdom he is to occupy.

Notice that we are to "receive the things done in the *body*," i. e., by the instrumentality of the body, which is "a proof of the essential identity of the natural and resurrection body." The *Bible Commentary* says: "Justice requires that substantially the same body which has been the instrument of the unbeliever's sins should be the object of punishment," but if this be true, the other side of the case is also true, and substantially the same body that rendered the acceptable service should receive the reward. These rewards will be received according to what we have done.

On this whole question of rewards there is much confusion in the Christian mind. To quote another: "If the Romanist has exalted merit to the utter exclusion of grace, the Protestant may be in danger of exalting grace to the utter exclusion of merit." Of course merit has nothing to do with our pardon and acceptance. As sinners standing before the mercy seat "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" but as saints standing before the judgment seat of Christ there *will* be a difference since they are to "be judged every man according to their works."

Rewards therefore, have an important place in the scheme of redemption, and "it is not necessary, in

order to magnify the grace of God that, having reduced all men to the same level of unworthiness, we should fix them there forever." Otherwise what means the words of the prophet that they who turn many to righteousness, "shall shine as the stars forever and ever"?

It is indeed because of these distinctions in disciples in the life to come, that while God in one place says: "Look unto me, and be ye saved," He does in another say: "Look to *yourselves*, . . . that ye receive a full reward" (Isaiah 45:22; 2 John 8, R. V.).

THE WISDOM OF WINNING SOULS.

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." This was Paul's chief service for His Lord "to persuade men," to pray them "in Christ's stead" to be "reconciled to God." This, in the concrete, was his ambition and aim. And the motive stimulating thereto was, also in the concrete, "the fear (not terror) of the Lord."

The Revised Version translates "terror" by "fear" and the reference is not to the fear of the ungodly in perdition, but the fear of the godly as he stands before the judgment seat of Christ. The fear of the ungodly were in itself a sufficient motive for seeking to save them from their sin, and Paul employs it at other times, but he does not employ it here. He is thinking of himself here, and the accounting he must render to the Lord of glory for the fidelity and diligence with which he has witnessed to His name.

Let the writer press the application of this upon his hearers with the following incident:

When he was quite a young man he heard the Rev. George J. Mingins, pastor-evangelist in the Presbyterian Church, relate this experience:

He had been an infidel in his youth and associated with infidel companions in Philadelphia. Some time after his conversion he was visiting one of them, who said:

"George, I hear you're a Christian now, is that so?"

"It is," said Mr. Mingins.

"And George, do you believe in God?"

"I do."

"And do you believe in hell, and that all who do not believe in God and in Jesus Christ will ultimately go to hell?"

"I do, most solemnly."

"Well, George" said he, "does Christianity dry up all the milk of humanity in one's body as it has in yours?"

"Why," said Mr. Mingins, "what do you mean?"

"I mean this," he replied, "that here you have been living under my roof three days and three nights, knowing and believing all this, and yet you have never put your hand on my shoulder, or said one word to save me!"

I wonder how many more of us Christians may have such an indictment as this laid at our doors? Of how many of us is it true that there is "bone of our bone

and flesh of our flesh " who has yet to find the Saviour, and to whom we have yet to say the first word expressing interest in their condition? And this says nothing about the wider circle of our friendship and acquaintance in business and society: nor the great fields, white unto the harvest, in heathen lands, where perhaps not even one dollar of our money has ever gone.

"O, Christians, view the day
Of retribution! Think how ye will hear
From your Redeemer's lips, the fearful words:
'Thy brother perishing in his own blood
Thou sawest—thy brother hungered, was athirst,
Was naked, and thou sawest it. He was sick,
Thou didst withhold the healing; was in prison
To vice and ignorance—nor didst thou send
To set him free!' Oh, ere that hour of doom,
Whence there is no reprieve, brethren, awake
From this dark dream."

Fellowship With God

CHAPTER VII.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, AND HOW IT IS MAINTAINED.

An Exposition of 1 John 1 and 2.

It is an interesting fact that almost each of the New Testament epistles has in it one leading or central theme. It were as though the Holy Spirit intended to write a monologue on each of the great truths He desired to reveal to the hearts of God's people. And one of the most precious and important of all is that of this epistle—"Fellowship with God."

It is also interesting to observe the way in which the writer works out his theme, so to speak. He does it in a series of three cycles of thought. He says first, "God is light," the inference from which is that to be in fellowship with God one must be walking in the light. In the second place, he says "God is righteous," the inference being that to have fellowship with God one must be doing righteousness. In the third place, "God is love," the inference being that to hold fellowship with God one must be experiencing and manifesting love.

It is only the first of these that we have time to dwell upon tonight: "God is light," and to have fellowship with God one must be walking in the light.

In the first verse of the epistle, the writer refers to the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He

is addressing Christians who were very evidently familiar with his Gospel, in which he had already alluded to our blessed Lord in the same language, saying: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father." Here he is bearing testimony again to that great and so important fact that the religion of Jesus Christ is a historical religion, and that Jesus Christ is Himself a historical person who lived in the flesh, and was heard and seen and looked upon and handled. "We declare this unto you (third verse) that ye may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

After stating the theme he elaborates it in verses 5, 6 and 7:

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

For example, the question arises, If God is light and to have fellowship with Him is to walk in the light, what is meant by walking in the light? We should be so thankful that God leaves us in no doubt as to

what is meant, and that we have a practical, everyday answer to the question.

I

And what is the answer? First, we are walking in the light as we are perceiving and confessing sin in the faith of Jesus Christ. (See verses 7 to 10 of the first chapter, and 1 and 2 of the second chapter.)

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

There is no sin on us, of course. It has been borne by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but there is still sin *in us*. We are not dwelling in sin, in other words, but sin is still dwelling *in us*. Our old Adamic nature is still with us and every once in a while it comes to the surface through temptation. If we say this is not so, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth, i. e., no light, in us.

But we must not only be perceiving sin, but confessing it (1: 9). I suppose that one might ask forgiveness of his sin every day in the year, and never have the assurance that it was forgiven so far as this promise is concerned, but the moment he confesses it, it is not only his privilege, but his duty, to believe that it has been forgiven, and that he has been cleansed from his unrighteousness.

The difference is this. We may ask forgiveness for sin without really knowing what our sin is, without ever bringing ourself into the place of judgment for it. But the moment we confess it we bring it out in the light of God's countenance, and take the same place with reference to it that God takes.

But this is not enough. We must not only perceive and confess sin, but it must be done in the faith of Jesus Christ (2: 1). It is the man who sees Jesus Christ as his propitiation, the One in whom he has forgiveness, in whom he is brought into a state of peace with God through His shed blood, and his ever living Advocate and Intercessor, who is in fellowship with God.

Do we stand in that attitude? Are we really resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ? Has he become our Propitiation and our Advocate? Have we laid hold of and are we living in the realization and the enjoyment of these great facts? This is to be in fellowship with God.

II

But secondly, we walk in the light not only as we perceive and confess sin in the faith of Jesus Christ,

but as we are keeping God's commandments. (See verses 3 to 6 of the second chapter.)

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked.”

Let us note the deep and practical significance of the words—“Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.” Does He mean the Ten Commandments? Yes, but that is not all. He means every commandment that God has written in His Word from Genesis to Revelation, and which has a bearing upon us in the dispensation in which we live. And not only every commandment in the written Word, but every commandment recorded on our enlightened conscience in Christ. He only is holding fellowship with God who is keeping these commandments for He only knows that he knows Him.

“To walk even as he walked.” How did Jesus Christ walk? He tells us in the eighth chapter of John, where He says: “He that sent me is with me: the Father has not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him.” That was the reason He had fellowship with His Father, because He did always the things that pleased Him.

And we have the testimony not only of the Son, but also of the Father, to the same fact. When He came to be baptized of John, we hear the Father saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." That testimony has reference to those thirty hidden years He spent in the unsavory village of Nazareth. God was well pleased with Him from the beginning. As a babe on His mother's knee, as a boy playing in village streets, as a youth learning the carpenter's trade, as a journeyman carpenter earning His own living, contributing to the support of His mother and His brothers. Well pleased with Him in the days when the muscles of His arms were hardening, when His fingers were gnarled by the use of heavy tools, when the sweat was on His brow as He labored in His little shop. All His life He was well pleasing to His Father and thus holding fellowship with God.

III

In the third place, we are walking in the light as we love the brethren. (See chapter 2, verses 7 to 11.)

"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his

brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."

Verse seven perhaps alludes to that commandment which sums up the second table of the law—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," while the eighth, it may be, alludes to the special commandment to love one another as brethren in Christ.

There is a difference between these two loves—the love for our neighbor as such, and love for our brethren in Christ.

We cannot say that we are walking in the light and holding fellowship with God except as we are manifesting this love toward the brethren. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now."

Some Christians think this commandment the hardest ever laid upon them, but the reason is that they do not consider the real meaning of it. They think of that natural passion or emotion which we call love—between brother and sister, between husband and wife, between parent and child—and naturally ask, How can we have that love for one just because he is a Christian, one that we do not know very well and who may not be very lovable in his character?

But that is not the kind of love meant. It is not natural, but supernatural love. The love born in the

heart of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, because he has been born again and is a new creation in Jesus Christ. With that new creation has come the new love for all who are new creatures with him in Christ Jesus.

We have the definition of this love by the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 13—where Paul, speaking of it, says: “Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” That is the kind of love referred to. And that love is perfectly possible for us if we really desire it. And indeed, except as we are possessing and manifesting it towards one another in Christ, are we fulfilling the commandment of holding fellowship with God?

IV

Fourth, we are walking in the light and holding fellowship with God when we are separated from the world. (See verses 15 to 17 of second chapter.)

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

When John says: "Love not the world," he does not mean the material world, the flowers and the trees, and the mountains and the oceans. Neither is he referring to the world of men and women, for there is a proper love for our relatives in the flesh, and it would be sinful not to manifest it. But He means that love of the world which is contrary to the love of the Father, the pleasures, the fame, the spirit of the world as opposed to God and His Son Jesus Christ. He means by "the lust of the flesh" for example, the desires and gratifications of our old fallen nature as such. When the woman saw that the fruit was good for food (the lust of the flesh), that it was pleasant to the eyes (the lust of the eyes), and to be desired to make one wise (the pride of life), she took of the fruit of the tree and gave also to her husband and he did eat (Genesis 3).

Observe the corresponding temptation on the second Adam in the wilderness. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," the lust of the flesh. Then he taketh Him into a high mountain apart, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and says: "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me,"—the lust of the eyes. And he carried Him to a pinnacle of the temple,—“Cast thyself down: for it is written, 'He shalt give his angels charge concerning thee,' ”—the pride of life as seen in the doing of a great miracle.

So Satan tempts every one of us in one of these three ways. Not necessarily in all of them, for there are some of whom he can get possession through the lust of the flesh, the lower and baser things of life. Others he can get possession of through the lust of the eyes—the glamour, the pleasures and amusements, the gold and silver of the world. There are others he cannot touch in these ways, but secures by the pride of life, the exaltation of human reason against the revelation of God, the setting up of our thought against the divine thought. So we are all ensnared. When He says: “Love not the things of the world,” this is what He means.

He gives us too, a practical argument against our loving these things. “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.” Not only does the world pass away but the very desire thereof passes away. You remember Barzillai. When David is returning after his exile, subsequent to the death of Absalom, he feels kindly toward him, and says: “Come home with me, and sit at my table for the rest of your life.” But Barzillai answers: “Why should I do this? I am now so old I cannot hear the voices of the singing men and the singing women; I cannot taste the delicacies set before me. The time has passed for me to enjoy these things. Do thou go over without me.”

You remember the story of the rich man in hell. Even there the lust of the world is gone. Dives did not want to be taken out of hell, the world had no at-

tractions for him. He was willing to remain if only his situation could be made more comfortable. "Let Lazarus dip his finger in water, and touch my tongue." It is only he that doeth the will of God that abideth forever.

V

Fifth, we are walking in the light and holding fellowship with God not merely as we are separated from the world, but as we are separated from false teachers. Nothing is of more importance to us just now than this. Now read verses 18-28 of the second chapter:

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. * * * * Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. * * * * And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

We understand that the antichrist, when he comes, will be an individual, a secular despot, greater than Nebuchadnezzar, or Alexander, or Cæsar or Napoleon, or all of them rolled into one. But when John says

there are many antichrists, he means in the sense of types or forerunners of the one who shall arise at the end of the age.

The difference between the false teachers then and now is, that in John's day, "the false teachers went out from us, because they were not of us," while now they stay in the church, and you cannot drive them out.

In verse 22, he warns us that the center of all the false teaching consists of opposition to the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" Here is the bottom of it. We have been passing through a battle with the higher criticism, supposed to be directing its shafts against the Word of God, but the real object is not the written Word, but the Word incarnate. If this is not true of the rationalistic critic, it is true of the devil behind him. He tries first to undermine the written word, and then the Incarnate Word.

But to deny Jesus Christ is to deny the Father as well as the Son. And this is not the Christ of Mrs. Eddy, nor the Christ of the New Thought, nor the Christ of the popular magazines, nor the Christ of some of the popular preachers of the day, but the Christ of the Word of God. The Christ who was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. The Christ who suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried. Who on the third day rose again and ascended into heaven, and now sitteth on the right hand of God. And who shall come again

in power and great glory and bring His reward with Him.

That Christ is being denied today even in Christian pulpits. So much so that I school myself not to use the phrase "the Christ" any more, because it is used in so many instances where it means something so different from what is revealed in the Gospel. I try to say "Jesus Christ," or "our Lord Jesus Christ," or "our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Thus we see that holding fellowship with God is a very simple thing, and we can know whether we are doing so by knowing whether we are walking in the light.

1. Do we as Christians perceive the sin in our lives?
2. Are we confessing it in the faith of Jesus Christ as our Propitiation and our Advocate?
3. Are we keeping God's commandments and walking as Jesus walked?
4. Are we loving the brethren just *because* they are brethren in Christ and fellow-members of the body of which He is the Head?
5. Are we separated from the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life?
6. Are we separated from false teachers in that we are loyal to the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as God has revealed Him to us in His Word?

If so, we need not fear the day when He shall appear, for "We shall have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Rivers of Living Water;

or,

How the Believer Becomes a Blessing

CHAPTER VIII.

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER;

OR, HOW THE BELIEVER BECOMES A BLESSING.

An Exposition of John 7: 37-39.

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”

Let me speak first to you of this feast. It was the Feast of Tabernacles, and came in the fall of the year, about our October. The Jews were an agricultural people, and the harvest was now garnered, and a time of rest and recreation and gladness had come.

The men were required to go up to Jerusalem at this feast, which commemorated the time, fifteen hundred years before, when their ancestors, not yet welded into a nation, were journeying in the wilderness, and dwelling temporarily in tabernacles or tents on their way to Canaan. While the men only were required to go up, yet many brought their women with them, their wives and children, to par-

take of the social and religious festivities of the time. There were no locomotives in those days, no trolley cars, no stage coaches nor omnibuses, no farm wagons and carryalls, and the people walked. The older and the feebler might ride on asses or donkeys, but for the most part they walked, no matter how long the journey nor how much time it took.

Picture the happy scene. From every hamlet, village and town, the people are gathering out into the great highway leading to Mount Zion. They have not met before for months or perhaps a year. The men are discussing politics and the crops, the women are enjoying their neighborly gossip, the children are romping in the way, the young men and maidens are making love, and God looks down upon it all in gracious favor, for He has planned it all, and desires His people to be happy, only that they be happy in Him.

The feast lasts a week—a week of eight days—and during this whole time the people are living in the open. They are dwelling in booths made of boughs and branches of the trees. They are having a social time, and yet it is a religious time. The temple is the great centre of attraction. The priests and the Levites are continually occupied in presenting the people's offerings and in the public worship of God. The singing of glad songs and the sweet sounds of the instruments of music fill the air.

But the great day of the feast is the last day. A unique ceremony takes place on this day. It takes place, perhaps, on each day, but there are special features connected with it on this day. The priests and Levites form in grand procession, ("the former carrying golden vessels in their hands, and chanting the psalms of Zion and playing on the instruments of music,") and march to the historic pool of Siloam. There they fill the vessels with its sacred water, and return in the same manner to the temple court. And now, at a given signal, the contents of the vessels are poured out upon the brazen altar, to the accompaniment of such a shout of exultation as at no other time and no other place was ever heard.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRANSACTION.

But what is the significance of this transaction, or what meaning does it bear? We must go back seven hundred years to the prophet Isaiah to find out. The people were iniquitous and living in disobedience to God, experiencing all the suffering and sorrow incident to such a course. But God had graciously promised them a revival, saying by the prophet:

"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call him-

self by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel" (Isaiah 44: 3-5).

The people were in such a case in Jesus' day. Indeed, they were almost always in such a case. And the transaction just referred to was in some respects an emblem of their condition. They were supposed in that transaction to confess their need to God, to plead their thirst, and to appeal to Him for the fulfillment of the promise of His Spirit.

Jesus seizes upon this moment, for He is present at the feast. He stands and cries. He takes His position on some exalted place, and lifting His voice as it is not said He did at any other time, they hear Him say: "If any man thirst, let him come unto *me*, and drink!"

Jesus is the Very God, or else He is the greatest blasphemer and impostor who ever lived. This invitation on His part proves Him to be either the one or the other. Who hath power to pour out the Holy Spirit, save God only? Is this not His prerogative alone? And yet Jesus in this instance claims it as His own. Are not His countrymen here professing to be athirst? Are they not apparently seeking the Holy Spirit? And does He not say: "I am He who is able and willing to supply your need?" What other application can be given to the words: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink"?

THE MEANING OF JESUS' WORDS.

But how can a man "drink" of Jesus? What is the meaning of that word "drink"? Let Jesus Himself explain, when in the next sentence He says:

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

To come to Jesus and to drink of Jesus is to believe on Jesus. And if one ask, what it is to "believe" on Jesus, the answer is, to commit yourself to Jesus, to commit yourself to Him as your Saviour to be saved and as your Lord you would serve.

On one occasion in Jesus' ministry, earlier than this, there were many who believed on Him when they saw the miracles He did. But it is added that "Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men." We know what "commit" means in this case. We know that He did not trust Himself to these men, that He did not put Himself in their hands or "give Himself away" to them. But this word "commit" is in the Greek the same as our word "believe," and it might be rendered, "Jesus did not *believe* Himself unto them, for He knew what was in man." If, then, commit is to believe, to believe is to commit; and the man who commits himself to Jesus, who trusts himself, who gives himself away to Jesus as his Saviour and his Lord, that man "comes" to Jesus and "drinks" of Jesus and is blessed.

But what is the blessing he receives? It is not only a blessing for himself, but a blessing for others through himself—"Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." He himself shall be filled with blessing and shall overflow in blessing. By "his belly" is figuratively meant the source or fountain of his inner being. And by the "living water" is meant that supply of spiritual and eternal life which he possesses, and which he shall minister to all about.

Let us name some of these rivers of living water:

1. *There is the river of a Christian character.* I was once the pastor of a church where a certain man, past middle age, presented himself for membership on confession of his faith. The church committee was surprised, for they had known this man these many years as a scoffer at Christianity and an absentee from church. What had brought about this change, they asked. Watching the life of his neighbor, Mr. D——, he replied. Mr. D—— was a Christian and a member of this church, who had lived in his proximity a long while. He had observed him going in and out, he had studied him in his home and in his business, until at length he was convinced Mr. D——'s religion was a religion he required, and his neighbor's God should be his God.

2. *There is the river of Christian testimony.* A woman I know was addicted to a certain habit injurious to her health, and detrimental to her spirit-

ual life. One day she had a guest who had been similarly addicted, and who testified to a baptism of the Holy Ghost, as she described it, which had set her free. Her hostess listened without reply. But after she had bowed her visitor from the door, she turned, and leaning her head upon the newel post of the flight of stairs leading to her room, she simply said: "O God, Thou knowest I had rather have the Holy Ghost than longer to retain this habit. Fill me with Thy Spirit and set me free." It is now more than fifteen years ago, but from that moment she has been free.

3. *There is the river of Christian service.* In a beautiful town of western Pennsylvania, there dwells a man, the father of a family, who for years was a village "bum"—a "ne'er-do-well"; who spent his time and what little money he could earn in the saloon. He came to Jesus, and he "drank of that life-giving stream," and began at once to minister salvation to other souls. He took his Bible into the saloons, and getting permission, read its contents to some who were gathered there, and talked with them, and sometimes prayed with them, and has led, and is still leading, many other souls to the Saviour he has found.

4. *There is the river of Christian intercession.* Edward Judson, apostolic son of an apostolic father, Adoniram Judson, of missionary fame, tells this story of a revival he was conducting in a fashionable

church of which he once was pastor. He said he was depending for results, not on the machinery of his organization, not on the money he had to spend, but on the prayers of a washer-woman living down under the hill, at whose house he and a few others were in the habit of meeting daily.

THE SECRET OF BLESSING.

But what is the philosophy of the situation? How can it be explained that such an one becomes a blessing? The answer is given in the text, for John affirms that these things were spoken by Jesus of the Holy Spirit, "which they that believed on Him were to receive." The Holy Spirit was not then given unto men as now He can be given, because that Jesus was not then glorified.

But Jesus now is glorified. He died, and rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And it is part of the reward of His obedience as the God-man that He sheds forth the Holy Ghost upon them that believe on Him (Acts 2:32, 33). It is the Holy Ghost, then, dwelling in a man, filling the man, overflowing the man, that makes that man a channel of spiritual blessing to all around him, in his life, his testimony, his service, his intercession, and a score of ways as rivers of living water.

My appeal is, first of all, to the Christian heart. You believe on Jesus Christ; you have come to Him,

you say; you have drunk at His fountain of salvation. But I ask, Are you yourself a fountain? Are rivers of living water flowing forth from you? Do they refresh and bless your home, your church, your neighborhood, your social sphere, your business circle? Is there power in your Christian character and testimony? Are you serving the Lord Christ and are you winning souls to Him? Have you unction and access in supplication, and do you know how to bring down blessings from heaven for your life and the lives of others upon earth? If your reply is in the affirmative, I congratulate you and thank God for you. But if your reply is in the negative, I appeal to you to come to Jesus and drink of Him. I appeal to you to believe on Him again in a newer and a deeper sense. I appeal to you to commit yourself to Him as a saint as once you committed yourself to Him as a sinner. You have received the Holy Spirit or you could not have believed on Him, but it is one thing to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you and another thing to have Him filling you.

But the appeal to the unsaved or unconverted is practically the same. O, the comprehending grace of that expression, "If any man thirst"—*any man!*

Ay, there's the rub! It is the condition, and only one—a *thirst!* There are some people who have little thirst, physical thirst, I mean just now. I am one of them. Placed at my hand upon the table

is a glass of water. My neighbors have the same, and drink of it. Sometimes they empty a second glass and a third, but mine will stand untouched. I grow alarmed, and say: "This cannot be right, this cannot be healthful, for hygienic reasons I ought to drink more water." But how can one be brought to drink who is not thirsty? I find the answer in a change of diet. There are certain things you feed upon that awaken thirst.

It is very much the same in the spiritual realm. The bargain counter, and the card party, and the playhouse, and the dance hall, the story book and the Sunday paper—these things do not create soul-thirst nor lead men to desire Jesus Christ. The Word of God does this—that Word alone.

Do you know what is meant by "eating" the Word of God? Do you know what is meant by feeding on the heavenly manna? As you have listened to these words of Christ, have they created any thirst for Him? Do you desire this living water that He has to give? Would you be more holy? Would you have more power? Would you produce more fruit? Would you come to the secret of prevailing prayer? Then come to Jesus, and drink of Him. Believe on Him today. Commit yourself to Him today, and let Him fill you with the Holy Spirit.