Hebrews - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Christian Truth: Volume 6, Danger of Forsaking Public Testimony

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"Consider one another to provoke unto love"; that is, having got to God in grace, we must be diligent in acting toward others in grace. Paul introduces "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together" to meet the tendency there was to avoid public testimony, and to think that private faith would do in times of persecution such as these were. This was their natural tendency; and, whether it be persecution or reproach, it is the same thing. The latter is perhaps our snare. "And so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"; for judgment is surely coming. If the power of evil increases, there is the more need to cling closely to Christ. And we must not suppose that the world is improving because the Spirit is working; on the contrary, this is just the proof that judgment is nearing. The more rapidly souls are gathered in, the more reason we have for believing the coming of the Lord to be at hand. 'While the long-suffering of God is salvation, the hope should ever be a present one to the Church. It was the wicked servant who said, "My lord delayeth his coming"; yet He did delay it.

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward"; and let us remember that we shall "have need of patience"; but "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 1, No More Conscience of Sins

Heb. 10

THE object of redemption is to bring us nigh to God, as it is written, " Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." But what is our state before God when thus brought nigh? The right understanding of this is most important. It is impossible that we could be happy even in the presence of God, if there still existed a thought of His being against us. I need the perfect settled assurance that there is no sin upon me before Him. The sense of responsibility ever makes a person unhappy when there is any question as to sin standing against him: see the case of a servant and his master, or that of a child and its parent-the conscience is miserable if there be upon it the sense of that which will be judged. So God's presence must be indeed terrible, unless the conscience be perfectly good. If there be happiness for me there, it can only be in the sense of His favor, and of the completeness with which we have been brought back-the perfect assurance of " the worshipper once purged " having " no more conscience of sins."

God speaks to us according to His estimate of our standing: it may not be our heart's experience. There is a distinctness between the operation of the Spirit of God in bringing me unto Jesus, bearing witness to me of God's love, and of the efficacy of what Christ has done, and His operation in my soul in producing in me the love of God. That which is the subject of experience is what is produced in my own soul, whereas that which gives me peace is His testimony to the work of Jesus. A Christian who doubts the Father's love to him, and who looks for peace to that which passes in his own heart, is doubting God's truth. The gospel is the revelation God has given of Himself; it displays the love of God towards us, and what is in His heart. I can trust the declaration of what is in God's heart, and not what I think of myself.

The apostle speaks of a due time: " When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." It is almost always true that there is in us a terrible process of breaking the heart, in order that we may be brought to the ascertainment that we are lost and ruined sinners; but the gospel begins at the close of God's experience of man's heart, and calls us from that in order that we should have joy and peace from the experience of what is in His heart. Man left alone before the flood, put under the law, in Canaan, indeed under all and every trial of his nature and tendency up to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, was just God's putting him to the test.

One would have thought, after Adam had been turned out of paradise for transgression, that would have been a sufficient warning; but his first-born became a murderer. We should have supposed that the flood which swept off the workers of iniquity would have repressed, for a time at least, by the terror of judgment, the outbreak of sin; but we find immediately afterward Noah getting drunk, and Ham dishonoring his father. The devouring fire of Sinai, which made even Moses fear and quake, seemed sufficient to subdue the rebel heart and make it bow beneath God's hand; but the golden calf was the awful evidence that the heart of man was " deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Again in Canaan a part of the world was tried to the utmost to be cultivated, but it would not do. A bad tree producing bad fruit was the only type by which God could set Israel forth. See Isa. 5 He might dig about it and dung it, but after all these efforts it could only bring forth more bad fruit. At last He said, " I have yet one son, perhaps they will reverence my son," but man preferred having the world for himself, and so crucified Jesus. Looking to His cross, Christ said, " Now is the judgment of this world," John 12.

At the crucifixion of Jesus, the veil was rent, and the holiest opened; what God was within the veil then shone out in all its fullness. When grace reveals this to me, I get confidence. I see God holy and expecting holiness-true; but the peace of God is in knowing what He is to us, and not what we are to Him. He knows all the evil of our hearts. Nothing can be worse than the rejection of Jesus-man's hatred is shown out there, and God's love to the full. The wretched soldier (who, in the cowardly impotence of the consciousness that he could with impunity insult the meek and lowly Jesus, pierced His side with a spear), let out, in that disgraceful act, the blood and the water, which was able to cleanse even such as he. Here God's heart was revealed, what He is to the sinner; and this is our salvation.

Death and judgment teach me redemption. God judged sin indeed in sacrificing His well-beloved Son to put it away. It must be punished: Jesus bore the blow-this rent the veil, and showed out what God really is. The very blow that let out the holiness of God put away the sin which His holiness judged. The perfect certainty of God's love and the perfect cleansing of the conscience is that which the defiled and trembling sinner needs. " By the grace of God " Jesus Christ has " tasted death." Death, the wages of sin, is seen in the cross of Jesus as the

consequence of " the grace of God." " Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness." Were anyone to demand of me a proof of God's love, I could not give more than God has done in that " He spared not his own Son ": none other could be so great. But then, it might be asked, may not my sin affect it? No, God knew all your sin, and He has provided for it all: " the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

In real communion the conscience must be purged; there can be no communion if the soul be not at peace. We read here, " By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." There is very frequently the confounding of what faith produces with what faith rests upon. Faith always rests upon God's estimate of the blood of Jesus as He has revealed it in His word: faith rests on no experience. Jesus said, " Lo, I come to do thy will, 0 God! "-" by the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." " We are sanctified," it is not that which is proposed for our attainment; it was the good will of God to do it, and the work is done, to bring our souls back unto Himself. Jesus has said " it is finished." But then there must be the knowledge of this also, in order for us to begin to act. You might have a person willing to pay your debts; nay, you might even have them paid; but if you did not know it, you would be just as miserable as before. We are not called upon to believe in a promise that Jesus should come to die and rise again. The work is done. He " sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high " " when he had by himself purged our sins." But then this is not sufficient for me: I must know that the work is done; and therefore He sent down the Holy Ghost to be the witness that God is satisfied.

Knowing perfectly their guilt and amount, God has declared, " your sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Faith rests on this, " God is true ": " he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." The Lord said to Israel in Egypt concerning the blood of the paschal lamb, " When I see the blood, I will pass over." Could there be hesitation if we were in a house marked with the blood on the door-post? Should we not know that He would pass over? Faith is always divine certainty. God has said, " I will remember no more." This is the ground on which we enter into the holiest. " The worshipper once purged " has " no more conscience of sins."

God has found His rest in Jesus: our peace and joy depend upon knowing this. Were anything more necessary, it could not be His rest: God is not seeking for something else when at rest. None else could have afforded this. " God looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God." " They are all gone out of the way ": " there was none righteous; no, not one." But God bore witness unto Jesus, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God is well pleased in Christ; God rests in His Son, not merely in His life, though that was holy and acceptable unto Him, but in His work on the cross. Jesus said, " except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," and that meets our need. When He shows His glory to the angels, He points to what has been done by man. In man was God glorified; as in man, the first Adam, He had been dishonored. Christ reversed all this: " Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him "; which God recognizes in straightway glorifying Him. Righteousness cannot be looked for from the creature, but the fruit of righteousness will-the thing itself is only in Christ.

God is not a grudging giver. Did Satan, tempting Eve, question this in the forbidden fruit? He has given His Son; He rests in Him; the sinner likewise rests there. What can man do for me? Nothing. If I were to come to him to deliver me from death, could he help me? No. He might fill my hand with those perishing things which could only swell the triumph of death and decorate the tomb, but there his power ends.

In Jesus God has found His rest-this is mine also; I know it from the testimony of God's truth. Have you found rest in God's rest? If you say, I have not, will you say that God has not found His rest there? Will you look to your own heart? In that you can never find it-it is only in Jesus: who had said, " Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Would that all knew the perfect rest to be found there!

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 2, Will of God, the Work of Christ, and the Witness of the Holy Ghost, The

Hebrews 10

THE basis of the argument of the apostle in this chapter lies more in the contrast than in the comparison between the law and the good things to come. The law, he says, had only a shadow, not the very image of things. For example, under the law the priests ministered in infirmity; now Christ ministers in glory. They offered oftentimes the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins; He one sacrifice-once for all. Then there was a veil; now there is none. Then the priests could not enter into the Holiest; now we have boldness to enter in by the blood of Jesus. The law had a shadow of good things to come, not the very image. It was a mere figurative witness of the things that were to be spoken after. Just as the shadow of a man gives some general indistinct idea of him, but does not present a single feature clearly; so it was with the law. It could never make the comers thereunto perfect, as the repetition of its sacrifices showed. Now the unity of the sacrifice proves its perfection; and the present position of the worshippers gives the most complete contrast possible to that under the law, though there is a certain measure of analogy.

There are three things brought out in this scripture: firstly, the source from which all blessing springs; secondly, the means by which it is accomplished; and, thirdly, the testimony by which it is known.

This last is a most necessary part of the matter, in order to our communion; because, unless we know sin to be all put away, it would be absolute madness to attempt to enter into the presence of God: a Jew even would not have thought of such a thing, much less a Christian. If I am not as clean as an angel, the presence of God is no place for me; and the attempt to appear in it would be to follow the example of Cain, who thought to stand before God as a worshipper without blood. We may cry to Him from the depths, of course, and He will ever hear; but if the conscience be not perfect, we cannot go into His presence to worship.

With the Jews this perfection was of course only ceremonial; with us it is real: with them the veil hid God; now that it is gone, and that we enter into the holiest of all, there is the greater need of perfection of conscience. This is why the apostle insists so strongly on the word " once." Indeed all the reasoning of the chapter depends on it. " Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." " Once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." " We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." If those sacrifices could have wrought perfection of conscience, would they not have ceased to be offered? Christ was once offered, thereby proving the perfect result of His word; it needed no repetition. That is why he says, elsewhere in this epistle, that, if this be rejected, " there remaineth no more offering for sin." If that has not made perfect, there is no hope. If that be rejected, there is only " a fearful looking for

of judgment." In the repetition of sacrifice there was a remembrance made of sins. It was not God's saying, Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Christians now have often a mind to be in the same place still, and call their unbelief humility. With the Jews, of course, it must have been so, because it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sins. Therefore God changes the whole thing. " He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

This brings out the first principle to which I alluded, namely, the source of all blessing. It originates in the divine will. " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." It originates in the will of God, and not in the will of man: this is only sin. As a creature, man should have no will of his own, just as Christ had none. The principle of His obedience was not a controlling power, hindering the operation of His own will; but, ' Lo, I come to do thy will, O God! " This was perfect obedience as a man. God's will was His; and that will alone brought salvation and life, where man's will had only brought sin and death. This gives stability and perfection to everything, to find its source and origin in the will of God. If it had been the result of my will, all would have been vacillating and changing as man's will is; and, moreover, if we had earned heaven by our own will, there would have been no love of God in the matter, and we should lose the sweetness of holding everything as the fruit of divine love.

This will of God is not presented to man to do; it is the Son of God who says, " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God! "

Men could never have done the will of God; the second Adam does it. As belonging to the first Adam, our place is to confess that we have not done, and that we never could do, the will of God. When brought back to Him, of course we have nothing else to do, for we are sanctified unto obedience; but, as regards acceptance, it is the result of the work of another. " By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." God does all for us in grace, and leaves man out in both the will and work. Salvation is the result of God's will and Christ's work. And it gives quietness and confidence in this work, to see that it was not a work done to turn God towards us, as it were, but that from all eternity it was counseled by Himself. We have the source of all in the unchangeable purpose of God.

Secondly, we have the work itself. It is a wonderful thing for us to be thus let into what passed between the Father and the Son before the world was; and most blessed to see the freewill offering of Christ. If it were God's will to be the author of our salvation, it was equally Christ's to be the instrument of it; and whilst He, in order to be so, makes Himself a servant, His divine power is still evinced in the very expression, " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God! " That could be said by none but by one competent to execute any command of God. Supposing that command had been to make a world, instead of to save one, Christ was the only one who could do such a will; and in fact, both divine power and divine love were evinced in redemption and resurrection, in a higher degree than in creation.

In verse 5, where the quotation is from Psa. 40, the verbal difference is considerable, but the sense identical. " A body hast thou prepared me," and " Mine ears hast thou opened," or " digged," are both expressions of assuming the form of a servant. The ear receives commands, and the boring of the ear was making one a servant forever. So when a body was prepared for Christ, He took on Him the form of a servant. Thus far we have the will of God working in grace, and Christ undertaking to accomplish it.

Then in verse 11 we have the contrast between the priest standing, and Christ sitting. His work is finished-there is nothing further to do; and He sits down till His foes be made His footstool. " Forever," in verse 12, means " continually " or " constantly," not that Christ will never rise again; but as regards His sacrifice for sins He will never have to rise again to do anything more. Having offered one sacrifice for sins, He sits down till His foes be made His footstool. As regards His friends, all is done-not as to intercession of course-but as to acceptance and perfecting the conscience. But He has still to deal with His enemies; therefore is He waiting, still retaining His servant character, until God makes His foes His footstool. We too are expecting, till Christ rises up from the throne and judges His enemies. This is not done yet: else wickedness would be purged from the earth; and it explains the call for vengeance in the Psalms, which sometimes puzzles people, " Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered," etc.; and, " Of thy mercy cut off mine enemies." These surely are not the cries of the church. She does not want to see her enemies judged but saved. She goes to meet the Lord in the air. Not so the Jewish remnant. It passes through great tribulation; and " except those days were shortened, no flesh should be saved." So they call earnestly enough for deliverance. But such is not our part at all; we are associated with Christ while expecting; in grace now, and in glory by-and-by, but not in judgment.

In verse 12 we have seen that Christ's one sacrifice was such that He has sat down forever; so in verse 14 we read, that " by one offering he hath perfected forever "-or " continually "-" them that are sanctified." Thus we are continually perfect; not practically here-though the Spirit sanctifies the heart and affections as far as this goes-but here the work of Christ makes the conscience constantly perfect. " The worshippers, once purged, should have no more conscience of sins." Thus we are brought into the presence of God, never to have any more conscience of sins. " For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." We are called so to know Christ's work, as to see that it is quite impossible for us to have sin on us before God. Sin cannot be in God's presence. There is nothing but perfection there; and we are there because perfected forever by the one offering of Jesus. We are in God's presence because we are clean, as clean as He could wish us to be. " The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." It is quite true we have to keep a conscience void of offense, and not to grieve the Spirit; but we are sealed of God unto the day of redemption; and there can be no mistake. The Holy Ghost could not dwell in us unless cleansed by the blood of Christ; and then He is the witness, not to the fruits, but to the virtue of that blood. The fruits could not be produced unless He were there of course, because they are " the fruits of the Spirit "; and when produced, the order is, first, the internal ones, then all the rest. " Love, joy, peace," precede the outward manifestations of the Spirit's presence.

The Christian ought to keep himself in the present communion of his known place before God, because then, besides the joy, the Holy Ghost has its full flow in using him as a vessel to others, in God's service; whereas otherwise He must occupy us with ourselves. I have not only communion, but power, only as thus in immediate intercourse with God in His presence.

We now come to the third point. Having seen the source of all in the divine will, and the accomplishment of all in the divine work, we get the testimony to it all in the divine witness. " Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that he had said before, This is the covenant," etc., then He said, " And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." And here is the secret of settled peace. If I think that God will ever remember sin, I am denying the will, the work, and the testimony of God. In short, if a believer in Jesus, it comes to being a sin to have the least thought of God's ever imputing a sin to me. It is just as much a work of the flesh as to commit the sin. He does not now impute sin, and He never will. " Where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin," sweeps away every refuge of lies, and lip the blessed foundation for full confidence. " Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus," shows that the very way we enter into God's presence proves that the thing which shut us out is gone forever.

" Our bodies washed with pure water," refers to the priests, who were washed with water, sprinkled with blood, and anointed with oil. The latter is not mentioned here. After they were once washed, the priests needed only to wash their hands and feet. The anointing with blood of the ear, the thumb, and the toe, was the application of the work of Christ to the whole moral man. The work of Christ is always set first, then follows the work of the Spirit. In Ephesians it is said, " Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Therefore in the tabernacle the first thing you meet is not the laver, but the altar. As a sinner, I must first meet the blood; then I am fitted for service, by the removal of all that is contrary to God: but I cannot skip the altar to reach the laver; I must there own myself a sinner first; then I can delight in the holiness of God, and understand it, too.

The apostle then goes on, " Consider one another to provoke unto love," etc., that is, having got to God in grace, we must be diligent in acting towards others in grace. He introduces " Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together," to meet the tendency there was to avoid public testimony, and to think that private faith would do in times of persecution such as these were. This was their natural tendency; and, whether it be persecution or reproach, it is the same thing. The latter is perhaps our snare. "And so much the more as ye see the day approaching"; for judgment is surely coming. If the power of evil increases there is the more need to cling closely to Christ. And we must not suppose that the world is improving because the Spirit is working; on the contrary, this is just the proof that judgment is nearing. The more rapidly souls are gathered in, the more reason have we for believing the coming of the Lord to be at hand. Whilst the long-suffering of God is salvation, the hope should ever be a present one to the church. It was the wicked servant who said, " My lord delayeth his coming "; yet He did delay it.

Then, in verse 26, it is as though he said, If you do not hold fast-if you will give up, and abandon this perfect sacrifice, then there remains nothing further; there is no year of atonement to come round again with a new offering; but just as those who believe are eternally perfect, so he who refuses is left remediless. It was he who despised Moses' law who died without mercy, and not he who broke it; so it is he who counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and does despite to the Spirit of grace, that shall be counted worthy of a sorer punishment; not he who fails. " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins "; such is the gracious provision for failure through infirmity- advocacy, righteousness, and propitiation. But if a man, after having seen all the grace and fullness that are in Christ, deliberately choose sin as his portion; and, rejecting the blood of the new covenant as insufficient, turns back again, then he must take the consequence. God's grace is His last resource, so to speak, for winning man. If that does not suffice, judgment must take its course; and "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." On this ground the position is at once that of "adversaries," and we know Him that hath said, " Vengeance is mine, I will recompense." "Let us, therefore, hold fast our confidence, which hath great recompense of reward "; and let us remember that we shall "have need of patience; but yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry."

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Christian Truth: Volume 37, Better Country, A

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." Heb. 11:13-16.

Not only were those spoken of here "strangers and pilgrims" but they "confessed" it. People sometimes wish to be religious in private, and not to speak of it; this requires no energy of faith. To see the world as a lost and condemned place, to have our hopes in heaven-such facts must of necessity produce a proportionate result, that of making us think and act as "strangers and pilgrims" here. And it will be manifested in the whole life. If the heart be already elsewhere, it remains only for us to set out. This evidently involves open and public profession of the fact, and herein is a testimony for Christ.

Who would be satisfied with the friend that did not own us when circumstances were difficult? The concealed Christian is a very bad Christian. Faith fixed on Jesus, we embrace the things we have seen afar off; we are not mindful of the country from whence we have come out; we have at heart that "better country" before us. Where difficulties are in the path, and the affections not set on Jesus, the world rises again in the heart (Phil. 3:7-14). Paul had not acted in a moment of excitement to repent forthwith; his heart filled with Christ, he counts all but dross and dung. Perseverance of heart marks the Christian's affections to be onward, his desires heavenly. And God is not ashamed to be called his God.

It is either the flesh or faith; it is impossible that at bottom there can be a stopping halfway. The aim of the Christian must be heavenly things. The appetites and necessities of the new man are heavenly. Christians may be used for bettering the world, but this is not God's design. Seeking to link ourselves with the world and using Christianity for world-mending are earthly things. God's design is to link us with heaven. You must have heaven without the world, or the world without heaven. He who prepares the city cannot wish for us anything between the two. The "desire" of a "better country" is the desire of a nature entirely from above.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 7, Hebrews 11: Faith

We find in this chapter not exactly a definition of faith, but the effects of its power, brought before us; and this is to make things so present as that they should be real to the soul. The things looked out for are as substantial to the soul as if possessed, and this which are not seen are as vividly before us as if they were seen. This is what characterizes a believer. He is a person who has such an evidence of things not seen as to govern his thoughts and affections, as his motive. The world in which he lives is seen and felt by faith.

This is calculated to bring home that question in a man's soul which God Himself answers. Is there any substance in my soul? are things unseen as real to me as if I saw them? Faith is opposed to law; for " the law is not of faith." Law brings out the rebellion of the will. The carnal mind is opposed to God's law and, therefore, there is disobedience wherever there are self-will and law. If I have no law, I may do my own will; but if there is a law, it is the will of someone else I must do.

There is another character of sin brought out here. It is not rebellion against a law, as in Adam. There was the absence of faith in Cain: while it is said of Abel, " by faith he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." What substance have you of things hoped for? This question does not disturb one who has real faith. I do not ask if you live up to these things-that is another question; but have you faith? The Jews had killed the Holy One and the Just, but they believed that He was the Holy and the Just One, for if they had not, they would have said, when they were charged with having killed Him, Oh, He was not the Holy and the Just One at all; but their very confession of " What shall we do? " proves that they did not deny His being so, and it made them fear. They were not what they should be, but they were pricked to the heart; and the effect of it is they cry out, " What shall we do to be saved? "

The conscience may be frightened about sin, but that is not faith. There is no power in natural conscience to acquire life, but there is fear of punishment-" a certain fearful looking for of judgment "; but this is not faith. There is nothing " hoped for." Have you such a sense of the reality of future things on your heart? Is it a reality in your souls, so that it controls your thoughts and feelings and habits? If not, you have not faith. In the end of John 2 we see a class of persons on whom there was no insincerity charged, but there was no faith in them. They saw the miracles and they marveled; but Christ did not commit Himself to them.

All through this chapter (Heb. 11) faith is spoken of in a practical way. " By it the elders obtained a good report "; and in all the instances mentioned, it was such a real and practical thing that it characterized the man.

If your soul is distressed with the thought that you have not the outgoing of soul answering to what Christ is to you, it is a proof that you have faith. Christ has such a substance in your heart. There is something wrong, something not given up-some levity, carelessness, vanity, etc.; but still you have got some substance. There is a connection between these four first examples of faith. The first shows us its exercise about the sacrifice, on which Abel rests. The second is, the walk with God consequent upon this. The third is, the knowledge of the future which actuates. The fourth opens the special subject of walking as pilgrims and strangers; but all following each other in order.

The moment a soul is brought home to God, it changes everything to him. " The fashion of this world passeth away." He sees God through it all, instead of seeing it as He did before, only as man's world with none but man through it all. You cannot bring God into a world which has rejected and slighted Christ, without altering everything to the heart and judgment. You are not in paradise now, and you know and feel that you are not. There is not a circumstance in the world, but in it we see the results of our having broken with God, and God having broken with us. The very fact of our dress reminds us of it; it is the consequence of sin.

Cain went out from the presence of God, and what does he then? He builds a city: and what next? You cannot have a city without having something to amuse. Then comes Tubal-Cain with the arts and sciences, and Jubal with pleasant sounds-" he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." There was no harm in the music, etc., itself; but why did they want it? What was the source of it? What use did they make of it? It was to make them content in being away from God. Is not this " harm " enough? Adam, after he sinned and heard God's voice, hid himself among the trees in the garden: there was no harm in the trees, but there was harm in his hiding himself. There is harm in man's trying to make himself comfortable away from God. The prodigal went and joined himself to the citizens of the far country: but when he was in want, no man gave to him. There is none to give him where the devil reigns. Man never can satisfy himself in that country. Bring God in; and what is the result? It gives the consciousness of the truth. It makes him feel and say, " I am perishing with hunger." This is the first effect of faith coming in. Mark, too, the next consequence. How thoroughly he would hate all those things which governed and attracted his heart before! There is nothing a soul will detest so much as the very things he loved most before. When a soul comes to God, he finds out what it is to have left God-that he might do according to a will that is utterly corrupt-his own will. This is the effect of such a discovery. He thinks of the contrast and of his father's house: " How many hired servants of my father's," etc. The sense of the contrast comes in when God is made known. Then comes the sense of sin-I am this wicked person. There is not only wickedness, but it is I that am this wicked thing; and then the discovery of ourselves, just as we are, would be more than we could bear; we need the revelation of God's grace. We could not bear to see all otherwise. There was One and only One who could. The conviction of sin comes into the soul in the sight of the blessedness of Him who is without sin.

Let us look a little at these religious characters brought before us. Cain and Abel were both alike as to outward character and circumstance. They were both under the sentence of banishment from the presence of God. They both had employment, and both seemed to have been outwardly decent characters. They both came to worship, too, and Cain brought that which cost him most, that for which he had worked. God had sent him forth to till the ground, and he tilled it; that was all right, and it was right for him to bring an offering. The difference between them was not in all that. In outward character, too, Cain was just like Abel; nothing came out amiss until he killed his brother. What was the mistake in Cain? There was no sense upon his heart that he was driven out of paradise because he deserved it: he might not have known that he was driven out even, for he thought he had nothing to do but to go to God, as if he was all right with Him. This is just what men are doing now. They are driven from God's presence and favor, going on with their occupations, tilling the ground and the like, and, when the time comes round, thinking to come and worship! What would a father feel about his child who had been disobedient to him one day, and coming the next, just as if nothing had happened, expecting to be received as though all was right between him and his father? This is just what men are doing with God. But, dear friends, you are out of paradise, and can you think to come and worship God as if nothing had happened? Are you expecting to get into heaven just the same as (not one whit better than) Adam was when he got out of paradise? If you got into heaven, you would spoil it; but the truth is, you are making your own heaven down here.

Abel was not a bit better than Cain as to his position and nature; but there is one great difference-he owns it all, and obtained testimony that he was righteous. " By faith he offered to God a more excellent sacrifice," etc. It might have been said he was not so right as Cain in a natural sense, as to his calling, for God had not set men to keep sheep, and he had to till the ground; but he brought a sacrifice from the flock, a bloody sacrifice. He had a sense of being out of paradise; but, more than that, he had a sense of being an outcast for sin. He felt he was a sinner. He had a sense of having broken with God and God with him, and he knew Him to be of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. He owned that God had not done wrong in turning man out, and that it would be wrong to let him in. He owned that death hung over him as his proper desert.

It is God's sentence upon me, and my ruin is my desert. These things had such a reality to his soul that he would have known it would have been presumption for him to go to God as though nothing had happened. Then he had something more still; for he had learned, through the grace of God, that there was something needed between him and God, and that this something was there. Sacrifice was the only way. See the other side of this blessed truth. Not only could he not go without a sacrifice, but, beyond this, it was there: and we know who this is-the Son of God. God says, I cannot look at sin; but there is one thing I can look at-an offering about sin, and that is my Son as a sin-offering. Faith apprehends this, and there was no thought of coming in any other way. " There will I meet with thee," God said to Moses. And what did he put at the door of the tabernacle? The altar of burnt-offering, the sacrifice for sin God had there; and faith rests on this as the only possible way of approach.

There was no climbing up some other way. There is but this one door by which to enter, and it is through that sacrifice, by which the holiness of God is fully maintained, as well as His love manifested, in the highest way. I want to see my sin put away in His sight, just as I see it brought out first in His sight; and here is the perfect sin-offering, and there is no place where this wonderful question of good and evil has been judged as at the cross of Christ. The sacrifice is fully accepted. He has borne all the wrath and put it away. Hear Him saying, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? " There was perfect obedience and perfect love. He was a perfect sin-offering; and there He is now at the right hand of the Father. " Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." His offering for sin has forever settled the question of sin. He has made peace about my sin and for my sin; and has He done it in part? Would that be like God? No; it was complete. " When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." When I see that, I cannot go to God as Cain, just as I am; and yet I must go to Him if I am to have happiness or blessing. But I also see that God has provided Himself with a burnt-offering. It is taken out of our hands, as it were; it is God's own perfect work; it is His settling of sin, and I can rest in the result of what He has offered. This is faith. Now we go to God by Him. This is, as it were, offering Christ. God gives me the resting-place; and the convinced sinner cannot come to Christ without finding all his sins put away forever. The sacrifice of the burnt-offering is there, and the moment I am there I come with the sacrifice, and can be happy in His presence, though with a perfect knowledge of His holiness.

" Abel obtained witness that he was righteous ": not merely that the sacrifice was perfect, but he had the witness that he was righteous. It was not only true that he was righteous, but that he also had the witness of it, and this gave him peace. The gospel is God's witness to His acceptance of Christ. See how this is " God testifying of his gifts." If you bring that Lamb, I accept you according to all the value of that Lamb.

The next effect of faith we see in Enoch, walking with God when brought to Him, and it is with a God who has found a propitiation in the blood of Christ. " Am I accepted in the Beloved? " I have no hope but in Christ; but He is my hope. " Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow," etc. God's holiness is the measure by which He has put away sin, and there is not a spot upon him that believes in Christ. Then I can walk with God. It is not only peace, but walking with Him till I am in heaven with Him. How can I have all this? Christ is my title. I may expect all that God can give as the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul. I know God and am known of Him; and walking in the comfort and peace of His grace and truth in Christ, I trust Him.

Christian Truth: Volume 27, Our Example: One Who Ran the Whole Race

In Hebrews 12 the epistle enters upon the practical exhortations that flow from its doctrinal instruction with reference to the dangers peculiar to the Hebrew Christians—instruction suited throughout to inspire them with courage. Surrounded with a cloud of witnesses like those of chapter 11, who all declared the advantages of a life of faith in promises still unfulfilled, they ought to feel themselves impelled to follow their steps, running with patience the race set before them, and above all looking away from every difficulty to Jesus who had run the whole career of faith, sustained by the joy that was set before Him and, having reached the goal, had taken His seat in glory at the right hand of God.

This passage presents the Lord not as He who bestows faith, but as He who has Himself run the whole career of faith. Others had traveled a part of the road, had surmounted some difficulties; the obedience and the perseverance of the Lord had been subjected to every trial of which human nature is susceptible. Men, the adversary, the being forsaken of God, everything was against Him. His disciples flee when He is in danger, His intimate friend betrays Him; He looks for someone to have compassion on Him and finds no one. The fathers (of whom we read in the previous chapter) trusted in God and were delivered; but as for Jesus, He was a worm, and no man; His throat was dry with crying (see Psalm 22). His love for us, His obedience to His Father, surmounted all. He carries off the victory by submission, and takes His seat in a glory exalted in proportion to the greatness of His abasement and obedience—the only just reward for having perfectly glorified God where He had been dishonored by sin. The joy and the rewards that are set before us are never the motives of the walk of faith—we know this well with regard to Christ, but it is not the less true in our own case—they are the encouragement of those who walk in it.

Jesus then who has attained the glory due to Him becomes an example to us in the sufferings through which He passed in attaining it; therefore we are neither to lose courage nor to grow weary. We have not yet, like Him, lost our lives in order to glorify God and to serve Him. The way in which the Apostle engages them to disentangle themselves from every hindrance, whether sin or difficulty, is remarkable, as though they had nothing to do but to cast them off as useless weights. And in fact, when we look at Jesus, nothing is easier; when we are not looking at Him, nothing is more impossible.

There are two things to be cast off: every weight, and the sin that would entangle our feet (for he speaks of one who is running in the race). The flesh, the human heart, is occupied with cares and difficulties; and the more we think of them, the more we are burdened by them. It is enticed by the objects of its desires; it does not free itself from them. The conflict is with a heart that loves the things against which we strive; we do not separate ourselves from it in thought. When looking at Jesus, the new man is active; there is a new object which unburdens and detaches us from every other by means of a new affection which has its place in a new nature: and in Jesus Himself, to whom we look, there is a positive power which sets us free.

It is by casting it all off in an absolute way that the thing is easy—by looking at that which fills the heart with other things, and occupies it in a different sphere, where a new object and a new nature act upon each other; and in that object there is a positive power which absorbs the heart and shuts out all objects that act merely on the old nature. What is felt to be a weight is easily cast off. Everything is judged of by its bearing on the object we aim at. If I run in a race and all my thought is the prize, a bag of gold is readily cast away. It is a weight. But we must look to Jesus. Only in Him can we cast off every hindrance easily and without reservation. We cannot combat sin by flesh.

Heb. 12:25

THE apostle, in addressing this exhortation to the Hebrews, acted upon the ground of the character is which Christ spoke, and the consequences resulting therefrom. Observe: His character is specifically brought. forward as speaking " from heaven," contrasted with His character as speaking on earth: " If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth [that is, when He spake from mount Sinai, thundering out His righteous law], much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven "-speaketh from the right hand of God, in the midst of His glory.

Here is the contrast: Christ, as speaking now from heaven, and then on earth; an awful warning to transgressors, by the evidence of what then happened, to effect much more: " Whose voice then shook the earth." This having occurred sanctions the word spoken, which says, " Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven; and this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made." And those things, dear friends, are what the saint is in now-not of them, but in them. Therefore is he, thus surrounded, warned not to turn away from Him " that speaketh from heaven."

This then is the ground on which he stands. On the one hand, he sees the full blessedness-the unqualified hope- which this voice, speaking from heaven, makes known to him; and, on the other hand, he sees there is nothing else to rest upon but the word of Jesus, which is perfectly stable in that it has been tried and proved. This cannot be removed or shaken; everything, no matter what, that is not in association with this, being liable to be shaken, shall be removed. When the voice speaks from heaven for the removal of all that opposes it, all that is not of this heavenly character must go.

This same speaking then implies the deep blessedness of the believer, and his not having anything else to rest on but Jesus; not merely to rest on Jesus in the way of righteousness, but for all things-for everything; for all else is in opposition to God, and when the time of this speaking closes, all that is not of grace goes. " He then shook the earth." Tremendous was the sight. The mount was all on fire, and there was a very great earthquake. This was calculated to inspire great terror. But here is manifested the blessedness of the child of God, he is not come to that: " For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest... but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God," etc.

Here we have the character of the dispensation to which we, as believers, are called; it is spoken nominally of all the professing church, though only true of those who are alive to God. They have come to this; their warrant is, that this voice has spoken to them from heaven, and that they have heard it, and that it is the voice of Jesus. Thus He is presented, as having entered into His glory, and from thence speaking.

Thus then we learn from this word that this same Jesus who spake on earth is now speaking from heaven. " Who is he that ascended but he also that descended first into the lower parts of the earth? " The Lord Jesus is speaking specially, as having effected the entire accomplishment of all that His people failed in, and that could in any degree militate against their happiness. This voice tells us that it is the same Person, the same Christ who was humbled for our sins; who went through the world, weary and sorrowful; the same man who was crucified, dead, buried, raised, and ascended, that now speaks from heaven, as having passed through all these, and is now at the right hand of God, from whence He is inviting His people up thither.

This then is the joy of the child of God, when he hears this voice of Jesus addressing him from heaven, testifying of what He has done, and speaking as a witness of peace; speaking in the consciousness of having so overcome-so entirely to have borne the sin of His people as to set it aside forever by the one sacrifice of Himself once offered. And in this position He speaks-I have set aside forever the sin which kept you excluded from God; and I am entered into the rest and glory, as your representative, in the presence of the Father. When this voice is heard and known, we have peace.

When the Lord Jesus therefore speaks from heaven, He speaks of having accomplished all the work which the Father gave Him to do. He speaks in the consciousness of this; and He gives us the consciousness of the same in the power of the Spirit, when He visits us individually. He, the Redeemer- He who stood the bearer of sin-stood responsible for His people; and by His perfect satisfaction acquitted them entirely. Now He, having ascended, says, I have done; I tell you, as in the presence of the Father, the result of all the work I accomplished: I am now in the very glory to which I am about to bring you. Here is the voice with which He speaks; and if ever He speaks from heaven to any soul now, it is just thus. The voice may be heard very indistinctly indeed; but that is just what the voice declares-that is the story which Jesus brings to the soul.

It is a tale of mercy, of boundless, inconceivable mercy. It may indeed, poor trembling soul, begin with a tale of thy sin. This is calculated to originate deep thoughts-deep searchings of heart; but the beginning and end is for peace- blessed peace! The voice still continues to speak; to say, those sins are gone-utterly put away, no more to incur God's wrath; no further requirement to satisfy for them: Jesus has done that. You may indeed have sorrow still as to this world; for you are in the very midst of that world which crucified and rejected Christ, the Lord of glory. You are still in that world which displayed its utter and total enmity, even in rejecting the Author of all blessedness. That the world did, and He triumphed over it. He was crucified by the world, and He returned to the Father. What brought Him there, but the total rejection of Him by the world? There He is now, and speaks. And what does this voice declare? Why, that He has no part with the things of the world. He does not own it. The world would not own Him when He came in humiliation, and now He will not own it when seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Christ is now speaking from heaven with the witness of His rejection on earth, but with the full recognition of having passed through it, and triumphed over its most inveterate malice. This constitutes the blessedness of God's people here; for they see a full salvation. Christ now speaking from heaven, who once spoke on earth, brings with it the certain evidence of the full accomplishment of all He engaged for. Nay, more, by His thus speaking from heaven, we, as believers, are privileged to know all that we are come to, even here. For this voice says, " Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly; and to the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made

perfect; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling.

Here we have, not only the confidence of acceptance, but the entireness of deliverance; not only as having overcome, but the blessedness to which believers are privileged to come. Blessed indeed is the portion to which they are called! A salvation which is already finished for them-a present salvation! This voice speaks, not of something which occurred some time ago, or in a distant place; but, when brought with power into the soul, it shows the present realization of these things. It brings the soul to say, I am come to these, because He is there. Thus faith brings near these things. This then is the conscious position of the believer when under the energy of the Holy Ghost-the total putting away of all that hindered and dissociated him from that intimate communion with God, to which he is united, and which it is his privilege to enjoy.

All this Jesus speaks from heaven, and therefore His voice is a voice of peace-peace under all circumstances. He speaks the same under all the variety of exercises and trials of this mortal life. We may be bowed down, and think hard things of ourselves: but there Jesus sits in the calmness of conscious victory, and His words are only words of peace. Persecution, affliction, and woe, may speak from earth; yet the voice from heaven speaks nothing but peace. The voice of the Lord Jesus is a voice of peace and conscious rest. Whatever conflicts with this peace is not in or from Jesus.

This position of the Christian is his perfect identity in spirit with Jesus as He now is: " Bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh," and therefore He can well sympathize with us. We may be tempted, harassed, oppressed; but, notwithstanding that, we are really come to " the things which cannot be shaken." " He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." This may indeed be but dimly seen here, but it is not less real, and it is known to be real, by the power of the Spirit dwelling in them that believe. They see the " old man," in their weaknesses which they have crucified, and now are raised, according to the power of the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Christ, our Savior, is a risen and ascended Savior; and He now speaks from heaven, as a pledge that He is in the very place to which He will bring us, and where we shall behold Him.

Moreover He so pleased the very mind of God, having performed all His will, that therefore He can say, It is done- it is accomplished-it is finished forever. Thus He now speaks from heaven one whole testimony of peace; it must necessarily be the voice of peace, bringing in the blessedness of the results of that which brought peace. It is only of peace then that He speaks, whether it is heard or not. As Paul says, " and came and preached peace to them which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Christ wrought sorrowfully, even to the death of the cross, to obtain this peace for His people; and now He proclaims it. Man knew not peace while at enmity with his Maker; and so the Lord Jesus undertook the whole responsibility attaching to His people, and has overcome all impediments to obtain their peace. And this is the only way true peace can be obtained-this is what Jesus died to obtain, and, having obtained, now testifies to the truth and certainty of it. See then that your eyes are fixed on Him that speaks from heaven: else you never can obtain peace; for, in very deed, it is the word of God.

Christ now sits in heaven proclaiming peace, which brings before us the unspeakable blessedness of the manifestation of the prerogative of God's love against the extent of man's sin, not only in His excelling greatness triumphing over it, but being made the sacrifice Himself, so putting it away. We come now to see the stability of God's promise, and the certainty of its accomplishment: " Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made." We have seen the association with Jesus into which we are brought, and are come to things spiritual, which, being stable, and resting on the security of God's word, cannot be removed when all else shall be shaken.

We will just see what they are: " Ye are come unto Mount Sion; and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." And shall that be shaken? No; the city of the living God rests on the living God, and can never be removed. " To an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly." Can they be shaken? No; there was one great shake in heaven, and the rebel angels were driven deep into darkness, there to remain; the rest are upheld by His power. " And to the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to the spirits of just men made perfect." And can these be shaken? No; being made perfect by God, they must remain perfect; they cannot be shaken.

And ye are come " to God the Judge of all." He being the very security and support of all else that cannot be shaken, He must so stand. And ye are come to Jesus, who is where all these will be-that is, not on earth, but in glory; He was on this earth, and the men of the earth did not like Him, and therefore rejected Him. His voice once shook the earth, but now He is in heaven, and speaking from thence, He has promised, yet once more, to shake all that can be shaken.

In the word, " Yet once more," we have a remarkable expression, for it comes to us as a promise on the authority of God; it presses itself upon one's spirit, and bears witness to the truth in the power of the Holy Ghost; it comes to us as a promised truth. Now let us consider whether Jesus has so spoken to us from heaven, as to lead us to thank God that He has promised this from heaven-that in truth we believe the promise, and are looking for the accomplishment of it.

Have we understood this voice from heaven? and do we rejoice in knowing that everything which Satan, the world, and the flesh have set up in opposition and enmity to God shall be shaken terribly, even to their destruction? Can we say in faith, I understand the voice so speaking, and am looking forward with joy to its accomplishment, when all that offends Christ shall be done away with? But have I also heard the voice so speaking to me from heaven as to identify me with all and everything that cannot be shaken?

Well will it be for the saints when they see the removal of all that burdens and keeps them from the perfect realization of their unspeakable privileges. They have nothing to fear from that terrible voice which shall " shake terribly the earth." They have heard, and are identified with that blessed voice which speaks to them naught but of love and mercy and peace, and they want no other.

Brethren, beloved of the Lord, what a contemplation is it to enter into, that of our being established-firmly established and settled in those things which cannot be shaken! The extent of that tremendous shake, which is full of woe to him who is fixed here-who is settled on any of those things liable to be shaken-is full of joy to him who is come to the things which cannot be shaken, and which shall therefore remain.

" There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." This shaking time will come; but it is your joy, that those things on which your mind and affections are set, and with which you are associated, cannot be shaken. And further, this voice to believers implies much more, wonderfully much more, than the removal of all things which cannot stand the

shaking; it implies their whole blessedness; that they shall then be brought into the full perfectness of the joy of Jesus, resting alone on the stability of God. All things which are made shall be shaken. At that time, he who is associated with God, and he alone, shall stand the shake. For he is now come spiritually unto that to which he shall enter personally, where nothing defiling, nothing unstable, shall find an entrance.

The believer therefore rests on these two grounds: that the Lord Jesus Christ is thus speaking to him from heaven- speaking peace, and therefore taking away all fear, as regards himself, in the promised convulsion and upturning of all things, and also that the promise of God shall stand, in the setting aside of all that shall not participate in his present glory. Here we see the total dissociation of all and everything connected with an interest in the things of this world: that they are opposed to the things of God-they are quite distinct, and never can be united.

As soon as the season is past for the exercise of God's longsuffering and patience with a guilty world, then will the shaking commence: happy they who are in a way of grace then! Yet there is an admonition to them to watch: " What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch! " and this watchfulness is to continue to the end, amidst all opposition, supported therein by the life-giving energy of the Holy Ghost. The believer's life is thus manifestly a life of watchfulness; but he rests not here, he looks forward. " If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable ": but he sees beyond this life, he has come to perceive eternal things; and in the power of the Spirit to discern the unquestionable blessedness to which he is called-into the spiritual enjoyment of which, even here, there is no hindrance, not the least impediment, except as regards himself. Christ has done all that could be, all that was necessary to be done, in order to make the reconciliation perfect.

There is then no hindrance as regards Christ's work; it is a mark of complete perfectness. All things that could keep us from God have been overcome, set aside, triumphed over: and He is now in heaven, in the full consciousness of victory- altogether finished as regards our salvation; entered into heaven, in the presence of God for us, and continually speaking peace to us His people-the consciousness of which, on our part, is wrought in our souls by the eternal Spirit, who, testifying of the joy into which Jesus is entered, and the peace which He proclaims, makes us also full of joy and peace in believing, and looking to that glory into which we also shall be brought, " whither the forerunner is for us entered."

This is the only ground of peace which Christ promised, and it is the privilege of the believer to enjoy this peace, even in the midst of trials and conflicts and afflictions. He looks to Jesus where He now is; and, resting on Him who is now speaking from heaven, he has that peace which passes all understanding, arising from his union, his oneness, his identity with his Lord and Master. Have you thus known the Lord Jesus Christ, as speaking from heaven to you, and speaking peace? Has He told you that all is finished, and that you are privileged to have peace? Do you see your own personal iniquity put away?

I would ask you still further, dear friends, in how far you are associated with that which shall be removed? The voice from heaven has witnessed, has promised, the removal of all things which can be shaken. If you are associated in any way with those, oh, how sad, when Christ comes, to find you thus! They that are earthly do mind earthly things-that is their character: as the apostle says to the Philippians, " Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." The voice speaking from heaven proclaims the dissociation of Christ and His company from these-from all that is earthly.

I solemnly put it before you, dear friends, Are you thus engaged? or are your hearts, affections, and desires lifted up to Him that is higher than the heavens-to that which cannot be shaken, and can never be removed? Could you receive the shaking of all things, as the promise of God? He has promised, " Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Blessed, everlastingly blessed, are they who are established in Him who is higher than the heavens! They who are thus fixed are as secure as they will be when associated with Him in glory.

Let me again ask you, dear friends, If this shaking were to come now, where would it find you? Would you be found trembling under the consciousness of being mixed up with that which is to be removed? or borne in perfect peace upon the heart of Him who is to shake all things? May the Lord find you in the latter circumstances-happy in the consciousness of His love and power, ready to enter into the joy unspeakable, and glory of your Lord. Amen.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 7, Hebrews 13:7-19: Burning and Eating the Sacrifices

Hebrews 13:7-19

There was a twofold character in the offering which has its counterpart for us in Christ: and the want of firm grasp of this, to distinguish and yet maintain them together, lies at the root of much want of enjoyment and of feebleness in the children of God. The first and most fundamental point was that in the offerings there was that which was consumed. Being identified with the sin of man, it was consumed under the wrath and indignation of God or it went up as a savor of rest, as that which was sweet and acceptable to God, as for instance in the burnt-offering. In the sin-offering there was God's judgment of sin, and therefore the greater part was burnt outside the camp. But, besides this, there was another character that entered into the sacrifices. In very many cases men partook of them. In the meat-offering and peace-offering such was the fact: and even in the offering for sin the priest had a portion.

And I believe that this is what is referred to here. These Jewish Christians were in great danger of forgetting their privileges. They had abandoned everything that they had once revered as the religion given them by God: they were no longer gazing on things that shadowed His glory. The grandeur, the magnificence, the glory, of the Levitical institutions-all was left behind. God was not now as of old, thundering from heaven. He had wrought with infinitely greater moral glory. He had sent His Son from heaven: pardon and peace had been brought, and joy and liberty in the Holy Ghost; but all this was unseen. It is, however, one thing to enter into the comfort of the truth when all is bright and fresh, and another thing to hold it fast in time of reproach, shame, derision and the falling away of some. When the first joy is somewhat lessened, the heart naturally returns to what it had once rested on. And there is always this danger for us- when evil is felt, the blessing not being so present to the soul. Who among us that has long known Christ-known His ways- has not felt this snare?

And what is the divine remedy? It is just that which the Holy Ghost here uses-" Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." We must not sever this verse from the succeeding one: " Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines," etc. The Holy Ghost would

guard these Jewish believers against that which, compared with our own proper Christian blessings, is mere trash, earthly priesthood, holy places, offerings, tithes, etc. These things, after all, were but novelties compared with the old thing, which is Jesus.

Looked at historically, Christianity might seem a new thing. He had been but recently manifested; but who was He? and whence had He come? He was " the first-born of every creature "-yea, the Creator! " All things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." He was the One whom God intended to manifest from all eternity. And here we see Him in His complete Person-" Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." Through Him God could bless. With Him He would have us occupied.

We are told a little before to remember them that had the rule over us-to follow their faith, even if themselves were gone. But these all pass out of the scene, while " Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." This is the only thing that abides unchangeably, and establishes too. " Meats have not profited those who have been occupied therein." Many might have abstained-it was God's bidding that they should; but if occupied with the thing, it was not for their profit. Christ was the substance: all else was shadow. Therefore He goes on to say, " We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." If others have the husk, we are feeding on the kernel. (The " tabernacle " was used to express the Jewish system.) Everything had passed away in Christ. In Philippians the apostle could speak contemptuously of circumcision in contrast with having Christ, even though it was of God. To be occupied with it, now that Christ was come, was to be outside, to be of " the circumcision."

" To eat." It was not merely the offering, nor the burning of the offering, but the partaking of it. We have got Christ Himself, and our sins put away-sin, root and branch, dealt with by God. There is not now one question unsettled for us who believe. Has He one question unsettled with Christ? and if not with Christ, He has not with us, for He died and rose for us, and we are one with Him. As in the Jewish system, God and the offerer had their portions in the sacrifices, so now we may say that God has His own portion in the same Christ on whom we feed. The entrance into this exceedingly blessed thought is one of the things which the children of God greatly fail in-that we are seated by God Himself at the same table where He has His own joy and portion. Of course there is that in which we cannot share. In the burnt-offering all went up to God. The sweet fragrance of all that Christ was goes up to Him. We must remember that God has His infinite joy in Christ; and not only for what He is in Himself, but for that which He has done for my sins. When we think of this, all of self is absorbed, and must sink before it. The old nature we have still; but it is in us to be crushed. We have to treat it all, its likings and dislikings, as a hateful thing. But the new life needs sustaining. It grows by feeding. As in natural life, the mere possession of riches will not sustain life, but it has to be nourished; so in spiritual life, it is not only true that Christ is my life in the presence of God, but I must make Christ my own for my food-eating of Him day by day; John 6. He is in very deed given to us, to be turned by faith

into nourishment for us. And the sweet thing is that we are entitled thus to think of Christ, given by God to be this food for us. It is not only that Christ is God's, but He is ours too: our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 7, Hebrews 13:17-25: Obedience the Saint's Liberty

Hebrews 13:17-25

The spirit of obedience is the great secret of all godliness. The spring of all evil from the beginning has been independence of will. Obedience is the only rightful state of the creature, or God would cease to be supreme-would cease to be God. Where there is independence, there is always sin. This rule, if remembered, would wonderfully help us in guiding our conduct.

There is no case whatever in which we ought to do our own will; for then we have not the capacity either of judging rightly about our conduct or of bringing it before God. I may be called upon to act independently of the highest authority in the world, but it ought never to be on the principle that I am doing my own will, which is the principle of eternal death.

The liberty of the saint is not license to do his own will.1 If anything could have taken away the liberty of the Lord Jesus, it would have been the hindering Him in being always obedient to the will of God. All that moves in the sphere of man's will is sin. Christianity pronounces the assertion of its exercise to be the principle of sin. We are sanctified unto obedience (1 Peter 1:2): the essence of sanctification is the having no will of our own. If I were as wise (so to speak) as Lucifer, and it administered to my own will, all my wisdom would come to be folly. True slavery is the being enslaved by our own will; and true liberty consists in our having our wills entirely set aside. When we are doing our own wills, self is our center.

The Lord Jesus " took upon himself the form of a servant," and, " being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Phil. 2:6-8. When man became a sinner, he ceased to be a servant, though he is, in sin and rebellion, the slave of a mightier rebel than himself. When we are sanctified, we are brought into the place of servants, as well as that of sons. The spirit of son-ship just manifested itself in Jesus, in coming to do the Father's will. Satan sought to make His son-ship at variance with unqualified obedience to God; but the Lord Jesus would never do anything, from the beginning to the end of His life, but the Father's will.

In this chapter the spirit of obedience is enforced towards those who rule in the church-" obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves," v. 17. It is for our profit in everything, to seek after this spirit. " They watch for your souls," says the apostle, " as they that must give account." Those whom the Lord puts into service He makes responsible to Himself. This is the real secret of all true service. It should be obedience, whether in those who rule, or those who obey. They are servants, and this is their responsibility. Woe unto them if they do not guide, direct, rebuke, etc.; if they do not do it, " the Lord " will require it of them. On the other hand, those counseled become directly responsible to " the Lord " for obedience.

The great guardian principle of all conduct in the church of God is personal responsibility to " the Lord."

No guidance of another can ever come in between an individual's conscience and God. In popery this individual responsibility to God is taken away. Those who are spoken of in this chapter, as having the rule in the church, had to " give account " of their own conduct, and not of souls which were committed to them. There is no such thing as giving account of other people's souls; " every one of us must give an account of himself to God," Rom. 14. Individual responsibility always secures the maintenance of God's authority. If those who watched for their souls

had been faithful in their service, they would not have to give account " with grief," so far as they were concerned; but still it might be very " unprofitable " for the others, if they acted disobediently.

Wherever the principle of obedience is not in our hearts, all is wrong; there is nothing but sin. The principle which actuates us in our conduct should never be, " I must do what I think right "; but, " I ought to obey God," Acts 5:29.

The apostle then says, " Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly," v. 18. It is always the snare of those who are occupied with the things of God continually, not to have a " good conscience." No person is so liable to a fall, as one who is continually administering the truth of God, if he be not careful to maintain a " good conscience." The continually talking about truth, and the being occupied about other people, has a tendency to harden the conscience. The apostle does not say, " Pray for us, for we are laboring hard," and the like; but that which gives him confidence in asking their prayers is, that he has a " good conscience." We see the same principle spoken of in 1 Tim. 1:19; " holding faith, and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck." Where there is not diligence in seeking to maintain a " good conscience," Satan comes in and destroys confidence between the soul and God, or we get into false confidence. Where there is the sense of the presence of God, there is the spirit of lowly obedience. The moment that a person is very active in service, or has much knowledge and is put forward in any way in the church, there is the danger of not having a good conscience.

It is blessed to see the way in which, in verses 20, 21, the apostle returns, after all his exercise and trial of spirit, to the thought of God's being " the God of peace." He was taken from them, and was in bondage and trial himself; he enters, moreover, into all the troubles of these saints, and is extremely anxious, evidently, about them; and yet he is able to turn quietly to God, as " the God of peace."

We are called unto peace. Paul closes his second epistle to the Thessalonians with, " Now the Lord Of peace himself give you peace always by all means." There is nothing that the soul of the believer is more brought to feel than that he has " need of patience " (Heb. 10:36); but if he is hindered by anything from finding God to be " the God of peace," if sorrow and trial hinder this, there is the will of the flesh at work. There cannot be the quiet doing of God's will, if the mind be troubled and fluttered about a thousand things. It is completely our privilege to walk and to be settled, in peace; to have no uneasiness with God, but to be quietly seeking His will. It is impossible to have holy clearness of mind, unless God be known as " the God of peace." When everything was removed out of God's sight but Christ, God was " the God of peace." Suppose then, that I find out that I am an utterly worthless sinner, but see the Lord Jesus standing in the presence of God, I have perfect peace. This sense of peace becomes quite distracted when we are looking at the ten thousand difficulties by the way; for, when the charge and care of anything rests on our minds, God ceases, practically, to be " the God of peace."

There are three steps:

1. The knowledge that God has " made peace through the blood of his cross," Col. 1:20. This gives us " peace with God," Rom. 5:1.

2. As it regards all our cares and troubles, the promise is, that, if we cast them on God, " the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." See Phil. 4:6, 7. God burdens Himself about everything for us, yet He is never disturbed or troubled; and it is said, that His peace shall " keep our hearts and minds." If Jesus walked on the troubled sea, He was just as much at peace as ever; He was far above the waves and billows.

3. There is a further step, namely, He who is " the God of peace " being with us, and working in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. See verses 20, 21. The holy power of God is here described as keeping the soul in those things which are well pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ.

There was war-war with Satan, and in our own consciences, but it met its crisis on the cross of the Lord. Jesus. The moment that He was raised from the dead, God was made known fully as " the God of peace." He could not leave His Son in the grave; the whole power of the enemy was exercised to its fullest extent; and God brought into the place of peace the Lord Jesus, and us also who believe on Him, and became nothing less than " the God of peace."

He is " the God of peace," both as regards our sins, and as regards our circumstances. But it is only in His presence that there is settled peace. The moment we get into human thoughts and reasonings about circumstances, we get troubled. Not only has peace been made for us by the atonement, but it rests upon the power of Him who raised up Jesus again from the dead; and therefore we know Him as " the God of peace."

The blessing of the saint does not depend upon the old covenant to which man was a party, and which might therefore fail; but upon God who, through all the trouble and sin and the power of Satan, " brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus," and thus secured " eternal redemption," Heb. 9:12. All that God Himself had pronounced as to judgment against sin, and all the wicked power of Satan, rested on Jesus on the cross; and God Himself has raised Him from the dead. Here then we have full comfort and confidence of soul. " Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," argues faith (see Rom. 8:31-39), for, when all our sins had been laid upon Jesus, God stepped in, in mighty power, and " brought again from the dead that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." The blood was as much the proof and witness of the love of God to the sinner as it was of the justice and majesty of God against sin. This covenant is founded on the truth and holiness of the eternal God having been fully met and answered in the cross of the Lord Jesus. His precious blood has met every claim of God. If God be not " the God of peace," He must be asserting the insufficiency of the blood of His dear Son. And this we know is impossible. God rests in it as a sweet savor.

Then, as to the effect of all this on the life of the saint, the knowledge of it produces fellowship with God and delight in doing His will. He " works in us," as it is said here, " that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ."

The only thing that ought to make any hesitation in the saint's mind about departing to be with Christ is the doing God's will here. We may suppose such an one thinking of the joy of being with Christ, and then being arrested by the desire of doing God's will here. See Phil. 1:20-25. That assumes confidence in God, as " the God of peace," and confidence in His sustaining power whilst here. If the soul is laboring in the turmoil of its own mind, it cannot have the blessing of knowing God as " the God of peace."

The flesh is so easily aroused that there is often the need of the word of exhortation-" I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation," v. 22. The spirit of obedience is the only spirit of holiness.

The Lord give us grace to walk in His ways.

Letters 2, Moral and Official Authority Contrasted With Infallibility; Woman's Place in the Work

Of course every Christian is a servant of God and of Christ. But service in every house is different, one may be a butler or a scullion boy. There is moral authority in a gift. Official authority is another thing. If I have the word in power, I shall have authority in the consciences of those to whom it is addressed. The word shows distinctly the relationship in which we stand to this moral authority: 1 Cor. 16:15, 16; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13; Heb. 13, where "they that have the rule" is the same word as "chief men" in Acts 15:22. 1 Cor. 11:5 applies to no meeting of sisters. It might be in their father's house, without any formal meeting at all, as Philip's four daughters. It refers to inspiration, not to teaching. A woman is not suffered to teach.

April 28th, 1874.

Letters 2, Ruin of the Church

I do not expect a very speedy healing of this matter, but God can do it and when He pleases. Too often a healing of a humbling state of things is sought more than the state of soul which has given occasion to it. Now this affair at-found souls needing renewal, and if we do not wait God's doing (though obeying every positive direction of the word), we have to await the effect of not doing it. There is but One that can bring the light that judges conscience into the soul: on Him we can count. I do not think there is one that has a more profound sense of the ruin of everything than myself, but there is One that is never ruined, and as able to be what is needed for the church now as at the beginning, and as faithful. "Bring thy son hither" is in the same sentence with, "How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" We cannot hasten God; He, when He is working, will have things real. The Lord graciously be with you, and keep us all.

Affectionately yours in Him.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 7, Hebrews 2:5-18 What Is Man?

A wonderful inquiry this is, which is quoted from Psa. 8 " What is man that thou art mindful of him? " It is an inquiry founded upon his nothingness in himself, but bringing out, in God's answer to it, all His own counsels in Christ. " What is man that thou art mindful of him? " Such is his littleness; yet, when it comes to be answered not according to what man is but in the counsels of God, we find him to be the one in whom all the wisdom of God is displayed. Nor is it the display of power merely-creation shows that-but all those qualities in God where His nature comes out, which are more than attributes. Power can say a word, and the thing is done: very wonderful, of course; but there is a great deal more than this. Man is the one in whom angels have to learn what God is in His ways and counsels, for the simple reason that the Word of God was in those counsels to become a man-that He who created angels does not take up angels, but takes up man.

Thus necessarily all the ways and qualities of God (I use these words as distinct from mere attributes, such as of power, and the like), His holiness, love, and righteousness, all these come out in man; because they were associated with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this that gives man such a wonderful position. And then it is not like the angels-glorious creatures, but preserved by the power of God unfallen, while that shows His ways in this respect, His power to do so, if He please. But men are taken up when they are sinners to display the glory of God in them; and this is another matter. Things that are in the highest (a revelation of the character of God) do not come out in angels. No doubt angels in a certain way want mercy; no creature can even stand without being sustained. This is quite true, as I am sure we all know; but they do not want redemption, and as regards grace, mercy, love, all these come out in man. As Paul says, " We are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men." In carrying all this out, we have the special testimony of the responsibility of man as an unfallen creature, one who was made in the image of God, which is never said of angels; but in that, when he did fall, we find grace and power coming in and connecting him with the Creator Himself, so that Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren.

This is what is brought out so wonderfully by the question" What is man " It was a testimony to man's lowliness, taking him in himself, crushed; but the moment we have the thoughts of God (v. 7-9), this puts us in a wonderful place. Angels excel us in glory and strength; but they are not said to be in the image of God, and there never was any being set up to be the center of an immense system that was to turn round himself, till man was (Adam, of course, I mean); but this is fallen now, and every one is seeking to be a center for himself. The whole system therefore is under the bondage of corruption now. But in the Lord Jesus man will be the center of everything that God created. He has put under the Lord all the works of His hands; yet when He said " all things," it is manifest that He is excepted who put all things under Him: God alone is the one exception. The statement of the exception proves that all else is put under Him. But man in the Person of Christ is Lord of all.

Thus the lordship of Christ over everything is not only dominion, but this in a Redeemer, in One who keeps it safe, One who descended first into the lower parts of the earth, to death, but who descended that He might ascend up far above all heavens and fill all things. But He fills all things in the power of the redemption He brought out. God will gather together in one all things which are in heaven and which are on earth in Him, even in Christ. They were created by Him and for Him, but while presently He becomes Head, He does not take them until He can take them as Man. And then too what is brought in is that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; as He says again in John 17, " The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one." These are to come in, though, of course, He is the firstborn amongst many brethren. He brings us in every respect into the relationship in which He stands Himself as Man. Son Himself, He

makes us sons, and He takes His place in resurrection that it may be made ours: for He tells us, " I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Then there is another thing to weigh that is so wonderful- it is all by redemption. How could He take sinners and put them in such a place with Himself? Not as sinners; and so He comes down where the sinners are, and puts Himself (sinless, of course) in their place: and in this I learn where I am. " If one died for all, then were all dead." God " made him to be sin for us." He came down to the place of death and judgment, passing through all the toil and difficulty of this world as we do, but perfect in it all, that He might take our hearts up where He is, giving a title by redemption and a condition by grace in which we could be associated with Him as the firstborn among many brethren. It is not merely the fact that I am saved, which is true; but He has associated Himself with us down here, in order that He might take up our hearts there by the love He has brought down into them- up into the very place where He is gone, making all the Father's love known to us; for the word is " Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." It is not only that I have a place in glory in consequence; but Christ is come for the purpose of associating us with Himself in heart and spirit and mind, so that He should not be ashamed to call us brethren. He might well be ashamed if He took us as we are.

We see the various characters of the way God brought Him through, and He could say Himself, " Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." He was in Himself a sweet savor to God, beyond the putting away of our sins. In this chapter are given the various grounds upon which He had to go through this place of sorrow in order that we might have this blessing with Him. " It became him in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The truth upon which it is all founded is this-the great original truth-that He was rejoicing in the habitable parts of God's earth; that is, Christ Himself was wisdom in Prov. 8, and " his delights were with the sons of men." Thus Christ is the wisdom of God, and He was God's delight from all eternity. " I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." There I get the link formed with the eternal objects of the Father's delight. Where did His delight go out? Into the habitable parts of the earth before even they were made. " I was by him as one brought up with him "; but if we look where His heart went out, it was into the habitable parts of the earth and with the sons of men.

Also in due time He became a man: that is the source and foundation of it all to us. He took up the seed of Abraham, who are the heirs of faith. Then comes the purpose and plan, His gathering together in one all things which are in heaven and earth put under His hand as Man. The ground given in Heb. 1 is that He is Son; in Col. 1 it is that He created them; and in Psa. 8, Eph. 1, as well as Col. 1, it is that all things are put under Him according to God's counsels and plan. As Son, as Creator, and according to God's counsels, He takes all. " To the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak "; but " thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." " But now we see not yet all things put under him."

Such is the purpose and intention of God. There comes in the additional notice that " we see not yet all things put under him." There is only half of the Psalm fulfilled. He is crowned with glory and honor; but we see not yet the things put under His feet, for He is waiting for His joint-heirs. The time now is the gathering by the gospel the joint-heirs, that He may take His power and reign. As Paul says, " I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." There was another set of promises belonging to this earth, and this we get in Psa. 2, where God sets His king in Zion, and says, " Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." This will be " the world to come "; but it is not the higher position of Him who is to have the world to come; and therefore in that connection we read of Christ's rejection, " Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against his anointed "-the very passage Peter quotes in Acts 4.

But, being rejected, Christ takes another place-on the Father's throne, where He now is: He is not on His own throne yet, but as He says, " to him that overcometh will I give to sit with me upon my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father upon his throne." He sits as Man at the right hand of God, not having taken His own throne; and this He does not take until the joint-heirs are ready: Psa. 8 comes in (v. 6-9). Nathanael owned Him as Son of God and king of Israel; but to him our Lord replied: " Thou shalt see greater things than these. Henceforth [so it should be] ye shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." It is a small thing, My title in Israel; but you shall see Psa. 8 fulfilled. He was rejected as the king of Zion, but He was cast out of the world that God's righteousness might be accomplished; and He was answered according to the value and virtue of what He had done in God's setting Him at His own right hand; and so it is said, " Sit at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This has not yet come; and therefore we must suffer with Him, because His enemies are not made His footstool. The world is round us, and Satan is not bound, and everything has been spoiled that God set up good; and so it will be until Satan is bound. So that plainly Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, not having taken His own throne, but with title over everything, not only as Creator but in redemption, having first descended into the lower parts of the earth; I say, with title over all things, but having taken none, with His enemies still in power and to rise up more dreadful than ever; and then all will be put down.

Now here it is that people are so deceiving themselves- Christians too. They are trying to improve man and improve the world. Why, He was in the world and could not improve it; but Christians are going to try! This is the folly of even real Christians: when Christ has been rejected by the world, they would make it all right! But it is only the time for gathering those who are to be Christ's companions. Of course light does improve the world in one sense: men are ashamed to do in the light what they would do in the dark. But this is all. They are themselves the same, not better.

Now we find this blessed One, of whom Adam was a figure, going to be center of all things, though not yet. We find Him made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor. Then we find the next point-the way in which He was bringing others into full association of heart with Himself. All the glory was His; but He does not go and take His place at the right hand of God as Man until He has accomplished redemption, tasted death, gone down to the lowest place and condition to which man can go. I speak now of sufferings rather than atonement, though this is in the chapter. But He tastes death. He goes down to that in which the curse was expressed on the first man, and a great deal more, as we shall see. But it is here the great and blessed testimony to the way in which He took man up to glory. He came into the world and left it to go to the Father, but not by the aid of twelve legions of angels; but He as man goes through where we are, on His way as man to glory. I speak of the road He took. He tasted death. The great general fact is that He who created everything, and who is now sitting at the right hand of God, did not take that place until He had gone down to the lowest place, down to death: and this without speaking of atonement. Two things are there: the fact of the death and the life spent where hatred and death reigned. He came to destroy Satan's power; He came to glorify God; He came to be able to sympathize with every trial and difficulty and sorrow of my heart while trying to walk rightly. There are therefore objects: the glory of God, the propitiation for sin, the overcoming the power of Satan, and the entering into

all our sorrows. This is what He does as Priest. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We see Him, " Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." " It became him [that is, God] in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." He was perfect Himself. He came from God, and went to God, and still was the Son of man who is in heaven; but He had come to obey, to serve us, and bring us there also; and if this were the case, He must take the consequences. The moment our blessed Lord had undertaken our cause, it became God to deal with Him according to the place He had taken.

The majesty and righteousness of God must be maintained, and none could have vindicated them but Christ: there never could have been security for God's glory otherwise. It became Him to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings-" perfect," that is, in the full result of glory-to bring Him into the state of a glorified Man if He would bring sons to glory. In Himself He was the perfect One; He always is in the bosom of the Father; and all that He did was the Father's delight; so that, if I may reverentially use the expression, the Father could not be silent, but opens the heavens and says, " This is my beloved Son." But in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is a question of the majesty of God, and we do not find " Father."

Hence, if Christ takes up these sinners, He must take the consequences of taking them up. God's glory must be maintained. If He was to clear us from our sins, He must deal with God about them and be made sin-He must die. It was His own blessed grace to do it, but through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. It is not spoken of here as clearing us, but as called for by God's glory; and the more we look at the cross, the more we shall see God could not be glorified any other way. If He had cut off -all men as sinners, there would have been no love in it; but the moment Christ gives Himself up for the glory of God, there is perfect dealing with sin in righteousness and perfect dealing with the sinner in love-infinite love in the sacrifice for sin, and infinite righteousness. Of course, all this is in God's nature; only it is here displayed, so that there is nothing like the cross. Nobody in what he is himself could be there in the glory with Christ. Therein is expressed all that God is, every character of His, and Christ giving Himself up in perfect love to His Father, in love to us, and in obedience to God. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but He is made perfect through sufferings; He goes through the effect and consequence of having taken up our case, so that He could say, " Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in him." He has that place, is a glorified Man now, and will be displayed in glory when He comes again. God would straightway glorify Him. Only faith sees this. The world will be judged when He comes again; but faith sees it now and sees it at once, not when displayed in judgment. As He glorified God perfectly on the cross, so He is gone as Man into the glory of God. It became God to deal with Him thus. And what a thought it gives to the depth of the place Christ was in, that in the depth of the place among sinners He was making good the glory of God! It was amongst sinners, yet He was the sinless One.

The first ground laid here is that " it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me," Heb. 2:10-13. Now we find the association of His people with Himself-He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified. It is not simply the fact of incarnation, but this in resurrection. They are "all of one" after His death; for He was heard from the horns of the unicorn. He declares His name after He has accomplished redemption. He had said, " Behold my mother and my brethren " in a vague way: but now He calls them His brethren and not before. " I ascend to • my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." This name is expressly declared after redemption was accomplished. These then are His brethren, made " all of one " with Him. Here we have it in a poor earthen vessel; but it is so. Those who are His own are all of one before God, they are Christ's brethren, and they are entirely and forever associated with Himself, they the redeemed, and He the redeemer; we the recipients, and He the exerciser of the grace, it is quite true; but this is what is done.

We are " all of one." The more it is looked at, the more striking it will be seen to be. All through the life of Christ He does not once say, " My God." He lived in the perfect relationship He was in, and says, " My Father "; but on the cross, when He was drinking the cup of wrath, He says, " My God." This was His perfectness; it was not the expression of relationship: but it was the expression of infinite suffering, and of infinite claim. But when this was accomplished, so that we could be brought in, He uses both names; and on those names of God our whole blessing rests. If we look at God as He is, we can delight in that name; for we are made partakers of His holiness. We are made the righteousness of God in Christ; of course, we are so suited to God; while we have also the blessed relationship of sons, and say, each of us, He is my Father too. And so we read in Eph. 1:3, " the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ " has blessed us. Of course Christ is a Man, and so God is His God; and because He is His Son, God is His Father. Grace has brought us perfectly to God, and this is the blessedness which is wrought for us. Then the whole place is perfectly settled.

I do not say we may not have trembling faith in our hearts; but the place is settled-" my God and your God." We have not the full results of it all yet, but the grace which gives. us the full consciousness of it. In three ways we have it. If I take John 1 Say, Christ is in me, and I in Him; if I take Paul, I say I am a member of Christ's body; but if I take the question of coming to God, which the Epistle to the Hebrews treats of, I can go into the holiest. I do not call this priesthood; but it is the place where we go through redemption. And it is important to understand this, because it is often used as if priesthood was to bring us there, and therefore persons go to the priest. Surely He will hear them in His mercy, though they are wrong. But it is not right: we are there, accepted in the Beloved. By one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.

But is this all? It is not all the truth. Did not Christ live on earth? Was He not perfect on earth? Are you living on earth? Are you perfect on earth? That is another story. It is not all the truth to say, " I am in Christ before God "; it is the foundation of all, but it is not all the truth of what is passing in your hearts. Have you not difficulties? Do you not find you give way sometimes through want of faith? This is not suited to heaven: the more you consciously belong to heaven, the more unsuited you feel it to be. And God deals with this. It is a tremendous mistake to think that, because I have a place in heaven with Christ, God is not concerned in my path down here. In this respect I am present in the body and absent from the Lord; and God deals with us in this condition. He brings practical death on all that is in us (on the flesh I mean), and not only where there is failure (this is met rather in 1 John 2). And in all the weakness here, I have the blessed sympathy of Christ with my heart in all I am passing through, where I need help, and He obtains help for me. I am before a throne of grace, and there is righteousness truly-grace reigns through righteousness. But what is the confidence I have? " If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us, we know that we have the petitions we desired of him." I am talking to God, and getting answers from God.

This is not perfection. Certainly if there were not perfection, I could not go on; but now, mark, it continues, " seeing we have a great high priest " (Heb. 4: 14-17); and so I go boldly and find grace. I have standing there a witness of righteousness and propitiation. He is there; and

this because He is both these. Then in 1 John 2, " If any man sin, we have," etc. He is my righteousness, and all this is settled: if not, I should have the sin imputed to me. But I stand in Him as my righteousness before God; and He is there according to the value of His propitiation; and if I fail, He there has taken up my cause. Grace comes to deal with my heart and spirit and restore me, my righteousness never being touched. It is because my righteousness can never be touched at all, that I go on. This is not my highest place, but to be members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones-in one word, to be in Christ; but it is the highest character of His grace now to help us when we are in weakness and infirmity. If God has commended His love towards us, it is when we were sinners, but I learn it all in joy in God. He loved me when there was nothing in me to love; and the grand testimony of absolutely divine love is that God loved sinners. So the grace of Christ to me is not my highest place; but it is the highest place of Christ. It makes me little and Christ great. To be put into Christ makes me great; to find Christ going the same path as myself that He may understand every feeling I have makes His grace great. And this is most precious.

The next point is-" I will put my trust in him." He passed through the whole scene, it was part of His perfection, dependent on His Father; when going to appoint the twelve, He prayed all night, and so on. Then we see Christ treading this path of opposition and insult; and we know that we have not one who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. But in my infirmity, as Paul says, I can glory that Christ's power may rest on me. You know what the Lord does there-He sends a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him: but He says " my grace is sufficient for thee." He answers, deals with him, understands him; and this is all he wants. It was the humble weak place of the believer, but the constant and touching exercise of Christ's grace towards him.

Another reason why Christ took this low place (not part of priesthood exactly, though the priest took it) was to annul the power of Satan-in order to be able to die and destroy Satan, that is, his power. First, it became God to lead Christ through this path in regard to His own glory; then Christ was there putting His trust in Him while going through it. Then He destroys Satan's power. And next we come to the more proper and immediate exercise of priesthood, and He says, " For verily he took not on him the nature of angels," etc. (v. 16-18).

First, the children were partakers of flesh and blood in trial and difficulty (it does not say sin, though they might sin). He calls them His brethren, and sings in the midst of the church. Think what it is!-not, you may sing now, for I have accomplished redemption, though this is true; but I will sing! Christ leads our praises; He has associated us with Himself now that He takes up all our thoughts and feelings. It is praise for redemption, but it is every thought and feeling I can express to God. For He is a Man; He knows what it is, as none of us ever will know, to bear God's wrath. It is over; it is gone for Him on the cross; and it is gone for us by His having taken it. When risen, He declares the Father's name to His brethren, and leads their praises. It is from below the praises go up, founded on redemption and atonement; but the expression of every thought and feeling that can be in my heart, as an exercised man down here, goes up in praise. Christ has gone through all this, enters into it all, and sings in the midst of the church-a figurative expression, but true. That is, He is the Person who leads every feeling and thought of exercised persons, because He has gone through it all.

And when it comes to the accomplishment of the way, it is the same thing, " in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." He understands it. It is not a question of perfectness or acceptance before God, but the heart of the Lord entering into every trial and difficulty I have. As He might ask, " Do you think I was not tempted and have not gone through sorrow? " He could say, " Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? " There was the constant passing through this world with all that is in it. And there He is understanding every thought of the exercises through which we pass as belonging to God. He belonged to God, and as such was made perfect through sufferings; and if we belong to God according to His acceptance, we must pass through sufferings. It is in this respect He can help us. He succors them that are tempted. There is the link of our weakness and dependence and exercises and trials we go through here. They have an echo in Christ's heart and are a link between our hearts and His.

It is not a question of righteousness, but belongs to the righteous. That is the difference. It is not the question of sin, but it is having our whole heart, as a man's down here, brought into the tune and tone of Christ's feelings, who went through it here that He might call our hearts into the current of His own. He is a merciful and faithful High Priest. It was a strictly priestly act: the high priest did it. It was not the going between the people and God at all. He was victim as well as High Priest. But Christ did not exercise His priesthood on earth, for if He were on earth He could not be a priest; but the people must have a ground on which they could stand in such a place. Christ made propitiation before beginning His ordinary exercises of Priest. He stood as representative of the people. Christ was both. There is this blessed truth in it. There is the perfectness of the work, but the full confession of the sin. Christ was owning all my sins upon the cross. He was the victim and scapegoat that bears them; but as the high priest He confesses them. And so He charges Himself with them all, the basis of all the rest. " He is able also to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him "-not only scapegoat, but this thought too (and that even of Christ as man), that He it is that confesses all my sins. He is scapegoat as well as high priest.

Then I learn that He suffered, being tempted. That is not atonement; it was part of His trial, and it enabled Him to succor them that are tempted. It is not atonement but succoring. And, I repeat, though God does not make an offender for a word if the heart is right, it is not that we go to Christ, but Christ goes to God for us, and we go to God by Him. The Spirit of God groans in us. The word "Advocate " is the same as Comforter. The Holy Ghost carries on in divine sympathies, as dwelling in us, and takes up all our sorrows; while Christ takes them up for me in the presence of God, and the effect of this is that the blessing comes down on my soul by the Holy Ghost. In this connection it is said, " He is able to save to the uttermost "-unto the end. He is talking of all this, of our going through the wilderness. It is not union that we find spoken of here in the wilderness, but exercises and trials. Christ enters into all these, and there is grace to help in time of need. His death has perfected us for God; His life carries us on with God until we reach Him. He ever lives for this; and in this we have a blessed consciousness of our weakness, and quite right too; so that with the weakness we look to One and lean on One who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Do you believe that this is Christ's heart now? I do not believe it has its place until we have righteousness, for it is a mistake to think that we go by the priest to get righteousness. Christ is there, and, believing in Him, we are made the righteousness of God in Him. But this leaves us free, in perfect acceptance with God in Christ, to learn all that He is by the way. God is thinking of us too in His own heart; and we have a Man sitting at His right hand touched with the feeling of our infirmities, One who takes every sorrow, weakness, and difficulty, as the occasion of ministering grace bringing us into the presence of His faithful love. It is not mere righteousness; it is a Christ I can trust. And I admit, and press it too, that it is not our highest place; but it is blessed, precious, perfect grace that we learn. My weakness makes me insist on what the grace and tenderness of Christ are. By Him I am perfect before God; but while I am absent from Him, I never lose the exercise of His heart for me before God to secure for me grace and strength. This carries our souls on with Him. I would have you feel that it is a low place, but it is true. It is your weakness and your infirmity, and it may be a thorn in the flesh; but it is to put you in the place where the grace of Christ can

meet you, and His strength be made perfect in your weakness. It is a great thing to learn the constant exercise of grace, as it is our highest duty to show the life of Christ; but it is the daily exercise of Christ's grace that obtains for us grace to help in time of need. The time of need is the time of grace. The Lord give us to know it in power!

The Word of God and the Priesthood of Christ, Word of God and the Priesthood of Christ, The: Part 1

Heb. 4

THERE are two things that God employs in carrying us through the desert, as spoken of here. One is the word of God, and the other is the priesthood of the Lord Jesus.

The word of God is used for the detection and discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is “quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,.... and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Whatsoever is flesh it cuts down mercilessly—and thank God for it, because it is a hindrance to our blessing. The warning of which the Apostle speaks here, alluding the history of Israel, is that their carcasses fell in the wilderness. They had got out of Egypt, and yet their carcasses fell in the wilderness. There is, of course, for us the danger answering to that—a very real danger. No doubt, God will keep His own to the end, but there is the principal danger; and if we are kept, it is through faith. Now, that which tends to make us fall in the wilderness is the flesh, and the means that God uses that we should not fall in the wilderness, is the word that is sharper than any two-edged sword. Whatever is not a thought that comes from God, and an intent that goes to God, the word of God judges—that is, whatever springs naturally up in the heart of man, whatever comes from the flesh, which, of course, is everything in a mere natural man—in the heart, out of which are the issues of life. The flesh never gets from the wilderness into the land. It may die in the wilderness, but it never can get out of it. The flesh belongs to it, in a sense, and may die in it, but cannot get from it. There is nothing for the flesh but the sword a figure, of course, of that which judges, detects, and condemns it—and let us thank God for that.

As regards acceptance with God, we can say the flesh is condemned already. “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Thus, looked at as a question of righteousness, in the cross of Christ God has condemned sin in the flesh; and then when we come to the journey through the wilderness, the word of God judges whatever is not according to that word. The cross has dealt with the flesh already: whatever did not suit the death of Christ in a thought or act was thereby judged and condemned. The word of God is one means for the practical carrying out of this; and the second means employed is the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of God, we saw, judged the thoughts and intents of the heart; while the priesthood applies to all infirmities and failures. The moment it is a question of a thought or intent of the heart, it has to be judged as coming from the flesh; and this is done by the word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword. On the other hand, looked at as regards trials and weakness, there you get the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word of God is the eye of God, judging everything in my soul that is not according to Himself. And then we have “a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.” Where it is a time of need and difficulty, it is the High Priest full of tenderness and mercy, “that we may find grace to help in time of need.” It cannot be, evidently, anything inconsistent with the word of God. It cannot be the one to cut and the other to spare the flesh; and, therefore, the priest must sustain us, according to the blessing which is given us entirely out of the reach of the flesh. And so it is that Christ becomes High Priest. He is gone up where the flesh cannot enter. That is the place in which we have to say to God; and, therefore, as our High Priest, He has to carry on our affairs in that presence of God, where nothing that defiles can enter. He lays the foundation of that in the sacrifice, by virtue of which He can go there; so that this very priesthood of Christ is founded on our acceptance.

As a figure, the redemption of Israel out of Egypt, which preceded all their journey to the wilderness, is here used. We have done with Egypt altogether. The Red sea put death and judgment between the journeyers and Egypt; and so with the saint now. Death and judgment form the starting-point of the saint. There is that which goes before it in exercise of heart; and when a soul sets out to leave this world of ruin and condemnation, it often finds itself, as Israel did, on the banks of the Red sea, the waters before and their enemies behind them. There they were completely shut in to this judgment, where Satan was driving them. But the moment they had passed over the Red sea, all that was entirely and finally closed. What had been a barrier, when Israel could go no further, was now left wholly behind, and served as a barrier against Egypt. And to us, death and judgment are a securing barrier between us and all that was against us. It is not that there may be no conflict after; no weariness after; but there is no question of deliverance after that. If Israel were not faithful, they failed in gaining victories, but there was no question of God's being against them. Next comes this journey through the wilderness, the judgment of the flesh by the word, and then the priesthood of Christ, which is exercised for us. And when I come to see where Christ is, I find that it is the very One that has gone through the death and judgment that were due to me, and has taken His place in the presence of God, where He is exercising His priesthood.

He has settled the point where I belong to, where I worship; and it is in the presence of God—that is my place. All that belongs to me, as in the first Adam, is done with in my intercourse with God—not as regards conflict with it, but as regards my place with God. The old nature is there still, and the word comes and judges all the movements of it, that would hinder me in my path. But the place where Christ exercises His priesthood is out of the flesh altogether; it is in heaven. “Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” Israel had a place on earth, and a priest on earth; we have a place in heaven, and a priest in heaven.

“And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him” He must first be made perfect in His place as priest, before He begins to lead and administer to those who were to worship through Him. We shall find that Christ exercises this priesthood because we belong to a place where flesh cannot enter, because He has set aside all that we were connected with in the first Adam. He gives us access into the presence of God, and there He maintains us. The high priest in Israel, taken from among men, was not there; they did not go even in figure within the veil, save once a year, and that was with -clouds of incense, to hide the glory of God from them. They were men in the flesh, and therefore could not be connected with the holiest. We are men in the Spirit, and therefore we are in the holiest; but the flesh has no part there, in any way. The Jews, as a nation, being in the flesh, they must have a high priest in flesh, compassed with infirmities, because they had infirmities; as it is said here, “who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he

himself also is compassed with infirmity." He was outside like them; he was on the same ground. Well, in a sense, we are on the same ground with the High Priest, and it is on the ground of the new thing that is in heaven. We are associated with God in this new place that He has made for us in Christ. But Jesus, as our High Priest, is the very contrast of the Jewish high priest taken from among men. He must be separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, because we are. All the question of our capacity to go on with joy, as being there, depends upon the intercession of Christ.

There are three things here, as regards this fitness of Christ for the priesthood. The first is the title of His person. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest." He did not set up to be a person worthy in dignity to take such an office, but God says it of Him, He is my Son. And there He was, having a competency in His own person. "But he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." In the second Psalm we find it said, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." When I look at Christ as a man upon earth, (for it is not His eternal Sonship that is spoken of here), and say, Who is this man that He can have a priesthood? What is His title? He is the Son of God. He has a competency in His person to have such an office.

Then we come to the installing of Him in this office. "As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Not like a high priest taken from among men, who dies, and gives the office to some one else, but He is a priest forever, &c. The carrying on of the priesthood of Christ in heaven is founded upon an already completed salvation, as regards both blood-shedding and righteousness. If the righteousness were not already perfect, the failure must bring down judgment instead of intercession. If propitiation has not been made for the sin, the sin must be the cause of judgment. But righteousness having been perfectly made in Christ and made for us, He sits now in heaven, and intercedes, for those for whom propitiation has been made through His blood. The atonement has been perfectly accomplished, sin is put away, and I am made the very righteousness of God in Christ. But the question still remains of our intercourse in this holy place with God in blessing, and in the perfect enjoyment of the position He has brought us into by this death and judgment through which Christ has passed. Here the intercession comes in. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Thus we have the Lord Jesus Christ in the dignity of His person, as Son of God: and in the title for office, as Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. If He is to be our Priest in the presence of God, we have Him in the dignity in which He can carry it on.

But, then, there is another difficulty. If He has this mighty title, if He is the Son, how can He enter into all the sorrows and trials of such poor creatures as we are? If He were a priest like another man, He could understand the infirmities of other men.

But I answer, the priesthood is carried on where there cannot be a thought of infirmity, where the enjoyment is spiritual enjoyment, where, if there were a thought of the flesh or of sin, there could be no communion with God. Therefore the place of Christ, as Priest, is necessarily out of the reach of all infirmity. Another priest could join with sinners, and feel their infirmities, as being himself a partaker of them. How, then, can the Lord Jesus Christ be fitted, in that sense of the word, to be our High Priest. It is not while He has His priesthood that He is thus fitted for the office. It is what He was upon earth, not what He is now as a Priest, that has fitted Him for such a work. "Such an high priest became us," &c. He has gone through the difficulties and trials of a godly and perfect man upon earth. He has known every possible difficulty which a godly than can find in his path through this world, and the trials too. He suffered and was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." Now that is just what I want. I do not want sympathy with my sin—I find the word of God to cut it down, but no sympathy with it. Christ does not intercede for the flesh. What I want Christ's help for is for the new man against my flesh. I want to be helped as a believer going through this world, against myself, so far as the flesh is there.

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." That is what I am to learn; only in His case I hear, "Though He were a Son," &c., Christ had to learn obedience. Why? Because He commanded everything through all eternity. I have to learn obedience, because I have a wicked heart and will; Christ had to learn it because He was God over all, and therefore obedience was new to Him It is new to me because I am a disobedient creature; it was new to Him because He was not a creature at all. He was put into all the difficulties and trials that we can possibly go through; and more than that, He was even put under the wrath of God, that we might never be there. Into those sufferings we can never enter. In His sufferings as a righteous man on earth, we can, in our little measure, sympathize with Him Suppose I am seeking to lead a godly life in this world, I must take up my cross and follow Him. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." And if we get too much ease in this world, it is not a safe thing for us. Suffering must be my portion. If I am godly in my ways, I shall find suffering; and if I walk in the power of the love of Christ, there I shall find suffering too. I may suffer for righteousness' sake and for Christ's sake; but whatever it be, we find there, in our path through this world, the Lord Himself going before us, suffering first and most of all.

In the sufferings of Christ about our sin, He was entirely alone; but there is another kind of suffering which Christ went through, of which we cannot say that we suffer with Him, but in which He can sympathize with us, and that is in the close of His life. The special character of that, though not exclusive, was the suffering of the Jewish remnant in the last days. They are under law; they do not know what it is to be reconciled to God, but they come into the most awful conflict with Satan, antichrist, and all the terrors of that day. They will be under the sufferings which come from the full letting loose of the power of Satan upon them, without the knowledge of God's favor resting upon them. That is anything but suffering with Christ; but, still they will have the sympathy of Christ. Christ has gone through that too. When things were entirely changed in His whole position, (not yet as drinking the cup from God,) but when He comes and has Satan's power let loose upon Him, (and there He can look forward, to wrath,) He was going through all that darkness which the power of Satan could bring upon Him, with the wrath of God staring Him in the face. For that reason He can sympathize with the remnant of Israel in the sufferings that they will pass through. Wherever this character of suffering comes in, judgment against man is what we find called for. Hence the constant appeal to God to arise and avenge them on their adversaries, which we finch throughout the Psalms. Whereas when expiation is made, it is mercy that is called for. In the one case, it is calling for judgment upon men, because men, as the instruments of Satan, are making Christ suffer; but the moment He is suffering from God, because of atonement for sin, it is exactly the contrary. You then read, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto thee." It is all grace, and nothing else.

But how does that apply to us? Take souls that are under the law, finding out something of the depth and extent of their sin—not quite in despair, but all the terrors of the law drinking up their spirit. Christ can sympathize with them; having passed through all this terror and distress from the power of Satan, there is a sustaining grace that hinders the soul from being completely overwhelmed. The sufferings of expiation are another thing. Christ only has drunk that cup, because He suffered from God—entirely apart, totally alone; and nothing but

grace remains. After He has said, “Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns,” you will not find one single thing but grace. It is the wrath of God He was bearing for others.

Christ, in going through the two first classes of sufferings, can sympathize with me, where it is the trial and suffering of a godly soul, and can intercede for us and help us on. I have no doubt, too, that the presence of Christ in heaven now sustains Israel as a separate nation.

“And being made perfect,” &c. The whole thing has been passed through, and He becomes a qualified High Priest, as regards my sorrows and difficulties, because He passed through them when He was here. He has gone through all the difficulties of a godly life on the earth, and therefore now while He gives us this place in heaven, He is competent to sympathize with us as we pass through the world. My place is in heaven, and my path upon earth is that which belongs to, and is consistent with, this place that I have in heaven. My path ought to be the expression of that. What was Christ's path in this world? Even as the Son of man upon earth, He was ever “the Son of man which is in heaven.” Every atom of His life was the expression of this blessed One in heaven; and so is it with us, so far as we are consistent. The Christ who is in heaven, and who gives me this place in light, in the presence of God, is the Christ that is in me. So the apostle says, “Always hearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” The life of the Christian upon earth is the manifestation of that life in Jesus, with whom he is in heaven: he is the expression of that Christ upon earth.

(To be continued.)

Christian Truth: Volume 33, Dividing Asunder

"The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12.

God has created natural affections, but how much self and idolatry come in! Self-will, too, and self-gratification-how awfully it comes in! That is soul, and not spirit. The Word of God comes in and knows how to divide between soul and spirit, what looks like the same thing, the very same affections, as far as man sees. What a mass of corruption! Can we have communion with God when self comes in? How powerless Christians are now-you, I, and everyone. There is grace, blessed be God, but in a certain sense, how low we are! "We will give ourselves... to prayer," said some. All blessing comes from the immediateness of a man's life with God. There are rivers of living water. How are you to get them? "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink," and "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." A man must drink for himself first before there can be rivers, etc. In the time of the prophets they had a message, "Thus saith the Lord," and then they had to inquire the meaning of the prophecy; but with us, we ourselves drink first. We are so connected with Christ that we have it ourselves from Him before communicating it to others.

Notes and Comments 4, Throne of Grace, The

Note the expression "Throne of Grace," Heb. 4:16. "Throne" is connected with government, and the principles and character of Him who governs. God deals in grace, and governs in grace, but He does so according to His own nature and character—He governs. Israel, on Moses' intercession, was dealt with in grace, but that was not exactly a throne, and Israel was replaced under law. Here God governs a people who walk in this world, but, on the principles of grace, we come boldly to a throne of grace, to obtain mercy and seek grace to help in time of need. The Father takes a positive interest, as from his own heart, in the children, but an "Advocate with the Father" (1 John 2) is not simply "their Father"—that would not do—it is "the Father" "of whom ye say he is your God." The Son has revealed God, necessarily thus as Son. He Himself loves us because we have loved Christ, but it is a revelation of God the Father by the Son—not in the way of a relationship with us, though that be true. But it is a much fuller revelation of God, and in a new way. A child has not an advocate exactly with his father, but "if any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father." We have communion with the Father and with the Son, but it is with God who is Light. On sinning and getting out of communion, the nature of the revelation is not changed to put me under Law and Jehovah, but restoration is needed according to its nature.

Remark, here, that in John, however high the privilege spoken of, the saint is always looked at as in this world.

Note, further, that in Heb. 4, we have, at the end, three great and important principles for going through the wilderness—the Word, the Priesthood, and the Throne. This is very instructive. The Word searches the thoughts and intents of the heart—all that is working in the mind (desire) and will—as the eye of God. The Priesthood sustains, in grace, in every infirmity and in difficulty and trial. The Throne is perfect grace, but it is a Throne—absolute sovereign power, positive government though in grace, and according to the character and majesty of Him who sits there. We go there "boldly," for all is grace, and the great High Priest is for us with God.

Still the Throne rules according to its own principles, though I am sure to find mercy and help there, for He who sits there is sovereign goodness, and can bless righteously and graciously because of the Priest. Our privilege is to go there, but it acts as a throne when we do not, still in connection with the Priest.

Letters 1, Affliction's Lessons; Dependence; God's Ways in Discipline; Paul; Soul's Restoration; Trial of Faith

* * * It is clear that afflictions are trials of faith as well as chastening; so we ought not to suppose that what happens to us is always for the purpose of chastening, properly so-called. There is discipline as well as chastening; that is what purifies, what helps to mortify the flesh, what breaks the will, and helps by an inward work to shelter us from outward temptations, which would otherwise surprise us, because of the innate levity of the heart, which yields itself so easily, alas, without knowing it, to vanity, if there is nothing to counterbalance it. I do not speak of outward levity, but of this tendency to forget the presence of God, which is so natural to us. There are then chastening, discipline,

and the trying of faith. Chastening ought to affect the conscience, awakening it as to any failure (at least, through the operation of the Holy Spirit which accompanies it); but at the same time the work is not done until the root of the failure is discovered to the conscience, and this applies to all sorts of discipline.

Want of dependence on God, pride, may cause us to fall into many failures; the soul is not restored before that which has given occasion to these failures is judged in the heart. Discipline applies rather to the condition of the soul. There are negligence, pride, inward forgetfulness of God, a thousand things which need the pruning-knife of the Husbandman, and it is even necessary that things which are in nowise laid bare to the conscience should be hindered from acting upon the heart. The flesh needs to be thus kept in check beforehand. But there is a perfecting of the new creature which leaves room for trials: Christ passed through them. Although the new man is in itself perfect, still there is progress. In us these various kinds are mingled; in Christ there was this last only. Not that He was not always perfect, but He "learned obedience by the things which he suffered;" His faith and His obedience were put to the test by circumstances ever becoming more difficult, and this even to death. His perfection was not to act, but to suffer; in suffering there was a more entire surrender of Himself. It was so likewise with the apostle Paul; we find this more particularly in the Epistle to the Philippians. God allows the enemy to put difficulties in the path of the new man. A trial comes; the energy of the new man is exercised by it; it is strengthened by it, and in the end it gains the victory. If one does not act according to faith one shrinks back, one loses joy, or at least the light of the Holy Spirit. The new man, while perfect in his nature, is a dependent being. This is the place which was taken by Christ.

Sometimes external trials are necessary that we may distinguish between what is of the old man and of the new, which are often confounded in our deceitful hearts.... When there remains in the heart any groan which is not uttered to God as to a God of grace, any distrust of Him, it is the flesh, and the work of the enemy. When we do not go forward when God has shown the way, because of some difficulty, the flesh acts, and the Spirit is grieved. Have confidence in Him, and rejoice in His love. We may be cast down at times (although scarcely ever without some want of faith), and yet everything goes on well, if we bring it all to God. If it is trial only, we shall certainly be comforted; if there is failure in us, it will be discovered there. However matters stand let us go to Him, His peace shall keep our hearts....

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Christian Truth: Volume 22, Perfection

Hebrews 6

Nothing seemed to be a greater burden on the heart of Paul than to keep the saints up to their privileges. The Hebrews saw that Christ had died for them, though this had not the power over them which it ought to have had; but they were risen with Him also. They were in Christ in heavenly place s within the veil, and the question was, were they realizing that?...

Freshness of affection and quickness of understanding go together. There is less spring, less apprehension, less clearness when our hearts are not happy. On the other hand, my judgment is clear when my affections are warm. Motives that acted before cease to be motives when my affections are warm. Freshness of affection being lost, the Hebrews were "dull of hearing," and so were "become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." And then the Apostle explains that those who use "milk" are unskillful in the word of righteousness and are babes; while "strong meat" belongs to those, not who have made great progress but, who are of full age—men in the truth in opposition to being children or babes—and who have "their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

But how can I separate the "knowledge of good and evil" from the knowledge of Christ? If I were to try to separate between them of myself, shutting Christ out, how could I? He is my standard of good; and it is what I find in Him that gives me power to judge what is evil. How can I walk as He walked without Him? "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ [or, the word of the beginning of Christ], let us go on unto perfection."

Instead of wasting your time with what has passed away, go on to the full revelation of Christ. Be at home there, and understanding what the will of the Lord is. For how can I walk as He walked without Him? I know not how to attempt it. The secret of everything is found in that truth, "Ye are complete in Him." As Christ Himself also has said, "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me." But what is that? and where is Christ now? In heaven. Then I am there too, and my affections should be there also. My hope is to be thoroughly identified with Him. For the portion I have is what He has—life, glory, all that He has risen to -and all my associations are with Himself. There is the difference between "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" and the full perfection. Of Christ Himself it is said (chap. 5:9), "Being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."

Now He was not made perfect down here, but in being glorified in heaven. He went through the experience down here; as it is said, "He... learned.. obedience by the things which He suffered," and then went into heaven to be Priest, because our blessings and associations and hopes are all up there. He is "made perfect" as our High Priest in heaven, and not down here. He had not received that point in the counsels of God in glory, when He was down here. Now that He is there, He has associated me with Himself in that place. I can see that Christ has been through this world so as to be able to sympathize with me in all my sorrows and all my trials; and He has also borne my sins in His own body on the tree. But where is He now? He is in heaven; and I am there too in spirit, and He will soon bring me there in fact. Where He is, is His being "made perfect." The work is done, and now He is showing me the effect of its being done, and is teaching me the walk that belongs to the redemption He has wrought out. He has taken my heart and associated me with Himself, and He says that is the perfection I am to go on to.

Where did Paul see Christ? Not on earth, for long after He had left the earth he was a persecutor; but he saw Him, as we all know, in heavenly glory. His only knowledge of Christ at all was of a Christ in heaven. His course on earth he might learn; but the revelation of Christ that brought his soul into the presence of God in the power of an accomplished redemption, was the revelation of Christ in heaven and in glory. Hence he says, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." The Christ he wanted to "win" (as he says in Phil. 3) was a glorified Christ. It may cost me my life, but never mind. This is my object; after that I am reaching. I am alive from the dead, because Christ is; and I want to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. I am not in the flesh, but in Christ. I have the

consciousness that this work of Christ has put me in a new place (not yet glorified in body, but) in a new place as to my life and associations and home; and this is the perfection we are to go on to....

In the example of Abraham, the Apostle presents an encouragement to their faith, which needed to be strengthened. Abraham had the promise of God, and he believed it; he had His oath, and he trusted it; but we have more. It is not to us that God presents a promise of future blessings, and adds an oath to assure us of their accomplishment; but He has performed all that He calls us to believe. We have a redemption now in the presence of God. Christ, having wrought the work, is sitting down in the presence of God, and in spirit has brought us there. But we have more than that; for, in hope, we are partakers of all the glory which belongs to that redemption.

We have life, redemption, the Holy Ghost as the seal, and more. The forerunner is gone in, and the Holy Ghost gives us the consciousness of our union with Him, and not merely that our sins are put away through the bloodshedding of Christ. We have the Spirit in virtue of Christ's redemption, and He is come to tell us that we are in that Christ, who wrought the redemption, and is now in the power of an endless life within the veil.

But what is the practical consequence of all this? Why, if the glory He has is mine, and I am going on after Him, then all the world is but dross and dung in my esteem. This will be faith's estimate of everything in the world, when Christ is filling the heart's affections, and when the soul is pressing on after Him, in the certain hope of being forever with Him. One moment's real apprehension of Christ in the glory is sufficient to dim the brightness and glitter of every earthly thing; but the soul must be occupied alone with Christ for this.

If our affections and desires are lingering on earth, or stopping short of a glorified Christ in heaven, as the One in whom our life is hid, and to whom we are presently to be conformed in glory, and that in the glory where He is, we shall find soon that earthly things are something more than dross and dung. Leave a stone on the ground for a time, and you will find that it will gradually sink into it. And our hearts, if they are not practically in heaven with Christ, will soon become attached to earthly things.

There is a constant tendency in earthly things to press down the affections. Duties are more apt to lead away the soul from God than open sin. Many a Christian has been ensnared by duties, whose heart would have shrunk from open sin. But we have only one duty in all the varying circumstances of life-to serve Christ. And we should remember that if things on earth are dark and the heart is tested in journeying through the world, all on the side of God is bright. "Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on unto perfection" (marginal reading).

Access to God: An Extract, Access to God

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

(Hebrews 9:11, 12)

It is all-important thoroughly to understand that it is into the presence of God that we enter; and that at all times, and by virtue of a sacrifice and of blood which can never lose their value. The worshipper under the former tabernacle, did not come into the presence of God: he stayed outside the unrent veil. He sinned—a sacrifice was offered: he sinned again—a sacrifice was offered. Now the veil is rent. We are always in the presence of God without a veil. Happen what may, He always sees us—sees us in His presence—according to the efficacy of Christ’s perfect sacrifice. We are there now, by virtue of a perfect sacrifice, offered for the putting away of sin, according to the divine glory, and which has perfectly accomplished the purification of sins. I should not be in the presence of God in the sanctuary if I had not been purified according to the purity of God, and by God. It was this which brought me there. And this sacrifice and this blood can never lose their value. Through them I am therefore perfect for ever in the presence of God; I was brought into it by them. (From the writings of J.N. Darby.)

J.N. Darby

From “Synopsis of the Books of the Bible,” Loiezaux Brothers, New York. Vol. 5, p. 339.)

Christian Truth: Volume 6, Hebrews 9:27-28

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Death is like the policeman to bring us up to the judgment. Then (v. 28) we have the counterpart of this in grace. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him [all believers], shall He appear... without sin." What does that mean? As to His own Person, He was without sin the first time; but now the same One comes back-what for? To deal about the sins? No! That He has done the first time; and now, apart from that entirely, He comes to receive them to Himself. For those who trust in His first coming, and look for His second, there is nothing but blessing. There is a work done in us to make us sharers in that which has been done outside us; but this is the question of the work done for us, outside of ourselves altogether. 'What had I to do with the cross of Christ? The hatred that killed Him, and the sins that He bore, are all that sinners had to do with it. Therefore there can never come a shade upon the love of God in the cross of Christ. It is perfect.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 2, Purged With Blood

Hebrews 9

" AND almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

In the latter part of this text we find an exclusive and distinct proposition-that without shedding of blood there is no remission.

In the flaming sword placed in the garden of Eden, after man's disobedience, we find his positive exclusion from the presence of God; in our being out of paradise, we see the existing fact, that we are in a state of exclusion from God. And the question now is, have we any access to God-to that which is far above paradise?

It is not only that we are out of paradise, but that we stand in all the accumulation of our transgressions. In the first act of sin we find that the will of man is disobedience to God; and every act of his since has been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

When our conscience is awakened, we learn how productive of fruit our evil nature is, and whenever we see that all is gone (for innocency once lost is lost forever), then we find there is no competency in us to enter into association with God. That which was man's privilege in paradise has been lost, and we find ourselves not only evil, but daily accumulating transgressions. And can we then enter into the place of God's holiness? This is the only true question. Let me ask you- Is there nothing your consciences own as needing remission? Murder and theft, etc., which are the consequences of the condition man is in, through transgression, are owned by all as evil. The natural man may see the blessing of moral conduct as giving happiness on earth, but can discern nothing beyond. But when we look within the veil, it is altogether another thing. Our not wronging our neighbor may produce temporal happiness: but the revelation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ awakens the mind to a new inquiry-its fitness for the presence of such holiness; and this question is soon settled: we find it utterly impossible. It is not fitting us for happiness in the world as it is (that is not the question); but making us competent to be associated with Christ in the glory He is in when He appears. Does the world know any- thing about it? Is this what they look for? Do they not rather say it is presumption to think any can have association and fellowship with God? The world is a witness to itself that it presumes no such thing.

God's testimony is, " There are none righteous, none understand, and none seek after God." But suppose we have received an understanding to know Him that is true, then still the question is-How are we to stand in the presence of the glory? Can one in a sinful condition abide in His presence? Can we say we are fit to be partakers of the glory? There is nothing in the world fit for this. It is vain to plead the highest morality, or the most refined amiability; they are not the things to qualify us for heaven. We may find the character of evil all around: all are guilty, for all come short of the glory of God. The evil of the root from which it springs may be easily discerned in the fruits.

Now there must not only be a renewing, but a complete purging of the conscience. And I plead this, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission: all other ways are the efforts of man to depreciate the righteousness of God- the substitution of something instead of God's way of salvation, which is most presumptuous and subversive of the great testimony of God, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. The accumulated sins of our evil nature must be put away. The Spirit of God can have no part but bringing us to the knowledge of the hatefulness of sin, and the necessity of the blood shed; and whenever the soul is awakened to what sin is in God's sight, there cannot be peace until the Spirit which shows the necessity of holiness, and reveals that of God, thus teaches us that nothing but God's own efficient act can put away, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus, that which God testifies against.

The shedding the blood brings it to the actual power of death-the taking away of the life of him whose life is given; and why? Because there is the forfeiture of life, and therefore the necessity of the life being given, the blood shed, to blot out the sin; and here we find Christ stepping in, and all the believer has entirely shut up in Christ, in whom we have a new nature whereby we can delight in God, and not forgiveness only; and this the consequence of the work of Christ alone, shedding His blood before God, offering His life as a ransom to God, presenting that which was adequate for the purpose, but without which there is no escaping the consequences of sin. " It pleased the Lord to bruise him." The blood was shed, but it is manifested as His own voluntary act. At the same time His side is pierced that we might know the act complete. This is presented to our faith as a thing requisite, and which could be done in no other way. Christ had no associate, no companion; but once alone and forever the thing was done; and the revelation of it by God to the soul is salvation. This is a transaction between God and the Son; the thing done is the ground of remission of sins to every one who believes.

I have not peace in anything in which I take a part, but peace in that in which Christ acted alone. Man's part in it was only stretching out the sinful hands which crucified Him, and this is all he had to do with it. Is it, I ask, by any act to be done now that peace is obtained? No; it is simply by the blood which has been shed, the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of His death, which can give peace through faith.

If once we see ourselves morally dead in trespasses and sins, and that without the full forfeit of life there is no remission, we shall see, as regards the cleansing of the conscience, there is nothing but the blood for us. But who did this? It is the act of God to provide Himself a Lamb, by the shedding of whose blood the conscience of those admitted into the holy presence of God is effectually purged.

Can you say paradise is lost, and disobedience and sin are here, and yet I shall force my way back to God? What hope can those have who are not washed in the blood, taking a worse ground than that which excluded them from paradise (with thus accumulated sin upon them), treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and despising that blood which cleanses from all sin, counting it an unholy thing? He who seeks God's holiness and passes by Jesus, going to God in his sins, passes by the blood, rejects the testimony of God, and despises Jesus.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 7, Original Sin, Letter on

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I find in general, that people do not know what they mean by original sin. Is it a taint, an evil in nature, or a relative state with God? For instance it is said, By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.

But it is never said, Christ has put away sin in any sense. He came once in the end of the world to put away sin. But the result is not yet produced. Faith knows it is effectual and rejoices. But the Holy Ghost convicts the world of sin because they believe not in Jesus; so that there they are, sin increased upon them by the death of Christ. But, I repeat, it is never said Christ has put away sin. He has done the work that does it, so that in the new heavens and new earth righteousness will dwell.

Hence my first answer must be the question, What do they mean by original sin? If it be the nature (as for instance in the thirty-nine Articles), it is not put away at all, but condemned in the cross. If it be the relationship and standing of the sinner, it is not changed till he believes. Only the cross is the adequate and glorious ground on which, God being glorified and the blood before His eyes, He can send to every sinner beseeching him to be reconciled; but this proves he is not till he answers to the call.

If it be meant that sins are put away (which is not original sin in any sense), and we remain guilty of unbelief, it is wholly anti-scriptural. The Lord says, " If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins "; and Paul, " Let no man deceive you; for because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." And men are judged according to their works for the deeds done in the body. Only remember with the vague word " original sin " we must know what they mean. The text generally, I suppose, applied to it is Rom. 5:19. But this says nothing as to putting away. And it is never said Christ has put away sin at all.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J.N.D.

I cannot answer for letters put in by those who have received them, because the inquiry to which they are an answer may be met most justly by that answer, but does not appear in the answer. But I have more to say. Original sin is theology, and not scripture, and the fruit of men's minds, which have not to be explained but refuted as not the expression of God's In this case it has no really ascertained meaning at all. My explanation of it would be merely my thought; and it is constantly used and said to be put away and used for children's salvation, entirely out of the bounds of scripture; and those who use it do not know what they say or whereof they affirm; and it is very useful for them to know this.

Such I judge is the case of your correspondent, though I have no wish or reason to complain of his note. If your correspondent uses the statements of scripture which he quotes and drops the theological expression of original sin, he will be all right. But his letters show that he has everything to learn on the points he speaks of. He confounds, from the outset and all through, sin and sins, being born of God with forgiveness and divine favor. Speaking of sin in contrast with sins, scripture never speaks of its being forgiven at all, and carefully makes the difference between the two. It is just the vagueness and confusion which is on your correspondent's note which leaves so many souls in confusion and uncertainty, and hinders their progress. Many of your readers know that the Romans treats distinctly, and with diligent care, in two different well-defined parts the question of sins involving guilt, and sin, as the state which is the subject of deliverance, not of forgiveness, giving to each part a statement of resulting blessing. The last phrase of your correspondent's note I totally deny, as wholly erroneous.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 7, Hebrews 9:27-28: Christ's Coming, Faith's Crowning

Hebrews 9:27, 28

The apostle after speaking of Christ's first coming, and the work accomplished by Him, as the sacrifice for sin and of His having entered in once by His own blood into the holy place (heaven itself), " having obtained eternal redemption," sums up the whole doctrine in the closing verses of this chapter, and there contrasts, in a definite way, the portion of the first Adam and those who belong to the first Adam, with the place and expectations of the believer. " As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after that the judgment [that is what we have to say as to men, that there their history is ended], so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many [for the believer death and judgment have been already met-Christ having died for him and borne his sins]; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without in unto salvation."

A word in explanation of a portion of this passage. The Lord Jesus, as regards Himself, appeared the first time, as truly " without sin," as He will the second. But then He appeared the first time, though without sin, yet about it (v. 26); He came to bear it. The second time He has nothing more to do with sin; it will be unto salvation," as He says, " I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also," John 14. His second coming is to fulfill in the result all the designs of His first coming for those who believe. This makes it their hope-" that blessed hope," Titus 2:13.

This event has nothing whatever to do with death (with which it has often been confounded): so far from it, that, when the Lord Jesus Christ appears, if a believer be alive, he will never see death. See 1 Cor. 15:51, 52; 1 Thess. 4:15, 17. So little has it to do with death, that the apostle declares expressly, " we shall not all sleep." Here it is contrasted with death.

Another thing note. It is said, " unto them that look for him shall he appear." It is not a question about Christ's appearing to us at death; we " depart to be with Christ." So Col. 3:4, " When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory "; not only He appears, but we appear with Him. Again, 1 John 3:2,

" We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him," etc.; at His coming we are to be conformed to the image of God's Son in glory; Rom. 8:29.

See too Phil. 3:20, 21, " Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Many other scriptures might be quoted, but these will suffice to show that His coming has nothing to do with death. It is the power of the living Savior taking us out of the reach of death.

If the Spirit of God works in our hearts with power, this gives us present fellowship with Jesus glorified at the right hand of God. The heart of the saint is fixed on Christ Himself. This is what sanctifies: " We all with open face," etc. What then is our hope, connected with this? Our hope is to be conformed to the image of God's Son in glory. " As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. 15:49. Such is the desire, the object of hope in the soul. Now we are bearing the image of the earthy, but we hope to be made like Christ on high. " We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." It is not that there is not a moral change wrought now, but the effect of this is to produce the desire to be conformed to the image of God's Son in glory.

This being so, God could not have given us a more glorious hope or one more practically powerful in disentangling from the world. But when is it we are to be conformed to His image? At death? Clearly not, for then the bodies of the saints are in the grave, and our hope is to have them

fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. Scripture speaks of men being glorified, but nowhere of glorified souls. It is " far better " to depart and to be with Christ; Phil. 1:23. I would not weaken that. " We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened," says the apostle (2 Cor. 5), " not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. [That is what I want, to have this mortal body changed without seeing death.] Now that he hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit; therefore we are always confident," etc. The confidence I have is not interrupted at death; the life in my soul will not be affected. If I depart, it will be to be present with the Lord, and I am " willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." But I want " mortality to be swallowed up of life "; I want this to be accomplished in myself, I am to be conformed to what I have seen of His image by the power of the Holy Ghost, and I want to be " like him."

There are but four passages in the New Testament which speak of the joy of the disembodied spirit: Luke 23:42, 43, where the dying thief says to the Lord, " Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," and the Lord replies, " Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," Acts 7:59, where Stephen says, " Lord Jesus receive my spirit "; then 2 Cor. 5:8, and Phil. 1:23. We see in these passages that the soul, on departing from this world, freed from sorrow, placed out of the reach of sin, enjoys the Lord apart from it; but this is not the object of our hope-our hope is to be conformed to the image of God's Son in glory. We are to be " like him." " Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that has this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." There is the practical effect of this expectation. It is never said (blessed as that is), ' he that hath the hope of going to heaven purifieth,' etc. What am I expecting? To be like Christ. What is the effect of this? I am trying to be as like Him as I can now. This is the present practical effect of the certainty of being like Christ, when He appears.

But it is a hope which I have in common with all saints, not merely my individual hope. It is the church's hope. And therefore, as regards the Lord's supper, it is said, " As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death [not, till death, but] till he come," I Cor. 11: 26. There is the basis of our common hope-the death of Christ, and we go on showing this till He comes again to receive us unto Himself. If I think of death, of my departing to be with Christ, it is myself that I am thinking about; I shall be happy, but not the whole church glorified. When Christ comes, every saint will be there, and Christ shall then see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. The bride shall have the Bridegroom, and the Bridegroom shall have the bride. It is not merely that I shall be happy. The Spirit of God carries me out of myself, in thinking about it, to the whole body of Christ. Christ shall have that church which He loved, and for which He gave Himself (Eph. 5), with Him in the glory.

See another thing. It fixes the heart on Christ Himself. I am looking for a Person whom I love. He, who has loved me, died for me, is coming again to receive me to Himself, and I am looking for Him. The angels said, " This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," Acts 1. The Person whom they loved they had lost; they stood looking steadfastly towards heaven, longing after Him, and the first thought God brings upon the heart is, He will come back in like manner. They were to expect His return. It was a grand truth to be kept as a present thing before the soul. I see it all through the epistles, mixed up with every present feeling, whether of joy or of sorrow.

For example, turn to I Corinthians 1: 7. They were all there together " waiting [it was an individual thing, it was a common hope] for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; not all waiting to die, but " waiting for the revelation," etc.

And mark another thing. Many have supposed that we are to be waiting for another outpouring of the Holy Ghost. A very characteristic and essential feature of the church of God is the fact that the Holy Ghost dwells in it. This is not our hope, but what we have already. The Holy Ghost came down on the day of Pentecost, that " other Comforter " to " abide with us forever," John 14. " I thank my God," says the apostle, " always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you," etc.

If we turn to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, we find everything there having reference to the coming of Christ. It is mixed up with all the constant daily thoughts, hopes, affections, motives (with every element in the daily life), of the saints. As to their conversion itself (chap. 1), the power of the word had made them so like what Paul preached, that their neighbors could not help seeing it. The very world was speaking about them (perhaps saying, " How foolish," yet still bearing witness). And what did they say? That they had " turned to God from idols " and were " waiting for his Son from heaven." That is, that they had left their idols, the stocks and stones they had formerly worshipped, and were waiting for God's Son to come down from heaven.

And the apostle Paul sanctions it. It was so little their death they were expecting, that he says (chap. 4), " We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," etc. Let us be only, as an habitual thing, waiting for God's Son from heaven, it would cut short the links that bind us to the world, and knit us in heart to Him and to one another.

Look at Christian affections in the apostle; chap. 2. What a picture of careful tending of the flock! And he concludes, " For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy." That is the time (he says), when I shall get all the joy of Christian affections.

Again (chap. 3), it is associated with holiness in the saints" to the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." Again (chap. 4), what comfort at the death of brethren! where it is still more remarkable. They were uneasy at seeing Christians die (so present a thing was the hope of the return of Christ) and it was therefore a mutual comfort at the death-bed of a saint to be enabled to remind one another of a mutual meeting. " I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." The apostolic consolation to saints mourning the death of brethren was not, " Be content, they are gone to heaven," then it would have been " You will go to them "; but so did the coming of the Lord fill the soul, as a present thing, that he gives this comfort, as it were, at the dying-bed of a Christian, " Be content, God will bring him back, when Jesus comes." It need not be said that it is not death, for it is comfort against death.

In the second epistle we get it linked with comfort in trial and persecution. They were in terrible trouble (though exceedingly patient under all; their faith growing exceedingly, and their love one towards another abounding). What comfort does Paul give them? " You will go to heaven soon? " No! there will be respite, when Jesus comes. Again, it has no connection with death.

These passages have been quoted, and it may be added, that all through the epistles we find the same thing, in order to show that this grand truth (not death) is kept as a present thing before the soul, mixed up with the whole course of feelings amongst them in their everyday condition. Thus it enters into the whole framework of Christian service. It is quite evident if this be left out there must be a gap, a spiritual gap. And this becomes even still more evident when we consider (as properly characteristic of the saint) such passages as, " Unto them that look for him," " Unto all them that love his appearing."

At the close of Matt. 24 the Lord mentions the sign and characteristic of the " evil servant," and what I find there is that, the evil servant says in his heart, " My Lord delayeth his coming, and then begins to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." Were we going to trace to its source the evil, ruined state of the church (considered in its relations and responsibilities here below), we should find that the putting off of the Lord's coming brought in all kinds of evil.

See in connection the beginning of Matt. 25 " Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom [death is not the bridegroom]," etc. " While the bridegroom tarried," it is said they all slumbered and slept. The whole were asleep-the wise as well as the foolish, and both awoke together. While the wisdom of the first was in having oil in their lamps (the Spirit in the heart), when the others had not, there was forgetfulness of their hope, and consequent slothfulness. They had gone to sleep. What brought them out of this condition? What roused them? " At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh," etc. That was what was to rouse the slumbering church. Time sufficient is given to prove if there is oil in the lamp, but not to procure it.

Passages might be multiplied from the Gospels, as from the Epistles, one more however will suffice; Luke 19:12-27: " And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come," etc.

We cannot mistake, if we really attach importance to the word of God, the vital importance of all this.

The resurrection of the saints (the " first resurrection ") takes place at Christ's coming; as it is said, " Every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." This resurrection is altogether another thing from the resurrection of the wicked. There will be a resurrection, both of the just, and of the unjust, but on different principles. The former have life in Christ, which life has nothing in common with the world around. Moreover, they have the Spirit of God dwelling in them. " If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," Rom. 8:11. " The body is... for the Lord and the Lord for the body; and God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power," 1 Cor. 6:13, 14. The body is the Lord's as well as the soul. As to the wicked, Christ raises them up for judgment, but not at the same time. Christ will accomplish, for the bodies of the saints, what He has already accomplished for the soul; the wicked will be called up for judgment, and forced to honor Christ in spite of themselves; John 5.. In Luke 20:35, 36, there is a remarkable distinction. As regards all my sins, He put them away at His first coming. I am going to appear before Him who has already died for me.

But then there is another aspect of the coming of Christ, and a most important one as regards the present interests and operations of the church; namely, the way in which God is going to accomplish, through it, His purposes towards the world.

I quite understand a person saying, " I do not see this "; but I do not understand the saint saying, " I do not see the importance of it." Christ is soon coming again, and He is coming to judge the world. Now is not that important? A man may not believe it, but it is folly to say that it is unimportant. The world is going on in a rapid progress of evil, concerning which Scripture gives abundant testimony, and the preaching of the gospel is not that which is to convert the world which is all ripening for judgment. And here it would be well to guard against a false thought, namely, that to insist upon this would hinder the preaching of the gospel. Quite the contrary. It would urge to it with more power and energy, with more of the activity of love to go and say to poor sinners, " Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Did the sure knowledge of judgment coming hinder Noah? It is admitted on all hands that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will one day fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea. But the question is, how is this to be brought about? In Scripture this event is attributed to the glory of Christ. Nobody can be saved unless born again, unless washed in the blood of Jesus, but they may believe through seeing Him, like Thomas.

If we turn to Isa. 26:9-11, we there find it said, " When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favor be shown to the wicked [the character of the gospel], yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of Jehovah. [Grace does not produce that effect.] Jehovah, when thy hand is lifted up (just ready, as it were, to strike), they will not see: but they shall see," etc.

Hab. 2 speaks of the universality of blessing: " Behold, is it not of Jehovah of hosts that the people shall labor in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? " Is that the success of the gospel? yet it makes the prophet say, " for the earth shall be filled," etc.

So Isa. 11, and here again it is connected with His glory. In Isa. 25:6-8 we read, " And in this mountain shall Jehovah of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, etc.... and he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory," etc. Doubtless, it is the desire of our hearts that this terrible veil might be taken off, and we get (1 Cor. 15:54) a positive revelation as to the time at which it shall be so taken off. " Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." We must be subject to the word of God as to when, and how.

We ought (as regards responsibility) to have filled the earth with the knowledge of Jehovah; but we have not! And what have we done? We have let the enemy into the church of God. See the parable of the wheat and tares, Matt. 13 " While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." Through the carelessness of men Satan could come and spoil the results of Christ's sowing. Could this be repaired? are we to undo it? No! we cannot undo it. The mischief is done, and there they must stay until the harvest (v. 28-30). It will be rectified by a dispensation of judgment-a harvest, not a re-sowing of the field. We ought to have filled the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, but we have failed; and here we get a truly sorrowful revelation (blessed be God! He can come and set all to rights); the mischief done,

where good was done, is irreparable.

God, in the accomplishment of His purposes, is gathering out, through the gospel, the co-heirs of Christ; but there is a sorrowful side of the picture. It is blessed to preach the gospel to sinners; but it is profitable for us, as saints, to own where we have failed. " In the last days," says Paul to Timothy, " perilous times shall come "; and again, " Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

If we take two other passages, we find the same testimony as regards the carelessness of man in responsibility, and the continuance of evil (so introduced), up to the time of Christ's coming, leaving no room for intervening blessing.

First, 2 Thess. 2:7, 8: " The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." The principle of evil is already working in the church-it has begun, and it will go on working till Christ comes: there is now a hinderer; but when this is taken away, the man of sin will be manifested; and then it will be put an end to by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The same truth is revealed in the Epistle of Jude. When Jude gave all diligence to write about the common salvation, he found it needful to exhort believers earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints; " for," says he, " there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; their character is described in detail, v. 4-13. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, " Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints," etc. He identifies these very men with those whom the Lord is about to destroy.

Let us now turn to God's dealings with the nations.

When " Lo-Ammi " was written upon Israel, God gave power into the hands of the Gentiles; Dan. 2. How is it that the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ? Is it by the preaching of the gospel-a clear duty, whether the earth be filled by that, or whether judgment is to come first? The word says, " Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay and brake them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them [there was the most complete and utter destruction of the whole system of the image]; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth," v. 34, 35. There again I get a positive revelation that the universal prevalence of Christianity will be preceded by the execution of the judgments of God. The little stone cut out without hands does not become a mountain, etc., until it has executed judgment upon, broken in pieces, and destroyed the image. And, note, the act of smiting the image and then filling the whole earth is not the setting up of Christ's kingdom at the day of Pentecost. It is not an influence that changes the gold, the silver, etc., into the character of the stone; but the sudden execution of judgment upon the image-a blow, which breaks in pieces, and leaves not a trace of the existence of the image, so that we read, " no place was found for them."

If I turn to Revelation 19: 11-22, and compare it with Isa. 63:1-6, I get a striking testimony respecting the judgments of the nations. " Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me [it is not here " He that was trodden in the wine-press," but " He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," Rev. 19:15]; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment [not whiten theirs]. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." Rev. 14:17-20. The clusters of the vine of the earth are gathered, and cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

One passage more, Zeph. 3:8: " Therefore wait ye upon me, saith Jehovah, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." Verse 9 brings out subsequent blessing. This needs no comment.

Whatever part of scripture I turn to, bearing upon these things, I find the same uniform testimony.

There is another part of the subject, for which there is not space now beyond a brief notice: namely, its connection with the destinies of the Jewish people, " as concerning the gospel, enemies for your sakes, but, as touching the election, beloved for the fathers' sakes " (Rom. 11:28); " of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came," Rom. 9:4, 5. We say, with the apostle, " Hath God cast away his people? God forbid." Israel, as a nation, will be saved, and planted in the land. " There shall come out of Zion the deliverer," etc. " The gifts and callings of God are without repentance." The promises have never been accomplished. God gave certain promises to Abraham, unconditionally. Israel got into the land conditionally under Joshua, failed, and were turned out of the land. The promises are taken up under the new covenant, and connected with Messiah. Their return from Babylon was nothing in that sense; Neh. 9:36. And Messiah was not there. When He came the first time, they rejected Him. But even this, while it filled up the measure of their guilt, did not touch the promises given without condition.

If this be so, it must be under a new dispensation. It is another state and condition of things altogether.

" In the dispensation of the fullness of times," God will " gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him," Eph. 1:10, 11. When Christ, who is " heir of all things," takes the inheritance, we, as joint-heirs with Him, shall be brought into the same glory.

In conclusion, as it regards Christ's coming to judgment: I find there a very solemn testimony against being identified with the world in its interests, its pursuits, expectations, etc. The world-aye, and the church (in the general vague sense of the word) too-is ripening for judgment. " In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." How can I be found identifying the interests and objects of the world with my interests and objects as a saint? making myself a nest in the place where Christ has been crucified, and where He is coming to judge?

But here is another thing. If I look up, " Glory is coming! there is the Bridegroom! I am going to see him as he is, to be with him in the glory, to be like him." " Every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure."

The Lord give you to search the word, and see if these things be so. May you receive them, not merely as matters of knowledge, but of faith and of hope. This plants a thousand joys.

Letters 2, Original Sin

I find in general that people do not know what they mean by original sin. Is it a taint, as evil in nature, or a relative state with God? For instance, it is said,

"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." But it is never said Christ has entirely put away sin in any sense. He came once in the end of the world "to put away sin." But the result is not yet produced. Faith knows it is effectual and rejoices. But the Holy Ghost convicts the world of sin because they believe not in Jesus, so that there they are-sin increased upon them by the death of Christ. But I repeat, it is never said Christ has put away sin. He has done the work that does it, so that in the new heavens and new earth righteousness will dwell. So that my first answer must be the question, What do they mean by original sin? If it be the nature (as, for instance, in the thirty-nine Articles), that is not put away at all, but condemned in the cross. If it be the relationship and standing of the sinner, it is not changed till he believes. Only the cross is the adequate and glorious ground on which, God being glorified and the blood before His eyes, He can send to every sinner beseeching him to be reconciled; but that proves he is not, till he answers to the call.

If it be meant that sins are put away (which is not original sin in any sense), and we remain guilty of unbelief, it is wholly anti-scriptural. The Lord says, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." And Paul, "Let no man deceive you, for because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." And men are judged according to their works, for the deeds done in the body. Only remember, with the vague words "original sin" we must know what they mean. The text generally, I suppose, applied to it is Rom. 5:19. But this says nothing as to putting away. But it is never said Christ has put away sin at all.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Hereford,

September 12TH, 1873.

Letters 3, Good and Evil Brought to Issue in the Cross; the Greek Translated "By" With Genitive; Sin and Sins

I write at once as to Heb. 9. is used for a state or condition, which affects the principle on which we act or receive anything, on which anything takes place. Thus, Rom. 4:11, ; Rom. 2:27, . So it is in Heb. 9:11. As to though it be having come, it is not the act of coming , but being present in or for something by coming; coming into a certain condition, so that He is there, or come, in view of what is to be done when arrived. The verb in the sentence is , verse 12. He had taken the position of High Priest of coming good things; and this office was to be fulfilled, not in the present earthly tabernacle, but in a greater and more perfect one. The tabernacle is not, therefore, I think, the incarnation, for His priesthood (save the fact of atonement) was not on earth; it is exercised in connection with heavenly things, though there securing earthly ones for Israel: is entering into the condition of priesthood, not incarnation or glory, and that is connected with the heavenly tabernacle. The fact of His going in is in 24 as in 12; this referring to eternal redemption, which He had found; that, to the fact of His abiding presence before God there for us; but in both , the act of going in- not what He had come to be or do, the condition entered into or in view. I do not consider , or as instrumental, but to be used in the sense already referred to.

The "end of the ages," or "consummation of the ages," are all the dealings of God with man to test his general condition. In this general sense the state of innocence comes in; but the proper connection is what is after the fall, yet not looking at man as lost, but testing his state and whether he was recoverable, or was lost and had to be saved. Without law; under, law; God manifested in the flesh, were the great features of this. Hence in John 12 The Lord says, "Now is the judgment of this world." Though there was testimony, there were no religious institutions before the flood, unless the fact of sacrifices. There were after: government; promises to Abraham, showing it was grace to one separated from an idolatrous world and head of a new race; the law; the prophets; and at last the Son as come, not as offered. Then God laid the foundation of His own purposes in righteousness.

The difference is that in John 1:29 it is the sin of the world; in Heb. 9 it is to put away sin more generally. Neither will have full accomplishment till the new heavens and the new earth. In this last passage we have to distinguish between it and bearing the sins of many. The last concerns us, and purging our conscience. I do not think it has been adequately seen how all good and evil has been brought to an issue in the cross-in that place of sin before God, that is, in Christ made sin (though in the last words it is for us, 2 Cor. 5:21). We have the absolute wickedness of man and enmity against God in goodness; the complete power of Satan, "your hour and the power of darkness;" the prince of this world leading all men, the disciples having fled; man in his absolute perfection, in whom that prince had nothing, but there was perfect love to the Father and perfect obedience; man in absolute perfection, and that as made sin before God, where it was needed for God's glory, for it was where He was made sin that the obedience was made perfect, obedient unto death; God absolute in righteousness against sin, and perfect in love to the sinner. This, therefore, is the finished and so immutable ground of eternal perfectness. We cannot say as to the result sin is actually put away, save for us (2 Cor. 5) who by the Holy Ghost know it; but the work is perfectly done on the ground of which there will be a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

We must not confound "sin" and "sins." He has borne the sins of many (they never can be remembered against us); loved and washed from them in His own blood-our conscience, once purged, is made clean forever. But sin is that alienation of all things, and first of all of our hearts, from God, which requires reconciliation of things in heaven and earth, which is not yet, and of ourselves which is; see Col. 1:20, 21, and many confirmatory passages. Christ then has been manifested for the total abolition of sin out of heaven and earth, defilement and alienation gone, besides our guilt being atoned for and our sins remitted; but both are by His sacrifice, in which God withal has been perfectly glorified in all that He is. The result is not yet wholly accomplished, nor will be fully till the new heavens and the new earth. The of Phil. 2:10 are another

thing; they bow but are not reconciled. I say this to avoid mistakes. The burnt-offering alone took the ground of sin, the sin-offering of sins. Romans also, 1:17-5:11, treats of sins; 5:12 end of 8 of sin only, here only as to man on the earth:, is as to sins, goes on to sin.; sins are borne, sin put away. Of course our sins are wholly taken away, but that is "our." He is never said to have borne the sins of all or of the world, or taken them away, but our sins, or those of many; but He is the of sin out of the universe, the taker-away of it, the result being not yet accomplished: (Heb. 9:26) is the result proposed, is not said. The work is done, the full result not yet brought about; but it is all in virtue of that, though power comes in to make it good, just as it does in the microcosm of ourselves, even as to the body in due time.

As to the question of "covenant" or " testament": " covenant" is always right, save in Heb. 9:16, 17. Even here it has been contested; but it seems more simple to take it as "testament," an observation or allusion by the bye, being in Greek covenant or testament or disposition. The voice of has been the great bone of contention where it has been discussed; translated, if covenant, "the appointed" [sacrifice.] But this has seemed to me forced. Some have even made Gal. 3:15, 16 "testament," but this, I judge, is entirely wrong.

Ottawa, America, Oct. 27th, 1876.

Notes and Jottings, Hebrews 9:19-28, Lecture on

THERE are two very distinct parts in this passage to the value of the sacrifice of Christ.

The one is its aspect towards God, and the other is its aspect towards us as sinners.

There is the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and then, He hath borne the sins of many. We find these two aspects running all through Scripture. Take the figure of the Old Testament. In Lev. 16, on the day of atonement the blood was carried in and put on the mercy-seat; this was the first goat, or, "the Lord's lot"; sins were then confessed on the head of the scapegoat by the high priest as representing the people, and afterward these sins were carried away into a land not inhabited. This second goat dealt with actual sins and transgressions; but the former goat, or the Lord's lot, although in favor of sinners, surely had its direct aspect towards God.

Another element there is here, on which, however, I do not stay; viz., that Christ Himself has gone in, and is always there; that is, as is always the case in Hebrews, the truth is carried much further than the figure, for Christ is constantly in the presence of God for us. Not only has He done one work with regard to our standing before God, but He appears also in the presence of God for us.

There is a further element in the passage which has also its value and place, and that is, the " blood of the covenant " (v. 20). Not that there is any covenant made with us, but, as respects our relationship with God, it gives the fullest contrast between the first and second covenants. We get the blessings of the second covenant, though not exactly under it.

The great truth is, that we are in a state of sin before God. Everything is defiled where the creature has reached, everything even of heaven; I do not mean, of course, where God dwells in unapproachable light; but the created heavens regarded as part of the whole creation; and the angels also as well as the heavens.

Not that the heaven:, are guilty, but they are defiled; and therefore it is, that Christ has gone up " far above all heavens."

All that to which the creature has had to say, is defiled. If we look at God as dwelling, in a certain sense, in His creation, He sees the whole of it defiled; not indeed where He is in His own being and nature in unapproachable light; but there where He is in connection with His creatures, there, is defilement, and that does not do for God, for " Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, forever."

It is in respect of this, that the great truth of the putting away of sin out of God's sight is made known to us; and then comes another thing: we are guilty, and our sins must also be put away. We have sinned. This is our place and condition, in the midst of the defiled creation. The whole evil must, therefore, be put out of God's sight, and this has taken place by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a purification for both, and Christianity teaches it in its own way: "Forthwith came there out blood and water." "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." Practical purifying is typified by water; and also, even under the law, "almost all things are purged with blood." And not merely have we the renewing of our minds (which is another thing entirely), renewed in the knowledge of God, "in knowledge after the image of him that created him," but as there was sin in God's sight with which, of course, God has had to deal, so now all the dealings of God go upon that ground. No matter what the kind of dealing is, it is based upon the existence of sin. It must be so, because sin is here.

I am not speaking now of believers who stand in grace, nor of God's righteousness which has come in; but I am looking at the ways and dealings of God, in judgment or in mercy, in atonement or in condemnation; all is in view of sin, because sin is here. We have surely thousands of mercies in regard to temporal things, but we have to look at things as men in the presence of God. In God's moral dealings with men, He must deal with respect to sin, because sin is here, or the dealings would not be true. It is of all importance that our hearts should get into the consciousness of this. We must either say that the world is fit, or else that it is unfit, for God.

If it is fit for God, what kind of God have we got?

With corruption, murder, violence, oppression, horrible wickedness, wretchedness all around us, can we say that the world is fit for God? No person with a conscience, but will own it is not fit for God. Put it fairly before him, and he will own it. He might perhaps fly out against God, because of its state, or, that he should ever be punished for it, but he will never say that the world is fit for God as it is. And again, our hearts are not fit for God; that is a serious thing. No doubt a few leaves of a poisonous plant are not like a tree covered with fruit; and we may not grasp the whole value of this. As regards what was manifested, the Lord could look at it, but the whole condition of man is apart from God. At the first, we read that, "So he drove out the man"; and since then, every man has added his own sins, making up his own guilt.

We find, then, these two things: the state of the world before God, everything suffering from it and groaning together; and, in speaking of direct application to the conscience, our hearts also are away from God, and we never can be really in the truth with God until we own that. We may have many beautiful ideas in our heads, but to be with God, we must first take our place as sinners, just because we are such. There

is not one of us, no matter who it is, but has done things his conscience condemns. And " if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." Of course, a holy God must condemn us. That is where we find ourselves (I am not now speaking of the believer's place in Christ), and the word of God fully unfolds all this, and presses it upon us. Nor shall we mend our position by deceiving ourselves, or by hiding ourselves from God, as Adam did in the garden, or by hiding God from ourselves. Not hiding absolutely, of course, for the sense of God will break in upon us sometimes, when anything unusual happens. A terrible disease rouses man to a consciousness of his position, and his conscience then sets to work at once. Bring cholera into the place, and at once you will have people religious. It expresses the sense that men have to do with God.

One there was who could say about a certain sin, that " the man that hath done this thing shall surely die "; and he gets answer from the prophet, " Thou art the man," though he had not the least conscience of it. There is no truth for us till we get before God in the consciousness of our state of sin, and also, that we have sinned, i.e., that the tree has borne its fruit. It is not merely a generality, but it is intensely individual; I have to do with God, and I must be before Him according to all I have said and done.

I may seek to excuse myself; but there I am, and that is the truth. As is often said in the proverb, ‘He that excuses himself, accuses himself.' "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat"; thus spake Adam. "Thou knowest the people that they are set on mischief," so said Aaron; but that was no good reason for his giving way to them, and making a golden calf.

All this is instead of saying with Jeremiah, “I have sinned, and it is no profit to me." Now, God deals with man on that ground. But the question is: How?

God must deal with us as sinners, for the simplest of reasons, namely, that we are sinners. But how? That is another question.

Let us not deceive ourselves by fancying that the thought of right and wrong remained with man from the time when he was innocent. He did then know that he had to say to God, that is true; but he obtained the knowledge of good and evil by eating the forbidden fruit. In a certain sense, it is a mercy he did, if he ate at all. But a bad conscience is a terrible companion; and, if not purged, it is an everlasting bad companion. It says, " The man is become as one of us," not, that man has retained this from his former state after his fall. Conscience is there, then, but it is when man is under sin, and though it is a mercy now to have conscience, yet it is a terrible thing, too, because it is either hardened by depravity, or else it is present to distress. Better to have a bad conscience than a hard one, but one or the other we must have. Now having a conscience, there is a sense in man, when not reckless in sin, that he ought to be righteous; and so he sets about to get righteousness.

Quite right is he in thinking he ought to have it, though he will fail to get it. He may take the law for his guide; but what God did in the law of Moses was, to give, not the image of heavenly things actually, but only the shadow of them. Looked at apart from its ceremonials, the law, as a moral law, was marked by two things; it came to man fallen from God, i.e., after the promise and when God was testing man in this way, to give a perfect rule of righteousness to man as he was, if he was to have human righteousness. He was not to covet, not to lust, not to lie, etc. Besides containing a complete epitome of national rules for Israel, the law told man first, what he ought not to do, and second, how he ought to feel towards God and towards his neighbor. Now man takes the outside of the law, not the real kernel of it; and so he tries to make out righteousness which, says he, ' I must have, or else, in the day of judgment, I shall fail.' He is so far right in taking the law as a rule, though he will not succeed.

Along with that, there is in man the constant tendency to make out a righteousness for himself, for he knows he needs it. If you will try to make out righteousness for yourself, well, here is the rule: " This do, and thou shalt live."

Man-Israel—had thus the law; but with it, God gave that which was the pattern of things in the heavens; not the very image, but the shadow of them.

And then we have the whole system of the tabernacle, and of the ordinances which referred to sin, etc.

It is true that the giving of the law was followed by the immediate breaking of it; but, to begin with, we have a moral rule, and then, in the tabernacle, the development of God's ways and purposes towards the sinner.

Although it was but a figure, a shadow, it contained another element which comes out in Hebrews, and that is, that until the work of redemption was wrought by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, there must be a separation between God and man. Under the law, there were hopes seen afar off by men of faith, and, of course, such were saved, but as to their then present condition, they " searched." Peter tells of those who wrote, " What, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you." These things had not then come, but though they had believed on them as coming, there was no present access to God. When a man failed and sinned through ignorance, there was a provision made, figure of Christ's sacrifice, which restored him to present communion with God by providing a relative purifying before God. This kept up the notion that sin must be put away, and it maintained intercourse with God, so far as God had revealed Himself; but along with that, there was this testimony, that man cannot draw near to God. There was always the holding out the hope of the brighter and better things that were to come; but the vail was still there.

The more we read the Old and New Testaments, the more we shall see that of old there was on the part of God the gracious condescension of communication with man, but always with this, "The Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest," i.e., that man could not draw near to God. The more we take notice of the difference between then, and now, the more striking does it appear.

There are two passages often quoted, as applicable to us, which bring out this difference; both of them have just the opposite force to that for which they are quoted. " Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," and there the quotation is stopped, as if the things were so glorious and so great, that our hearts could not know about them; but the Apostle adds, " God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." This shows that we can know them now.

Then again, in the same chapter, we read, " Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? " Nobody, of course. But the former part is used to show that we cannot now know God's mind; whereas it continues, " But we have the mind of Christ." Both of these are quotations from Isaiah, but with distinct additions, showing the exact contrast between the condition into which we are brought by grace and

the condition in which those were under law. There were wonderful thoughts in the Psalms, and gleaming through the prophets, but with it all there was still the testimony that man could not draw near to God. It was to us, Christians, that they ministered these things. We are not yet in the glory, of course, and therefore he says, " to whom they have been reported," not brought. We are still in this poor world which is under the bondage of corruption, though the work has been accomplished by which the vail has been rent and the foundation of the glory laid. And whilst waiting for the redemption of the body, we have distinct entrance into the holiest, boldness by the blood of Jesus. The vail is rent from top to bottom, i.e., the introduction of an entirely different thing.

When we have to do with responsibility, whether without law as Gentiles, or under law as Jews (indeed we all have, practically, to do with law, unless we are lawless, because it is the measure of man's responsibility as man), and when, at the same time, we do not know grace, then we go to the law, which is very useful to convict us of sin; but then, that which answers to the law, in the heart that has failed to keep it, is the day of judgment to come.

The day of judgment takes up man on his responsibility and deals with him according to the light he has had. All have failed, and the day of judgment is, therefore, not a question of mercy nor a time of discrimination between those who are saved and those who are not (it shows that out publicly, of course); but it is now that discrimination takes place; it is now that " he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," and that "he that believeth not is condemned already." So, the very moment the conscience is reached, it cries out, " Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." And directly we have the testimony of the law, as in Rom. 3 to the Jews, the conclusion is clear: " There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Their very understanding is darkened, that is, morally (I am speaking, not of science, but as regards God),.and their will is all wrong; " they are all gone out of the way." In a terrible way, all are thrown together into a lump, and none is profitable; that is what the apostle has to say of men in their responsibility. That is where he sets us all. And that is where conscience sets each of us when the light of God enters. That is also where God sees each of us to be.

The testimony takes up the thoughts and intents of each heart, whether as a heathen, or as having heard of Christ from my youth up, and so it puts me, in my conscience, where God sees me in the light.

In truth, there I am. I may not altogether understand it, but there I am; and then I find I am striving for a time to make out my own righteousness. That is how law acts as a principle.

I am under obligation to meet God's requirements. I do not say I shall succeed, but the position is true, and the day of judgment meets it; as long as there is a trace of that in men's minds they never can get peace, for they are thinking of that day, and the testimony is perfectly clear: " There is none righteous, no, not one."

Nor has God left us in the dark as to what is the result of the judgment. If He were sitting upon the great white throne, He could not say it plainer than He does now. If a person says, " I am not afraid to come before God," it would only be a proof that he has not seen God at all. It may be such an one has been preserved, through providential mercy, from outward violence, open immorality, and all that kind of thing; but he has been always thinking of himself; Christ has had no place in his thoughts and heart. Paul could say, " touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless "; but the moment the law said, " thou shalt not lust," he was killed at once; " sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Is God to allow lusts? Suppose we had lusts in heaven; what kind of heaven would that be? Lusts take us after things contrary to God. And quite true it is, that if we have not God in joy above us to delight in, we must go and satisfy ourselves by living on what is below us. Poor it is surely, but so it is. The fact is, that we have got away from God; and directly I am away from Him, I must find my pleasures and satisfactions on the earth. I may seek to keep up merriment and the like, but my pleasure will be in man. It was so from the outset. Cain built a city, and called it by his son's name, Enoch; this was the expression of his own personal importance, just as men do now with their properties; and then we find artificers in brass and iron, musical instruments, and so on, in order to make everything pleasant here for man without God.

Not that there is harm in sounds, but there is in the use made of them. And so with everything else.

When Adam hid himself behind the trees of the garden, that did not make the trees wrong. If I give a man a blow and kill him, there is no harm in the strength itself which God has given me; it is in the use I make of my strength. It is in the heart of every man that has not got God to make use of these things so as to do without God; that is the evil.

And in another way, when the conscience of a man is awakened, he may take up with outward things, and u-v to make a righteousness with them.

There are both Sadducees and Pharisees in the world wherever there is profession. On the one hand, Sadducees, going right on into open infidelity; and, on the other hand, people tithing mint, and anise, and cummin, but all the while they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. The Lord tore open their sepulchers and laid them bare; that is what He must do. He will acknowledge, in its proper place, everything that is gracious and amiable in the natural character as such just as in the case of the young man in Mark 10: " Jesus beholding him loved him."

Running to Christ, he said, " Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? " But Christ stops him, saying, " There is none good but One." You are altogether out of the way; but, " if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," Matt. 19. Well, he says, I have kept them. Jesus said unto him, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor." And then he went away sorrowful.

The Lord loved him, for he was a lovely character; but his heart was as much away from God, as anybody's else is. The Lord did not deny what his character was, but He probed his heart to the bottom, and out came just what the heart always is.

Well, this has to be met in both respects; that is to say, God's glory has been dishonored, deified, trampled upon, and His heart offended by having it before His eye; and then there is the positive guilt of the sinner.

Now the gospel meets both these things. It owns them most fully; and it establishes also the authority of the law, the curse of which Christ bore. At the same time the gospel takes up man on entirely new ground. It admits to be all quite true what we have just been saying, but

then, in view of that, man is lost. Take the law and apply it to his conduct, and it condemns it. If we have to meet God on our own responsibility, then we are lost. Does a man deny this? Does he say that sin is not sin before God? Or that it is no matter? Or that we are not guilty? No, he will not do so. Very well, then, you must come before God in the day of judgment and answer for it, and then you are completely lost. If we have to answer for ourselves, we must bear the consequences; and when the law gets into our souls, we find this out. Then we see we have sinned; and of what good is a judge, if he does not condemn one who has sinned?

But I am the man. I own it. I have done so-and-so. There I am; and the moment, therefore, I take up my responsibility, I see I am condemned already, or else I weaken the holiness of God.

It is no longer a question as to how a man may grow better, so as to be able to meet God at some future time. Are you going to get better to meet Him? Then it is clear that you have never met Him yet-you are without God.

Do you hope to be in a state to meet Him hereafter?

Ah! when the word of God meets the soul, it brings the soul into God's presence at that very moment; then what presses upon it is, not the question as to whether I am going to get better tomorrow, but what am I to-day? Nor can there be peace in my soul till I come to that point. I never find peace till I come in my rags to God, like the prodigal who came to his father, just as he came out of the far country; I mean, as to his condition, not as to his will. The prodigal was not fit for his father's home for a double reason: his state did not suit the master of the house (that is, God); and, what is more, he was really guilty, for he had been committing sin.

Now, in Heb. 9, both these things are completely met. We are sinners, and if we answer for ourselves, we are condemned; but God has set about to work for Himself. For some thousands of years He left man under responsibility, without law and under law; and this had brought out distinctly -what He has to bring out in our hearts-that the carnal mind is enmity against God. Now when that is practically brought home to us, then God takes up, not what man has done, but what He Himself has done. The responsibility is there, but if God judge us according to our works, no flesh living should be justified. So God saves us, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His own work; and that makes all the difference. God has come in, in grace, not by our works, else grace is no more grace, or work is no more work. Either I am, as to my acceptance, going to God on the ground of what I have done, or, I am going on the ground of what God has done for me. Judgment answers to the one; glory and salvation answer to the other.

And that which is of great moral importance to note, and which comes before the question of our sins and guilt, is, that God's glory had been cast away. First, angels fell, then Satan triumphed and man casts off God. Violence, corruption, death came in. Satan is both the "prince" and the "god" of this world, so that when the Son of God came into it, Satan could bring the whole world against Him. God had been utterly dishonored. Christ comes and puts Himself into this place. Sin is under God's eye, and Christ is "made sin." Not only has He been made sin for us, but there is first of all the Lord's lot. Christ, the second Man, came, and while perfect in all His ways as a living Man, yet the condition of men as such was that of sin; if, therefore, He were to save man, He must put Himself in that place before God.

And this Christ did. He was " made sin." He stood there as a sin-offering for the glory of God in this respect; and that is the basis of all. The blood has been carried inside and presented to God. Of course, the testimony of the truth of Christ's mission is also presented to people, but that has nothing to do with presenting the blood to God's eye. It was testified to the people without, as is the case now in the gospel; but this blessed truth is of the first importance, viz., that the whole value of the sacrifice has been presented to God Himself.

Man failed, and fell under Satan. Christ was also tempted by Satan; but He met the entire opposition, and everything else, and that, too, when accompanied by God's wrath; He has passed through all in divine perfectness, and He has ended it all forever.

Now this was, morally, the “end of the world” (v. 26), as the Lord had said, “Now is the judgment of this world." Man had been tried in every possible way; first, he had been set up in innocence and had sinned, so that he could no longer be with God in an earthly paradise; afterward came judgment, such as the flood; then came law and prophets, and repeated warnings; and lastly, Christ came, for nothing more could be done; it was the end of the world. And now, if a man try to make out all he can for himself; he will find himself at the end where he began, or worse; he has but proven to himself that he is a sinner.

Then must he not come into judgment, and be judged? What, then, is to be done with him?

Now see. The end of the world was morally accomplished on Calvary at the cross. Death passed upon the blessed Son of God, when He, as man, and for us, put Himself under the judgment of God. Man had been already tried under every variety of condition in the ways of God, and it had resulted in total failure on his part; then Christ comes and puts Himself there where man was; and He did this on man's behalf and for the glory of God. The second Man, in circumstances far more trying than those in which we had been overcome, first of all with every inducement that Satan could offer to Him and by which He had deceived men, and afterward with all the terribleness by which he would hinder Christ from carrying through the work of obedience, the second Man, I say, goes through all perfectly and successfully, and then, through the Eternal Spirit, He offers Himself without spot to God.

There was perfect obedience, and perfect love to His Father; He was made sin, and God dealt with Him in righteousness. We see in a Man, Christ, perfect devotedness to God, perfect devotedness to His Father; and then He goes and stands before God perfect in Himself. So that, whilst drinking the cup of wrath more deeply than we could ever drink it, He could ask, “Why hast thou forsaken me?”

He was there, so that God might be glorified in righteousness, glorified in His majesty, glorified in truth, glorified in love, by Christ putting Himself in the place of sin, Himself sinless, and by His being tested and proved all His life through; He is " the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Not the sins, as it is too often wrongly quoted, but “the sin"; if He had taken away the sins, what would there be left to judge man for? But with respect to all, God says, I am glorified. Christ hath appeared " once in the end of the world... to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He annulled sin completely, in the sight of God, by perfect obedience in His own Person, taking the whole thing upon Him, and dying as " made sin " for us, so that God has not one word more to say; on the contrary, He can now accomplish the full result of active blessing in the immutable stability of the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. All things will be reconciled (not the things cast out under the earth, I do not speak of them now), in heaven and on earth, and a new heaven and a new earth will be brought in, founded upon the death of Christ, the One who is the delight of God forever. Christ's work must ever be God's delight, because through that work God has been perfectly glorified in all that He is. And the point is, that there where Christ was " made sin," there, has God

been glorified.

Where was obedience proved? In the place where Christ was " made sin."

Where was love proved? In that place where Christ was " made sin."

Where was righteousness proved, and holiness, too? There where Christ was " made sin."

It must have been so, because sin was there before God's eye; and if Christ had not accomplished this, nothing would have been done at all.

If, then, all is done, and so done, I can say to any sinner in the world: The blood is on the mercy seat, " Come." God has been glorified in Christ, as He Himself said, " Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Will you come?

Inasmuch as God has been perfectly glorified, the testimony of the blood of Christ goes out now to the sinner, and says, ' Grace is free, grace reigns through righteousness '; while as to the full result of it, this will include " new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

As regards ourselves, we know the work is done, and that, consequently, Man sits at the right hand of God. We have also the testimony of the Holy Ghost that so completely and so perfectly has this work of God been done by Christ on the cross, that man in Him has been already glorified by God. Not, of course, that we are there yet, but our " Forerunner " is entered. For His own work's sake, Christ is now glorified in answer to His words in John 17, " I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, 0 Father, glorify thou me." Now He sits at the right hand of God in glory. But He will come again to judge His enemies, as it is written, " Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

In the application of all this, I see that not merely God has been glorified, but also that my case has been met as a sinner. At the close of this chapter, we read, "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Sin has brought in both death and judgment. Death has actually come in, and judgment is before man. So that, in this passage, I see that not merely the great general basis and foundation has been laid in God's work on the cross (not on man's responsibility, for the eternal glory rests upon the finished work of the " second Man," and it can therefore never fail), but also that conscience has been dealt with. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"—that is where we are as sinners - "so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Death came in by sin, and judgment also comes by sin. Judgment applies to my works. But I find here that God having come in, not only has Christ glorified God, but He has also confessed, as it were, my sins, my evil works, upon the head of the scapegoat, and thus they are gone forever.

So the whole question of sin has been completely met.

On the day of atonement, the high priest of old, as one of the people, and for them, confessed their sins this took place every year. Was that a sign of their sins being put away? Surely not. Why was it done? Because their sins were there. Instead of indicating the removal of their sins, the repeated confession was rather the memorial of them.

But now, my sins are all gone, for Christ has sat down, and in respect of the removal of sins, He has nothing more to do whatever. Having finished that work, He has sat down in the glory.

I see that He has confessed all my sins upon His own head. I am not excusing anything, therefore, not even a single sin; if I sin after I am converted that, of? course, is a great deal worse, but as regards the work of Christ, there is no question in that about the moment in my life of my conversion, or of the sins I committed before or after conversion. To introduce that question would be to confound the time of the efficacy of the work in me with the actual value of the work itself. In that sense, there is no time with God. God knew all my sins from the beginning. And what is so blessed is, that if I look up to God in all His holiness, righteousness, majesty, glory, and love too, but specially righteousness, I see now that He has been perfectly glorified in every respect and detail that concerns me.

The work of Christ has met God's glory, and what is more, it has enhanced it. He could say, " Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Man is therefore now glorified in God's glory.

All is perfectly done, so that my soul can say, "As regards the sin of man, and the glory of God in reference to it, I see that by what a Man has done on the cross, God has been glorified."

I do not forget that there, God's own love has been most wonderfully displayed. But in respect of the very thing wherein such gross dishonor was done to God, Christ has met every claim of God, and has honored Him perfectly.

And in that same scene, Satan was bringing every terror to bear upon Christ, and yet 1-le only showed out perfect love and obedience to God; all the perfectness was brought out in His being made sin, and in His drinking the cup. All is now finished, and Man is sitting at the right hand of God. Then what has become of my sins? He has borne them all.

If in my heart I have been brought to own myself a sinner, I see that Jesus "was once offered to bear the sins of many"; all is finished, settled, perfectly and forever; there is no longer any possible question between my conscience and God. I do not now rest upon my works, for I own I was utterly lost by them; they brought me nothing but just condemnation as regards myself. This must ever be so in view of God's glory and of my guilt; but in sovereign grace Christ has stepped in, and He has glorified God in the place I had got into, and He has borne all my personal sins-every one of them. The whole thing was settled before ever I knew of it or had been told of it, indeed before ever I was born.

And who was engaged in doing this work?

No one but Christ with God; that is the reason the work is an absolutely perfect one. It was wrought out totally and absolutely between the Son of God, offering Himself spotless, and God dealing with Him as a Victim. When therefore the Lord gave expression to what He was going through (His perfectness in submitting to it came first), we hear Him saying, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? " There was no wavering in the perfectness that owned God as His God, and yet He asks, " Why hast thou forsaken me? "

He was the One who knew God infinitely and also what it. was to be infinitely forsaken.

And in the perfectness of that work, there and thus accomplished, we had nothing to do.

This puts us in our true place. It makes the testimony to be that of sovereign grace in righteousness, so that the grace itself reigns through righteousness.

And what is the consequence? Why, that now it says, " Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Every Christian looks for this in some shape or other.

As regards those who are looking, what do they look for? Is it to be judged? It cannot be so, because the first time He came, He put away all their sins; when, therefore, He comes again, it must be "without sin," that is, apart from the question of sin. Always without sin as to His own Person, He will appear "without sin," because the first time He came, He put it all away. It was then that He stood in the place of sin before God, for God's glory and for our salvation. All is totally finished.

If men now reject Him, they will have, of course, that additional guilt, whilst their sins are not gone. But suppose I am brought to repentance, and that I am broken-hearted about my sins, then it is that I see Christ bearing them upon the cross, and I learn that all is settled; I can only then say, what a wretch I was to make the Savior suffer so! But I look up to Christ, and I say, 'The first time He came, it was in love and to give His life a ransom for many.' He was the only One who could do it, and He has done it; all is now finished for God's glory, so that the new heavens can rest upon such a basis.

And as regards my sins, all has been done also.

God's glory rests upon this finished work. So much so, that when Christ comes again, it will be "without sin." He has nothing more to do about sin (I am speaking now as to believers, but not in respect of their needing correction in their pathway here), for " by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified "; and therefore it is, " unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation."

Am I, then, resting upon the absolute, complete, eternal efficacy of His sacrifice?

That sacrifice brings us to God in the light, as God is in the light; this is its effect. Nor does it leave us there as we are, for the gospel tells us that we have died, and the question is asked, " How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? " I do not now enter into details, but I take up the broad ground of the gospel.

The vail has been rent, and we have not only boldness to enter in, but sin has been judged in the light of God, and so we judge it, too. God sees no longer any obstacle in the way. Balaam expressed it clearly enough. A wicked man he was, but God forced him to say to Balak just what God pleased, and Balaam could not help doing so, though, if he could, he would have done otherwise. And he said that which is true of God's people now. We find in this case, as always, that the accusations of Satan are put to silence before the testimony of Christ. If Joshua stand before the angel of the Lord, and Satan stand to resist him, then we find this: " The LORD rebuke thee, 0 Satan... is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? " And Balaam made his announcements as from God.

It was at the close of the wilderness journey, and not in a scene of fresh thanksgiving as at the Red Sea; it was just at the time when Moses' own witness about them was, 'Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you,' and, "I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck." But God testifies to the adversary, by Balaam, that " He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." As to the question of our acceptance, the blood of Christ gives the one perfect answer; God cannot see one bit of sin upon the believer. He will most assuredly not allow us to walk wrongly, but that is not the question here. It is God's work in the day of grace, meeting me in my need, and giving me a standing in Christ, because God has been so fully glorified as regards all that relates to me; therefore it is that I am now waiting for Christ to come and take me into the glory.

Let us see, then, that we are with Him whilst we are on the way to meet Him. There is no excuse for us in failing.

If we fail as Christians, we are always at fault; but as regards the great groundwork of our acceptance, this has been settled and established forever. Since Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, I do not need to modify my justification by my sanctification. And further, He ever appears before God for me. Having been brought to God, I have now a far deeper sense of sin than I ever could have in my natural conscience. I own how I have put His name in the dust, and how I do so still, though I call myself a Christian, though that is not what I am examining now. I am speaking more especially of this, that if I look at Christ's first and second comings, I see the most distinct difference. At His first coming, He bore my sins; I know it by the gospel, and by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven; and therefore I am now waiting for Him to come a second time without sin unto salvation.

If the Lord were to come to-day, would each one of us be able to say, ' Well, the time has come for Him to fetch me to be with Himself'? Many may say that they are waiting His good time, but is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ a thought of promise to our hearts? Is it a promise for the fulfillment of which we are looking? Or is it connected with an uncertain mixture of hope and fear as to judgment? If the latter, then I have not really laid hold of the value of His first coming. Are we able to look for Him according to His promise, " I will come again, and receive you unto myself "?

We lose so much of the value of His blessed work.

Have our hearts learned what it is to be before God, loved as Jesus is loved, righteous as Christ is righteous? He " of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." How can I fear if I have that?

Is that where our hearts are? Are we resting upon this work so that, as regards ourselves, we know that when He comes the second time, He has nothing to do for us with respect to sin, because the first time He came, He finished with sin when He bore it and was " made sin "? Jesus Christ the righteous is now our Advocate; and His advocacy is founded upon righteousness and propitiation; all believers can therefore still look up, and expect Him to come and change these vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His own glorious body, and, further, to receive them unto Himself. On the other hand, if we die, our bodies, " sown in corruption," will be " raised in incorruption "; " sown in dishonor," they

will be " raised in glory." If Christ should come to-day, would it be for us like taking a person that was waiting for Him, or like taking one that was uncertain whether or not Christ would have him? But I know that I shall be perfectly like Him when He comes, and, therefore, I am seeking to be as morally like Him now as ever I can be.

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