# Hebrews - Commentaries by Frederick George Patterson

Words of Truth: Volume 6, Hebrews 10

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There is a blessed secret in Heb. 10 The divine argument there, seems to me to be an enlargement on the words in Ex. 12, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” And Israel was all the time within, feeding upon the lamb.

The secret is this. The conscience follows the throne. If God’s demand or will be unanswered, the conscience is not perfected. If God’s will be answered, the conscience is purged, and we are sanctified.

The blood of bulls and goats did not satisfy the throne of God, or answer His will. The proof was this that the same offering went on day by day-year after year. But the blood of Christ once offered, was never offered again. Jesus. “sat down” instead of going out again. God saw the blood and passed over, as One that had said, “Judgment shall not come nigh you.” The Israelite—the believer—may feed on the Lamb inside. God entitles him to be “bold”—to stand in His presence like a priest, fresh under the washing of the Sanctuary. The throne is satisfied, and so is the conscience.

Sin is not an offense against ourselves; it is a damage, a mischief, a ruin on ourselves but it is against God; it is an offense; and if God be satisfied that it is put away, so are our hearts to be. We are thus to stand as sprinkled from an evil conscience.

Words of Truth: Volume 6, Reward of Confidence, The

The Epistle to the Hebrews trains the soul for confidence in God through Christ.

It tells us at the very outset, that the One who is now seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Majesty got there as having purged our sins (chap. 1:3); and, I ask, may not that inspire confidence?

It tells us also that it became God, it was for the Divine glory; to give us a perfect Saviour (chap. 2: 10); and, again I ask, does not that give confidence?

Again, it teaches us that Jesus was faithful in all His house (chap. 3: 1).

Again, it teaches us that He did perfect Himself as the Author of salvation to us sinners; and that, according to this, God has put Him into such a priesthood assembles Him and entitles Him to confer righteousness and peace on us with all royal authority, and to save us to the uttermost (chap. 5:9, 7). Surely, I may say again, this is all fitted to inspire the believing soul with confidence.

But still further, God is so satisfied with His perfection for us, that He has seated Him with an oath in a sanctuary pitched by Himself, and in the highest place of dignity in the heavens (chap. 8:1, 2); and this is of the same character, inspiring confidence. And the Holy Ghost witnesses, in the language of the New Covenant, the same perfection in Christ to remit our sins (chap. 10:11); and of this I say, as of the rest, what thorough, what entire confidence may all this secure to our souls!

This perfection in Christ for us being proved, we are challenged to honor it; and this honor is to be rendered in several ways, as we see in chap. 10:22-25.

We must draw near with full assurance of faith, and with a purged conscience- in other words, with a heart true to Christ’s perfection or sufficiency for us as sinners (v. 22).

We must be exercised in hope (v. 23). (For “faith” in this verse read “hope.”)

We must exhort each other to the fruits of faith, in love and services, assembling ourselves together (in the hope of a coming day of glory) for the common edification (vv. 24, 25).

By each of these things the perfection of our salvation in Christ is honored. Because each of these things—(this boldness of faith-this exercise of hope-this cultivation of fruit in love, or character of assembling together)—implies or assures that a sacrifice for the purging of sins has been accomplished. None of these things would be enjoined upon us if the peace of the soul or the cleansing of the conscience had not been provided for and secured.

But this is all blessed truth, for may I not say this? If the perfection of Christ’s work for us sinners be honored in the sanctuary in heaven (as it is by His being seated in the highest place of dignity there), surely it is but little to say, that the same work ought to be honored in the assembly of the saints on earth. If the Lord, Christ Himself, honors that perfection of, His own work for us sinners, as He does by thinking not of it, but of that fruit in victory and glory which depends upon it (10:13), surely it is but little to say, that we in our hearts ought to honor it.

But, again, this confidence being established in our souls on this perfection in Christ for us, the Apostle goes on to warn us to hold it fast, because it has “great recompence of reward,” or great power attending it.

Collected Writings, Hebrews 12:23

Q. “A. B. M.” What is the correct thought of Hebrews 12:23: “to the general assembly and church of the first born”? Does the Holy Spirit repeat Himself, or is there a distinction?

A. The passage should be read thus, “But ye are come unto mount Zion; and unto the city of the living God the heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels a general convocation; and assembly of firstborn (ones) enrolled in heaven,” etc.

The writer is contrasting the order of things to which the Hebrews had come under Christianity and grace, with that of Mount Sinai and law. They were not come to the latter (vss. 18-21), they were come to mount Zion — the principle of perfect grace from God to His earthly people when wholly ruined in all classes of the nation; people, priests, and Kings, (vss. 22-24). This is the meaning of “Mount Zion” here; it is perfect grace. It refers to God’s intervention by His chosen King, David, in re-establishing His relationship with the people at mount Zion when all was ruined; in bringing back the Ark of God (see 2 Sam. 5-6). He opens in these verses a magnificent vista of all that will be in millennial glory, but as now true to faith. The word “and” divides each thought in verses 22-24. So that the last clause of verse 22 should not have been severed from the first part of verse 23. These two clauses refer to the great convocation of angels on high. Then comes, “and assembly of firstborn (ones),” enrolled in heaven, by grace; they were not like angels — indigenous to the place. (Compare Luke 10:20.)

Collected Writings, Hebrews 13:13

Q. Does Hebrews 13:13 — “Without the camp” — refer to Exodus 33, when Moses pitched the tent “Without the camp, afar off”? or, rather, is there an allusion to it; for I suppose there is no doubt the reference is to Lev. 16?

A. In the Gospel narratives we learn that Israel had refused their Messiah — “We have no king but Caesar,” is their word (John 19). Jesus said on His cross, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23). The answer to this intercession was the offer by the Holy Spirit, who came down at Pentecost (Acts 2), by Peter in Acts 3, “I wot that through ignorance ye did it,” he says, and that if they would now repent, Jesus, whom they slew, would return, and the times of refreshing would come. Their full answer to this offer of grace was at the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7), in which act the citizens who hated the nobleman, who had gone into the far country to receive a kingdom and return, sent a messenger (Stephen), after him, saying, “We will not have this man to reign over us” (see Luke 19). Stephen sees the Lord Jesus — the Son of man — standing at the right hand of God, till then ready to bring in the “sure mercies of David.” They had now refused these “sure mercies,” and the whole earthly order of things is broken up at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad, except the apostles. Hebrews now come in, and in it we find Jesus seated and expecting, till His enemies be made His footstool (Heb. 10:12,13). Till the day when He says, “But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me” (Luke 19:27). In each Scripture it is a characteristic attitude in which He is seen. It characterizes very preciously these Scriptures, to the renewed soul, who is free to learn the beauties of the word of God. In consequence, the Jewish believers are called upon to “go forth therefore unto Him outside the camp.” They must come outside the earthly order of things, and everything of a religious character which recognized man in the flesh, and connected itself with the world. (Believers were now “in the Spirit,” with a heavenly sanctuary and High Priest.) This was most distinctly Judaism at all times. This word of the Lord holds good with regard to every religion which connects itself with the world, and recognizes and provides for man in the flesh, or unrenewed. An earthly formulary, which takes in all the nation, or country, or district, is the “camp” now, and the distinct call of God to the believer is uncompromisingly to disconnect himself with such, and take his true place with Jesus — “bearing His reproach” — “outside the camp,” or such an order of things.

Thus acting, he recognizes what God requires — separation from evil — in order to walk in fellowship with Him. Moses was quick in apprehension in the mind of God, when he pitched the tent without the camp (Ex. 33). He knew that God could not now dwell amid a rebellious and revolted people. Every one that sought the Lord went out to this place of separation to God; and God’s presence was found there; and there He spake to His faithful ones.

There is no doubt, as far as the offering went, that Lev. 16 is alluded to. It was the type.

Words of Truth 2:178-180.

Words of Truth: Volume 4, Redemption and the Sympathy of Christ, Thoughts on

We have a wonderful inquiry in the sixth verse of Heb. 2 which is quoted from Psa. 8 This question is— “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” It is an inquiry founded on his nothingness in himself looked at as a fallen creature down here, but in the answer in our chapter bringing out all the counsels of God in Christ.

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” Such is his littleness in himself; but when the inquiry is answered, to what he is in the counsels and purposes of God in Christ, and not according to what man is in himself, we find Him to be One, in whom all the wisdom and power of God are displayed. This brings out all that God is. In creation the power of God as Creator is manifested, but in Christ there is more than power—the goodness and love of God are displayed. All those qualities of God wherein His nature comes 1 which are more than attributes.

Power, for instance, can say the word, and the thing is done. All very wonderful, no doubt, but there is a, great deal more than that in God’s counsels in Christ. In Him the angels learn what God is in His ways and counsels, for the word that spoke everything into existence has become a Man! He who created angels, did not take up angels, He took up man. In their creation the power of God is displayed, but the ways and qualities (I use that word to make a distinction from mere attributes of power and the like;) of what He is in holiness, love, goodness—all these qualities of God’s nature come out in His counsels and ways in Christ. The creation of the angels are not bringing out His love nor His

ways in grace. They learn—these in their God become a man. “For, verily, he took not on him angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” That is, He who created angels, did not take up angels, He took up man. He is about to display everything in man. “Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor,” but all in man as associated with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is this which gives man slides wonderful place.

And then with man, it is not like the angels, glorious creatures, who are preserved by God’s power, unfallen, and they show His ways of power and goodness in this respect. His power to do it, for no creature can stand in itself, but men are taken up, when they are sinners, to display the glory of God in them in goodness and mercy, in all these qualities that are in the highest sense the full revelation of what God is. This does not come out in the angels. They don’t want mercy as we do, though no doubt in a certain way as poor weak creatures in themselves they are preserved by God’s mercy, for no creature can stand without being sustained by God; but they don’t want mercy in redemption as we do. But all that God is in grace, in mercy, in love, in redemption; and the unfolding of righteousness when all has been called in question by sin, all that comes out in man “which things the angels desire to look into.” As Paul says, “we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men,” (1 Cor. 4:9) in carrying this out.

This testimony as to what man is in Christ, comes after all is lost in the first Adam. He was set up in responsibility as the image of God, which is never said of angels; but in man, when fallen, when afar off, I see grace and power coming to men, and connecting them with the Creator, so that “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” That is what is brought out so wonderfully by this question, “What is man?”

Looking at what man is in the world, he is a poor, wretched, fallen creature less than a worm in himself, “whose foundation is in the dust,” as Job says, “ which are crushed before the moth;” (Job 4:19), nothing but weakness and sin; but the moment you bring in the thoughts and counsels of God about him in Christ, that puts man in a wonderful place.. Angels excel us no doubt in glory and strength, but it is never said of them that they were set in the image of God. There never was any being set up to be the center of an immense system that was to turn round himself, as Adam was. He was made in the image of God, a figure of Christ, “of him who was to come.” (Rom. 5:14.) God set him over all the works of His hands.

Adam fell we know, and the whole system fell with him, and as the result of this we see now every man is seeking to be a center for himself, the sad consequences of man losing his place. We see on every side the whole system is under the bondage of corruption “made subject to vanity,” as the apostle says; but man was set in this place, and in the Lord Jesus Christ he has been set there again forever. In the Lord Jesus Christ man will be the center of everything God has created. “He hath put all things in subjection under his feet.” I do not speak of the wicked, of those who reject Him now, who will be cast into the lake of fire. “Thou didst set him over the work of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.” In 1 Cor. 15:27, this comes out even more strongly, the exception makes it stronger. “It is manifested he is excepted, which did put all things under him.” It is Christ as Man that is before us in the passage, and the only exception being that of God, who put all things under His feet, establishes the subjection of all things to man in the person of Christ in the most absolute way.

But, then, in Christ we have all this lordship and dominion in a Redeemer-in one who keeps it safe. In one who did not take this place until He had “descended first into the lower parts of the earth”—to death; and He descends to death, that He might ascend up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things; and that He might fill all things in the power of the redemption He has wrought out. He had a personal title to go there without descending first into death-as He said to Peter, when the Jews came to take Him, “thinkest thou, that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels.” He could have taken the place of dominion, “for all things were created by him, and for him;” but, “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abidedth alone.” He does not take them until He takes them as man consequent on redemption, for unless He died he would have had no joint-heirs.

We come in thus, for it is of the grace of God He has tasted death, that He might be the “first-born among many brethren.” We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. “The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.”

“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.” He thus takes us up, and brings us into the glory, bringing us in every respect into the relationship in which He stands Himself as man, and making His standing as Son Himself, ours, for He makes us sons, and He took this place as man, though ever the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, that it might be made ours. As He says to Mary, after His resurrection, when redemption is accomplished, “ Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.”

But now we come to another thing. How could He take men into His place, for they are sinners? He could not take them there as such; so He comes down to the sinners where they are, and puts Himself, sinless of course, into their place. It is thus I learn where I am. “If one died for all, then were all dead.” We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. He came down to the place of death and judgment, passing through all the toil and difficulties, temptations and trials of this world as we do, but perfect in all, that He might take up our hearts where He is; giving us a title by redemption, and a condition by grace, in which we could be associated with Him as the first-born among many brethren.

It is not merely the fact that I am saved, that is true; but He has taken up our case so thoroughly down here, that He might take up our hearts there by the love that He has brought down into them, up into the very place where He is gone, making us know that the Father loves us, as He loved Him. That is the word in John 17, “And that the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” It is not only that I have a place in glory, in consequence of redemption; but Christ has come for this purpose, to associate us so completely in heart, and spirit, and mind with Himself, that He is not ashamed to call us brethren. He might well be ashamed if He took us up as we are, without redemption.

You see the various details of the way He took up this path, and how God brought Him through, in other scriptures; but in John 13, where the end of that path, death is immediately before His spirit, He says, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall all glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.” God was indeed always glorified in Him, but He is speaking there of His death, when He was made sin for us, and bore our sins. He was perfect under it all, so that as Man He never so glorified God as when forsaken of God on the cross. He was in Himself a sweet savor to God, besides His putting away our sins. In His death He was perfect in obedience, perfect in love, perfect in act, when everything in Him was being perfectly tested. Therefore, God glorified Him with Himself, and crowned. Him with glory and honor.

He gives us in this chapter the various reasons upon which He had to go through all this path of sorrow, in order that we might have the blessing with Him.

The ground next mentioned is in the following verse, “For it became Him” (that is God), “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.” God is going to bring many sons to glory. What a wonderful place for man! We get the great original truth upon which all this is founded in Prov. 8. The link between God and man is found there in the delight of the Eternal Son of God in the sons of men. He is spoken of in Prov. 8 as the wisdom of God. We see Him there in creation as God’s eternal delight. He is thus revealed in the counsels of God. “I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.” There I get the link formed with the eternal object of the Father’s delight; but where did His delight go out? “Rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.” It is in the habitable parts of the earth, before ever they were made. “I was by him as one brought up by him, rejoicing always before. him.” And if He looked downwards, as it were, He found the objects of His delight in the sons of men. Well, and He became a Man—that is the source and foundation of it all to us. “For verily he took not on him angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham”—those who are the heirs of faith. Then you get the purpose and place in Eph. 1:10, “That he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are on earth; even in him”—putting all things under His hand as man. The ground given for this in Heb. 1, is His person; He is the Son of God; and in Col. 1, because as Creator, all things were made by Him and for Him; and then because He is the answer “what is man?” according to Psa. 8, whom God has set over the works of His hands. 1 Cor. 15 shows that He will take this place of dominion in resurrection-first His own and then that of His people-after He has destroyed death. Thus we see that His title to this place of universal Headship is His being God’s Son-His being the Creator of all things—and because He is Man, the center of God’s counsels and plans. As He says here, “What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visited him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For that he put all in subjection under him;” that is, where the purpose and intention of God put Him.

But we now come to another thing, “We see not yet all things put under him.” Half the Psalm is fulfilled. “He is crowned with glory and honor,” but all things are not yet put under Him, though it is all known now to faith. Why is this? Because He is waiting for the joint-heirs. He is not destroying His enemies, but gathering His friends by the gospel, that he may take His power and reign with them. As Paul says, “I would to God that ye did reign, that we might reign with you.” That is, he wished that the time was come for Christ to reign, according to another set of promises in Psa. 2, which belong to Him as reigning over this earth. He is there set by God as His king in Zion, and He is to ask Jehovah, and He will give Him “the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.” That is, “the world to come,” which is spoken of in Hebrews.

But it is not the highest thing that will belong to Him in the world to come. The promises are connected with His title as in Psa. 2, Messiah, and king of Israel, and therefore the Psalm speaks of His rejection. “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” The very passage Peter quotes in the Acts, 4, and applies to Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Jews, in crucifying Christ. But, having been rejected, the promises in Psa. 2 are suspended for the time. The throne of David has passed away, and He takes another place. He has a seat on the Father’s throne. He will have the throne of David, though it is not the highest thing, but being rejected He takes another place, and sits on the Father’s throne where He now is. He is not upon His own throne yet, but, as He says, “to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.” (Rev. 3:21.) He sits, a man at the right hand of God, sitting on His Father’s throne; but He could not take His seat on His own throne until all the joint-heirs are ready; for He will have them reign with Him. It is there where Psa. 8 comes in. Nathaniel (John 1) owns Him, according to Psa. 2 as the “Son of God and king of Israel.” Son of God as born into the world; but the Lord tells him he shall see greater things than these. “Henceforth,” for that is the word, “ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man.” It is a small thing my title in Israel. You shall see Psa. 8 fulfilled also.

But He was rejected and cast out of the world, that God’s righteousness might be accomplished in putting away our sins, and according to the value and virtue of what He has done. God’s righteousness is declared in setting Him as Man, at His right hand, according to Psa. 110, “The Lord said unto my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” As yet He is expecting. He is not destroying His enemies yet, but He is gathering out his friends. We must therefore suffer with Him till He does take this place of power. His enemies are not yet made His footstool. The world is around us, and Satan is not yet bound, and we see everything spoiled that God set up good, and we must expect it to be so, until He takes His great power and reigns, and then we shall also reign with Him. He is now sitting on His Father’s throne, with title over everything, not only as Creator, but by redemption, having first descended into the lower parts of the earth, but yet having taken nothing; His enemies still in power, and soon to rise up in more dreadful opposition than ever; and then all will be put down.

Now here is the folly not only of people generally, but even of Christians in so deceiving themselves as to set about improving man, and seeking to set up the first Adam again. They are going to get all right, and improve the world, and even Christians think they can improve the world—the thing Christ did not do. Are they wiser than He? The world crucified Him, and they fancy they can make the world all right.

Which is it with you, beloved friends, will you seek to improve the world which has rejected Christ? or will you be now Christ’s companions in it, associate with Him, as the brethren of whom He is not ashamed? Christ is gathering His people out of the world now, and judgment is coming upon it. They are His companions, His associates, His brethren, and as the Captain of their salvation, He is bringing them to glory. The world is given up to judgment. I don’t deny that the light of Christianity has improved the world in one sense. It has checked the evil appearing. People are ashamed to do in the light what they do in the dark, but that is all. They are in themselves the same; man is no better. We find this blessed One, who is to be the center of all things, upon the throne of God, but we see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Him crowned with glory and honor.

The next point taken up here is 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 until He has accomplished redemption, until He has tasted death—gone down to the lowest condition to which man can go down. He is speaking here of sufferings rather than atonement; we shall come to that lower down in the chapter. But He took these sufferings by the grace of God. It was the grace of God which brought Him into this place, and by which He tasted death, which is that part of His path where He went down to the lowest. “By the grace of God he tasted death for every man.” His whole path was one of suffering. We have the fact of His tasting death as the end of that path, not its value. It is looked at here as His going down to that place where all the consequences of the ruin of the first man were expressed; to the place wherein the curse was pronounced on Adam, and He goes through it by the grace of God. A blessed testimony to the way in which He takes up man. He came from the Father into

the world, and again He leaves the world to go to the Father, and He goes back by death, where we were. It is presented here as the road He took. He did not go back with twelve legions of angels as He might have done, but, “by the grace of God, he tasted death for every man.”

It is the great general fact here, that He who created everything, and is now sitting crowned with glory and honor at the right hand of God, did not take that place until He had gone down to the lowest condition in which man is found.

I get these two things here. First, the fact of His tasting death; and, secondly, the fact of a life spent where hatred and death reigned, and where He was rejected.

In this chapter we find Him come into this place on four accounts. He has come here for the glory of God; He has come to make propitiation for the sins of the people; He has come to destroy Satan’s power; and He has come to be able to sympathize with every trial, and difficulty, and sorrow of my heart which I pass through in treading this path. The last, entering into our sorrows, is what He does as Priest —He is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” (Chapter 4:15.)

The first ground we find in the tenth verse. “It became him,” that is God, “in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” The moment the blessed Lord takes up our cause, He must take the full consequences before God. It is not that He was not perfect in Himself. He came from God and went to God, and in all His pathway down here He was “the Son of man, who is in heaven;” but He had come to obey, to save us, and to bring us to glory also; and, if that were the case, He must take the consequences. It became God to deal with Him according to the place He had taken. If He has undertaken our cause, He must go through all that becomes the glory of God according to His majesty.

It is not the question here of God’s love, or of meeting the claims of righteousness, but because He is to bring us as sons to glory. In doing this the majesty of a righteous God must be maintained. It is what becomes God, and who could vindicate that but Christ? There never could have been security for God’s righteousness otherwise. “It became him to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Not that He was not always perfect in Himself, but here, as throughout the epistle, perfect means the full result of a thing. Here it is the full result in bringing Him as the Captain of our salvation into the state of a glorified man, because He is to bring the sons to glory. What a wondrous place of association with Christ for men. In Himself He was ever the perfect one. He is always in the bosom of the Father. This was ever His place. Not as people say, He was in the bosom of the Father, and left the bosom to come down here. Scripture does not speak so. The Father’s bosom was ever His place, and is so still, and all that He did was ever the Father’s delight,—not only in His death, but all through His course. At His baptism, before He began His ministry, He was so perfectly the object of His Father’s delight, not only as His Son, but also as the perfect Man, that, if I may reverently use the expression, the Father could not be silent, but opens the heavens upon Him, and says, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

But here it is the question of the majesty of God. The glory was due to Christ, but He takes it as the Captain of salvation that He may share it with the sons. We do not get the Father’s name in the Hebrews; it is the question of our coming to God. And so if He take up these sinners, He must go through the consequences of having taken them up. God’s glory must be maintained. If He has 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 here it is looked at as meeting the claims of God’s majesty. So He by the eternal Spirit offers 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 in any other way. Nothing brings God out like the cross. If there had been no cross, God could have destroyed the whole race of men as an act of righteousness, but there would have been no love in that; and had He forgiven sinners without the cross, then. there would have been no righteousness; but the moment Christ gives Himself up for the glory of God, then I get perfect dealing with the sin in righteousness, and perfect dealing with the sinner in love. Therefore one can say, there is nothing like the cross, of course all that the cross brings out was always in God’s nature, only the cross displays it, and it cannot be known anywhere else, so that there is nothing like the cross. Nobody could be in the glory with Christ without it.

In the cross we get expressed all that God is, every character of His, and Christ giving Himself up in perfect love to His Father and for us, and in perfect obedience to God. Here it is not so much the question of God’s love, or of His righteousness, but of what became Him according to His majesty. It was for the glory of God that Christ should pass through all these sufferings, as He had undertaken our cause. His whole life we know was suffering—He was the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but here He is seen perfect at the end. He goes through in death the whole effect and consequences of having taken up our cause for God’s glory, so that He should say, John 17:4,5, “I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

Therefore this is His place now with the Father as a glorified Man. When He comes again, He will be displayed in glory, and the world will see His glory. He will come in His Father’s glory, in His own glory, and in the glory of the holy angels; but faith sees it now, and sees it too in the most excellent way, not as it will be displayed in judgment, but when in grace where one feels at home. “Glorify thou me with own self.” It is His glory in the Father’s house, and only faith sees that.

As He glorified God perfectly on the cross, so He has gone as Man into the glory of God. But then it became God to deal with Him in this way, if He is bringing us as sons to glory. What a thought it gives of the depth of that place Christ was in, that in the place of sin, and made sin and among sinners, He was making good the glory of God,—this is the first ground.

We come now to the perfect identification between Christ and the sanctified. “For both he that sanctified, 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 to my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee; and again, I will put my trust in him; and again, Behold, I and the children, which God hath given me.” (verses 11, 12, 13.) Here we get the association of these sanctified ones with Himself. He the Sanctifier and they the sanctified, and they are all of one. It is through incarnation, but only said in resurrection, after redemption. It is after death, after He has been heard from the horns of the unicorns—after He has accomplished redemption, that He declared His Father’s name to His brethren. In a vague way He said, “Whosoever doeth the will of God, the same is my mother, and sister, and brother;” but He never called His disciples His brethren before the cross. This is most important to be clear upon, for these verses have been perverted by men to establish the doctrine of union in incarnation before redemption was accomplished. But now He has accomplished redemption. He calls them expressly His brethren, saying, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.” (John 20:17.) The association is only with sanctified ones after redemption was accomplished. But they are now looked on as all one set; a risen Christ and those redeemed are all of one, one set

before God.

True, in themselves they are conscious that they have the treasure in poor earthen vessels, conscious of frailty and infirmity, and poor weak bodies; yet these sanctified ones are all one set before God. They are Christ's brethren, and they are entirely and forever associated with Himself. They the redeemed, and He the Redeemer; they the sanctified ones, and He the Sanctifier; they the recipients of grace and He the Exerciser of the grace but still all one set before God. The more you look into it, the more striking does this association, this oneness appear. What a place this gives man with God, for it is God here and not the Father.

All through the life of Christ, He does not once say "My God." It was always " My Father," for He lived in the perfect communion of the relationship He was in to the Father, as His only begotten Son; but when He was on the cross drinking the cup of wrath for us, He says, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" for that was not the expression of His relationship to His Father, but of infinite suffering, and of infinite faith. But when that was accomplished, so that we would be brought in, He uses both names, and on these names of God and Father all our blessings rest.

If we now look to God, as He is, a God of infinite holiness, we can delight in that name, for we are made partakers of His holiness. I can look to God and say "my God" because I am in Christ before Him in righteousness, according to all that He is, so that I am suited to it.

Can you look at God in His infinite holiness, and say, all is well, and joy in Him thus, delighting in His holiness, as One who has Christ's place and relationship with God! Besides, as the Son of the Father, He gives me the blessed relationship of a son, so that I can say, He is my Father too. Therefore, you read in the epistles, that He is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Christ is a Man, and so He is His God, and because He is His Son, God is His Father. Grace has brought us perfectly to God, and grace has put us into this place of sons and by the Spirit of adoption to call Him "Father," and that is the blessedness which Christ has wrought for us. The relationship is perfect, and He puts us into it now. The results of it being in such a place are not accomplished yet, therefore the Holy Ghost is given us as the earnest of the glory, but as to our place and relationship with God all is settled.

I don't say there may not be trembling in our poor hearts about it, but the place is eternally settled. It is Christ's place— "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," We have not got a bit of the results of this place yet, but the Holy Ghost is given us, to keep us in the constant sense of this relationship, and that we are made the righteousness of God in Him. He who is our Priest on high has done the work which has given us this place, and now He is in the presence of God for us.

There are three ways in which we are looked at in scripture. John takes up divine life in us. There it is Christ in me, and I am in Him. Paul looks upon us as members of Christ's body, united to Him in heaven, and the Hebrews look upon as coming to God individually. Thus in chapter 10 I can go with boldness into the holiest, through the blood of Jesus. I don't call this priesthood. We go with boldness into the holiest, through the Redeemer. We don't want Priesthood to bring us there, but to sustain us when we are there. We go there into the holiest in virtue of Christ's redemption. "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." We go there as accepted in Him, and we go there perfected forever, so that we have boldness to enter into the holiest.

It is important to understand this, because the Priesthood of Christ is often used, as if it were needed to bring us into the holiest, and therefore persons go to the Priest for what they need. Surely, God will hear them in His mercy, though they go wrong. But the thought is not right. We ARE accepted in the Beloved. Our place before God is perfect. We go there as accepted, as perfected forever, and with boldness. But is that all the truth we have? I know Christ's place in heaven. But He lived on earth, and don't you? And He was perfect down here, and are you? That is another thing. It is not all the truth to know your place in Christ. It is not all that is passing in your hearts even. Have you not difficulties and trials down here? Don't you find, too, you give way sometimes through want of faith? Don't you find much in you that is not suited to heaven—to your perfection in Christ? The more you know of your place in Christ, the more you will discover of what is in you unsuited to that place; and God deals with all that is going on in your hearts according to His holiness. He cannot allow anything to pass there which denies His nature, and the place you are in Christ.

It is a great moral mistake to suppose that because I have got a place in heaven in Christ, that God is not concerned in my path down here. As a matter of fact, while present in the body, I am absent from the Lord, and God deals with us in this condition. Hence all the exercises and trials we go through now. God deals with us to bring practical death on all that is in us—upon the flesh, I mean; and here the Priesthood of Christ comes in, and not only when there is failure, though it is true of failure, and both go together too often in our wretched hearts. But failure is met rather in 1 John 2:1,2, by the advocacy of Christ. We don't find failure in the Hebrews, but it is everything to have the Priesthood of Christ to meet me in all the weakness and exercises that arise from my being present in the body and absent from the Lord. In all these exercises I get the blessed sympathy of Christ with my heart, in all I am passing through, where I need the help which He obtains for me. I am before the throne of grace; and there in righteousness truly; His finished work the perfect foundation of all, so that I have God for me, because grace reigns through righteousness. God is dealing with me in grace, taking up my heart in connection with all the things down here, and in going to the throne of grace what is the confidence I have? Why, that if I ask anything according to His will, He heareth me. I am talking to God and getting answers from God. That is not in itself perfection, though surely if there were not perfection, I could not go there. If you turn to the fourth chapter, you see the way our hearts are dealt with by the action of the word— "All things naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." But how does it go on? "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession, for we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin; let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need."

Because the Priest is there, I can go to a throne of grace. I don't go to the Priest; I go to God, and I can go direct to Him, because there is One standing in His presence who is a witness of righteousness and of propitiation. He is standing there, because He is both these, and thus I can go boldly to the throne of grace. Then, alas, if I fail, He is my Advocate with the Father. "If any man sin" (not "if any man repent,") "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." He is my righteousness, and all that is settled, or I should have the sin imputed to me. If He had not been the propitiation for the sin, the sin must be imputed to me; but I stand in Him as my righteousness before God, and He is there according to the value of His propitiation. He carries on my cause before the Father, and if I fail, grace comes down to deal with my heart and spirit about it, and to restore me to communion, and to speak to me of righteousness which can never be touched; for Jesus Christ is the righteous one, where righteousness is all settled.

I do not say this gives you your highest place in Christ, “as members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” but remember it gives you the highest character of His grace. It is what makes Him precious to the heart, when, in my infirmity and failure, He helps me in the place where He has learned to do it.

It is our need that brings out His grace, just as the fifth chapter of Romans brings out the greatness of God’s love in Christ, in His dying for the ungodly. It is not God’s love to His children there, but God commending His love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. It is there that He displays His love to me, when there was nothing in me to love. It is the grand absolute testimony of the love of God. I learn it in joy before Him, but it is the love of God, when there was nothing in me to love. Well and it is the same with the graciousness of Christ. It makes me little, but it makes Christ great.

To be put into Christ makes me great, but to find Christ going the same path as myself, that He may understand every feeling I have, makes His grace great. He has been in this place that He might sustain us in it. He has been through all as a real man, thus we find Him saying, “I will put my trust in Him.” As the humble dependent man trusting in God, just as we have to do. This was part of His perfection, but in it I have got One who can say to me, “I have trodden all the path before you. I know it all.” Have you to cry to God in prayer? well, He spent the whole night in prayer before He called His disciples, and so on with everything we go through. He has gone before, as He says of Himself, as the Good Shepherd, “When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them.” I have not one who cannot be touched with the feeling of my infirmities.

We may have a thorn in the flesh, but that was just the way Paul had to learn that Christ’s strength was made perfect in his weakness; and we learn what the grace of Christ is in this lowly, humble, weak place, where indeed we learn what we are; but at the same time we learn, too, the constant and touching exercise of Christ’s grace to us. This made Paul say, “I will glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” The Lord says unto you, “Don’t be uneasy, my grace is sufficient for you, my strength is made perfect in your weakness.”

Thus I have one who answers me when I call upon Him, though I may not know what to pray for as I ought. He may deal with me by a thorn in the flesh, but He enters into all. I learn to trust in one who answers me, deals with me, and understands me.

The next reason. we have why Christ took this low place was that He might annul the power of Satan—most blessed in its place, but not being properly part of His priesthood, I do not enlarge on it now. He must take this humble place of man in. order to die, that He might annul the power of Satan, for that is the force of the word “destroy” here.

The first reason then we have looked at for Christ taking this place, is, that it became God to lead Him through this path in bringing many souls to glory. Secondly, He goes. through it, putting His trust in Him as the perfect man, while going through it, that He might associate us with Himself in our exercises on our way to glory. Thirdly, He goes through death to destroy the power of Satan, but this is not the immediate object of His place of priesthood.

We come now to the closing verses—to the proper and immediate object of His priesthood. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation (it is not reconciliation here) for the sins of the people. For in that he suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.” (Verses 14-18.) Remark how the Spirit of God associates us with Him in these verses. He will be one with the children, and as they are partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise Himself takes part of the same. It is not so much the fact of His incarnation that is before us here, as the way He takes up the circumstances of trial and difficulty in which the children are found. It does not say sin, though they might sin, but it is their difficulties He is taking up here. Then having gone through all, He calls them His brethren, and sings in the midst of the church.

What identity this is! It is not the union of the body or of members to the Head, but so associating us with Himself, that in our midst He leads our praises up to God. Think what that is—Christ, singing in the church. Not saying, You may sing, now I have accomplished redemption, though that is true, but, “ in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.” Christ Himself leads the praises in the midst of His brethren. He has so associated us with Himself now, that He takes up all our thoughts and feelings, and offers them all in praise to God. It is praise for redemption, but it is every thought and feeling I can express to God, offered up by Christ in praise. For He is man, and He knows, as none of us can know, what it was to bear God’s wrath, and this is over. Gone for Him, when on the cross He said, “It is finished;” gone for us, by His having borne it, so that He can declare the Father’s name to His brethren, and lead up their praises. It is from the Church down here that 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, He offers up in praise to God. Christ has gone through it all, enters into it all, and sings in the midst of the Church, a figurative expression, I need not say, but true, that He is here to lead every thought and feeling of exercised persons, because He has gone through all, up in praises to God.

And when we come to conflict by the way, it is the same thing. “In that he hath suffered, being tempted, he is able also 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 am in, and carrying up every thought and feeling in the measure in which I am looking to God in it. Is He? not able to succor those that are tempted? Was He not tempted, and has He not gone through the sorrow? He could say, “Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say;” and, besides, there was the constant passing through this world with all that is in it. Does He not understand every thought and feeling in the exercises through which we pass as belonging to God. He belonged to God, and as such was made perfect through suffering, and had to pass through it all, and according to our association with Him we must pass through sufferings. It is in that aspect He can help us, can succor them that are tempted. It is the link of our weakness with the grace of Christ as a merciful and faithful High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He has passed through all, and the exercises and trials we go through here find their echo in Christ’s heart, and are a link between our hearts and His.

It is not a question of righteousness that belongs to the righteous, neither is it the question of sin, but it is having one’s whole heart, as a man, down here brought into the tune and tone of Christ’s feelings, who went through it all, that He might call our hearts into the channel of His own.

There is another thing in these verses immensely important; and that is, that as a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, He has also made propitiation for our sins. All rests on the perfectness of that work, but I don't dwell upon it now, as it is not strictly speaking a priestly act, though the high priest did it. But on the day of atonement, the high priest was not acting in his functions as priest, in going between the people and God, but he was doing a work for them, when the people were not with God at all; He was taking their place in confession of sins, as the representative of the people. On the cross Christ was both the victim as well as the high priest; that is, He confessed all the sins and took them upon Him, as Aaron confessed them upon the scape goat. This brings us into the Holiest, for now there is no difference between the Holy Place, where the priests approached, and the Holiest of all where God dwells, because the veil that divided them is rent, and we now go through the veil to God. The priest stood as the representative of the people on the day of atonement, and so Christ was both offerer and victim on the cross, as the victim He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. But strictly speaking this was not the exercise of His priesthood, as Scripture says, " If he were on earth, he should not be a priest."

But the people must have a ground on which they can stand in the place to which His priesthood applies. Therefore Christ made propitiation for the sins of the people before beginning His ordinary exercises of priesthood. Christ owning all my sins on the cross, taking the place of Aaron, confessing the sins of the people, but He was also the victim, and the scape-goat, who bore them. He charges Himself with them, and they are dealt with in propitiation. That is the act in which as the offerer, He lays the basis for all His office of priesthood. Now He is able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by Him.

Having made propitiation, I get next, "For in that he suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." This is not atonement, and has nothing to do with my acceptance, but it is His having suffered being tempted, that He may be able to succor me now that I am accepted. And, I repeat, it is not that we go to Christ as Priest. God does not, however, make a man an offender for a word, if the heart he right, but Christ goes to God for us, and we go to God by Him. We have an advocate with the Father. It is the same word that is used of the Holy Ghost in the Gospel of John, (chapter 14.) and is translated "Comforter." The word means, "One who carries on our cause." The Holy Ghost carries on our cause in divine sympathy as present in us, and takes up all our sorrows, making intercession in us with groanings that cannot be uttered. Now all that the Holy Ghost takes up in me as the Comforter, Christ takes up for me as the Advocate in the—presence of God, and the effect of that is that grace comes down by the Holy Ghost into my heart. And it is in this connection that it says, "He is able to save to the uttermost," that is, right to the end, those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." It is the wilderness journey all through this epistle, and about our going through it. It is not union with Christ that is spoken of here, but our exercises, discipline, and trials in the wilderness, it is the whole path of faith down in this world.

Christ enters into all the trials and sufferings, and we get grace and help in the time of need.

His death has perfected us for God, while His life carries us on through the wilderness with God, until we get to Him.

He ever lives for that, and in our weakness, which we feel, and quite right too, we get this blessed consciousness in our weakness, that He is living for us to carry us on until we come to God, while in the weakness we learn to look to One and to lean on One who is touched, not with a righteous walk (though of course we ought to walk righteously), but with. the feeling of our weakness.

Do you believe that that is Christ's heart to you now? I don't believe this grace that is in Christ towards us can have its true place in our hearts, until we see that we have Him as righteousness; and it is a mistake to think we go by the Priest into this place in the holiest to get righteousness. Christ is there, and believing in Him we are made the righteousness of God in Him, but that which sets us in perfect acceptance with God, leaves us free to learn all that Christ is by the way. God is thinking of us too, and he puts us through the wilderness to teach us all that is in His heart, and in ours, and we have a Man sitting at His right hand, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. One who takes up every sorrow, weakness, and difficulty, as the occasion of ministering grace to us, and thus begetting in me confidence and trust, as I go on, in Himself, who is our righteousness in the presence of God. This is more than mere righteousness. It is a Christ who has been through all for rue, so that it is a Christ that I can trust.

I admit, and press it too, that it is not our highest place, but it puts me in a place where I can learn what this blessed, perfect, precious grace of Christ is. It is a place where my weakness makes me learn what His grace and sympathy towards me are, while I am present in the body and absent from the Lord.

By Him I am perfect before God, but while absent from Him I never lose the exercises of His heart for me before God, to secure for me mercy and grace for every time of need.

I would have you feel that it is a low place, but it is a true one. It is where you learn your weakness and infirmity, and it may be, too, what a thorn in the flesh is, but it is to put you where the grace of Christ can meet you, and where His strength is made perfect in your weakness. It is the daily exercise of Christ's grace that obtains help for us in every time of need. It is the time, of our need, which is the time of His grace.

The Lord give us to know in power the blessed exercise of His heart toward us, while we are hone in the body and absent from Him, for His own blessed name's sake. Amen.

Words of Truth: Volume N3, What Is Man, That Thou Art Mindful of Him?

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?" is an inquiry from Psa. 8, founded upon what man is in himself, looked at as a fallen creature down here; but it brings out, in answer, what is Christ! He is the man of the counsels of God—One in whom all the wisdom and power of God are displayed —in whom all those qualities of God in which His nature comes out are made known—the One in whom even angels have to learn what God is. It is the Word of God become a man; and man—that is, the redeemed—share in the blessing, because he becomes associated with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son. It gives man such a wonderful place—not preserved, as the angels were, but taken up by redemption when a sinner.

The highest character of God does not come out to angels, such as mercy and redemption. They do not want redemption. Grace, love, and righteousness from God are unfolded, when man's righteousness was called in question; all these things come out in man. Angels desire to

look into it. When man is utterly fallen, then grace comes in—a power connecting him with the Creator, so that “He is not ashamed to call them brethren!” Wretched fallen creatures! yet the moment I get the thoughts, counsels, revelation of God, I must look to man!

There never was any being set as a center of a system, in himself as man was, in the image of God. The first man failed entirely this place, but he will be set up again, in the Lord Jesus Christ, the center of everything that God has created. “He left nothing that is not put under him” i.e., Christ as man. “He hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him” (1 Cor. 15:27). The very exception makes it the more striking. It is the Lord Jesus Christ over everything, not only in dominion, but in dominion as Redeemer. “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things” (Eph. 4:10), filling all things in the power of the redemption He has wrought out, “for by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” (Col. 1:16). But He does not take them till He takes them as man. We come in then; for it is all in grace, “that he might be the first-born among many brethren.” “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” He takes us up to be in glory with Himself; “joint-heirs with Christ,” and makes His standing ours as sons, so that the redeemed should have the place that He has Himself with God. He says to them, “I ascend to my Father and your Father: and to my God and your God” (John 20:17). How could He take sinners as such to Himself? He could not. Therefore He comes down where the sinners are, puts Himself in every respect where they are (sinlessly, of course), even unto death. “For if one died for all then were all dead.” He was made sin, having first passed through all the toil, difficulties, temptations, trials of His lifetime here—perfect in them. He associates Himself with us down here that He may take up our hearts by the love He brought unto them, and make them know that the Father loved them as He loved Him; and that the world may know it.

It is not only that I have a place in glory, but Christ has come for this purpose, to associate me so completely with Himself; and that I might in heart, spirit, mind enjoy it with Himself, saying, “He is not ashamed to call them brethren!” There is nothing like the Cross, where the work was accomplished for all this. Well could He say, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him” (John 13:31). There perfectness was perfectly tested!

We find the great original truth in Prov. 8 Christ was the wisdom of God. He was God’s delight—the eternal object with the Father, and where did His heart go out—downwards, as I might say? “Then I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.” Then He became a man; took up men, Himself the source and foundation of all because He is the Son (see Prov. 8, Eph. 1, 1 Cor. 15). We see what the purpose and intention of God are, but we see not yet all things put under Him. The first half of Psa. 8 is fulfilled—known now to faith; but He is waiting for the joint-heirs—now gathering by the gospel His joint-heirs. Paul says, “I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you”—that the time was come. In Psa. 2 He is set as King in Zion; but He is in a higher position—Heir of the world to come, in Psa. 8 He is rejected from it now for a time, passed into the heavens. He takes no place—sits upon the Father’s throne—He will have His own throne, and “to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne” (Rev. 3:21). But He will not take it until He has got all the joint-heirs ready, that they may reign with Him.

Nathanael says, “Thou art the son of God, thou art the king of Israel:” that was a small thing. Jesus answered, “Henceforth ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (John 1:51).

In Psalm 110 He is called to sit at God’s right hand until His enemies are made His footstool. As yet He is expecting His enemies to be made His footstool; but He is gathering out His friends, therefore we must suffer with Him. Satan is not bound yet; everything is spoiled that God set up good, and must be so till He takes His great power and reigns, and then we shall also reign with Him. Christ is sitting on the Father’s throne with title over everything, but having taken nothing—His enemies still in power. People are seeking to improve the first Adam; to mend man; to improve the world without Christ. He was here and did not improve it, and will you? Or will you be now Christ’s companion in it, associated with Him as one of the brethren of whom He is not ashamed?

The way in which He thus brought others into this full association with himself was this, “By the grace of God, he tasted death for every man.” He did not go back and take His place at the right hand of God until He had gone down to the lowest depths that man could go—to the tasting of death—that in which was expressed all the consequences of the ruin of the first man. This was the great and blessed testimony to the way in which He took man up to glory. He left the glory and came down, and went back again; not with twelve legions of angels, as He might have done, but by tasting death for every man! We learn two things: the fact of His death, and the fact of a life spent where hatred and death were reigning. He had come to redeem us and bring us to God, come to destroy the power of Satan, come to sympathize with every trial and sorrow in my heart.

This He does as Priest. We read again— “It became him (God) 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.” The moment the blessed Lord took up our cause, He must take the full consequences before God. God deals with Him according to the place He took; and this is full of blessing for us. God’s righteousness must be maintained. It never could be but by Christ. Perfect now Himself, as He ever was here, in the full results in glory, He must go through these sufferings if He would bring many sons to glory; otherwise we could not go there. But He was always there— “ the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father”—not who was, for He never left it. The Father could not be silent, so to speak. He must express it when He began His service on earth, “And lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

What a thought it gives of the place Christ was in—that place of death—made sin, and among sinners, making good the glory of God (see verses 10-12.) The next thing we find is association with Him. “Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.” This was after death and resurrection; it never could have been said of Him in incarnation: a risen Christ, and those who are quickened with Him, are “all of one” (i.e., one truth of humanity) before God; they are the redeemed and He the Redeemer; they the sanctified, He the Sanctifier, are “all of one.” The more you look into it the more striking it is. All through the life of Christ He speaks not of “my God,” but “my Father,” for He was always in the joy of that perfect relationship. On the cross, when He says “my God,” this was the expression not of relationship, but of infinite suffering and infinite perfection. Upon these names of God all our blessing depends. I can look to God and say “my God,” because I am before Him in righteousness, according to all that Christ is—suited to Him. I get also the blessed relationship of son, so that I can say “Father.” Grace has brought us perfectly to God as redeemed ones, and the Spirit of adoption calls Him Father. Now my place is settled; it is Christ’s place; “My Father and your Father, my God and your God,” and the Holy Ghost given to keep us in the sense of constant relationship, and that we are made the righteousness of God in Him.

The Epistle to the Hebrews takes up the question of coming to God, and I can go into the holiest; a place I can go through as a redeemed one, by the same way by which Christ took His place as Priest (how often the Priesthood is used as if it were to bring us there!)

It is a moral mistake to suppose that because I have got a place in heaven in Christ that God is not concerned about the place I am in down here. While present in the body absent from the Lord; and hence all the exercises I get now. He brings practical death on all that is in us; but I get to know the blessed grace of Christ with my heart in all I am to pass through; when I need help, and where He obtains help before the throne of grace.

Blessed to know God dealing with me, taking up my heart in connection with all the things down here! I can ask of God in confidence, because I know God is for me. I can come with boldness, because I have got one standing there as High Priest—witness of the righteousness—witness of the propitiation, because He is both. In failure (though I have no right to fail; but if I do—if I sin), I have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation too! If I fail, I know Him as taking up my cause, His grace coming to deal with my heart, to speak of a righteousness that never can be touched; but it is not my highest place, my highest place is in Christ, but it is the highest character of His grace, it is what makes Him precious when in infirmity and failure. He helps me in the place where He has learned to do it—when He showed that He loved me, when there was nothing in me to love It is the grand testimony to the absolute divine love which took up the sinner—but it is not my highest place. It makes Him great, this wondrous grace; but my place in Christ makes me great.

Another reason that He took up man's condition was "That he might destroy him that had the power of death." Destroy his power. What association in those words, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee!" He has so associated us with Himself that He leads our praises up to God! He declares His Father's name unto His brethren, then leads up all our praises, all our thoughts and feelings that we have as men down here, that can go up in praise. He enters into all, and says, "In the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee!" He is the person who leads and carries them up, and He can do so because He has gone through it all Himself, entering into every trial and suffering that I am in, carrying up every thought and feeling in the measure in which I am looking to God in it. As I belong to God in it He belonged to God; and according to our association with Him we must pass through it, our weakness and difficulty finding an echo in Christ's heart—a link between our hearts and Him—Christ taking them up for me in the presence of God, "seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us," the Holy Ghost carrying on the divine work in me (Rom. 8:28). He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. This blessed consciousness is given rue in my weakness. I am weak, but I lean on One who can be touched with the feeling of my infirmities. Do you believe in Christ's heart? You do not, until you see that He is your righteousness. You are put into this world to learn all that He is by the way. His grace is begetting confidence in your heart, in the presence of the God whom He came to reveal, and while absent from Him I am learning His love, and the blessed exercise of His heart for me.

Words of Truth: Volume 2, Warnings of the Epistle to the Hebrews, The

The Epistle to the Hebrews deals with all on the broad ground of the profession of Christianity; and hence we get in it the solemn warnings in chapter 6 and 10. These warnings are never given to shake the confidence of the weakest believer, as to the eternal security of those who are truly Christ's. Of this, there need not be the shadow of a doubt entertained by the feeblest child of God. Such would never be the suggestion of the Spirit of God, but rather of the "evil heart of unbelief;" and should never for a moment be entertained or admitted into the heart, but rather treated as of the enemy.

In ch. 6:4-6 of this Epistle, we find enumerated the privileges which Christians enjoy in virtue of the work and glorification of Christ. The things we find there belong to all professors of Christianity, without any question of individual state or conversion. Suppose a person to have been enlightened as to all these blessings, and to have been told of the effect of them on those who accepted them; and after all the treasuries of grace were thus exhausted, that there was no result, but rather a turning away from them and a holding on to that which could not bestow them what more could one do? The result is in the hands of God alone.

Stony ground hearers, who heard the word with joy, and in time of temptation, fell away, come under this class. The natural affections are moved, the wondrous story of grace, hearkened to with admiration, and after all, there is no real result; the heart is like the barren ground that drinks the rain, and bears after all, only briars and thorns, and is good for nothing. These are they who had thus "tasted the good word of God."

The personal presence of God the Holy Ghost in the church who is here consequent on the death and resurrection of Christ, and His ascension to God's right hand; renders all who have professed the name of Christ, "partakers" of His presence. (The true believer is sealed with the spirit, and his body the temple of the Holy Ghost-which is quite another thing.) The Holy Ghost is here to testify to Christ's finished work, and bear witness to sinners, that, through the work of Christ, God says, " Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more" (Heb. 10:17); yet how many thousands never believe His testimony—how many are the forms and systems of religion around, that never admit this wondrously blessed truth, and keep their votaries "tied and bound with the chain of their sins," while the Holy Ghost witnesses to us, that God will remember them no more forever.

"The powers of the world to come," are more the miracles performed by those who were so gifted; such as healing of sickness, and the casting out of devils—the two characters of miracles which were samples of the powers which, when Satan is bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, and the world filled with blessing, will characterize the millennial kingdom, or "world to come." Many of the Hebrew professors of Christianity had seen these things, or had perhaps been the subjects of them in their own bodies, and yet had no life in the soul. We learn, too, that many believed (by the evidence of their natural senses), when they saw the miracles that Jesus did in Jerusalem, and yet were without life. (John 2:23-25.) See also the case of Simon Magus in Acts 8, who "believed seeing the miracles," and "had neither part or lot in the matter."

Surely if those who are enlightened about all these things, turn from them to obtain, life or salvation by ordinances, or sacraments, or else; they are just in the position of a Hebrew who returned to Judaism after the revelation of Christianity. God has, so to speak, exhausted the treasuries of heaven, in the blessings He has bestowed, consequent upon the death and resurrection and ascension of His Son; and if we have not accepted them with a thankful heart, and that we are practically ignoring the effect of His work, through our religion or ordinances, we are

in effect “crucifying to ourselves the Son of God,” i.e., we are like a Jew who returned to Judaism from the profession of Christianity, and thus identified himself with the sin of his nation, in crucifying Christ, when they said, “His blood be on us, and on our children.”

“The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself.” (Prov. 22:3.) He foresees the solemn results there will be to those who have been mere lifeless, fruitless, professors of Christianity, and he sees to it, that it is not so with him. “The simple pass on, and are punished.” (Prov. 22:3.) The careless ones hear the warning, and turn a deaf ear to it. They pass on along the “broad road that leadeth to destruction;” unheeding the land marks and finger posts, so to say, that a gracious Lord, whose desire is, that none should perish, has so abundantly provided, and they will find when it is too late, where the broad road has conducted them.

How sweetly the Apostle goes on to say, after all this solemn word of warning, “but beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.” He saw in the fruitful lives of those amongst them’, that which proved that it was more than a mere profession of the lip with them. “The things. that accompany salvation” were plainly to be seen. Things that while they are never a ground of confidence, never constitute salvation; they are sure to accompany a real reception of the “word,” into an “honest and good heart.” (Luke 8:15.)

The aspect of God’s heart toward a poor sinner, is his confidence. It is His desire that none should perish. He is a Saviour God. The Work of Christ is the sinners confidence, when he looks outside himself at Him as a Saviour-the testimony of the Holy Ghost, through the Word of God, is the confidence of the poor sinner, who has none in himself. And depend upon it, he will find his life only too short to be a fruit bearing, earnest, devoted saint, when he has accepted this salvation from a Saviour God, whose gift it is—the things that accompany this salvation will be seen in his life and ways. “God is not unrighteous to forget them”—while He is righteous in forgetting his sins and iniquities forever through the virtues of the finished work of His Son!

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