Luke - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Letters 2, Gethsemane and the Cross; the Path of Christ in the Gospels

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

At the present moment the Spirit of God is evidently working in His grace. It is sweet to think that it is He who keeps doors open, and that if He does so none can shut them. Evil is progressing rapidly, whether it be superstition or unbelief. There is shamelessness on the one hand, superficiality and want of any fixed principle on the other. "Truth," as Isaiah says, "has fallen in the street"; but at the same time there is a great activity of the Spirit of God underneath all external forms, and everything points to the Lord's coming. Old things, everything established, is crumbling, is powerless....

In fact, from Luke 9:51 to 18: 34, the Lord is on His way to Jerusalem. The story of blind Bartimæus forms in the three synoptic gospels the beginning of the last days at Jerusalem. Now this journey is interrupted by discourses, which all relate, however, to the introduction of the new system, and the setting aside of the old order of things. Luke introduces the new order, the things in which we find ourselves, rather than the kingdom to come.... For my part I often go back to the gospels in order to study the precious Savior Himself. They are full of the richest instruction. I have much enjoyed Matthew and Mark all this time. The Gethsemane of Matthew has just now interested me deeply: Jesus a victim without human resource; man completely fails Him. See how He turns from the deep anguish of His prayer to His disciples who were sleeping. His gentleness betrays no other emotion than love for them. What calmness! The soul which at the very moment was trembling with agony at the thought of the cup which He had to drink, shows only the gentleness which finds an excuse for His poor disciples, while reproaching Peter with a tenderness sweeter than praise. But I stop....

Belfast,

January 7th, 1874.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Our Joy in Heaven

Luke 9:28-36

Let us look a little at this scripture, as showing what our joy in the glory will consist of. We have the warrant of 2 Peter 1:16 for saying that the scene represents to us the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what we wait for. Our souls are not in a healthy state unless we are waiting for God's Son from heaven. The church is not regulated in its hopes by the word and Spirit of God, unless it is looking for Him as Savior from heaven (Phil. 3). And this passage, as disclosing to us specially what will be our portion when He comes, is important to us in this respect. There are many other things in the passage, such as the mutual relations of the earthly and the heavenly people in the kingdom. These it may be very instructive to consider; but this is not our present purpose, which is to consider what light is here afforded on the nature of that joy which we shall inherit at and from the coming of the Lord. Other scriptures, such as the promises to those who overcome in Revelation 2 and 3, and the description of the heavenly city in Revelation 21 and 22, give us instructions on the same subject; but let us now particularly look at the scene on the holy mount.

“And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering” (Luke 9:28-29). It was when Jesus was in the acknowledgment of dependence—“as he prayed”—that this change took place. This, then, is the first thing we have here—a change such as will pass upon the living saints when Jesus comes.

“And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias” (vs. 30). They were with Him. And this will be our joy; we shall be with Jesus. In 1 Thessalonians 4 after stating the order in which the resurrection of the sleeping, and the change of the living, saints will take place, that we shall both be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, all that the apostle says as to what shall ensue is, “and so shall we be ever with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:17).

But in this passage there is not only the being with Christ, but there is also familiar intercourse with Him. “There talked with him two men” (Luke 9:30). It is not that He talked with them, though this was no doubt true; but this might have been, and they be at a distance. But when we read that they talked with Him, we get the idea of the most free and familiar intercourse. Peter and the others knew what it was to have such intercourse with Jesus in humiliation; and what joy must it have been to have the proof that such intercourse with Him would be enjoyed in glory!

And then it is said by Luke that they “appeared in glory” (vs. 31). But this is secondary to what we have been considering. We are told that they were with Him, and then that they appeared in glory. They share in the same glory as that in which He was manifested. And so as to us. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:4). “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me” (John 17:22-23).

But there is another thing still. We are not only told that they were with Him, that they talked with Him, and appeared in glory with Him, but we are also privileged to know the subject of their conversation. They “spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). It was the cross which was the theme of their conversation in the glory—the sufferings of Christ which He had to accomplish at Jerusalem. And surely this will be our joy throughout eternity, when in glory with Christ—to dwell upon this theme, His decease accomplished

at Jerusalem. We next read that Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep. It shows us what the flesh is in the presence of the glory of God. Peter made a great mistake; but I pass on.

“While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him” (Luke 9:34-35). Peter tells us that this voice came from the excellent glory. “For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (2 Peter 1:17). Now Peter and the others had entered into the cloud; and thus we get the wonderful fact that in the glory, from which the voice comes, saints are privileged to stand, and there, in that glory, share the delight of the Father in His beloved Son. Not only are we called to the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, we are called to have fellowship with the Father. We are admitted of God the Father to partake of His satisfaction in His beloved Son.

“And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone” (Luke 9:36). The vision all gone—the cloud, the voice, the glory, Moses and Elias; but Jesus was left, and they were left to go on their way with Jesus, knowing Him now in the light of those scenes of glory which they had beheld. And this is the use to us of those vivid apprehensions of spiritual things which we may sometimes realize. It is not that we can be always enjoying them and nothing else. But when for the season they have passed away, like this vision on the holy mount, they leave us alone with Jesus, to pursue the path of our pilgrimage with Him in spirit now, and with Him in the light and power of that deepened acquaintance with Him, and fellowship of the Father's joy in Him, that we have got on the mount; and thus to wait for the moment of His return, when all this, and more than our hearts can think of, shall be fulfilled to us forever.

Christian Truth: Volume 35, Daily

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily." Luke 9:23. "Daily"-this is the trial. A man might heroically do it once for all, and he would have plenty of people to honor him, and have books written about him; but it is very difficult to go on every day denying oneself, and no one knowing anything about it. It comes to this that, if you spare the flesh in this life, you will lose your life in the next; and what if a man gain the whole world and lose his own soul: what would a man give in exchange for his soul? It is not a question of bringing life down to the flesh; but if you lose your life here, you will get it elsewhere, above and beyond this world: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will• lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it." It is either giving up the world for eternal life, or else it is eternal misery; that is the real question. "What is a man advantaged?" You must give it up; you cannot keep it.

Notes on Luke, Luke 9, Notes on

CHAPTER 9.

After the Lord had given a picture, as it were, of all that was going on in chap. 8, He raises the question of chap. 9 as to who He was, and He tells His disciples some should see His glory; for the mount of transfiguration shows what the glory of the kingdom would be. Peter speaks of the power and coming, “when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory... when we were with him in the holy mount.” But it is a closing testimony at that time, though the glory would come; and as a signal that it was, the disciples were to shake off the dust from their feet, when they were not received. It is interesting to mark all the circumstances which bring out the fact of its being the Lord Himself there, and a test to Israel. He worked miracles, and could confer on others the power, as we have seen. Now we find another thing—He is committing the power to several together, giving to those men, a number of them together, power and authority over the demons, and not only entrusting it to whom He pleases individually.

Three things we have noticed in connection with the testimony of the Son of man: (1) the testimony of God to Him; (2) the misery of man set aside by Him; and (3) demons cast out, so proving that it was really the Lord visiting this world in grace and power. There will be the display of power by-and-by; but He was bringing in, in His own person, the manifestation of that which will be then full and perfect, so being an earnest of “the powers of the world to come,” alluded to in Hebrews. This was not redemption, but the exercise of power in dealing with the enmity of man against Himself, and they would not have Him in this way.

Verse 3, etc. He is sending out His disciples, and in so doing He disposes of all their circumstances. While He was with them, He supplied them with everything—they lacked nothing. The power of the Lord was there to take care of them, wherever they were. Afterward, when He was going to leave them, He tells them to take a sword. They would have to shift for themselves, as it were: but while He was with them He was their shelter, etc. As in the demand for the ass to ride into Jerusalem, He proves His authority royal and divine altogether— “the Lord hath need of him.” The disciples depart, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere. Then comes the question of who He was: He would have the conscience awakened about Him. There are two things in man brought out by the question—curiosity is excited on the one hand, and perplexity and dismay on the other.

Verses 7-9. He goes on, and wherever there is an ear to hear, He ministers to them according to the grace of the kingdom.

Verses 11, 12. The disciples ask Him to send the multitude away. Let them go and get lodging. No, says the Lord, “give ye them to eat.” He does not now say He would feed them, but He is committing to others the same power as He had Himself, and He would exercise their faith in what He could do by them. This applies to the church now. Faith uses the power that is in the Head. “Give ye them to eat.” What He expected was for faith to exercise His divine power, that which they saw in Him. We should be so reckoning on the power in the Head. The Lord was trying their faith in Him, “Give ye them to eat.” But no; they had no faith; they began to reckon on their resources — “We have no more but five loaves and two fishes.” So it is with us. No faith! Memory is not faith. “He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed. Can He give bread also? “He gave us water, but can He give us food? We know He has done that one thing, but can He do this other thing today? We want to count on the energy of the Lord's love, and expect Him to be interested for us.

When He said, “Give ye them to eat,” they should have expected He would give them the power. Jehovah was amongst them, exercising His own power; but we see in their answer the horrid principle of unbelief. Unbelief shuts out God, and limits itself to what it sees — “except we go and buy meat,” etc. “He made them all sit down by fifties in a company. And they did eat and were filled.” It was said in Psalm 132, “I will satisfy her poor with bread,” and here He was doing it. This was said of their King, and He had chosen Zion; He had desired it for His habitation. He was here giving a sign that He was the One to accomplish this blessing, for He was feeding their poor with bread. He was not only sending out the power through His disciples, but Himself among them; not only as a man, a messenger, but as it is said in Hebrews, “the word began to be spoken by the Lord.” He was the Apostle. There were others sent afterward, but He Himself was there first as their Apostle. It is a solemn thing to think that the Lord has really visited this world! He has come and presented Himself first to His people Israel, but they would not have Him. It shows us what the world is we are in. God is now dealing with it in grace, though His Son has been rejected.

“Twelve baskets of fragments.” Just observe, in passing, that the number twelve is significant of power exercised in the way of government —twelve apostles, twelve gates to the city in Revelation, etc.

Hitherto we have been looking at Christ presenting Himself among the people as Jehovah, the Messiah; we now see Him as the dependent man praying. He was Immanuel, God with us; Son of David; Son of man. He was to be all. Then the question is started among the disciples, who He was. Some said one thing, and some another; but Peter said, “the Christ of God.” Upon this, He charges them to tell no man that thing. There was faith, however feeble, dictating this answer, and therefore there is no thinking about it. With perfect certainty, Peter says, “The Christ of God.” So it always is with faith. When the Spirit of God brings home the truth with power, there is no uncertainty about it. A man may not doubt whether Christ is the Son of God, or not; but the mind may work upon it, and think perhaps, I do not love Him enough to be saved? Then there is uncertainty. But when the Spirit, with power, shows whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him; then I believe it, and I see that my sins and my iniquities He will “remember no more.” It may set a man thinking about the consequences of a truth.

Verse 22. He now passes by the thing that has been already brought out, and He presents Himself to them as the Son of man, and He is going to suffer — to be crucified. They must therefore be content to take up their cross. A new thing was coming in; He was going to be rejected, and to be slain, and the third day rise again. It is no longer Messianic ground, but in another sphere altogether beyond this their hopes must lie. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his. cross daily.” “Daily” —this is the trial. A man might heroically do it once for all, and he would have plenty of people to honor him, and have books written about him; but it is terribly difficult to go on every day denying oneself, and no one knowing anything about it. It came to this that, if you spare the flesh in this life, you will lose your life in the next; and what if a man gain the whole world and lose his own soul; what should a man give in exchange for his soul? It is not a question of bringing life down to the flesh; but if you lose your life here, you will get it elsewhere — above and beyond this world: “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.” It is giving up the world for eternal life, or, eternal misery, that is the real question. “What is a man advantaged?” You must give it up; you cannot keep it.

There is the glory of the kingdom; there is the manifestation of glory coming. Those tastes and dispositions which are attracted by Jesus cannot find their portion here. “They declare plainly that they seek a country; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God,” etc. “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me,” etc.,"of him shall the Son of man be ashamed,” when He comes in the display of His own glory (see Dan. 7:13). One like to the Son of man came to the Ancient of days, etc., and there was given Him dominion, etc. Then He comes too in the glory of the Son of God—His Father's glory, and in the glory of the angels. The angels are waiting upon Him who created them, for they were created for Him as well as by Him, and thus give glory to Him as Son of man; giving Him His proper glory, for He has not lost a tittle of His glory; “Thou hast set him over the works of thy hands.” “Let all the angels of God worship him.” There was the same thing at Sinai. “The law was ordained by angels.” “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels” (Psa. 68).

We are now finding the displayed glory in this triple character spoken of (ver. 26). It is that glory when He appears; and it is a question of His being ashamed of those who have been ashamed of Him; they could not deny themselves present advantage. I do not here allude to the Father's house, which, of course, has another character. Here it is the kingdom manifested in its glory to the earth.

Verse 28. “He went... to pray.” This is not mentioned in the other Gospels. He was going to show His disciples His glory, to give the declaration of His power and coming. From the other Gospels we find that, a week after this, He went up to Jerusalem where He was to be crucified. “The fashion of his countenance was changed.” An entire change of things is here. He talks of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, where He ought to have been crowned; but there He is going to be crucified. There, where this horn of David was to bud, shall this root of David be taken, and by wicked hands be crucified and slain. This is the deep center of all the change.

“There talked two men with him, Moses and Elias.” This we may look at in two ways; dispensationally, as representing the law and the prophets; and in this way Moses held a very peculiar place, for it was through Him the law was given; Elijah had nearly as important a place also, for though the Jews were in a right position, they had failed in it, and he goes back to Horeb. The later prophets were not called to work miracles. Except the account of the dial of Ahaz, we hear of no miracle in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Habakkuk, etc. Those prophets, sent of God, gave proof that He was caring for Israel; but there was nothing like the calling back in Elijah, who stood as the maintainer of the law, when the people had departed from it most grossly, though all the prophets, even to Malachi, called back to law.

Moses and Elias were taken away, and Jesus is left alone. Law was gone, prophecy gone, and Christ is alone, and He was going to be crucified. All the fabric built up by law and prophets (not the testimony given by them, but law as given to man in the flesh) is broken up, because man ended by killing the Lord come in the flesh. Therefore all is gone. Peter would have had the three established together, taken all alike, “Let us build three tabernacles,” etc. But that moment Moses and Elias disappear, and the voice is heard, “This is my beloved Son, hear him.” It is now the righteousness of God, without law, in Jesus. Law did not send Christ. What law could have been put upon God to do it? Nothing but divine love could have originated such a thought. “Grace reigned through righteousness.” The law was good and perfect, but Christ was far beyond the law. Moses and Elias, therefore, were not to have any place with Him. God the Father put them aside, when Peter wishes to put them in connection. They disappear immediately. This is the important thing for us. Every word of law and prophets is the truth of God, but these were until John. Now the Son of God is the messenger of the Father's love, and the accomplisher of divine righteousness. When He is there, the voice says, “This is my beloved Son: hear him” —and He is left alone.

Mark, too, that they were occupied with His death, while talking with Him. One thing occupies the minds of heaven and earth. He was going to be crucified where He ought to have been King. Under such circumstances, there was nothing for heaven or earth to talk about but His death. And so for us, the great thing to talk about Messiah is, that He died. Though He could destroy all the evil that had come in, He must die —in grace of course. It must all end in death, because the carnal mind is not only under Satan's power, but enmity against God; therefore heaven has to speak.

Zion, the very place He had chosen, where He had been and is to be—the special place of God's favor, is to be the scene of His death. There they cast Him out of the world He came to save. The One in whom all human and divine righteousness and perfections were centered must die there. All man's nature, under the most advantageous circumstances: all man's wickedness, spite of the public and patient and varied ways of God in government: both are brought out here.

Moses could deal with man as man; and bring water from the rock for them, in answer to their murmurings; the prophet the same, “Plead with me,” “Put me in remembrance, let us plead together.” But now, all this was gone. God had cultivated the vineyard—done all that could be done for it. There was yet one thing; His Son —the best of all. Him He sent, and they cast Him out and slew Him. And now the testimony concerning man is, that he has “killed the Prince of life,” and “denied the Holy One and the Just.” We never can have peace then, till we get pardon through Christ on the cross. Then we see a true picture of heaven: but all the intermediate dealings of testimony are entirely short of what we have in Christ on the cross, because short of the ground of what man actually is, which fully came out only when he “killed the Prince of life.”

Notes on Luke, Luke 9:37-50, Notes on

WHEN the Lord's Messiah-ship was given up, we have seen He takes the place of translation from earth to heaven. He, being rejected, was no longer to be looked upon as the Head of Israel down here, but as the heavenly Christ; for He takes His place on high, when cast out by man, and this fact was to give a character to the path of those who follow Him. The two things go together—rejection on earth and a heavenly place. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (ver. 23.) The Lord shows them that this heavenly calling involves the cross down here, as it was with Christ Himself. The peculiar place given Him in heaven was, in God's counsels, dependent on the cross which He bore as the Man. “He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, &c.; wherefore God hath highly exalted him,” &c. It was through the cross that He went there; and if we are to have a place in heaven, we must have it too. The cross was for the destruction of sin and for the destruction of self, in which sin dwells. We have the same place; therefore He says, “Let these sayings sink deep into your ears, for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.” We want the heavenly calling to give power to take up the cross; and it is at the same time in proportion as we are dying to things down here, that the heavenly things are realized. When the blood was taken within the veil, the sacrifice was taken without the gate: so we are to go “without the camp, bearing his reproach” and if we apprehend the value of the blood, and go within the veil, we get too the place of being where the burning outside the camp was; for while we are in spirit where His blood has been carried in, our bodies are where His body was burned. Judaism only put men between the two; for they did not go in within the veil, His blood not having been shed; and they never went without the camp. (18-22). He is going to take another place, and they are to follow Him in it; and then, in order to strengthen them for it, He shows them what the heavenly place was. “He took Peter, and James, and John, and went up into a mountain to pray,” &c. (ver. 28). The heavenly part of the kingdom is here represented by Christ, Moses, and Elias-the earthly part by the disciples (and there is one part in which the Church on earth is alluded to as down here). Peter speaks of this scene as the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, &c. Christ Himself, in the position of the dependent man, (praying), takes them up into a mountain. “Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep;” asleep in the presence of the glory, just as in Gethsemane, showing what human nature is. There is no power in it, in suffering or glory, to fix the attention on Christ and His interests.

Moses and Elias were in the same glory, (30- 32,) and we are made the associates of Christ in the same glory (the glory of the kingdom in its broad character), not of course, the essential glory. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly,” even of God's Son in glory. “We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory.” The portion is not to be under Christ, but with Christ. “We shall appear with him in glory"-with him in the same glory. We look for the Lord from heaven, “who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned,” &c. We shall be with Him and like Him, and this we shall all alike share, though there will be different degrees of glory for one and another: e.g., Paul's measure will not be mine. What we speak of now is all the same glory, and we are predestinated “to be conformed to the image of his Son.” “The glory thou hast given me I have given them.” The next thing that we see is the perfect familiarity in this glory. They are talking with Him—not presenting a petition—not at His feet (though this is our blessed place too); but this part of the scene represents communion, familiarity of intercourse, the same as that of the disciples on earth, though better of course. On the holy mount they had a higher understanding about it, but it was the same subject occupied them. This shows us the kind of intercourse we have with Jesus now, for we belong to the heavenly part of the kingdom.

A third point to mark is the subject they talked of. This is quite a new thing, for He ought to have been a king. But man was a sinner, and there was the determinate counsel of God to be fulfilled—redemption. Jerusalem was the place of royalty, and His decease was to be accomplished there, where He ought to have been acknowledged King. There was full intimacy on the theme which occupied His heart, for they talked on this, His decease. Then He told His disciples afterward the consequences of it to them. They must deny themselves. “Let these sayings sink down into your ears.” The great subject on God's heart should be that for us. Another thing is, it is the glory which enables us to talk on this subject. We cannot talk of it until we have peace with God through the knowledge of forgiven sin. When a man has not this, he has to come in his need and get it; but when he is in it, he can contemplate and enjoy it. Besides this, God saw all that was passing in Christ's soul as to obedience unto death, &c. We shall never cease having interest in this subject: when with the Father in the glory, it will be the absorbing theme. He said Himself, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.” How much more shall we not love Him for the same cause? Think what it must have been to be occupied with Christ about His decease! What His knowledge was, of what He was going to do! He knew what man was, what the counsel of God was. He came to “reconcile all things to himself.” It was so effectually done that the eye of God could only see the effect of that blood in what was washed away. The rejected Christ a Savior! and this the subject of intercourse with Christ Himself! “They speak of his decease.” Peter says, “Master, it is good for us to be here,” &c. Then immediately there was a voice from the cloud: “This is my beloved Son; hear him” The effect on Peter's mind is a wish to put Moses and Elias on a level with Christ. We have spoken

of this, viewing it dispensationally, law and prophecy mixed with Him; but there is another thing to be noticed in it; viz., that which characterized the Son was peculiar. Nothing could be put on a level with Him. There necessarily comes out, therefore, the Father's testimony to the Son. “This is my beloved Son,” &c. When a saint knows Jesus, though he also knows he will be like Him hereafter, and that all the saints will be like Him too, yet Christ has the supremacy in his heart. He is single and alone in blessedness, having supremacy in the heart, as well as being the object of faith. I delight in the saints, but Christ is the alone object of faith. Then I get into this fellowship with the Father. I have the Father's thoughts about the Son, as well as the Son's thoughts about the work. I have fellowship with the Father and the Son. We cannot have communion with the Father about redemption work because He has not been made a man Notice, the Father does not say, This is the Son whom you ought to adore and admire, but He tells us His own thoughts about Him. “This is my beloved Son.” Wherefore “beloved!” “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life;” thus I know that I have one thought with the Father, in delighting in the Son and in His death. The Father communicates His own thoughts about the Son, and by the power of the Holy Ghost they are put into my heart, and I have fellowship; and as a consequence I know that he that hath everlasting life shall never come into judgment.

Mark, further, how they came into the excellent glory. There came a cloud and overshadowed them. The cloud is the Shechinah, the dwelling place of God, which the people had to guide them through the wilderness, and they were to stay or move according to it. It was the divine presence, and “they feared as they entered into the cloud.” They were not protected by the cloud, as Israel were, and as they will be by and by. “Upon all the glory shall be a defense;” but here they enter into the cloud. The fact was, coming into the cloud was coming into the presence of the Father now, a dwelling-place for us. It was thence the Father's voice was heard. “This is my beloved Son,” &c. Thence they were told who this Son was. He had been with them as one of them. He was the Father's beloved Son, in a place worthy of adoration, but the companion of their hearts. He brought them to the Father the only place into which redemption brings us (as to our relationship). Until a man knows redemption, and is brought into His presence, He can never know the Father's love: but when there, he can never know the end of it. It is the kind of love the prodigal never knew till he was in his father's arms. He had doubts and fears as he went on, and thoughts about the hired servants, but none when he was in his father's house. It is known only by the teaching of the Holy Ghost in us—in the cloud—God in us. It is in the presence of the glory, realized by faith now, we know the power of redemption; and by its brightness and its truth, it blots out all other relationship Notice who are learning this glory. Saints walking on the earth—Peter, James, and John; and so with us. The truths written in this book are not for us to know in heaven. Is the Father's love not to be known till we are in heaven? Is redemption only to be known there? Was God less intimate with those on earth than with those in heaven? Not at all. It was to Peter, James, and John this was communicated, not to Moses and Elias. The Father's voice was to men on earth. We learn the rejection of man here and the grace which has brought us to share in the glory. In what follows we find the Lord coming down into the crowd of this world, not remaining on the mount. We may listen and enjoy, but we have to come down and pass through this world. The Lord comes down and meets three things, a throng of men, Satan's power, and the disciples' unbelief. There was no seclusion here for Him, but He comes to a crowd. What a picture of distress this is! The son of one possessed with a devil (ver. 39;) and the father's heart racked more than the son's body. The world will weep till they are tired of weeping, and then go on with the same thing again.

We have seen before how the Lord was come in the display of His power and bound the strong man. The disciples could not do it. The power of Satan remains the same unto this day. He is not literally cast out, but remains the “prince of this world,” the character he has gained, not lost, by Christianity. He will be bound; his power will be overthrown as a fact, and not to faith only. The question was to be settled about Satan's right, and what did the Lord say of him?

“Now is the judgment of this world” — “Now is the prince of this world cast out.” His title is “cast out,” but Christ has not yet exerted this power. Therefore in the epistles we find him spoken of as still ruling in this world. In Ephesians he is called, “the prince of the power of the air,” “the spirit that now worketh,” &c. Then we hear of the “rulers of the darkness of this world.” When “the powers of the world to come” are in their full display, Satan will be cast out entirely; but these instances and more show he was here then as he is still. “How long shall I be with you,” &c (ver. 41.) It was not because Satan was here that Christ said this, but because the disciples could not use the power He had brought in, and that closed the dispensation. So it will be in this. The power and goodness of God brought Christ into the world, but the incapacity of man to believe so as to use that power, will close it. So we read in Rom. xi. “Toward thee (the professing body now,) goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off;” but until His grace ceases, there is refuge for us to go to Him. While He was here, the moment the father of the child sought to Him, He cast out the spirit. As long as Christ's grace is at work, if there is only one saint on the earth and everything else failed around, he would find the power of Christ ready to be exercised on his behalf. There can be no failing in meeting the need of a soul, because as there is Christ to go to, there is help in Him. However dark the dispensation may be, there is exactly the grace that is needed for the position. Not that God would have our eyes blinded to the darkness around, for if we do not take heed to the ruinous state, conscience is not in its right place. If I am ready to say, Why should He not stay? when He says, How long shall I be with you? I am insensible to the state of things around me, and I am not awake to the response that Christ's love to the Church demands; but, on the other hand, if I am not able to look up and count on the grace of Christ to meet that state, however bad it may be, I am powerless.

Ver. 43. “They were amazed at the mighty power of God.” It is very humbling to see how amazed they were about this power. They did not wonder at the power of the evil. But they ought so to have counted on His power as to have been amazed if the power were not exerted. Christ brings them back to the cross. “Let these sayings sink down into your ears, for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.” (ver. 44). You ought to have been able to get this power; but you must now know not only the power of Christ, but the cross of the rejected One. “Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” We have more to be rejoiced at in this than if a miracle were to be performed to-morrow. It is more blessed to know the cross. It was as though He had said, “I had rather you should come now to own the rejected One than be looking for this power even.” Beloved friends, you are not thinking of what God is doing at this present time, if you do not see that now it is not power on the earth, but rejection.

Ver. 46. There arose a reasoning which should be the greatest. What a tale this tells! What a selfishness runs through and through! Even at the Lord's supper it was the same thing. In Luke we find it, where there is so much of what man is brought out.

We see then, from what we have been tracing, that we need to come down from the hill; not to be without Jesus, but to learn what man is.

It is not necessary to come down from the mount, as some people say, lest we should be puffed up there; for we shall never be puffed up while on the mount. Like Peter, we may be afraid, but we are never puffed up in the presence of God. It is when we quit it that we are in danger.

Paul was not exalted above measure when in the third heaven, but after he came down, he needed the thorn in the flesh to prevent it.

Besides, there is an historical necessity for us to get through this world. But Jesus was as much with His disciples when they came down as while they were on the mount, and that is our comfort. Do not let us suppose we have lost Christ. We have to serve Him, walk with Him, learn from Him, and mark His patient grace towards us in and through all circumstances. The Lord give us to know, while passing through this world, what a Christ we have, taking our hearts clean out of the defiling circumstances around, so that, whether we get a taste of the glory, or are passing through the crowd of this world, He may be everything to us, as He is everything for us.

Ver. 46, &c. The Lord is now showing His disciples the place they are to take upon earth. They are not to be in a position connected with Him as Messiah in earthly glory—heavenly glory they could not have till the end. In the meantime they have to take their place with Him in rejection, and this put them to the test, for they were to give up things right enough in themselves; e.g., to hate father, mother, wife, &c., all which earthly relationships had a claim upon them, and especially so upon the Jew. “Honor thy father and mother,” &c. But all these relationships would not stand in association with the cross. Everything must be sacrificed, everything that linked man with the earth must be snapped asunder to faith, when Christ was rejected. The character of the world was fully manifested in His rejection: its deeds were evil and it rejected the light. The incarnation, which should have been the link to man's blessing, is rejected. He accomplishes redemption by His rejection on earth, and He has a place in heaven. This alters the character of everything. It brings in the judging of self. There never would have been this if Christ had been crowned on earth. He was “delivered into the hands of men,” &c. He whose very name carried power and authority is to be delivered up. If Christ had had His place on earth, the heart of man would never have been put to the test. Why? Because, if men had seen all the dignity and glory displayed on earth which was His right, it would have gratified their flesh with its greatness. But flesh cannot inherit heaven, and what place has it on the cross? There they go together so blessedly-the cross and heaven; and for the flesh there is no place in either. There was a terrible breach between man and God, and the One who would have healed it they crucified. Then every carnal thought that was in accordance with such an act must be judged. The disciples were disputing who should be the greatest—not greatest in., the world, but the greatest in the glory. It is self after all. They have not to tell Him much, but their thoughts are judged. When in the light, everything is judged. Jacob had the word from God to go to Bethel (Gen. 35), and he immediately says to his household, “Put away the strange gods that are among you.” And why so? Everything is detected when getting into the presence of God. Jacob could get the blessing before he went to Bethel; but when he goes into God's presence, the idols are judged. When he has got rid of the idols, it is “El-bethel,” the God of Bethel. The disciples were reasoning which should be the greatest, and when He detected their thoughts, He “took a child and set him by him,” &c. This shows us our place: we ought to seek the lowest place. We never can have it, because Christ has taken it. He went down under sin, wrath, death. He took the lowest place, because the servant of all. This is the truly happy place for us, but how it judges self/ This is what the cross does. Not only are the idols judged, but self is judged.

It is a blessed thing to have done with self. When there is room for God, we can be full of joy and happiness. We are not humble, even when we are occupied with our own nothingness, or how bad we are; but we are humble when we do not think of ourselves at all. When we have to learn our nothingness and badness, that is being humbled. If we get away from the Lord, we have to be brought back, and that is a humbling process. We want to judge the flesh in ourselves. It is pretty easy to judge it in another, but it is in ourselves we miss it. (ver. 50). Things are brought to a crisis. “He that is not against us is for us.” Mark how thoroughly conscious the Lord was of His utter rejection by man; so utter that He said, he that is not against us is proved to be for us. Christ was perfect; therefore He was a perfect test to men's consciences; and as far as He is manifested in us, we shall be so also. Paul could say, “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” Why could he say so Because it went out from him as pure as it went in. John said, “We forbad him, because he followeth not with us.” That tells the whole tale. They were thinking of themselves, not of Christ; of their own importance, and not His honor. If it had been his importance, they would have thought how blessed it was to find the effect of His name, and rejoiced to know how His power was being exercised by man. But no; they were looking at themselves as well as at the Messiah. Even John was thus using Christ Himself to further his own importance. And is there not something in us of the same thing, a satisfaction at that which aggrandizes self as well as Christ, instead of seeking the honor of Christ alone? The Lord takes him up and answers him on the ground of His utter rejection, which was corning. “He that is not against us is for us.” And mark that the very selfishness of John brings out the grace of Christ. He says “us.” You do not know the lot you have with me. If you find one who can use the power of my name, rejoice in it.

Ver. 5. “It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.” I am going to get a portion in heaven, and you are to have the same portion, but it must be through rejection here. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily,” &c.

State of the Soul After Death, State of the Soul After Death, The

The state of the soul after death is a subject which deeply interests us all. The rejection of the coming again of Christ to receive the saints and to judge the earth before the end of the world, and the losing sight of the distinctive importance given to the resurrection in the New Testament, has given in the common evangelical faith, and that where sound in the main, an absolute character to the vague idea of going to heaven, exclusive of all other conception of happiness and glory. But Scripture spoke too plainly of the Lord’s coming and the resurrection of the saints to allow the thought of going to heaven when we die to maintain the absorbing place it held in the minds of the pious.

Strange to say, going to heaven is not spoken of in Scripture, unless in the one case of the thief upon the cross, going to be with Christ in paradise. Not that we do not go there, but the scriptural thought is always going to Christ. Since He is in heaven, of course we go there; but being with Christ, not being in heaven, is what Scripture puts forward, and this is important as to the state of the spiritual affections. Christ is the object before the soul, according to the Word, not simply being happy in heaven, though we shall be happy, and in heaven. I speak of it only as characterizing our habits of thought. Poor human nature is apt to fall into Scylla to avoid Charybdis. It is apt, too, to follow its own thoughts, not simply to receive the Word of God.

The recovered truth of the Lord’s coming and the first resurrection obtained an importance in some minds which eclipsed the going to heaven when we die, too vague and too little formally scriptural to satisfy those awakened to search the Word. It was stated that the soul sleeps — is unconscious till the resurrection, even by some who in the main were sound in the faith; while with others, this notion carried them on to deny not only the immediate bliss of the departed, with Christ, but that we ever went to heaven, and what constitutes distinctive Christian hope.

My object is to give a plain scriptural statement, and proof from Scripture, that there is immediate happiness with Christ for the departed Christian. It is an intermediate state. The departing Christian waits for the resurrection of the body, and then only will he be in his final state in glory. Men speak of glorified spirits: Scripture never.

The purpose of God as to us is that we should be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. “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.” “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” This was exhibited for a moment when Moses and Elias appeared in glory with Christ at the transfiguration. (See Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:4-9; Luke 9:28-36.) This, and to be forever with the Lord, received to Himself in the Father’s house, is our eternal state of joy and glory. This latter part is seen also in the account of the transfiguration in Luke, where they (Moses and Elias) enter into the cloud, whence the Father’s voice proceeded. (See also 1 Thess. 4:17.) But this is our eternal state, when Christ shall have come and received us to Himself, raised, or changed into His likeness, when our poor earthly body shall have been fashioned like His glorious body (Phil. 3:21). God has wrought us now, already, for this selfsame thing, and given to us the earnest of the Spirit (2 Cor. 5:5).

Two things belong to us: first, to be like and with Christ Himself, and second, to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him. Redemption has made this ours, but we are not in possession. We have only the earnest of the Spirit, though God has wrought us for that selfsame thing.

The first point, being like Christ, we have already spoken of, though what has been cited there introduces us with scriptural authority to the second —“So shall we ever be with the Lord.”

But I add here other proofs of the second point, namely, that our portion is in heavenly places. It is distinctive of believers who have believed and suffered with Him. God, we are told, will gather together in one, under Christ, all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth (Eph. 1:10). So we read that all things were created by Christ and for Christ (Col. 1:16,20); all things will be put under His feet as man. (Heb. 2; 1 Cor. 15:27,28; Eph. 1:22.) But we read in Hebrews 2 that all things are not yet put under Him. He sits now on the Father’s throne, not on His own (Rev. 3:21). God has said, “Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.” He is (Heb. 10) expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. The time will come when not only all things in heaven and earth will be reconciled (Col. 1:20), but even things under the earth, infernal things, will be forced to recognize His power and authority. Every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ, the despised and rejected of men, is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10,11). For this we must wait.

But in this gathering of all things in heaven and earth under one head — Christ — our part is in heavenly places, and as it is our portion now in spirit, so it will be our part in glory. Nor is there any real separation between these two. Of course we are not in glory now — there is no need to insist on that, but that is our calling now, that which we are redeemed to and wrought for and wait for. Now we have the treasure in earthly vessels, and groan, being burdened. When we are out of the body, groaning is over, and we are with Christ in joy; when He comes, we shall have a body suited to that heavenly place — we shall be in glory. Thus, in Ephesians 1:3, He “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” In 2 Corinthians 5:1, “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” In Philippians 3:20, “Our conversation [citizenship —our relationship in life as Christians] is in heaven,” and in the same chapter (v. 14), where you have “high calling,” the true force of the word is, “calling above,” as may be seen in a Bible with a margin. We are called to be up above there. So in Hebrews 6:19,20, we read that Christ is entered within the veil — that is, heaven itself (Heb. 9:24), and as our forerunner. So, Hebrews 3, we are partakers of the heavenly calling. As united to Christ by the Holy Spirit, we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ —not with Him yet, but in Him — that is our place. So when the Lord comes, He gathers indeed, as Son of man, out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity. But the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Hence Moses and Elias not only are manifested in glory on earth, to show the state of the saints in the kingdom, but they enter into the cloud, God’s dwelling-place, whence the Father’s voice came.

It is thus clear that, as God will gather together in one all things both which are in heaven and on the earth, our part is to be like Christ in glory, and with Him forever, and that in heaven itself, blessed with all spiritual blessings (as Israel with temporal ones), and in heavenly places (as they in earthly). If we are joint-heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17), we have what is yet better — to dwell in the Father’s house, where He is gone. Hence it is clearly and distinctly expressed (Col. 1:5) that our hope is laid up for us in heaven, and Peter tells us (1 Peter 1:4) that an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and that fades not away, is reserved in heaven for us. All this clearly shows our blessings are where our hope enters, where our forerunner is gone, what our glory is — celestial, not terrestrial. We shall bear the image of the heavenly, and shall be forever with the Lord. He has gone to prepare a place for us in the Father’s house, and will come again to receive us there to Himself. He has declared, “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.”

One might expatiate on the blessedness of this —the wondrous place given to us, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus, but my object now is to give the Scripture-statement of our blessedness, and the proofs of it. What I have said gives our calling the same throughout, from the moment we are called, to the glory of eternity. There is no other: there is “one hope of our calling.” God has called us to His own kingdom and glory; we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Their Father’s house is the home of His children.

But this has not told us in distinct statements what the intermediate state is, though it has shown us, as a general principle, where all our blessing is, what redemption has obtained for us. The God of all grace has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus: wondrous love! but an integral part of Christ’s own glory, for what is a Redeemer without His redeemed? And once I believe that the blessed Son of God has died for me as man on the cross, nothing that a creature (whose life He has become) can have is too great as the effect of it.

The whole object of the epistle to the Hebrews is to show that our portion is heavenly, in contrast with the Judaism which was, and when Israel is restored will be, earthly. They had a high priest on earth, because God sat between the cherubim down here. Such a High Priest became us — “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” Why? Because our place and portion are with God there. Our place and calling are in the heavenlies. All had to be suited to this: the excellence of the sacrifice and the service of the priest.

But how far does the Word of God show us our intermediate state, between the time of our being in this tabernacle, in which we groan, and having it glorified when Christ comes and shall change our vile body and fashion it like His glorious body? Once we have understood the previous passage, and that our calling and portion are heavenly, all is simple and plain.

Our citizenship, now and always, is in heaven. How far we enjoy it when we die is the only question — more than here, or less? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him (Luke 20:38); though dead for this world, they are for Him as alive as ever, and so for faith. But it is alleged they sleep. There is no ground for this whatever. Stephen fell asleep — that is, died. It was not his soul fell asleep after death; those which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him (1 Thess. 4:14), but these (v. 16) are dead in Christ. Some have fallen asleep — that is, had died (1 Cor. 15:6), the same word as “sleep in Jesus” in 1 Thessalonians 4. This is contrasted with being alive, in Thessalonians, and with remaining to this present in Corinthians. It is just simply dying, and a beautiful expression to show they had not at all ceased to exist, but would wake up again in resurrection, as a man out of sleep. This is clearly determined in the case of Lazarus (John 11). The Lord says, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” They thought it was taking of rest in sleep; then He said plainly, “Lazarus has died.” That is, sleep means, plainly, dying; and awaking is not awaking the soul, as if it slept apart, and so leaving it, but bringing back from the state of death by resurrection. A Christian’s falling asleep is neither more nor less than dying; a soul’s sleeping is a pure invention.

Paul knew that God had wrought him (and he speaks of it as to all Christians, as their common faith) for glory, and did not wish to die (be unclothed) as if weary, but that mortality should be swallowed up in life. Christians have Christ as their life, as they have Him as their righteousness, and this being so, as to death itself (2 Cor. 5:6), they are always confident, knowing that while they are at home in the body, they are absent from the Lord. Life — eternal life — in Christ they have, but here it lives absent from the Lord, in the earthen vessel; when it leaves the poor earthen vessel which makes it groan, being burdened, it will be present with the Lord. Is that better, or worse? and where is He? Is it, though it has already the Holy Spirit as the power of life, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, going to sleep and knowing nothing? Is that the confidence he had who saw such a power in this life in Christ that he was not, as his object, looking to die, but mortality to be swallowed up by it; yet when it lost the tabernacle which made it groan, it was not capable of anything but helpless sleep? And remember, Christ is our life; because He lives, we live. Have we lost our connection with Him when we die? Does He sleep in us?

Again (Phil. 1), Paul was in a strait between two, to depart and be with Christ, which was far better, dying (mark what he was speaking of) gain, though living was Christ. Who would think that Paul, having the blessed joy of knowing Christ was his life and of living entirely for Him, so that it was worth his while to stay, would consider it far better —gain — to go to sleep and know nothing of Christ or anything else? Could his desire, as to his own joy, be to go to sleep and know nothing of Christ at all? Is it not perfectly evident that when he speaks of being with Christ, and of its being far better than serving Him here, though that was worthwhile, he speaks of the joy of being there? Who would think, if I spoke of the satisfaction and gain of going to somebody and being with him, I meant I was going to be fast asleep, and not know I was there?

But we have more: the Lord declares to the thief, who alone of all men in that memorable hour confessed Him, that he should be with Him that day in paradise. Was it not happiness He promised him, being with Christ and in paradise? Does that mean that he should be fast asleep and know nothing? I ask if it be not supremely ridiculous, and flying in the face of the very point of Christ’s words. The statement occurs in Luke, who, all through his gospel, after the first two chapters, which are consecrated to the poor pious remnant who waited for Christ, and gave a most lovely picture of them —God’s hidden ones in the midst of rebellious and unbelieving Israel — after these chapters, I say, the evangelist gives the testimony of divine grace in the Son of man and the present state. He proceeds with the genealogy of Christ up to Adam, and then unfolds, all through his gospel, the grace that in the Son of man blesses man, and blesses him now, and in a heavenly way. It is not dispensational, like Matthew, but grace, and present grace, and heavenly grace by the gospel, the present state of things. It answers, as far as it goes, to the testimony of Paul and the Acts. Now the poor thief, while a most bright and eminent instance of the power of grace and faith, confessing Christ as Lord when everything contradicted it, naturally did not go in knowledge beyond his countrymen. He was sure that He who hung upon the cross would come in (not into) His kingdom, and prayed that Christ might remember him then, in blessed confidence in Him. The Lord’s answer was, according to the whole tenor of the gospel, You shall not wait for that. I bring salvation by grace: today — this selfsame day — you shall be with Me in paradise, the fit companion of Christ in blessedness. This, then, is the portion of the departed saint: to be with Christ in blessedness, absent from the body, and present with the Lord.

I am aware of the miserable subterfuge by which it is attempted to read it — “Verily I say unto you this day, Thou shalt be with Me in paradise.” It not only destroys the whole characteristic point of the passage, according to the tenor of the gospel it is found in, but perverts the order of the passage, as it destroys its sense. “Today” is at the beginning of the phrase to give it emphasis in answer to “when Thou comest.” There is the solemn assertion, “Verily I say unto thee.” To add “today” to this is simply puerile, destroying withal the allusion to the request of the thief, which only hopes to be remembered when Christ should come in His kingdom. “No,” says the Lord, with the solemn “verily” which He used, “you shall not wait till then, this day you shall be with Me.” What is the sense of “Verily I say unto thee this day”? It only destroys the solemnity of the assertion, but “Verily I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise” more than fulfilled the hopes of the thief, and revealed to us other than earthly joys when we leave this world to depart and be with Christ. The wickedness of the Jews, as an instrument, fulfilled the promise in breaking his legs, as it did that in which the work of redemption was accomplished, which gave the poor thief a title to be there.

The intermediate state, then, is not glory; for that, we must wait for the body. It is “raised in glory”; “He shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like His glorious body.” But it is blessedness where no unholy evil is — it is being with Christ Himself, the source of joy ineffable. The hopes and “always confident” of Paul, of Stephen, were not disappointed, nor did the assurance given by the Lord to the thief fail of fulfillment.

I ask if the bright hopes spoken of in 2 Corinthians 5, Philippians 1, Acts 7, and the Lord’s words to the thief, for any honest mind, can mean going fast asleep, and knowing nothing? When the Lord described the state of the rich man and Lazarus, did it mean that either the wicked or the just were asleep and knowing nothing? I shall be told it was a figurative description. I admit it fully, but it is not a false one, and it is not a figure of men going to sleep and knowing nothing.

But further, if 2 Corinthians 5:68 means being happy with Christ, it means being happy with Him when we die. Death is the subject spoken of, for the Apostle had despaired of life (2 Cor. 1), and “absent from the body, and present with the Lord” is not resurrection; it means leaving the body, not taking it. “Departing and being with Christ” is not His coming and raising or changing us to be in glory. The Apostle is speaking there again of death —remaining here or leaving the world. It was “dying” which was gain (Phil. 1:21).

How a spirit enjoys Christ we cannot tell as to the manner of it, but there is no difficulty whatever. My spirit enjoys Christ now, in spite of the hindrance of the poor earthen vessel it is in, and though now we see Him not, yet rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It is not my

body which enjoys Him now, but my soul, spiritually, with the hindrance of the earthen vessel, and absent from Him, then, without the hindrance of the earthen vessel, and present with Him.

The believer may rest perfectly assured that, departing from the body, he will be present with the Lord, and if His presence is joy to him, that joy will be his. No one would be more anxious to press the Lord’s coming and our waiting for Him, and the importance of the resurrection. I would urge it, as I have urged it on the saints, and indeed upon all in its due place; but not to weaken that all live to God, even if they are spirits in prison, nor the excellent joy and blessedness of being with Christ when we depart, that to die is gain. It has justly cheered and shed heavenly light on many a dying bed, and will yet, if the Lord tarry, and the Scripture is as plain as to the happiness of the saint on his departure as to his being with Christ — far better, as to joy, than the most successful service here, as it is that Christ will come and take all His saints to be with Him forever in glory, like Himself, though the latter is the full and final state of eternal blessedness, when the marriage of the Lamb withal shall have come, when we shall be forever with the Lord.

Christian Truth: Volume 16, No Root

Some received the word with joy (Luke 8:13). This was a proof that the conscience was untouched; for when that is reached it is anything but joy, until forgiveness is known. The feelings may be moved for a time, and the word be listened to with a joy which will give place to sorrow. The reason truth is thus flippantly taken up with joy is because there is no root, and so it is received in joy and given up in trouble.

Notes and Jottings, Fragment: The Sinner Going to Christ

TAKE the woman in the city that was a sinner. Christ is revealed to her, and she feels the horribleness of her sins, but she goes to Christ and touches Him. The love of Christ has got into her. If she cannot show her face to a decent person, she can show herself to One who was the manifestation of the divine.

Notes and Comments 1, Forgiveness

Forgiveness is, I think, evidently the changed aspect of the mind of him who forgives, as regards the faults of the forgiven. Where judicial authority, or an injured right existed of the forgiver, and judgment as to the person concerning the act, ceased in the mind, judgment was no longer its aspect for the wrong done. It may be authoritative judgment of the wrong, or the kind of authority there is in the possession of a right- there is authority as to that, so that we may say, in general, that it is authority ceasing to view the fault in the aspect of judgment, and, thereon, releasing the offender who had come under that judgment; hence, it is evident, it cannot go beyond the claim or title to judge of him who takes cognizance of the offense. All beyond this is impossible in the nature of things; I may forgive a thief, or a murderer, his wrong, but this does not screen him from the laws, nor from God's judgment if unrepentant. A man may be forgiven of God, and yet as testimony in the world, providential effects may follow, because the spheres are different, and everlasting exclusion from His presence, or favor, is the effect of sin; or, I may impose a condition-as if my child had stolen an apple, I may require him to return the apple, or I do not forgive him, because there is a double relationship—my parental authority, and the wrong done to another. But, in general, forgiveness is the release of one in fault from the judgment of one in authority—who has title to release him, and this includes all wrong—and takes place in the mind of him who has authority, who ceases to hold him in the aspect of judgment.

Many consequences and effects may follow, but this, I think, is what forgiveness is; the consequence is, it is according to the measure and sphere in which that authority moves, and applies to the judgment from which the offender is released. God may chasten governmentally for our good, or even in testimony as in David's case, and Numbers 14:20, yet, as between Him and the guilty, forgive, and not impute the sin- no longer hold him guilty. I may forgive a wrong doer, but it is measured by the value and import of my forgiveness. The church may bind sin on a guilty Christian, in the exercise of discipline, or forgive, in restoring or releasing from the discipline, and God will sanction it, but it does not go beyond its own sphere, and competency, and it acts in that which God sanctions. God—if it be rightly done—will bind what the Church has done, but the Church does not forgive sins in the sense of eternal forgiveness for salvation—it is not its sphere. It is its sphere to deal with them here, and God will set His seal upon its actings; so could the Apostle forgive, as we read in 2 Corinthians; so, through the prayer of faith where sickness was a chastisement from God, so that His dealing with sin stood in the way of recovery, compare Job 36. God puts His sanction on the forgiveness which the Church grants in its sphere, but the Church cannot pretend to grant the forgiveness which belongs to God, in His sphere of authority. God sanctions my forgiveness of my enemy, that is another thing from my having a title to forgive, divinely, the guilt of sin against God. The administration of the Church is different, and God has committed an administration to it, but God's sanction of its action in that, is a different thing from its assumption of His sphere of eternal mercy as to guilt. That, what Peter bound on earth might be bound in heaven, is a different thing from his having all that heaven itself could—had—put into his hand; the king may sanction all a viceroy may do in his own proper sphere, that is not saying the viceroy can do all that the king can do, as such.

When all the Apostles were commissioned to preach remission, this was from God. It was no action of the Church at all—on the reception of the Word, they were admitted into the Church, their sins being remitted; there, there is no imputation of sins. Hence Ananias can say to Saul, "Arise, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord "it was the earthly administration of forgiveness, a present reception of the peace which Christ had made—then the government of God, I add, of the Church begins, and in that sphere of government, forgives or binds by judgment; God does so, as in Job 36, and the Church, cognizant of His mind, ought to be able to do, and the individual by the prayer of faith obtain it. It has nothing to do with the putting away, or imputing sin as to condemnation, but only, as far as the Church goes, to those who are forgiven by one offering-perfected forever, or supposed to be so, and dealt with as such. "Do ye not judge them that are within; them that are without God judgeth"—their reception in again is present administrative forgiveness—they enjoy, as amongst the forgiven therein, the privileges of those who are. In this sense of reception, the Church forgives, see 2 Cor. 2:7-10; hence, I have the administration of

forgiveness by admission to Christianity—coming into the place in which I have left my sins behind me, and indeed, for faith, my nature too—this, as an administrative right, as in baptism; Col. 2:12, 13. Rom. 6 as to nature.

Then a man is within, and the Church or Assembly judges him, and its administration of the government of God-not of salvation, but in respect of the saved—begins; so, in Job, "He withdraws not his eyes from the righteous." And as to the righteous, saints, saved ones, sins may be forgiven, or bound on the person, and here two or three, gathered in Christ's name, are competent, and their action, done under and with Christ's authority, will have divine sanction—but, as I said, divine sanction on their act is not God's act in respect of His wrath and dealing with sin, relatively to the sinner's place with Him of forgiveness or condemnation; that has been settled in the conscience of the sinner by faith, and reception into the Assembly as to his actual status. Discipline, even by God, is for the righteous—when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we may not be condemned with the world; the moment I have made it a re-forgiveness of the person, in the sense of grace and acceptance, I have upset Christianity, and denied the place and standing of the Church- to say nothing here of the work of Christ. Government does not begin till that is settled-the righteous are governed, chastened, forgiven, judged, now - and, as I have said, sanction from God on our acts, is not our pretending to His.

Forgiveness implies too the release (aphesis) from the penal liability to which the judgment of the mind of the forgiver rightly holds it; but forgiveness is properly what I have before referred to-this is an effect. It may be applied to the person or the faults; it has rather the previous and essential sense as to the person-the latter (aphesis) as to the sins. The words are different, at any rate often when applied to people and sins, as Luke 7:42 Cor. 2:7; Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:32 it is charizomai - of sins aphesis. But we have aphes auto (forgive him) (Luke 18:3), and charizesthe o ti; 2 Cor. 2:10, and chap. 12: 13. Etymologically, charizomai (to forgive, or show kindness to) is evidently more the favor of the person forgiving but actually exercised; aphiemi, its application to dismissal of the sin-a release. The force of aphiemi (to forgive or leave) is seen in Matt. 6:12, 14, 15, and Luke 11:4.

No doubt God must be satisfied, in the holiness of His own nature, as regards Himself-that there may be forgiveness, that must have been. Still, as to judgment, it is according to the relative responsibility qua judgment and punishment, though exclusion be the state of all unless reconciled; nor- though founded on the intrinsic work, so that eternal joy may be there as to what is essential to it-is conferred blessing by this consideration. The earthly saints in the millennium will not have their place within the veil; they are (say the Jews) thoroughly forgiven, but the Lord is with them, not they with the Lord in heavenly places. Sin will always be sin in God's sight, according to His nature-hence there must be the blood of Christ according to His own perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself; but they will return-their repentance will be according to, and by their rejected Savior, when they see Him. It is real, but refers to earth, to acts on earth, and has its fruit on earth then.

We have four words for “forgive” in the Old Testament: Ka-phar, Na-sa, Ka-sah, Sa-lakh. The first commonly used for atonement; the sin was covered by a sacrificial act in God's sight-God was satisfied, and so forgave. Na-sa is afro (take away), the sin was removed from God's sight, and so forgiven. Ka-sah is "cover"—it is covered, hidden out of God's sight; the last is forgiveness commonly so used, and as the effect of ka-phar. But the main point is that when the question of righteousness was raised, the evil was there, and on the great day of atonement (kip-pur), it was a memorial, a remembrance of sin, a witness that it was not put away (though of provision made for it) nor God accessible in His holy presence. Hence for every particular sin, the atonement had to be offered (ka-phar), a renewal of the act typically which put away sin. Forgiveness is when the mind ceases to look in judgment at the offender as under the sin, and the mind is returned to favor towards him, or holds him now in favor, if not before in it. But the state of man as an object of wrath was not revealed in the Old Testament; it dealt with man, as to the question of righteousness, on the ground of probation, though pointing to atonement, and giving a means of reconciliation, so that transgression, when occasion required, might be done away-put out of God's sight. Hence ka-phar towards God, kis-sah as to the man.

Christianity reveals righteousness on God's part-the veil is rent, one full, final, unrepentable sacrifice for sin made-so much so, that repetition is the denial of its value. This has been accepted of God, as the putting away sin athetesis (putting away, disannulling) (perhaps ha-them "make an end of," Dan. 9:24). Into this we come, and stand in God's presence in light without veil, where sin is not-Christ having perfectly glorified God, and borne, and put away our sins. There was no actual athetesis of sin he airon ("he that taketh away") though pointed to in shadows. But Christ has appeared in the end, sunteleia ton aionon (the summing-up of the ages), to put away sin for God and for us, and man (the believer) is accepted as and where He is—that is his status before God according to what He has wrought, and the passing-away of judgment, and forgiveness is necessarily absolute and eternal, for sin is put away, as such, according to that judgment and the nature of God, and our sins borne. God must deny that doing to bring the sins up, whereas His righteousness (and He cannot but be righteous) is active and exercised in owning it there only, perfectly; that is what in the highest sense righteousness is—"Of righteousness, because I go unto my Father," that is, righteousness as in act. Forgiveness is according to this passing away of judgment, and this was announced in the gospel. Forgiveness, when declared, puts the forgiven person in a new position with the forgiver as regards what is forgiven—if all, wholly so—but at any rate as regards what is forgiven.

The full efficacy I have spoken of is a question of positive revelation. During the Lord's life, when it was just about to be accomplished, but was not yet, we have to learn whether in any given case the Lord speaks as to the particular case, or as to absolute forgiveness. Thus in Luke 7, the word, " Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace," intimates a full forgiveness, not knowledge of all Heb. 10 or Rom. 8, but of Rom. 3 at any rate. The case of the man sick of the palsy has a more Jewish character, yet doubtless as to his then standing, was a full forgiveness; It alludes to Psa. 103, sa-lakh (who forgiveth)—actual forgiveness as present favor. But this raises another question; if forgiveness is the action of the mind, of one having a right or claim which has been injured or slighted, giving up displeasure and not holding the person any longer guilty towards him—the wrong must have been there to be forgiven—God could not have forgiven innocent Adam. Besides when announced, and so we speak of it, a person is forgiven, enters into the enjoyment of the favor expressed in it. I admit that unbelief may hinder a person's thinking himself forgiven, when the wronged one's mind is wholly towards the wrongdoer in love, and that even between man and man. Still, in itself, it is a relative position which supposes previous displeasure with the fault; " that they may receive remission of their sins." we read. It puts the individual in a new relative position; hence forgiveness must be after the commission of the fault, in respect of which the person is forgiven.

The ground of forgiveness may have been, and has been for us, long ago surely, laid in the work of Christ; no discipline could be exercised but in view of this—sin would be, and have remained exclusion from God's presence-but this laid the ground of appeal as to Cain, typically, as in Israel, and was in fact what made forbearance with Old Testament saints righteous. Now it is declared; but forgiveness (which in form never went beyond government then) which is now the abiding state of the believer-no imputation of sin, and righteousness imputed-is exercised as to, is granted in occasions of profitable discipline to the righteous when humbled, supposes the existence of the fault, and its forgiveness,

though we may speak of the person's being forgiven, but he is forgiven something. Just as in repentance, man passes from will and lust to the judgment of his sins and sin, so when one forgives, he passes from displeasure and judgment of the sin—i.e., viewing it in judgment of the person-to favor, and ceasing so to judge. Hence, though there is no time with God, and no imputation of sin to him that believes, and he, if he knows the truth has no more conscience of sins, yet forgiveness, as a fact, cannot be till the fault is committed, and the mind of the forgiver turned from judgment to favor. It may not be, as to the Christian, as to any imputation, but then there is no forgiveness any more in that sense either, but governmentally He may bring a person's sins upon him, or forgive, and then it is actual in time after the fault, and, when grace, causes displeasure, see Jonah-so even for the forgiveness by the Church—so even of Israel in the latter day—all founded on Christ's work, its value known to its now, to that we know nothing can be imputed. In this sense we are perfectly forgiven and justified—before Pentecost unknown, so that it was continual occasional forgiveness, as in governmental forgiveness—not known of Israel, in the latter day, till they look on Him whom they have pierced.

Justification is, in the first instance "from," Acts 13:38, 39; hence here, and in Rom. 4 does not reach beyond forgiveness, so chapter 3: 25, 26, and so chapter 4: 5—and resurrection is the status in which it is made good, though ascension and glory may be the effect of that by which it is made good. Still in itself it has nothing to do with glory, but with a judicial approbation of the state of the person judged, though the work, in virtue of which he is justified, may obtain glory, " whom he justified, them he also glorified."

In the gospel we have the revelation of God's righteousness; Rom. 1:17. This is strictly the righteousness of God; in chapter 3: 25, 26, we have endeixis " pointing out," "showing," and in the sense of proving, "showing" is the word in English. This is done as to forbearance with past sins, and to show it at the present time, so as that He is righteous, and the Justifier of the believer in Jesus.

In chapter 4 it is imputed, but this is righteousness, i.e., the man accounted righteous, not God's righteousness imputed; in that sense " imputed " is ellogeitai, not logizetai. The former connection suggested to me, only one must allow the last is accounting righteous, not God's righteousness, though it be according to that. God does not impute sin, or imputes righteousness; imputation of righteousness is not in question. Sinners are justified, chapters 3, 4, and 5. In chapter 8 we have a condition before God, where, founded on Christ, the Holy Ghost has set us. But in chapter 5: 18-21 we have dikaiosis (justification) and katastethesontai dikaioi (will be constituted righteous)-and that is the doctrinal statement in this part of the epistle; chapters 6, 7, 8 are only explaining the status of those so justified, as dead to sin and alive to God, and under the effect of the presence of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 13 they are justified from all things. Resurrection is the state in which justification is established, although that by which it is so established may be a ground for higher glory, and it applies to our being manifestly clear, in God's sight, of all the offenses of which we were guilty, and judicially cleared before Him. But righteousness is an abstract word—I am constituted righteous—that is my standing before God, and there is a cause for being righteous—judicially so accounted. Here the obedience of Christ—I am constituted righteous before God in virtue of Christ's obedience; no doubt I am justified from sins as having the profit of His death and resurrection, but I have the actual status according to the worth of what was done-I am estimated a righteous person, according to the value of what was done. So Heb. 11, " testimony that he was righteous," " God bearing witness to his gifts."

But justifying is of a person judicially in question; hence we have it not in Ephesians—when it is a new creation, God has not to justify that—His work. Justification, on the contrary, is of a responsible person, and with whom justice is occupied; hence, first from what we are guilty of as children of Adam; then resurrection of life, judicially, in the place, as to judgment, which belongs to the person judged by the judgment—not by the counsel, that is glory—but a positive status before God in righteousness, and that in resurrection. The judicial mind of God owns us by salvation as before Himself, not in the old condition in flesh, but in the new, alive to God righteously, without blame before Him, and that is in virtue of Christ's death, for we are not actually blameless as we know, though the new man cannot sin, and we are through Christ judicially placed in that. It was dikaioma eis dikaiosin toes (righteousness for justification of life); in actual result not yet, though the new man be faultless and free-because of Christ's death, sin and the tempter have no title. In the counsels of God, glory comes in; in Christ's case, He is in glory now by righteousness, but that is only of Him, and an assurance and guarantee for us-He appears in God's presence for us, and is withal our Forerunner.

In Rom. 5, verse 19 gives the abstract idea—what characterized the two persons referred to. It is definitely contrasted with the law in verse 20.

There is another thing we have to consider as to remission. It has been proclaimed, hence it is not in the Gospel when Messiah was come, only in the mind of the Forgiver; it was declared, proffered, present forgiveness, i.e., when so addressed to any one-applied, he was released; this might be governmental as heretofore in Israel, or from wrath. But Christ comes, saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee"—"But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins "—and the man is healed; and now full forgiveness is preached, as between the soul and God, as Luke 7, Acts 13, so that the person is in a forgiven state, no sin judicially imputed to him—it is not merely " I have (God has) forgiven " the person, but the person is forgiven. That is his declared, manifested status. In John 20, the administration of this was committed to the twelve, it was nothing peculiar to Peter; it was their mission from a risen Christ in the world, who breathed on them in life-giving power. He had stood amongst them speaking peace, then repeats it, sends them as the Father had sent Him, breathes on them, and declares that those to whom they forgave sins, should be forgiven. It is not the Kingdom, but the message of the Gospel administered in application by the twelve. Nor has it to do here with merely governmental forgiveness; the power might reach that, as in Corinthians—but it was the present administration of forgiveness to men. Baptism may have been associated with it in its due place; but the passage is a general abstract, conferring the competency to administer forgiveness on their mission from Christ, as He had in the Father's name.

Note.—Although the communications on which the work of a servant of God is founded, and by which he is strengthened in it, are not the state of his own soul, yet, inasmuch as it is an immense favor, and that which has passed between God and his soul, if he act inconsistently with it—neglect it, as to his moral state, and act unworthily of it—God may deal with his soul in respect of this neglect and unworthy treatment of such grace, and all the pain of a grieved spirit be in his soul. For these communications are an immense grace—how great the evil of slighting such, I mean slighting, in conduct, this intimacy with God, with which the soul has been favored! Note this well.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Miscellaneous 3, Savior and the Sinner, The

THIS is one of the passages, found here and there in Scripture, which brings out in strong relief the grace of God, and what is in man's heart too.

Here we get the Pharisee, this poor sinner, and the Lord Himself. We see these three characters, these three hearts all together: the man righteous in his own eyes; a person outwardly in wickedness; and then the heart of God, and the way in which He looks at and judges these two cases.

What precedes in the history is this: John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to ask, " Art thou he that should come; or look we for another? " (v. 19), and this gives occasion to the Lord to speak of God's ways and dealings, the principles of which are of all importance to us. John had come with his solemn testimony, but the conscience did not bow to it. Then came the gracious testimony of Christ, but the heart was not moved by it. " But wisdom is justified of all her children." God's ways, whether in the testimony of John the Baptist, or in that of the Lord Jesus, are justified by the children of wisdom. The Pharisee is here, and the poor sinner: then comes the question, which is the child of wisdom?

We get a most important principle here: these publicans and sinners " justified God " both in the testimony of John, and in that of the Gospel. When we know what we are as sinners, we justify God, never ourselves; and then in His ways with us He justifies us. The moment we begin to justify ourselves, it is only the utter darkness of the human heart. We find these two testimonies. John the Baptist came requiring fruit, calling to repentance: the publicans and sinners justified God in this: the ax was laid at the root of the trees, these poor sinners acknowledged it and repented: they justified God. The first good fruit that is produced is always the acknowledgment that we produce bad fruit. Then came the blessed Lord, telling of sovereign grace that rose above all their sins; they justified God in this too. The man that justifies God in condemning him most thankfully justifies God in sending His Son to save him. Those who owned the truth of God's judgment, and that they deserved it, confess their sins; Matt. 3:6. Are we willing to justify God in condemning us?

John was so strict he would not even eat with any one; he could have nothing to say to these sinners: that was the reason they said, " He hath a devil."

" There is none righteous, no, not one," Rom. 3:10. This is plain enough; the " great white throne " will not make it plainer. " That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God," Rom. 3:19. This is God's testimony, and in the gospel of grace too. Now we see around us numbers of religious people, going on decently and reverently; but their delight is not in God. Take such a person, and see where his heart is; leave a man alone three or four hours, and he thinks of his cares, game, pleasures, never of Christ. Christ has no place at all in his heart. We all have the idea that we shall be happy in heaven; so we shall, perfectly, blessedly happy. But put the natural man there, and he would get out as quickly as ever he could: there is nothing above he would like. When the blessed Lord came down in grace, man would not have Him. If you take a false religion, you never find a man ashamed of it; you never see this among Mahometans, heathen, or even in corrupt Christianity. Take a Christian, a real Christian, is he not ashamed to confess Christ before men? He is ashamed of himself for it, surely. You never find a person ashamed of a false religion, but you find Christians ashamed of the true.

Take man as man, and every mouth is stopped. Do we justify God in condemning us? The child of wisdom says, " It is true, I deserve to be cut down: I am a child of wrath; I justify God! " When that is the case, at once we are thankful for grace. When I am personally convinced that I deserve condemnation, I say, ' I justify God in the grace that rises up above all my sins: I do not justify myself.' The Son of man came in grace carrying the testimony of goodness wherever there was a poor sinner who would receive Him. God's wisdom in this double way is justified. Wherever there is truth in the inward parts, we justify God. Then as to the fact of the history, we find who this child of wisdom was. We see it was not the Pharisee who set up to have a righteousness for God. The woman justified God's testimony by John (I do not mean in fact, but it was the same testimony); she acknowledged her condemnation; but she justified God, too, in another way.

We cannot pretend to be righteous (I do not speak of what grace produces, but of the natural man); we do not love our neighbor as ourselves, we are not troubled if our neighbor's house is burnt down as if it were our own. If I take the law of God, we may deceive ourselves about loving God with all our hearts, but a man must be a dishonest man if he says he loves his neighbor as himself. Paul could say of himself, " Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless " (Phil. 3:6); but the moment the law said, " Thou shalt not lust," it might as well say, Thou shalt not be a man.' If I take the law, you see it is most useful; it probes the heart, and brings the consciousness that we have not kept it. Take all who are here; God has said, " There is none righteous, no, not one." Can any of you say He is mistaken? It is perfectly true that, unless we are probed, we are all disposed to have a good opinion of ourselves; we are all disposed to be Pharisees. When a man is in this state, Christ is not the object of his heart at all: he calls himself a Christian, but, if he is honest, he will have to acknowledge that Christ has no place in his heart.

In this wonderful history in Luke 7 we get these three hearts unveiled: the man's heart, not that of an open profligate sinner; the heart of the woman who was such; and God's heart. We see, too, who was the child of wisdom.

The Pharisee, who is curious to know about Christ, asks Him to dinner; but he gives Him no water for His feet, and no oil. He is curious to know this preacher, and he thinks himself perfectly competent to judge about religion. The Lord noticed it all. There into this fine house the woman comes, confounded as to her sins, but her heart fixed by what is in Jesus, her whole heart going out to the blessed One. The Pharisee sees the woman washing the Lord's feet with tears, and anointing them with ointment, and he says within himself, That is no prophet. When the conscience is reached, it is under judgment; but when it is not reached, a man thinks he is perfectly competent to judge whether God is right or wrong. " And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged." He says to Simon, You are right-showing that He was more than a prophet. " Seest thou this woman? " Her whole heart is upon Me. We see, too, a person who has had the Lord Himself in his house, and he is settling that He could not be a prophet!

Where the conscience is exercised, it never judges, but it is judged. We all have a natural conscience, that is perfectly true: God took care man should have that, but the intellect of man knows nothing of the things of God. If my intellect could measure God, I must then be the master of my subject: If I understand mathematics, I am master of that subject; if my mind were capable of judging of God, my mind would be the master of God. When conscience awakes and says, " Thou art the man "; you have been sinning against God, there is no attempt then to judge. All true knowledge of God comes in through the conscience. Nothing but faith, which is the eye of the conscience, can put man in his

right place with God. God brings me to justify Him: He is a holy God, I am not holy. That is the way the knowledge of God comes in. God is love: that is true, of course, but this is the way true knowledge of Him comes. The Pharisee thought he was all right, but in the presence of the Lord in grace he settled that He was no prophet. The mind of man is pitch darkness when we justify ourselves, not God.

When we turn to the poor woman, we find her owning in the fullest way her sinfulness, confounded by it; but what had she found in Christ? What does Christ mean? Who was He? What brought Him here? Was it our wishing, our asking? We rejected and crucified Him when He came. I find God acting when man was an utter sinner, all mouths stopped, then God manifest in flesh comes down amongst men. What brought Him down? I see in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and more fully still in His death, that " God so loved the world." This love of God had come into the world, so that sinners could look to and trust Him, while owning their sins.

The two names of God which express what He essentially is are light and love, light which is the purest thing we can conceive, and love. You see the law did not reveal God. It gave a perfect rule for the children of Adam, but Christ is not that (I do not say that He is not a model for Christians): but He is God Himself come into this world as light and love, showing me my sins because He is light. Show me any society you please where men are enjoying themselves, bring in Christ, and this spoils it all. But then if God is light He is love too. When God has shown me, as light, all that I am, I find I am in the presence of the perfect love which brought Him here; and now, instead of fancying I can meet the judgment, I have God Himself here showing me what I am. The heart of this poor woman and the heart of God had perfectly met. " God is light," and the woman had not a word to say for herself, but God is also love, and so she goes into the Pharisee's house. The light and the love manifested in God are both revealed to this woman's heart: the light showed her that she was an utter sinner; the love was what brought her there. She did not yet know that she was forgiven, but there was this blessed revelation of God which required nothing from her, but which was for her just what she wanted.

Christ was God in this world come to win back the confidence of man's heart to God. I get this blessed One in this world, and He says, Are you ashamed to show yourself to a decent person? Well, come to Me. He was here in this world, using the holiness that could not be defiled to carry the perfectness of His love to every poor sinner. We see a perfect example of this in the poor leper of Matt. 8 If a man touched a leper he must be put out, according to the law. Well, this poor leper saw the power that was in Christ, but he did not know His heart, and he says, " If thou wilt thou canst make me clean "; then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched him. I find the blessed Lord using the holiness that could not be soiled, that He might touch man in his sins! When my heart has seen that, I have got both truth and grace: truth in the knowledge that I am a sinner, and grace in Christ. The poor leper might have said, I am vile, not fit to show myself to God or man, but I find One who can touch me.

Christ is God come down to sinners in their sins. The law could only say, If you do not do this, you are cursed. Christ comes to these sinners, and He shows us what we are; but He shows us also what He is: love, that brought Him down to us as we are, the vilest, the most willful, sinners. Have not you committed sins, all of you? Well, how much sin will shut you out of heaven? Why did you sin? Because you liked it; your conscience tells you so. You cannot say to me, You are a big sinner, and I am a little one. Suppose you have committed ten sins, and I eleven, then am I to be shut out, and you let in? If I find two crab-trees, one bearing one crab, and the other one hundred, I say the one is a crab as well as the other. How many sins had Adam committed when he was driven out of paradise? One. That one sin proved his distrust of God, and his confidence in Satan. One crab proves the tree. It is quite true that some are living in flagrant sin, like the poor woman: it would be well if they were like her here! There is no good in sin, but there is good in being convinced of it as she was. God must deal with all sin, and this is what He does. If you have not found Christ, if you have not been washed in the blood of the Lamb, you are under judgment. The woman could not talk about theology, but she has found God, and what is in God's heart.

The Lord could say to the Pharisee, You are perfectly dark as to your own heart and as to God's heart. If you gave no water for My feet, this woman has washed them with tears; if you gave Me no kiss, she has not ceased to kiss My feet. Everything she had she has given Me. You had the Lord in your house, and you did not know it. Then He says of the woman, " Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." She had really met God's heart, as expressed in Christ, though she could not explain how it was: light was in her heart, love too, and they met. Why do I go to the cross? God manifests there His righteousness against sin, and His love to the sinner, and I justify God in His blessed love: as a child of wisdom I justify wisdom.

Then we get Christ's answer to the woman's faith: " Thy sins are forgiven." She did not know it when she came in, but she loved Christ, she trusted Christ; and now the sins are all gone. He said to her-it was not a mere doctrine in the air, but He gives her the comfort of it-" Thy sins are forgiven." God has sent love and light here, but He has sent forgiveness here also, " according to the riches of his grace," not narrowly, closely, measuring our need. He pronounces this judgment upon her, " Thy sins are forgiven "; as He did to the thief, who was fit to go to paradise, " Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The dying robber was bearing the fruit of his ways before man, but Christ was bearing it before God, and therefore he was a fit companion for Christ in paradise. This is true of every believer. " Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. 1:12. " For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified," (Heb. 10:14): this sanctification is entirely uninterrupted because Christ gives it perfection.

People call in question what the Lord has said to the woman, " Who is this that forgiveth sins also? " What is the good of preaching the remission of sins, if you do not believe it? Do you think, when God calls you by His grace, that He means you to be happy with Him or not? If we do not know we are forgiven, it is impossible to be happy. John, writing to all Christians, says, " I write unto you, children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake," 1 John 2:12. You will not find after the day of Pentecost unforgiven sins in a believer. Did Christ die for half my sins? I believe Heb. 10 " Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Though I deserve death and condemnation, I believe that Christ, in the fullest grace, has taken my place, and He did not sit down till the work was perfectly finished. If the work that puts away your sins has not been done perfectly, when is it to be done? Can Christ die over again? Can another Christ come and die? " Without shedding of blood is no remission." Christ cannot shed His blood over again, but the work by which He put away our sin never loses its value in the presence of God.

All through the Gospels we see that it is the soul that clings to Christ, touched by His love and grace, that learns most: that is where light and understanding come in, and so here the first full testimony of the Gospel is given to this woman" Thy sins are forgiven? " Did He deceive her? " Thy faith hath saved thee "-a blessed word! If you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are saved. What did He come for but " to seek and to save that which was lost "? It is an accomplished work, that can never be repeated. There is no veil now: we are brought into God's presence by Christ's work. If our sins were as scarlet, they are now as white as snow, because this work of Christ, perfectly accomplished, puts

me before God in the value of it.

Mark another thing He says to the woman, " Go in peace." " Peace I leave with you." Are you before God in the perfect peace He was in? He has made peace by the blood of His cross. He met God there on the cross, and the testimony of the Gospel is that of a finished work. Now, let us remember, the Lord's love takes all pains that He might do this for us: His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, when He was only thinking of the cup He was about to drink. I justify God in condemning me, but I justify Him also in saving me. He is righteous and holy, and He could not bear the sins; but He is love too, so He put away the sins.

Whatever I do now is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus; I am called to walk like a child of God. All duties flow according to the place we are in: duties cannot exist till we are in the place to which they belong. How can I have a child's affections if I am not sure if I am a child? You must be a Christian before you can have Christian duties. We have duties as men, but we are lost on that ground. Be assured of this, that Scripture is perfectly plain on the point that we know our relationship with God. We own the judgment that was due to us, but we know the relationship in which we are. " At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." This is the effect of the presence of the Holy Ghost. Am I to doubt the value of Christ's blood-shedding? Does the Holy Ghost make me doubt? God says, " Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." I do not doubt it: the Spirit cries, " Abba, Father." Ought I to doubt it? We shall go through exercises-the deeper the better; but the love of God has been revealed, and the fact is that I was a poor sinner, but here this blessed One came into the world when I was such, and died for me when I was such. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are all engaged in this work.

Have your hearts been opened to see the unutterable love in the Son of God coming to die for you, and that God has accepted this work? We shall have conflict with ourselves surely, conflict with Satan and with the world; but we are in perfect peace with God. God calls us to own our sinfulness, but to know His love. The Lord grant, if this is not yet your case, that you may submit yourselves to God's righteousness. Then " thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Jesus Himself, Jesus Himself

“He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27).

Name of Jesus! Highest name!Name that earth and heaven adore;From the heart of God it came,Leads me to God’s heart once more.

Name of Jesus! Living tide!Days of drought for me are past;How much more than satisfiedAre the thirsty lips at last.

Only Jesus! Fairest name!Life and rest, and peace and bliss!Jesus, evermore the same;He is mine, and I am His.

G.T.S.

The Lord Jesus began in a manger and ended on the cross, and along the way He had not where to lay His head.

A Jesus dying on the cross for the vilest meets the wants and burdens of the vilest. . . . If his sins are a burden to him, he may see Christ bearing them that he may be free and have peace.

The more we see the value of the cross, the more precious will Christ be to us.

If Jesus sees perfection in us, we need nothing more.

The Holy Spirit is a power that detaches us from everything and binds us to that which is invisible — to Christ in heaven and to the love of the Father.

“Her sins . . . are forgiven; for she loved much” (Luke 7:36-50). The Lord is able to make this pardon known. He reveals it to the poor woman. But it was that which she had seen in Jesus Himself which, by grace, melted her heart and produced the love she had to Him — the seeing what He was for sinners like herself. She thinks only of Him. He has taken possession of her heart so as to shut out other influences. . . . She goes into the house of this proud man without thinking of anything but the fact that Jesus is there. . . . She saw what He was for a sinner and that the most wretched and disgraced found a resource in Him. . . . A Saviour-God being present, of what importance was Simon and his house? Jesus caused all else to be forgotten. Let us remember this.

Whatever enfeebles attachment to Christ destroys power. It is not gross sin that does it, which of course will be . . . judged, but it is the little things of everyday life which are apt to be chosen before Christ.

If I have that in and about me which distresses the soul, I have that in Him which is unfailing joy and comfort. . . . Where could one’s heart turn for rest if it had not Jesus to rest in? With Him let heaven and earth be turned upside down, and still I have a rest.

There is power to attract out of every corruption around and to gather the soul into the thoughts and ways of God by the revelation of Christ Himself.

“That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” . . . If people have not got Christ, they tire. There will be no enduring unless Christ has possession of the soul, but if He has, there will be an abiding motive, and people will go on and “bring forth fruit with patience.” . . . Trouble may come in in the church; disappointment may arise, even from the brethren, but they go on just the same, because they have got Christ before them, for the word they have heard and keep connects them with Christ, and He is more than anything else.

J

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Miscellaneous 3, My Delights Were With the Sons of Men

Luke 2

FAMILIAR as we are with the thought, it is after all a wonderful thing that the Son of God should come into this world of sinners, and still more wonderful that He should die for them. Into this world the Son of God came, fully bringing out what we are, by the way in which He was received; but at the same time His coming was full of joy and blessing for us. He was the immediate object of the express delight of the Father; then He died and rose again, and so brought us into the same place-into light and blessing with Himself.

It is a wonderful thing, in the first place, to have God come into the world, grace and truth in the world; and that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a question of our duties, or of future judgment; but it is into the midst of this world of defilement, violence, corruption, evil, and enmity against God-into the midst of it He came. What makes it so especially wonderful is, that He came as a babe (though miraculously born) as one of ourselves, a real true man in this world of woe. Still there was more: for it is a totally different thing for God to deal with men as children of Adam, as to what they are, and what they can bring to God, and what their righteousness is- there is a great difference between looking at a man as responsible to God-and God dealing with Him according to His own thoughts. This is the truth, when grace is rejected. It is not that God overlooks our responsibility; but it is a totally distinct thing for God to reveal and fulfill the thoughts of His own heart, and for Him to investigate those of ours. Dealing with man on the ground of what he is, and what he has done, goes on to judgment. In Christ he is revealing the thoughts of His heart.

Thus we get His own intentions before ever the world was; the purposes and counsels of God, which were not in the first Adam at all, but in the last. That runs through the whole of scripture from the very beginning. As soon as ever man had sinned, grace opens the door to reveal it: there was the seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head. Adam was not the seed of the woman. The promise did not refer to the first man at all, nor was it a promise to him; but it was a revelation that there was one coming, the seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head and destroy his power. Therefore there was ground for faith to lay hold upon. Promises and prophets were always referring to the same thing. " In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed ": " To him give all the prophets witness." Prophets had to deal with men, and bring the law to their consciences; but here is one in whom all the thoughts and counsels of God rest, and in grace to poor sinners-" All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." " All things are for your sakes," though all surely for God's glory.

Another thing in connection with it is, that it is only when we come to Christ, that we can reconcile the purposes of God in the full blessing of life, and man's responsibility. Heathens and Christians have disputed over it. In the garden of Eden there was the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: life on the one side, responsibility on the other. Man failed, ate of the tree of knowledge, and could not get to the tree of life. Now the law took up the same principle-here again you have responsibility and life-and said, " Do this and live." The Lord Jesus Christ, the second Man comes, does His Father's will in everything, and sovereign grace takes up our responsibilities; He takes the consequences of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and He is the life. He bears the consequences of responsibility in His own body on the tree. It perfectly meets all our need, and a great deal more-God is perfectly glorified; and we get eternal life in Him, and the joy and blessing of it all in the full result of all these counsels of God, to be conformed to the image of His Son: nothing short of this.

Though the responsibility is proved, yet to be like the Son of God in glory has nothing to do with my responsibility. No man could have dared to think of such a thing; but it was the mind and counsel of God in Christ. It did not come out till after the cross, for we could not have had any part in it but by the cross. Before ever the world was, it was the thought of God to have a saved and redeemed people brought into the same place as, and associated with, Christ. Of course the preeminence is His. " Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Who could pretend to be the " fellow " of the Son of God, if it were not the fruit of the work of the Son of God? The mind of God rested on Him in connection with man.

The first Adam is totally set aside, having been tested, tried, and proved, up to the cross; then the Second Man is brought in. God never would set up the last Adam along with the first: the first Adam was a fallen man, the last was the man of God's counsels, and He sets Him up instead, when we had failed in our responsibility. Titus lays down (Titus 1:1, 2, 3) the other principle. " In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Then it was the hope of eternal life. 2 Tim. 1:9 gives the same truth: " Who hath saved us... not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." These thoughts and purposes of God were given us in Christ Jesus before ever the world was. Now if you look for a moment at Prov. 8, you find a remarkable passage connected with this. There I see that before the world was created, Christ was there as wisdom, daily the Father's delight, and having His delights in the sons of men (" delight " is the same thought as " good pleasure ").

We have then man put on his responsibility, and the first thing he does is to fall; he distrusts God, and that before there was a lust. He listens to Satan, he questions the love of God, he eats the fruit, and he falls. Then comes the law; man sets up the golden calf, and broke it. Last of all God sends His Son-" It may be they will reverence my son"; but "now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father"; "they cast him out." That closed the history of responsibility.

It was when man was a sinner and had broken the law, that the Son of man came into this world in grace. " Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He calls it the " end of the world " because man's moral history is ended-grace is not ended. Man is not less intellectual than before; he can invent railroads, telegraphs, and I know not what; but what have these things to do with the moral character of God or man, or with heaven? Death has come in, and this is all over. There are no telegraphs in heaven! Men are blinding themselves; there is not one single link with God, of thought or feeling of heart, but plenty with this other world. Remarkable persons there are; but all belongs to the fashion of this world that passeth away, and when man's breath goes forth his thoughts perish. You may put up a monument to him, but it speaks of death! God has put this world into man's power and he has invented much; but, are children more obedient, wives more faithful, servants more honest? And since we have had all these developments of intellectual capacity, taking it even on the lowest level, are people happier-more to be trusted? A world in which people cannot trust each other, is a miserable world! What is called progress, does not give more confidence from man to man, to say nothing of God. There is not a single thing in it connected with the soul.

Man's history was thus closed at the cross. First, lawlessness, then law-breaking, and then enmity to God; then comes that blessed perfect work of the last Adam, who met the need in His own Person, and brought in the full accomplishment of the purposes of God. He has brought man into an entirely new sphere by death and resurrection, and eventually glory, and has settled the whole question of responsibility.

But God speaks to our hearts, and says-and I desire that you should take this to your hearts-' Now you must understand what I am doing: I want to get your hearts into perfect confidence with Mine, by the testimony of what is in My heart, and as to your sins I have settled that.' This is the blessed truth, that when God could not bear my sins, instead of putting me away, He has put my sins away, and I stand before Him according to the value of that which was done in putting them away. What I have on my heart to show you is, how God brings us into the consciousness that when this work is done, the bad tree is done with. Not only had I sinned, but I was a sinner, and the question of what I am is perfectly settled. It is not character, for there are no two alike; each one of us has a different character. I may say, that is a humble trait in me: so I may say of a crab-tree, the flowers are more beautiful than those on an apple-tree; but what do I care for the pretty flowers when the fruit is bad? I cut the whole thing down! That is what God has done. When I have a spiritual judgment of the thing in my mind, I do not think of the pretty flowers on the wild tree, but of the fruit. So with man: God has sentenced the whole thing entirely; it is all cut down, and grafted with Christ, and then I expect fruit.

When I turn to look at the thoughts and counsels of God, I see His " delights were with the sons of men." His " good pleasure " was not in angels; they are witnesses of His keeping a creature unfallen, but we are witnesses of His redeeming a creature who has fallen. There is no purpose about angels; He did not take them up, but He became a man. Now we get the moral character of the world tested by Christ. He came in goodness, not requiring anything from men, but bringing goodness to them. If you look at His life, He came in a power which removed all the present effects of sin. Death disappeared before Him; devils, disease, sickness, all fled away. He comes in a power sufficient to remove all the effects of Satan's power, and He does it in grace. That is the character of Christ's work: there was no miracle that was not the expression of meeting a need in man, or of setting aside Satan's power. The cursing of the fig-tree is the only exception; there, responsibility was in question: He cursed the fig-tree, and it is the judgment of man. Israel was under the culture of God. He looked for fruit, finds none, and says, " Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever." The flesh is judged, set aside; and my heart is brought to own it—brought to the acknowledgment of its sentence at the cross.

Let us look at the Lord, the second Man, coming into the world. I see the place that He gets in this world; but when the angels begin to celebrate His praises they go much further. What is the sign of the Son of man coming into this world? First, of course (but on that I do not now dwell), the promises to Israel must be fulfilled; but this is the sign (Luke 2:12), " Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." An inn is the place where a man is measured: it touches the pride of man. The first floor for the rich, the garret for the poor: there was no room for Him! No room in the great inn of this world! He could go into the manger when He was born, to the cross at the end, and meanwhile have not where to lay His head. Is that the way you estimate the blessed Lord Jesus Christ? We are accustomed from education to exalt Him; but that is the world's estimate still, there is no room for Him! The world is never changed till the heart is changed; it is just what it was then, with the addition since of the rejection of Christ. Is this then your moral estimate of the world, that the Son of God got no place in it? That here He began with the manger, and ended with the cross, and meanwhile had no place to lay His head?

The Son of God comes in grace, and that is what sounds from heaven when the angels praise. It is beautiful to see them delighting in man's blessing, though they themselves were passed by. They are celebrating His praise-" Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." Do our hearts understand and estimate this, that God's heart was delighting in the sons of men, not by a general mercy, but by His being a man? There I have the object, the Person, before God's eye. He has come down into such scenes as these, and God says, Sinner though you are, I want your heart to trust Me; and that you may do so, there is My Son come down, and as a babe. God's love was beyond a human thought. Why do they say, " Glory to God in the highest "? It is because His Son has become a man. It was not in the fact of angels' glory, but when I get this lowly babe, that has not a place in the world, then the angels come out with this song.

There is nothing like this wonderful fact, " The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." I get the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, present with me, a poor sinful man, that I may know how God reached me first where I was. He has come down to me as a man, and to prove God's good pleasure in men. The result, " peace on earth," is not seen yet, but you have " glory to God in the highest." I have now this blessed truth, I have learned where and how God has met me. If a man was a leper, He touched him, when another would have been defiled: He used His holiness in grace to reach the most defiled.

At the end of Matt. 3 He takes up this wondrous place for us: Jesus comes to be baptized of John, and says, " Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." He takes this place, the moment the Word of God has met the heart of these poor sinners, and He says, I must go with them, because the Spirit of God has wrought in their hearts. It is that which defines the place of the Person. He takes His place amongst us; and mark, He was always the same Person from the manger, at twelve years old, and all along His path. But now He cannot let His people take one step, in what God had wrought in their hearts, without saying, I go before, I go with you. The Christ that could tell the woman all that ever she did was not there for judgment. If a person was convicted of sin, the Lord had been there. What for? To judge me? No, to bring me to Himself in grace. Now mark the wondrous bringing out of this place: " And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The heaven opened! There was never a person there before on whom heaven could be opened, and to whom a voice, the Father's voice, could say, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." There was not a thing in Him, but what heaven could delight in. This is to me a wondrously blessed truth. In this world is the Lord Jesus Christ, the man in whom is the Father's necessary, perfect, delight, and He owns Him as His beloved Son; and then the Holy Ghost comes down to seal and anoint Him. I have the place man must have according to the counsels of God, and heaven is opened on the world.

Another thing comes out, if possible still more wonderful- man gets into this place, which is in the thoughts and counsels of God for him. It is then that Satan is fully manifested. And here I get the first revelation of the Trinity: but it is when man gets into this relationship, with the thoughts and actings of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all in connection with man, and heaven opened: and it is that all the counsels of God might not only be in counsel, but in fulfillment and manifestation. To think that Christ, the Son of God, should thus come, not for a judgment on sinners, but to open heaven for sons! It is the pattern place of the saints. When He had thus publicly taken His place in grace with us, then God says, I will own you as My Son, and the Holy Ghost comes down and seals and anoints Him. And " Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts."

But whatever the grace, you will always find that the Person of Christ is maintained secure. Heaven is opened to Stephen, and he looks up and sees Christ there: he is full of the Holy Ghost, and he looks up to heaven. But heaven looks down on Christ. Here Stephen had an object, but Christ was the object of heaven. His Person is always maintained and secured. Thus we are brought into the same wondrous place as this wonderful One. We always find the Person of Christ pre-eminent, but we find the saints brought into a place where He can take us, and call us the " fellows " of the Son of God, with whom we are brought into fellowship. Take another example of this, the mount of transfiguration. Moses and Elias are shown in exactly the same glory as Christ, but the Person and place of the Son of God are most fully maintained. Peter thought it a great thing for his master to be like Moses and Elias, but when he says, " Let us make three tabernacles," the voice from the cloud says, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." Again, in the case of the tribute-money, Jesus says to Peter, " Of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute: of their own children or strangers? " " Of strangers." He was the great king of the temple, and yet, lest He should offend them, He disposed of creation to find money to give, and says, " for me and thee," thus bringing man into association with Himself. His Person is maintained, but this blessed Son of God cares to win the confidence of our hearts.

But though thus in association with man, He was there alone. " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone," John 12:24. There are three glories that are His, brought out there. He is Son of God, chapter 11; He is owned as Son of David, riding upon an ass; then the Greeks come up and the Son of man must be glorified-that is the revelation of Psa. 8 But if He was to be the Son of man, He was to be over all the works of God as man-" He left nothing that is not put under him, but now we see not yet all things put under him." As yet He is seated on his Father's throne, not on His own. He is Son and heir. What He is doing now is gathering out the joint-heirs. He is only waiting for that, and when they are all gathered He will come. And the thing that we are all waiting for is that He should come. Then we shall be like Him, and with Him in glory. But He was alone until, as the corn of wheat, He fell into the ground, and died. But the moment redemption is accomplished He can say, " Go to my brethren." And, " I ascend unto my Father and your Father."

Mary Magdalene was watching at the sepulcher. She was so near to the heart of Christ that all the world to her was but an empty tomb, when Christ was not there. Her heart was right, though her intelligence and her place were wrong. She was seeking the living among the dead! The disciples went to their own home-sad work! So Mary gets the message, " Go to my brethren." He called His own sheep by name" Mary." Then she thought she had Him back again, but He says to her, " Touch me not ": You cannot have me back for the kingdom yet. He lets Thomas touch Him, but He was telling far more to her. Now the moment that redemption is accomplished, that the work is done, He can say, according to Psa. 22, " I will declare thy name unto my brethren." Having been heard from " the horns of the unicorns " (a figure of speech of course of impalement, of intense suffering), His first thought is, I must have my brethren in the same place. He was alone till He died, now He was risen into the new place, and He can say, My Father and your Father, My God and your God. " In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." It is the song of perfect redemption, and He leads the praises. He puts them into the relationship, and when thus brought and gathered together, He sings in their midst. All this is fulfilled in John 20. Now if Christ is leading our praises, is redemption uncertain? I should be out of tune if I were not joining. Is He to sing one song of praise and I another? That would be discord, not harmony. He has brought us into the same place as Himself, and triumphantly He leads our hearts to join in the song He sings.

Let us see the full and blessed perfectness of that work. We were under the power of sin and Satan, and God's wrath had come in. What do I see this blessed One doing? Displaying God. He puts Himself alone in our place, to finish and complete that work where God must be glorified on account of sin, and man brought to be saved. If God had passed over the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden, I should have been able to say, sin is no matter, but when I look at the cross I cannot. There I see God perfectly glorified in every respect by a Man, and so much the more because sin was there. If God had cut off Adam and Eve, it would have been righteous, but no declaration of His love. So it was not possible for the cup to pass from Him; and at the cross I get God's full dealing with sin in righteousness, but with infinite love. It is beyond our need. God's majesty was maintained where all had been trampled in the dust, and now the Son of man is gone into the glory of God, and is sitting on the Father's throne, the witness that love has had its way, that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

I have the pattern then, when the Lord was upon earth, of my place with Him. I see the work done on the cross, that was needed to put me into it, and then I learn what the work is worth. It is worth the glory of God in heaven. And now I have the place before God, which is the consequence of that. I can rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and I have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby I cry, " Abba, Father." He has brought us into the place that the counsels of God required. We are in relationship to God as a Father, and Christ is the first-born among many brethren. He brings us into this in John 17: " The glory which thou gavest me I have given them... that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Then speaking of the present state, He says, " I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them." The Holy Ghost thus conducts down the fullness of the Father's love to the Son into our hearts. It is perfect.

It is all unutterable grace, and therefore humbles us to the dust. But, has not God a right to have thoughts for Himself? Surely He has. He is going to show " the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us by Christ Jesus," and if so, nothing is too good for me. Can you think that it is so? What else can I think? Shall I think my own thoughts when He has sent His Son to die for me? The poor prodigal thought, " Make me as one of thy hired servants," but never says it when he comes to his father. He confesses his sins, of course, but when he has had the kiss and has been clothed, there are no more thoughts of the son. All is the effect of the thoughts of the Father, so that even the servants are rejoicing that the son is brought back. What the Father thinks has come out. I can now say, with a purged conscience, I am nothing; but I am loved as Jesus is loved; not only saved by Him, but blest by Him: " Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Is this where our thoughts are? He passes on everything that was His to us, though it may be we are toiling along down here. If I walk in the Spirit, if my mind is full of Christ, I have no occasion to think of myself at all. If I have not to judge myself, I can think of Him; but if I fail, then I have to humble and judge myself. And the normal state of a Christian is to do all " in the name of the Lord Jesus." It may be the commonest affairs of daily life, buying and selling, furnishing my house, or dressing my body; but it is a very simple rule and cuts away a great deal.

We are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. Let me say one word on this obedience. I say of my child, who wants to go another way, but who yields to me, It is very pleasant to see such obedience: but it was not so with Christ. He never had a will to wish to go the other way. When the tempter came to Him, he said, " If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." What was His answer? It was as though He said, Nay, I am a servant, I cannot command, I obey; " It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." That is the obedience of Christ. The Father's will was His motive for everything. There are thousands of things we do from habit, and we say we must do them: there is no " must " for me, but Christ's will. I have to learn what His will is; for we are made epistles of Christ, and the path

we are to walk in is to manifest the life of Jesus in our bodies. Everything I do should be the expression of the allegiance of my heart to Christ; and the manifestation of Him to others. The standard of walk is, what is " worthy of the Lord," not of man. Sometimes it is very difficult to be peaceful, patient, gentle, when a man wrongs and insults one; but were you not the enemy of God, and did not God forgive you when you were His enemy? Well, you forgive your enemy. I quite understand the difficulties, but we have the blessed privilege of walking as He walked. If you want to do this, go and study Christ, learn what His path was down here, after you have learned your place in Him on high. It is a great comfort that, in looking at Christ, I not only see the thing I ought to be, but I get the thing I ought to be, " grace for grace." " We all with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." There is real growth there, not in fitness and acceptance, but in likeness to Christ, and it ought to be growth every instant.

We are in this place of Christ then before God; and what I would press upon you is to study Christ, so that we may be like Him here. There is nothing that so fills the soul with blessing and encouragement or that so sanctifies: nothing which so gives the living sense of divine love, that gives us courage. The Lord give us this courage, and enable us to study Him. " He that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Egypt and Nazareth

The next has more appearance of reason in it to a person who does not believe, nor consequently apprehend the bearing of the gospel accounts. It is this: Matthew states that the Lord was taken into Egypt; Luke, that after they had performed all things according to the law for Him, they returned to Nazareth. I cannot of course take popular habits of traditional belief in such an inquiry. Mr. N. of course can take them, and trouble people's minds by an objection to them. Such traditions it may be difficult to reconcile with other facts related, although the soul may sometimes lose little by the difference between the tradition and the history. Such traditions may be a mere careless interpretation of a particular fact. Thus it is assumed that the Magi's visit was at the time of Christ's birth. Who has not seen them from early youth represented amid asses and oxen, kneeling before a mother and a new-born babe with glories round their head? Now, morally, the departure from the history, if such means are to be used at all, is not very material. But there is not a tittle in the history given in scripture to prove that the Magi came at the moment of Christ's birth, but a good deal to show that they did not. It is pretty evident from Herod's inquiry as to when the star appeared (Matt. 2:7), that that appearance was at His birth. Now they may have taken their time to prepare to start; they certainly must have taken time for their journey- how much I do not pretend to say. Some little time was spent at Jerusalem before the visit. Further, Herod sends and kills from two years old and under, according to the time which he had accurately inquired of the wise men. Now we may well allow that Herod's jealousy and cruel character would have left margin enough to secure Him at all events, and that he was not particular about how many suffered. But, as it is said, according to the time accurately ascertained from the wise men, it must be certainly rather supposed that Jesus must have been on towards two years, or at least not just born. The woman's offering for a male child was thirty-three days after its birth. To kill all from two years and under, after accurately ascertaining that the child was less than thirty-three days old (which must have been the case if their visit was before Mary's presenting Him in the temple), would have a character of needless cruelty beyond all reason, particularly when it is said that he did so according to the time which he had diligently or accurately inquired of the wise men. There is a relation between the age of the children killed and the babe's age in Herod's mind accurately formed, and he slays them according to that accurate information. Now if he had ascertained Him to be less than a month old, and killed all under two years old, there was no relation between them whatever. All this shows that the presenting in the temple preceded the visit of the Magi, and there may have been even ample time to go to Nazareth and return to Bethlehem for the visit of the Magi. But that that visit was not made in the crowded state of the inn, spoken of at the time of His birth, is made probable by the fact, that the wise men came into the house to offer their gifts. There is no appearance of Jesus being then in the manger. Whatever other call they may have had, His parents certainly came up once a year at the feast of the passover. Their being, therefore, again at Bethlehem was nothing extraordinary.

Now in answering an alleged contradiction, to show that the facts can be reconciled, is a complete answer. Now both the narratives in this way may be true. Even supposing Luke is speaking of an immediate departure, it is a very probable thing that, being enregistered, and having performed their duty in the temple, they should go home; while the occurrence of such circumstances as accompanied the birth of Jesus would almost naturally bring them back to David's city, with the Jewish feelings they had; and these poor people had nothing to connect them with Nazareth more than another place. They were in that miserable place perhaps from poverty. It was not, at any rate, a place they had any tie to. If their son was the divinely-sent Heir to David of Bethlehem, whither would such a thought lead them? The circumstantial probabilities connected with the slaying of the infants tend to show some time had elapsed. The birth of the babe mentioned in Matthew connects itself with the regal title associated with that place in every Jew's mind, and not with the date of the event. The important matter was that He was born there; for so not only prejudice but prophecy claimed; and it is in this connection it is used in Matthew. But the fact is, the "when" in English (which to the simple English reader is a natural note of time) has nothing to answer to it in the Greek, which is merely "Now Jesus having been born in Bethlehem of Judea "-a fact of all importance to His history, and to this passage in particular. There is no note of time more particular than "In the days of Herod the king"-a fact also indirectly material to His history, and which tends to set aside the idea of a more accurate note of time being given in the same passage, and to give a general character to the statement. Hence nothing is more easy than the connection of the facts, while the objection falls to the ground.

The Christian Shepherd: 1997, Childhood of Jesus, The

Luke 2:39. When all was done according to the law, “they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.” Jesus would not be the Christ we need if He had taken any glory from Jerusalem. His place is among the poor of the flock, His place all through in Israel.

Luke 2:40. “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him.” Luke gives us more of the reality of His childhood than the other gospels. He was not made man full-formed as Adam. If one only reads the account without comment, how the soul feels it unspeakably precious! When we see who it was, we see human nature in Him filled with God. It is not official distinction, but the heart feels God brought nigh. The blessedness of the child’s intrinsic loveliness fills the heart. Deeply instructive, too, is the incident recorded in connection with the Passover when He was 12 years old. His true character comes out, though He was not yet to act upon it. He

came to be a Nazarene to be about His Father’s business. This is here stated distinctly before He enters upon His public ministry, that it might be seen to be connected with His person and not to depend merely upon His office. He was the Pastor of the flock in spirit and character. It belonged to Him. He was the Son of the Father, though abiding God’s time for showing it.

Luke 2:51. Nevertheless, “He went down with them... and was subject unto them.” What a majesty in His whole life. His being God secured His perfection as a child and man here below. He had ever the blessed consciousness of His relationship to His Father, an obedient child, but conscious also of a glory unconnected in itself with subjection to human parentage. He belonged to Mary and even Joseph; in another sense He was not theirs. His divine Sonship was as well-known to Him as His obedience to His parents was in due season absolutely right.

Luke 2:52. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” His human intelligence being developed, He, though ever perfect, became so in a fuller way; the perfect child grows into the perfect man. The lovely plant grew up and unfolded before God and man.

J. N. Darby (Notes on the Gospel of Luke)

Letters 2, What Preaching Should Be; Repentance; Our Place as Christ's Servants; Perfection

Assuredly repentance is needed, and there is no solid knowledge of the cross without it. The question for my mind is not exactly that, but how to preach it. We must have faith in the word to repent. What word? It was, with remission of sins, to be preached in Christ's name. Christian repentance implies grace, I mean recognizing grace in a measure. Repentance is for me practically—judgment of the past in the sense of grace. People may preach solely love and remission: this is not complete; there is what is defective in it. But where God works it produces repentance, but often calling for much ulterior deepening, sometimes through sorrow. But repentance may be preached legally as a preliminary, and then remission. But in this case grace is seldom fully known, because the base supposes man's action preparing himself for it. Reaction against this has partly produced the revival preaching, where repentance is thrown into the shade. When God works He makes both meet. Repentance has to be preached, because there is God's claim over man and man's judgment of himself, but preached in Christ's name, which carries grace with it. It is easy to put the just line on paper. In preaching, love to souls and living with God—and God's love to souls, which involves necessarily His holiness—will alone give preaching its true character. I am sure, and it is evident, that conscience must be reached, or nothing is done. But that is power, and God's power. Law itself may be used lawfully, when there is a reckless conscience, and with blessing; only grace and remission must go with it. But the cross convicts of sin, where really understood, more deeply than anything.

Yours affectionately in the Lord.

Montreal,

March 14th, 1873.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 4, Luke 23, Notes on

Luke 23.

Luke 23:1-25. Religious iniquity had now only to lead on the world to finish the wickedness in which itself had taken the lead. The civil power must give in to the willful evil of the apostate people of God. This is the history of the world, and of the two, the religious side is always nearest to Satan. The chief priests manifested their enmity by their accusation, which was calculated to arouse the jealousy of the governor; charging, on Christ what was entirely false as to Caesar, but with the subtle groundwork of that which they knew (reckoning on His truth) He could not deny. The guilt of the Jews was complete, as was also that of the Gentiles, for Pontius Pilate declared Him innocent, and desired to release Him. Cruel’ enough himself, the Roman governor disliked cruelty in others, but he would not go so far as to save Him from the malice of His enemies: it would have cost something to do this; it threatened his interest, and Pilate gave way. The one thing that is strong in the world is enmity against Christ.

But there was another form of evil to be introduced, to wit, Herod, the apostate king of apostate Israel; and in rejecting Jesus all are friends, however jealous and divided. How terrible the union between the fourth beast and God’s external people! But if the Gentiles failed shamefully in protecting the just and hence fell into basely unrighteous judgment, the activity of an evil will was with the Jews. Three times the opportunity of a relenting voice was given; but while the governor’s indifference was as plain as the disappointed insolence of Herod, every time the cry of the people increased in ardor for the death of the Messiah. Pilate, therefore, released the guilty Barabbas, whom they desired, to appease the Jews, and delivered Jesus to their will.

Luke 23:26-31. It was a terrible time and full of violence. It mattered little whom they met, if they could only force them to help in their iniquity. Their hour was struck, and all fell into the same mass of rejection and insult of Christ, save that the Jews acted with more knowledge. The forms of privilege became sorrows and harbingers of terror; they must be laid low, for all was untrue now. The natural feelings, touched by affecting circumstances, as we see in the weeping daughters of Jerusalem, did not change this. They understood neither the cross of Christ nor the ruin which awaited themselves. One may be affected with comparison, as if one were superior to Christ, and fall under the judgment consequent on His rejection and death. No humiliation of Jesus put Him out of His place of perfect capability of dealing with all others from God. Alas! it was not only on Pilate and Herod, nor on the chief priests, that judgment was coming, but on the women that lamented Him, unconscious of their own state, which was under condemnation. Neither natural conscience, nor natural religiousness, nor natural feelings will do—nothing short of the glory of God in Jesus. And if He, the living and true vine, who indeed bore fruit to God, was thus dealt with, what must be the lot of the fruitless and unprofitable, for such branches were they? Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Man rejects the green tree, and God rejects the dry. Life was there in the person of Jesus, and they would not have it, and are therefore given up; it cannot be had now but through a dead and risen Christ.

Luke 23:32-43. There is the setting aside of all they looked for here in present deliverance, for Christ must die. But if we are also to see how low man can go morally, we learn, at the same time, that Christ in His grace can go lower still. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone” (John 12:24). Therefore, whenever you see an attempt (and it is the attempt of man’s religion) to connect a living Christ, before death and resurrection, with living sinners, be sure there is error. It unites sin with the Lord from heaven, and it denies that its wages is death. Had Christ delivered Himself, as the rulers, with the people, said in derision, He would not have delivered us. He must pass through death, and take a higher place, even in resurrection, and there He takes us. By itself, the incarnation cannot bring life and redemption to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. We need to be set beyond all in resurrection-life in Christ.

Thus, then, in spite of the grace of Jesus in intercession, Jews and Gentiles joined in mockery of the crucified; yet God had prepared, even here, the consolation of His mercy for Jesus in a poor sinner. But no sorrow, no shame, no suffering brings the heart too low to scorn Jesus; a gibbeted robber despises Him! There is an instinct, so to speak, in every un-renewed heart, against Jesus, which was not quelled even by that power of love in which He was going down into the deepest humiliation, to suffer the wrath due to sin. Say not that you are one whit better than this wretched man. “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable” (Rom. 3:10-12). In two words, there is no difference. You are as bad, in God’s sight, as the railing impenitent thief. See now the fruit of grace in the other. Grace works in a man who was in as low a condition as he who, notwithstanding his own dying agony and disgrace, had pleasure in outraging the Lord of glory; indeed both had done it (Mark 15:32). But what more blessed and certain than the salvation of this thief, now that he bows to the name of Jesus? He is going to Paradise in companionship with the Lord whom he owned.

It is often idly said, that there was one saved in this way, that none might despair, and but one, that none might presume. The truth is, that this is the only way whereby any poor sinner can be saved. There is but one and the same salvation for all. There was evidently no time for him to do anything, had this been the way; but all is done for him. That very day his knees were to be broken. But how could he get into Paradise! Christ wrought his deliverance through His own death, and his eye was opened in faith to what Christ was doing.

Nor was it only that Christ’s work was wrought for him—the ground on which his soul rested for salvation. There was a mighty moral work wrought in him through the revelation of Christ to his soul by the Spirit who convinced him of his utter sinfulness. “Dost not thou fear God” (Luke 23:40), is his rebuke to his railing fellow, “seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we, indeed, justly.” It was not all joy. Conscience had its place. There is a real sense of good and evil; for he has got in spirit into God’s presence, and this, making him forget circumstances, elevates him into a preacher of righteousness. And if he owns the rightness of his own punishment in honest confession of sin, what a wonderful testimony he bears to Christ! “This man hath done nothing amiss.” It was just as if he had known Christ all his life. He had a divine perception of His character; and so with the Christian now. Have you such jealousy about the spotlessness and glory of Christ, that you cannot help crying out when you hear Him slighted? He believed that He was the Lord, the Son of God, and so could answer with assurance for what He had been as a man. As completely a man as any other, the holy obedience of Christ was divine. “This man hath done nothing amiss.” What a response in the renewed heart to the delight of sinlessness! His eye glances, as it were, over the whole life of Christ; he could answer for Christ anywhere, because he has learned to know himself.

Then he says, turning to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23: 42). As soon as he can get rid of what was sad, when he has done with his testimony to the other thief, his heart turns to Christ instinctively. How undistracted he was! Was he thinking of his pain? or of the people around the cross? As is always the case, where God’s presence is realized, he was absorbed. In the extremity of helplessness, as to outward appearance, he hears the Shepherd’s voice, and recognized Him as the Savior and King. He wants Christ to think of him. The judgment of men was that Christ was a malefactor. The weeping women saw not who He was. But no degradation of circumstances could hide the glory of the Person who hung by his side. He owned Jesus as the Lord, and knows that His kingdom will certainly come. The other malefactor thought only, if he thought at all, of present deliverance; but this one saw the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. His mind was set, not on being free from bodily pain, but on the loving recognition of Christ in glory. He looks not to earth, nor nature, but to another kingdom, where death could not come. There was not a cloud, not a doubt, but the peaceful settled assurance that the Lord would come in His kingdom.

And the Lord gave him more than his faith asked. There was the answer of present peace. It was not only the kingdom by-and-by, but “Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). As if He said, You shall have the kingdom when it comes, but I am giving now soul-salvation; you are to be associated at once with Me in a way far better and more than the kingdom, blessed and true as it is. For indeed the work was accomplished on the cross, which could transport a soul into Paradise. If the Savior had taken the sinner’s place, the sinner is by grace entitled to take the place of the Savior. The poor thief might know but little of Christ’s work and its effect, but the Holy Spirit had fixed his heart on the person of Christ. The words of the Lord (vs. 43) imply the atonement, by virtue of which we are made fit to be His companions in the presence of God. The work of Christ is as perfect now for us, as then for him; it is as much accomplished for us as if we were already caught up into Paradise. How distinct this is from anything like progress of the soul to fit it for heaven! And how wonderful that such a soul should be a comfort to the Savior! He had come into the condemnation; yea, and wrath was on Him to the uttermost. And now the converted thief was a bright witness of perfect grace and eternal salvation through His blood.

Verses 44-49. The scene was closed which let in the light beyond through the portals of a heart now purged by faith, and the darkness proper, to the hour took now its suited course —specially over Israel, it would seem; “and the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst” (Luke 23:45). Thus the way into the holiest was made manifest by the act which had its place in this darkness, and God in the grace of Christ’s sacrifice shone forth upon the world. Darkness of judgment as it was to one, the light broke through, and access was opened within the veil. All was finished, and the Lord with no hesitating voice but aloud cried, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). This was not Jewish blessing, (for the living, the living, they shall praise Thee), but it was much higher; it was sonship, death overcome, and the occasion merely of presenting the spirit, safe, happy, confident, notwithstanding death, into the Father’s care and presence. This is an immense principle, and, short of resurrection, of the highest possible importance. Death in the hands of Jesus—what a fact! The centurion, in the course of duty, struck at least in natural conscience, glorified God and owned a righteous man on the cross. The masses were troubled and went away, auguring no good. Those who knew Him, and the women from Galilee, were more nearly interested, but in fear stood afar off.

Luke 23:50-56. But the providence and operation of God, the righteous Judge, took measures for the body of the Holy One. If the more prominent witnesses were set aside, others feeble in the faith are found active and faithful in the post of danger, confession, and attachment

to the Lord. How often the difficulties which frighten those force these forward! So was it with Joseph of Arimathea, for Jesus must be “with the rich in his death” (Isa. 53:9). The women too, in true but ignorant affection, make useless preparation, awaiting the just Jewish time for a Lord who had passed far beyond their faith. The resurrection was soon to usher in the dawn of a bright morrow: for the honor of the grave, like the intentions of the women from Galilee, was of a Jewish character, and all this was now closed in death.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 2, Robber Saved, The

Luke 23:39-43

WE do not find, except during the three hours of darkness on the cross, that by any sorrow, weariness, or trial, the Lord Jesus was ever hindered from entering into the sorrow of others. None could put Him in a place, except when working out atonement, where He did not enter into human suffering: such unweariness of love do we see in Christ. Still He was light; and the more we look into His history, the more comes out the terribleness of the heart of man. It was never manifested till then. There are amiable natures and unamiable natures; but we never learn what the heart of man is till then. The thing that tries the human heart is, What is its object? not, What are its mere natural qualities? " There is none that seeketh after God." Man saw no beauty in Christ. There is nothing in the heart that looks at the Lord so as to find in Him an object and a delight. There is no root till the conscience is reached; there may be attraction, but until the conscience is in the presence and sight of God, nothing is done; it is like the morning dew which passes away. " The same is he which heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself."

Wherever the conscience is reached by God, there is some sense of goodness. Fear and terror may predominate, but there is attraction, and the heart cannot let it go. Faith always gets both: God is love, and yet He reaches the conscience. There is that which reaches the conscience, and that which inspires confidence, when the eye is on Christ.

On the authority of Christ Himself we have the certainty of salvation, that is, the Christian state; and no other suits the Christian. It is the only real Christian state which the word of God owns. The condition of the Christian is the effect of the work of Christ. It is not that there is no conflict, but that Another has taken my responsibility. My place before God is not the effect of what I have done, but of what Christ has done. Christ is the ground on which I stand before God: if it be so, what has He done for us? He died for our sins; then they must be put away. He is the Judge, but He cannot judge what He has put away. That we might walk with God in peace, He has sent the One who is to be the judge first to be the Savior. Confidence is connected with righteousness now.

In the history of the robbers we have both sides.

In the other malefactor taunting Christ, we see how the heart of man is enmity to God. It was the triumph for the moment of the first man and of Satan too. It is sad to think what our hearts are if left to themselves. When the heart is let out, where will it stop? Satan is over us. Here then we have the triumph of the wickedness of man over the goodness of God. We cannot get rid of Satan's power yet; we may bind it in a sense. The heart of man cannot bear the presence of God. There is not a vanity, not a bit of dress or money, that has not more power over the heart of man than all that Christ has done or is. You never yet found a man enjoying himself who would hear of Christ. The world would not have Him when He came in grace, nor would it now; but it must have Him when He comes in judgment. Take the majority of people in this city, and suppose them let into heaven! They would get out as fast as they could.

In the repentant robber, on the other hand, we see grace. He was crucified on a gibbet; but no matter, gibbet or no gibbet, when God and the soul meet, we have the simple and immense fact that the soul is brought at once into His presence. When God has dealt with the conscience, we make no more promises for the future. Unlike the naughty child that says, " I'll be better to-morrow," the soul confesses sin to-day. " Dost thou not fear God? " is the word, not " Are you not ashamed of being a thief? "

Have you ever been brought into God's presence? " The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom." If you have not been consciously in God's presence, wisdom has not begun for you. Before Christ you must be, and you must be there in truth: the difference is whether you are before Christ in the fullness of His grace, or before Him in judgment. " We indeed justly." He did not say that the world was guilty, but that he was the guilty one; it is not simply that sin is sin, but that I am a sinner. His thought is that he himself is justly there. It is a personal thing, not merely that God is holy, nor merely that the world is guilty, but that you are guilty.

" This man hath done nothing amiss." He would guarantee the whole life of Christ-it contrariwise was a divine revelation to the soul. Who is there that is a Christian that would not lay down his life for this? " This man hath done nothing amiss." It was a divine revelation of the perfectness of Christ's Person. Could your soul answer for Christ in that way? Here is a man who does so when everybody is deserting Jesus: here is divine faith that He was perfectly sinless: his eye is opened, his heart brought to the consciousness of it. It is not only that he has the fear of God, but he sees the perfectness of Jesus. Heaven was opened when Christ came out for public service; there never was a man before of whom God could say, " That is all I want." Has your heart echoed, and said, " That is all I want "? Nowhere else can the heart so rest when we see the evil around, and the imperfections even of saints. His mind, having got hold of Christ, finds rest in Him. All around is a wide waste of waters, the heart would get wearied, but it turns to Him; and what a rest! Things would be unbearable but for this, but the heart, when it turns there, enters its sanctuary.

" Remember me," said the converted robber. What sign was there that Jesus was Christ the Lord? There was not a cloud on this man's heart, because he was divinely taught. One heart recognizes that He is Lord in spite of everything. Pilate had washed his hands before all the people, and given Him up to the Jews; He was denied by one of His disciples, betrayed by another. Everything was against it. " Lord, remember me "; without a sign, the robber owns Him-how bright to faith! This man had no time to grow, or serve, or walk; but there was thorough conversion, full faith, a sense of what the Messiah was, and belief in His coming in His kingdom. Faith in itself is always certain; it may lead us to doubt about other things, but it is always absolutely certain. The believer has set to his seal that God is true; he does not say, " Perhaps He is true." Wherever I receive it as the word of God, I receive it with absolute certainty; if it be not so, I do not receive it as the word of God at all.

" Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." His whole concern was that Christ should remember him. We see in him boldness with a bold sinner, lowliness as to himself, a sense of the perfectness of Jesus and the knowledge that He would come in His kingdom. Happy are

we if we are in the state of this robber! If you were in suffering, in trial, is it the only thing you would care about, that Christ should remember you?

Another thing is Christ's answer to him: " To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The character of Luke is to bring in present blessing. Before ever the kingdom came, he would go straight to paradise. Faith never looks at my heart, but at the object God reveals. When brought to the consciousness of what I am, my eye rests on Christ Himself. When the thief looks to Christ, he has Christ's answer. The rest given to our souls is the positive answer of God. We have the positive declaration that this robber, taken up for his crimes, was that day absolutely fit for paradise; so perfect is the work of Christ. Observe this robber, and the woman that was a sinner, how they understand Christ, because they want a Savior! When I come to God with Christ in my hand (like Abel with his lamb), God says to me, " You are righteous." By faith I see Jesus is sitting on the right hand of the majesty on high; when did He go there? " When he had by himself purged our sins." Then I know my sins are purged before God. There is no progress here, no such thing as being fitted for heaven. Growth there ought to be in us, if left here, progress in likeness to Christ; but it is never in Scripture connected with fitness for heaven: Christ is my title. There is growth, but it is never treated as our fitness. This robber was fit for paradise at once; he went there, any way, that day; I suppose he was fit for it, since he was fit to be with Christ! Suppose I were to make all the progress the most blessed saint ever made, could I say I was fit thus for Christ? God forbid! yet I am fit. Death for the believer is simply that he has done with all that is mortal and sinful.

How little the outside is the truth! The Jews sent soldiers to break their legs: how little they thought they were sending the robber straight to heaven, to be the first companion (there were Old Testament saints, of course) that followed the blessed Lord!

It would be well for us if we were as close to Christ as that poor robber. When the veil was rent, the whole thing was changed. The Old Testament was a declaration that man could not go to God in the light: God did not come out, and man could not go in. The gospel says that God did come out, and man can go in. " We have boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus." If sin is there, how can I enter into the holiest? I am in Christ, not in the flesh. Our sins He bore; we have died with Him, and should enter into the holiest. Access is free, the veil being rent; we are accepted in the Beloved. Until the work was done, He did not give up the ghost. Now, as a present thing, we have boldness to enter into the holiest. Are you there? The veil is rent; you cannot have God afar off. There is no more a veil; we are before the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So full and complete is the revelation, that I see God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ, the witness of salvation accomplished. The glory is in the face of the One who bore my sins. In the presence of the absolute light and righteousness of God you must stand, or you cannot stand at all. The world may blind your eyes, but there is no veil on the presence of God.

Notes and Jottings, Fragment: The Sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane

LUKE gives us more of the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane than any other gospel. Being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly. The more He felt the depths of the dreadful cup, the more earnestly He prayed. The sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. It drew out His soul as man to God. But on the cross we find no trace in this gospel of the agony and sorrow. He had already passed through it all in spirit with God, so that He is above it all. We see, pre-eminently in Luke, the perfectness of Christ as Man. So entirely is He above the circumstances that He is occupied with others. His first word on the Cross is, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Then He can turn to the poor thief by His side, and say, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." And His last word is, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." It is the perfect unclouded consciousness of the perfect Man giving up His spirit to His Father.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 8, Gethsemane

THE state of heart has more to do than exegesis with the understanding of this passage. Yet important doctrines, or rather facts and truths relative to Christ, are connected with these remarkable verses. I shall try to bring out the position in which the ever blessed Savior is found here, although the appreciation of the bearing of these verses depends, after all, on the spirituality of the heart. It will be understood that doctrines about Christ are connected with them, when one knows that verses 43 and 44 have been omitted by more than one manuscript, evidently because according to the view taken by the copyists they made Christ too much a man. Now it is this which gives to these verses their true value: Christ, in the Gospel of Luke, is essentially man. We there find Him in prayer much oftener than in the other Gospels. Thus, after His baptism by John, it was whilst He prayed that heaven was opened upon Him; it was whilst He prayed that He was transfigured; chap. 9. So also He had passed all the night in prayer before choosing the twelve disciples; chap. 6: 12. All this is exceedingly interesting, yea, of profound interest for the heart.

But other elements present themselves in the consideration of these verses which are before us. An immense change was taking place at this time in the position of the Savior. Until then He had, by His divine power, provided for all the wants of His disciples, entirely disowned as He was, and in appearance dependent on the kindness of a few women (for it was their particular privilege thus to devote themselves to Him), or of other persons, for His daily bread-if needed, a fish. They brought Him exactly what was necessary to supply His wants. And when He sends His disciples to preach in the cities of the glorious land, He knows how to turn the hearts so that they lacked nothing. But He was to be rejected. The things concerning Him were to receive their divine and wonderful solution, and to be accomplished according to the depth of the counsels of God. He was going, not to shelter His disciples from every evil, but not to shelter Himself, and to be exposed to the outrages of those who said, " He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." Christ was not yet drinking the cup of wrath. This was accomplished on the cross; it was there, that which. He suffered from the hand of God, supreme and expiatory in its nature. But the moment was come which He Himself described by these words: " This is now your hour, and the power of darkness." The hour of temptation, not of wrath but of temptation, when the Savior must have thought at the same time of the terrible cup that was before. Him. The. enemy tried to. overwhelm Him by the circumstances, before which human nature, as such, would shrink; and in view of the forsaking of God amidst these circumstances. The Savior entered at this moment into the trial; but He entered into it perfect in every way, receiving the cup in obedience from the hand of His Father. As to the circumstances, and as to that which weighed upon His soul, Satan• and the men under his power were everything: as to the state of His soul, they were nothing; His Father was everything. This is one of the most perfect and profound instructions for all our troubles.

It is to this supreme hour that the apostle John alludes when he says, more than once, when no one touched nor could touch the Lord: " His hour was not yet come." But I would enter into some further consideration of the character of this hour of temptation. The Lord in His grace deigned, led by the Spirit, to allow Himself to be tempted, having associated Himself with us to take part in our miseries and troubles. Satan tempted Him at the beginning by all, that which (sin apart) induces man to act from his own will, that which leads him into sin when he listens to his own will-the need of food, the world and its glory, the promises outside the path of obedience and in distrust of God and of His faithfulness.

But the Second man maintained His integrity, and Satan could not succeed in making Him depart from the path of the Man of God. The strong man was bound and Christ returns, with the power of the Spirit, being untouched in His soul, " to spoil him of his goods." He delivered all those who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him; He was the Man who conquered, gaining the victory over Satan, as the first 'man had broken down.. By the Spirit of God He cast out demons; the kingdom of God was there. All the effects of the dominion of Satan disappeared before Him, even death itself. Alas! this did not change man's heart; who was, in the affections of his flesh, enmity against God. Death was needed for the redemption of man; quite a new state of being, his reconciliation with God; the righteousness of God was to be glorified; the claim that Satan had over man by sin in death and that by the judgment of God, was to be destroyed and annulled. The righteous vengeance of God against that which was hostile to Himself was to be manifested. So that all the enmity of man against God, all the anguish of death viewed as the power of Satan and the judgment of God, all the energy of Satan, and lastly the wrath of God (and it is bearing in the latter that expiation has been accomplished) were to meet on Jesus, and did meet on the head of the Lamb of God, who opened not His mouth before His oppressors. Terrible testimony showing that the hour of man and of his will is the power of darkness! The hour of God in righteousness for man is but the righteous wrath which abandons Him, and finally excludes from His presence him who is in hostility against Him. What powerful and infinite proof of grace, that Christ tasted this in His grace; that God gave Him that we might escape it, that Christ tasted it, offering Himself without spot to God for that! Outwardly the power of Satan and the malice of men led Christ to death and the cup of God's wrath. And it is thus that the perfection of Christ knows how to separate absolutely these two parts of suffering, and to turn the terrible suffering, from the power of Satan in death, into perfect obedience to God His Father, because He passed through that fearful hour of temptation with God, and without entering into it one moment as a temptation which might have for its effect in Him to awaken His own will. Such is Gethsemane; not the cup, but all the power of Satan in death and the enmity of man taking their revenge (so to speak) on God (" the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me "): all perfectly and entirely felt, but brought to God in an entire submission to His will. It is the Christ-marvelous scene!- watching, praying, struggling in the highest degree; all the power and the weight of death pressed upon His soul by Satan, and augmented by the sense He had of what they were before God, from whose face nothing then hid Him. But He always kept His Father absolutely before His face, referring everything to the Father's will, without flinching for a moment, or trying to escape that will by giving way to His own. Thus He takes nothing from Satan or men, but all from God. When He is well assured that it is the will of His Father that He should drink this cup, all is decided for Him. " The cup which my Father hath given, shall I not drink it? " All was between Him and His Father, the obedience is calm and perfect. What ineffable victory, what supreme calmness! suffering, yea, but between Himself and God! Satan now was as nothing, men were the instruments of the will of God, or the redeemed of His grace. See what happens when they come; Jesus went forth, and when He announced Himself, they fell to the ground. He voluntarily offers Himself to accomplish the work, and thus permits those to go in safety, who had no strength to shelter themselves, to subsist in that terrible moment when the triumph of good or of evil was to be decided, and where the righteousness of God against sin lent its force to the power of death and the malice of those who were the voluntary slaves of him who possessed the power of death.

The perfect bond of love has overcome through the subjection of Christ as Man to the judgment against sin, by which righteousness can triumph in blessing according to love; the expiation of sin has been made, and the power of Satan and of death annulled for him who comes to God by Jesus. But Luke 22:39-44 presents to us Christ conscious of that which was to happen, and, as man, occupied in communion with His Father, with this final and decisive trial. Was He to enter into the temptation, that is to say, to yield to a will of His own, even by desiring to escape death and the cup of judgment, or to find an occasion of obedience, instead of sparing Himself? For Him obedience, however terrible the sufferings, was the joy and breathing of His soul.

Not to dread the judgment of God would have been insensibility; to avoid it would have been to fail as to the will of His Father, since for this cause He came to this hour. It would have been to fail as regards the salvation of man, in which the whole character of God revealed itself even to the angels. But here Christ does not draw the character of this moment from elevating and encouraging motives, but He goes through it in entire subjection to the will of God with all the pain attached to it. He prays. Verse 43 puts the question in all its simplicity. An angel appeared to Him to strengthen Him. It is a man having need of help from on high. If He had not been that, it could not have been the deliverance of man. The pressure of anguish only became stronger on realizing the evil with which He had to do; but this struggling agony of soul is only expressed by more intense prayer. His soul attached itself more strongly to God, and He rises-having perfectly gone through the valley of the shadow of death, the power of Satan, the horror of evil as opposed to God-He rises victorious. The cup which His Father would give Him He will drink. Then it will not be a question of struggling, watching, or praying, but of subjection. A perfect calmness marks the cross, a calmness of darkness where man's eye does not penetrate; but the subjection is perfect. Here goes out the cry, " Why hast thou forsaken me? " " But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." It was perfection, the perfection of suffering; of subjection, but not a struggle, where the soul cleaves to God in order not to enter into the temptation, a temptation-mark it well-not by means of something agreeable, but of all the power of evil, of death, of Satan, who tried to make the Savior shrink before the awful cup which was found on the path of obedience, the cup which produced our salvation, and the glory of Jesus as man. On the cross, in the solemn hour of expiation, all takes place between the soul of Christ and God. In Gethsemane, the Christ, in presence of all the efforts of Satan, cleaves to God so as not to enter into temptation, but follow the path of obedience low as it brought Him. Now He descended into the lower parts of the earth, alone, forsaken, betrayed, denied, and, lastly, abandoned of God-perfect, victorious, obedient, the Savior of those who obey Him. And notice here, therefore, that in Gethsemane, infinite as were His sufferings compared with all ours, Christ is an example to us. We have to watch and to pray, to struggle in prayer perhaps, so as not to enter into temptation. Sometimes even, when some affliction comes upon us by our own fault (in Christ no doubt it was the fault of others), it is difficult to submit to the ways of God. It is the same thing when, in one way or another, the path of obedience and of uprightness, the path of life, is painful. A more easy path, more verdant to the eyes of the flesh, is to be found by the side of it. Then in our little troubles our portion is that of the Savior, to watch and to pray so as not to enter into temptation. The trying path (see Psa. 16) is the path of life. There God is found; there is the deliverance for His glory and for our own. May God keep us in it! We need His grace, we need sometimes to struggle in the presence of God, to hold good; but He who overcame is with us. And if we have gone through the trouble of circumstances with God, the circumstances themselves will be but the occasion of obedience when in fact they do happen. This is

the secret of practical life.

In the expiation, it is evident that Christ was our substitute, and is not our example except in the fact of His perfect subjection. There were, doubtless, on the cross, profound sufferings of body and soul, where Christ was a perfect example of patience for us; but in speaking of the cross we are pretty well accustomed, and rightly, to have the moment of expiation before our minds. It is in this sense only that I make a difference, as to the example. It is important in these days to maintain as clearly as possible the idea of substitution where Christ was alone, of suffering in which we had no part but by our sins. One is willing to have Christ as a burnt offering, a Christ who offers Himself (we, by grace, can offer ourselves, we ought to do it); but a Christ who is a sacrifice for sin some often will not have. Are we to suffer for our sins and to bear them? Morally speaking, there is a glory in expiation, in the cross, which is not found even in glory. I shall share the glory of Christ with Him, by the infinite grace which vouchsafed it to me. Could I have shared the cross? The Christian knows what he has to reply. May God teach us in exercises of piety, but may He keep us firm in the simplicity of that faith which rests on a perfect expiation, accomplished by Him who has borne our sins in His own body on the tree!

Hence, to understand Gethsemane, we must understand Christ as Man, as He was at the time of His first temptation in the wilderness; then all the power of evil and of death in the hands of Satan, and in presence of the judgment of God in death against sin. If Christ had not gone through that-the horrible bottomless pit, this deep mire, where there was no footing, lay on our path-who could have gone through it? Satan tried to make Christ shrink, before the abyss which our sins had opened, to place it between His soul and God. The effect on Him was to make Him draw near with greater intensity of soul to God, to ascertain His will while realizing all the horror of that moment in fellowship with Him, and then thus to find therein an occasion of perfect obedience without entering into temptation.

The cup of judgment itself He drank on the cross.

A word on our portion in following His example, if a trial is before us. If it be the will of God that we should pass through a trial, if even we dread it, our wisdom is to present ourselves before God, and to place all before His eyes. There may be anguish; that in which the will in us has not been broken will be laid bare. When we would avoid the temptation because it is painful, that is, spare ourselves instead of yielding the fruits of righteousness, instead of submitting ourselves to it for the good of our souls and for the glory of God, the evil path of selfishness, which the heart tries to take becomes evident; we choose " iniquity rather than affliction." When these exercises are sent for the development of grace, grace is developed, God working with the trial in the soul. When it is discipline, positive chastisement, and the soul submits-receives the discipline from the hand of God, the discipline has lost its bitterness and borne its fruit. In it God is all in holiness for the soul. I do not desire that one should anticipate evil, but that, when the evil is in view, one may pass through it with God and not with man-that one may watch and pray so as not to enter into temptation.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Sifted as Wheat: Simon Peter

Luke 22

How good and precious it is that we have at all times the Lord to look to; for if our eye had always to be fixed upon self, not only should we not advance, but we should be thoroughly discouraged by the thought of the evil within us. We confine ourselves to the idea of the evil, and thus deprive ourselves of the strength which can overcome it.

The nature of the flesh and the blindness of man's heart are worthy of remark. What foolish things come between God and us, to hide from us that which we ought to see! How strangely, too, do the thoughts of the natural heart follow their natural course (even when the Lord is near us), and deprive us of the consciousness of the most striking things, which have a sensible effect around us! We find this presented in the portion before us.

The Lord Jesus was about to accomplish that work which can be compared to no other; He was on the point of bearing the wrath of God for us poor sinners; He was in circumstances which ought to have touched His disciples' hearts. He had just spoken, in the most touching terms, of the passover which He desired to eat once more with them before He suffered; He had told them, too, that one of them should betray Him. All this ought to have rested upon their minds and have filled their hearts. But they? They were striving among themselves which of them was the greatest!

To us the curtain is withdrawn; and when reading of this fact, we can hardly understand how they could be busied with such things; but we know what was then about to take place. How many things have power to turn even us, who have more light than they, from the thought which then filled the heart of Jesus! Such is the heart of man in presence of the most serious and solemn things. The death of Jesus should exercise the same influence on our hearts as on the disciples'; it should be precious to us.

The Lord is with us when we are gathered two or three together; and yet we well know the thoughts which then pass through our hearts and minds. Here we see the same thing under the circumstances most calculated to touch the heart. Jesus tells His disciples that His blood was to be shed for them: “the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me at the table ... but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed” (Matt. 26:24); and they inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing. One might suppose that they would think of nothing save the death of their gracious Master; but no! “There was also a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest.” What a contrast! But, alas! if we examine our own hearts we shall find these two things generally brought together, namely, real feelings which bear testimony to our love of Jesus, but also, and perhaps within the same half-hour, thoughts which are as unworthy as this strife among the disciples. This shows the folly and vanity of man's heart; he is but as the small dust of the balance.

The Lord, ever full of gentleness and meekness, forgets Himself in His care for His disciples, and says to them, “He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Luke 22:26). He knows how to teach them, by His own example, what the love of God is; and at the same time He shows them the grace which is in Him, and all the faithfulness for which they are indebted to Him. It is as though He had said, Ye need not raise yourselves: my Father will raise you. “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28-30).

Instead of being irritated by the abominable conduct of His disciples, He shows them that, if there is no grace in men, there is grace in one Man, that is in Himself. This grace is perfect in Jesus; and He places His disciples in it, whatever they may have been toward Him. He has fixed them firmly in the principle of grace, instead of the folly of the flesh which had just shown itself among them; as though He had said, I am all grace towards you, and I trust the kingdom to you.

We are put under grace, and its voice is always heard. It assures us that, notwithstanding all our weakness, we have continued with Jesus, and that He gives the kingdom as His Father gave it to Him. Nevertheless the soul which is to enjoy these things must be exercised. The flesh must be made manifest to us as men; and therein we see the needs—be of all the trials we pass through; but Jesus enables us to persevere, because we belong to Him. If He says to His disciples, “I appoint unto you a kingdom, ye shall sit on thrones” (Luke 22:29-30). He takes care to show them what the flesh is.

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22:31-32). He does not say, Thou shalt not be tempted; I will hinder Satan from sifting thee; no, nor does He do it. We see here that God often leaves His children in the presence of their enemy, whom He does not destroy; but, even while thus in the presence of the enemy, He watches over His own; as we see (Rev. 2:10), “The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

Peter might have said to the Lord, Thou canst hinder my being thus sifted, as Martha and Mary thought Jesus could have hindered the death of Lazarus; and, truly, He who can give the crown of life can shelter us; but He does not do so, that we may be tried. Satan desired to have Job to sift him like wheat, and God permitted him to do so; and this happens to us also. We often say within ourselves, Why has He dealt thus with me? Why has He put me in such or such a crucible? Ah, it is Satan who desired, and God who permitted it. Things often, occur which we cannot understand; such things are intended to show us what the flesh is.

When God is about to use a Christian in His work, He takes the one who has gone the farthest in the path of trial. Thus here it is said, “Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you.” The danger is presented to all; but He adds, speaking to Peter, “I have prayed for thee,” for thee in particular; for Jesus distinguishes him from all the rest because he had taken a more prominent position than the others, and was thus more exposed, though they were all sifted at the death of Jesus.

The Lord then says to Peter, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” He was not going to spare any of His disciples the sifting; but Peter was to be the most severely tried, and, therefore, the best to strengthen his brethren. Notwithstanding all this, Peter is full of self-confidence. “I am ready to go with thee, both unto prison, and to death.” But Jesus replies, “The cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me” (Luke22:34).

The flesh acting in Peter had only power to carry him up to the time of trial, and there failed; for Peter denied the Lord Jesus, even in His very presence. He might have seen his Savior, if his heart had not been turned away from Him. Jesus was looking at him; and yet he denied Him to the maid, saying, “I know him not.” He had been warned; but the Lord would not allow him to be kept by divine power at that moment, because he needed to learn by experience what he was in himself.

If we notice all that Christ did, we shall see how He was watching at this time over Peter; His grace (so to speak) went out to meet him, and took care of him all through the temptation. The first thing that Jesus tells him is that He has prayed for him. It is not that Peter's repentance led to Jesus' intercession; but the intercession of Jesus brought about Peter's repentance. “I have prayed for thee,” and “Jesus looked on Peter.” As to Judas, he denied the Lord; and, when his conscience was awakened, he killed himself. No sooner was the crime committed than all confidence fled, and he went and killed himself. But, here, the effect of the prayer of Jesus was to preserve faith at the bottom of Peter's heart, so that, when Jesus looked on him, he was broken down.

The first thing to remark is, that the Lord had prayed for Peter; and the second, that He always remembered His disciple, and as soon as the cock crowed, Jesus looked on him, and Peter wept bitterly. It is in this way the Lord deals with us, He prays for us, and allows us to go into temptation. If He conducts us when in it, He also bids us to pray that we enter not into temptation: but God permits all this because He sees the end of it. If Peter had been conscious of his own weakness, he would not have dared to show himself before the High Priest. This trial was the natural consequence of what he was in the flesh; but it was God's purpose to use him, and even to put him in a prominent position in His work. The cause of his fall was self-confidence; the flesh was actively present.

God did everything well for him, and Peter saw what was the power of Satan's sifting. The other disciples, not having the same fleshly strength, fled at once. They had not so much confidence as Peter; but God left him to struggle against Satan, and Jesus prayed for him, in spite of his fall, that his faith should not fail. The moment Peter fell, the eye of Jesus was turned upon him. That look did not give peace, but confusion of face; Peter wept; he went out, and it was all over. He had learned what he was. There was his failure—the sin was committed, and could not be undone; it could be pardoned, but never blotted out. Peter could not forget that he had betrayed the Lord: but Jesus made use of this fall to cure him of his presumption.

It is the same with us. We often commit faults which are irreparable, from too much confidence in the flesh. When there is no possibility of correcting one's faults, what is to be done? The only resource is to cast oneself on the grace of God. When the flesh is too strong, God often permits us to fall, because we are not in that precious state of dependence which would preserve us.

Jacob had too deeply offended Esau not to dread his anger; yet God did not leave him in his brother's hand, but gave him enough faith to carry him through the difficulty. God wrestled with Jacob, and the latter prevailed; but he must have felt within his heart what it is to have had to do with evil. God would not allow him to be given over to the hatred of Esau; and at the end of his course Jacob could say (Gen. 48:15-16), “The God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil.”

When God tries the heart in this way, He sometimes leaves it in Satan's hands, but He never leaves the consciences of His children in the enemy's hands. Judas' conscience was in Satan's hands, and, therefore, he fell into despair. Peter's heart was in his hands for a time, but his conscience never. Therefore, instead of despairing, like Judas, the love of Jesus, expressed in a look, had power to touch his heart.

Directly grace acts in the heart, it gives the consciousness of sin; but, at the same time, the love of Christ reaches the conscience, deepening the consciousness of sin; but if this is deep, it is because the consciousness of the love of Christ is also deep. Perfect as was the pardon of

Peter, he could never forget his sin. Not only was he fully forgiven, but his conscience was in the Lord's hand when the Holy Spirit revealed the fullness of the heart of Jesus to him. His conscience had been so fully purified, that he could accuse the Jews of the very sin he had himself committed under the most solemn circumstances. “Ye denied the Holy One and the Just,” were his words. The blood of Christ had fully cleansed his conscience; but if the question of his strength in the flesh was raised, all he had to say of himself was, I have denied the Lord; and, were it not for His pure grace, I could not open my mouth.

Jesus never reproached Peter with his sin in those conversations He had with him. There is never the question, Why hast thou denied me? No; He does not once remind him of his failure: on the contrary, He acts according to that expression of love of the Holy Spirit, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:12). Jesus had forgotten all. But there was one thing He had to show Peter; it was the root of the sin, the point where he had failed. Satan's temptation, with his own want of love, had been the cause of his fall, and had destroyed his confidence; but now, his conscience being touched, it was needful that his spiritual intelligence should be formed. Peter had boasted of more love to Jesus than the rest; and Peter had failed more than all.

Then Jesus said to him, “Lovest thou me more than these?” (John 21:15) Where is now Peter's self-confidence? Jesus repeats three times, “Lovest thou me?” but He does not remind him of his history. Peter's answer is, “Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.” He appeals to Jesus, and to His divine knowledge; “Thou knowest that I love thee.” This is what Jesus did for Peter, and that after his fall.

Jesus had foretold his failure; and here He asked him, “Lovest thou me more than these?” Peter can say nothing, save that he has learned his weakness and that he has loved Jesus less than the other disciples. The relationship between Jesus and Peter is all of grace; he had no resource except to confide in Jesus, and now he could be a witness for Him; he had felt the power of a look of Jesus.

Peter seems to say, I confide in thee, thou knowest how I have denied thee; do with me what seemeth thee good. Then we see Jesus sustaining His disciple's heart, lest Satan should rob him of his confidence, and saying, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22: 33). What enabled him to strengthen his brethren? His denial had so taught him what the flesh was, that he would no longer bind himself to anything; he knew, that he had nothing to do save to trust God. Whatever his own incapacity to resist Satan, he could appeal to the grace of Him who knows all things. The knowledge that he could confide in Jesus, was that which made him strong. It was after reminding Peter of the utter incapacity of the flesh, that the Lord confided His sheep to him: “Feed my lambs”—and it was not till then that he could strengthen his brethren.

The flesh has a certain confidence in the flesh, and this is often the folly into which we fall. It is then necessary for us to learn ourselves by conflict with Satan; every Christian has to learn what he is through the circumstances in which he is placed. God leaves us there to be sifted by Satan, that we may learn our own hearts. Had we enough humility and faithfulness to say, I can do nothing without Thee, God would not leave us to this sad experience of our infirmity. When we are really weak, God never leaves us; but, when unconscious of our infirmities, we have to learn them by experience.

If a Christian does not walk under a constant sense of his infirmity, God leaves him in the presence of Satan, that he may there be taught it. It is then also that he commits faults which are often irreparable; and it is this which is the most sorrowful part of all.

Jacob halted all his life. Why was this? It was because he had halted, morally, during one-and-twenty years. He wrestled mightily, yet he must have been conscious what a feeble creature he was in the flesh, although God did not leave him to struggle with Esau. We need never be surprised if the Lord leaves us in difficulty; it is because there is something in us to be broken down, and which we need to be made sensible of; but grace is always behind all this. Christ is all grace, and if He sometimes appears to leave us to learn our weakness, still He is grace, perfect grace, towards us.

It was not when Peter turned his eyes towards the Lord that Jesus showed Himself to him; as to communion, indeed, this is true, but it was before his fall that Jesus had said, “I have prayed for thee,” for it is always grace which anticipates us. Jesus sees what Satan desires, and leaves us to that desire, but He takes care that we should be kept. It was not when Peter looked at Jesus, but when Jesus looked on Peter, that the latter wept bitterly. The love of Christ always precedes His own; it accompanies us, precedes us in our difficulties, and carries us through all obstacles. While it leaves us in Satan's hands, that we may learn experimentally what we are, it is always near to us, and knows how to guard us from the wiles of the enemy. Here we see the perfect goodness and grace of the One who loves us, not only when our hearts are turned towards Him, but who adapts Himself to every fault in our characters, that we may be fully and completely blessed according to the counsels of God.

All this should teach us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due season. When I feel cast down and grieved in thinking of myself after a fall, I ought not then forthwith to seek comfort, however natural that may be: no; it is not that which I am to seek, but rather, and first of all, the Christ who is there; I have to learn the lesson which God has traced for me.

If, in the midst of painful circumstances, you say that you cannot understand the teaching, God knows what it is, and He leaves you there to be sifted, in order to bring you by this means to a deeper knowledge of Him and yourself; He wishes to show you all He has Himself seen in you, so that we ought not to shrink from this sifting, but rather to seek to receive the precious teaching which the Lord offers us through it; and thus we shall obtain a much deeper knowledge of what He is for us.

We must learn to yield ourselves to His mighty hand, till He exalts us. May God give us to know Him alone! If we had only to learn what we are, we should be cast down, and sink into despondency; but His object in giving us a knowledge of ourselves and of His grace, is to give us an expected end.

One can say then, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psa. 23:6).

Notes on Luke, Luke 21:31-38 and Luke 22, Notes on

Vers. 31, 32 are interesting in this point of view here, because they furnish remarkable evidence, first, that the kingdom of God does not mean the gospel of His grace; and, secondly, that this generation cannot refer to the space of time from the prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem. (1) For when they see these things coming to pass (and He had spoken of the final, universal trouble for the whole habitable earth, and not merely of what has befallen the Jews), they are to conclude that the kingdom of God is nigh. Now, even if it were only the Romans taking away their place and nation, and still more if it include the latter-day trouble, it is undeniable that the gospel had extended far and wide before the first. In fact, the manifestation of its influence was declining rather before that time, as we see in the later epistles. But the things here seen were signs like the budding of the trees, and the kingdom of God is evidently to be at the coming of the king, when the Lord God Almighty takes His great power and reigns. That there was a partial, analogous judgment when Jerusalem fell, is true, but verses 25-28 ought to leave no doubt of a wider, subsequent judgment, with signs which introduce, not the sorrows of the Jews, but the Son of man coming in His kingdom. (2) For a similar reason “this generation” does not apply to a mere lifetime, but is viewed morally, as in Deut. xxxii., Psa. 12 and many other scriptures. It is here expressly put at the close, after not only the fall of Jerusalem, but the totally distinct scene of Christ's coming in power and glory.

The expression in verse 33 is very solemn. Deeper interests were involved than a casual change as to Jerusalem. The time was wrapped up in purposed obscurity, but nothing more sure than the facts predicted.

The Lord has provided for His then disciples what was needful, but also in the written word for the like times to come. Still, though the principle be always true, verse 34 clearly applies to a day to come on the earth. The privilege is to escape the judgments and stand before the Son of man. This again is earthly, not the rapture to heaven. The great moral principles, of course, remain true for all; specially indeed for those who, by virtue of a higher calling, can enjoy them in a more excellent way.

Vers. 37, 38. The Lord yet returned to give testimony, walking and working in the day; but His resting-place was there, whence He did depart, and where His feet shall stand in that day. Patient in service, He taught daily and early in the temple; at night He was separate from the judged city. His time was now come.

22. How was the carnal mind shown to be enmity against God in the rejection of Christ! Wickedness was summed up and brought out in all—people, priests, rulers. If a friend, he is a traitor; if disciples, they either fled when danger approached or denied Him when near. The religious chiefs who ought to have owned the Messiah took Him to the infidel power of the world. He who was in the place of judgment washed his hands, owning His innocence, but gives Him up to man's will and rage. Thus man's evil was brought into complete juxtaposition with that which was perfect, and this in putting Him to death. It is no use to look for good in man Not that there are no amiable traits of nature, but God has no place at all if man is put to the test. Along with this is the picture of the Lord's perfect patience through it all. Not man only, but Satan was there in temptation. It was the power of darkness, as well as man's hour. And the Lord Jesus passes through this scene of men's wickedness and Satan's power; His heart melted like wax, but the effect always being the manifestation of perfectness. An angel strengthens Him; for He was really man, but perfect man, enduring all that could try Him, and nothing brought out but perfect grace and perfect obedience. Whenever there was sorrow, His love surmounts the suffering to help and comfort others.

Vers. 3-6. It is a solemn thought that the nearer to Jesus, if there is not spiritual life, the more a man resists God, and the more sure and sad an instrument of the enemy he becomes. If truth has been presented and not received, no where has Satan so much power.1 Covetousness was the means used; but though they plotted to betray and crucify Him in a corner, this mild not be: they were obliged to accomplish it according to God's purposes. Then the light from behind the scene (vers. 8-13) makes a passage. It is the Lord; and no matter what He suffers, or what is before Him, yet we find the divine knowledge and power. There is the chamber! What calm and peaceful dignity! It is no effort, nothing to display a character. All yields before the unwitnessed authority of this rejected Savior—all but that to which it had been most manifested, the unrenewed heart of man. To the householder, unknown it seems to every eye but one, it was enough to hear, “The Master saith to thee.”

Ver. 14, &c. How blessed to see such perfect human affections combined with His divine knowledge of all things. “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer” —like one leaving his family and first desiring a farewell meeting. When we see the divine glory in the person of Christ, we find the human affections shining out. (Comp. Matt. 17:27). It is this which gives Him a power and charm which no object else has; so that God can delight in man and man can delight in God. The Lord breaks every link with the old thing. (Ver. 16.) It is not setting up the kingdom here, but setting up man with God when the old connection was impossible.

He was taking a new place where flesh and blood could not enter. His death and resurrection introduce a new relation with God.

The Lord distinguishes here between the paschal lamb and the wine, and both from the institution of His Supper. He entered in the fullest way into all the feelings of Israel—the Israel of God, into the interests of the people as such, till His rejection put them on other ground, and divine favor passed into another scene by the resurrection, becoming Himself the Substitute, the true paschal Lamb. His disciples held the foremost rank as to this fellowship, as we have Hushai the king's friend. With them He desired the last testimony of parting and love. But while thus expressing His affection to them, He assumes manifestly (verse 18,) the Nazarite character, which was always His morally, but now externally and painfully: “I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God come.” He postpones His joy with them as in the common enjoyment of the kingdom, till then.

Then (verses 19, 20,) He institutes the memorial of His better redemption, of His self-sacrificing dying love. If He separated Himself now to God in His joy, it was not want of love to His disciples, but its fullest display. It was to be done “in remembrance” of Him. We remember Him suffering, dead, absent; we know Him as a present living Savior. The new covenant is established in His blood. We cannot, in all the joy of fellowship with Christ above, forget what brought us into it. On one side, it is a body broken and blood shed; on the other, it is Himself and all the perfectness of love in dying for us. We are united to Him as a risen Christ, but He calls us to remember Him as a dead Christ. The blessedness of this last is in the work He did alone, by virtue of which I am put in union with Himself, alive again for evermore. As to man's part in it, (vers. 21, 23,) it was treachery and wickedness.

The Lord then distinctly sets forth this calling to walk in His own lowliness and not as the world. Earthly grandeur was recognized among the Jews, but now it was sentenced, like all their system, as the rudiments of the world. All other greatness, though under the form of being benefactors, was worldly. He was one that served. The grace of His heart sets theta right without a reproach. He lets them know that whatever high place they sought, He took a low one. He might have said, Nothing will break down this horrid selfishness; yet says He, “Ye are

they which have continued with me in my temptations.” And He is the same now. What we should seek is to have as much of the burden of the Church as we can. Suffering thus with Him, His heart goes on with us.

Ver. 31. Peter was bold enough in the flesh to enter temptation. But it is impossible for man to stand where it is a question of good and evil. He is a sinner and cannot go through that trial. If God judges, flesh comes to nothing There is the weakness of human nature, but, besides, Satan's title and power over man, who had brought out his own condition in God's presence, and come under death as the judgment of God. I may have learned in grace that the flesh is thus profitless, but it must be learned by intercourse with the enemy, if not with God. For Simon, the Lord prayed that his faith should not fail: all his self-confidence must perish. Nor did he distrust Christ like Judas, who had no faith. What enabled him afterward to strengthen his brethren? He discovered that there was utter badness in himself when he meant best, and that there is perfect grace in Christ even when he did worst.

Vers. 35-38 show an entire change of circumstances. Previously He had protected them and supplied all, as Messiah disposing of everything here. That was now gone, since the Righteous One was being more and more rejected. He had come, able to destroy Satan's power, but it was the Lord, and man would not have Him—that is the condition the world is in. He must be reckoned among the transgressors. What link could there be between God and man? Humanity is a condemned thing, because it refused Christ. You may find a scrupulous conscience as to putting the money in the treasury, but no conscience in betraying and crucifying Him. But it is in a rejected, dead Christ that faith delights. The Christ that man scorns, it requires faith and grace to own. But the disciples still rested on man's strength, not on Messiah crucified in weakness, and said “Here are two swords.” The Lord in saying “It is enough,” alludes to their words, and implies that they did not enter into His mind. He did not want to say more.

Verses 39-46. There are siftings needed to exercise us and to judge flesh. Christ, of course, did not need this, but dealt with all in communion with His Father. To Him it was a path of obedience, a blessed opportunity of doing God's will: to Peter, it was Satan's power. Christ did not speak of the wickedness of the priests, the will of the people, or the injustice of Pilate, but of the cup His Father gave Him. There was positive intercourse with God about the trial, before the time came. And so it must ever be. It is late to put the armor on when we ought to be in the battle. A man living with God, when he gets into trial, goes through it, in his measure, as Christ did. He stands in the evil day, because he has been with God when there was no evil day. On the cross it was not a question of communion; in the garden Christ is in communion with the Father, as to Satan's power, which was about to fall on Him. He felt all, but succumbed under nothing. Thus, instead of entering into temptation, He was in the highest exercise of spirituality, accomplishing the will of God in the most difficult circumstances, and the most perfect submission where it cost everything. Our Father never can lead us into sin, but He may into temptation, i.e., into the place of sifting, where the flesh is exposed, when this is needful, because hardness, or levity, or inattention to His patient warnings, has come in. It is the last, and often necessary, means of self-knowledge and discipline. Though it is great grace that He should take such pains, yet seeing our weakness, and the terribleness of the conflict with the enemy, it well becomes us to pray that we may not be cast into the furnace. In such times a bad conscience drives to despair. The flesh, in its undiscerning carelessness, meets the trial in uncertainty—, or carnal opposition, and falls. If, on the other hand, trial comes, we learn our position before God—watching, prayer, entreaty, spreading all before Him in child-like confidence, but submissive desire that His will be done.

The Lord was thoroughly man in this, for an angel appears and ministers, strengthening Him: for the conflict of His soul was great; but it urged Him, in the realization of the trial, to pray more earnestly. The effect of this is to see more clearly the power of evil and the sorrow; and that so as to act on the very body. He was in agony Himself, but always says “Father.” He is, and speaks, in His relationship as Son: not yet the victim before God, but the sufferer in spirit, feeling all the depths of the waters He is passing through, but crying out of them to His Father. Satan tried to stop Christ with the difficulty, when he could not beguile Him with the pleasure. But He went through all with His Father. At the cross was another thing the power of God against sin.

Verses 17-53. It is blessed to see these two things brought together—patience with men, and yet power to stop everything. Having been in an agony with God, He is calm before man. When the servant's ear was cut off, He puts forth His hand to heal. What a picture of man, what a picture of God, if we look here at Christ!

Verses 54-62. When we tremble before men, it is when we have not been with God. Peter breaks down, proving the deceitfulness of the flesh. In Jesus, suffering as He was, there was naught to disable the perfect and simple action of grace at each moment required. When the cock crew, He turned and locked on Peter, who remembered His word, went out, and wept bitterly.

Verses 63-71. The Lord spent the night, not before His judges, who took their ease till morning, before they judged the Lord of glory, but with the men whom they employed, the object of all injury and insult. Then, when it suited the convenience of the Jewish rulers, they brought Him to their council; but the Lord knew it was not the time of testimony, and left them to their weakness. The presenting of Messiah to the Jews was finished: from this the Son of Man was to be seated at the right hand of God. All was settled with God—they could go on. They draw the right conclusion and He conceals nothing. He was the Son of God. They must be guilty, not of mistake, but of condemning Him because He was the Son God and owned it.

Notes and Comments 1, Angels

THE creation of angels is not recorded historically, but that of this visible universe; then they, already created as a separate body of beings, show their interest in the works of God—" the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy."

When Christ is born, first the Jewish aspect is announced to the shepherds, and then a multitude celebrating it—their public delight in God's ways, and, with unjealous delight in them, declare that God's good pleasure is in man. It is the heavenly aspect of it—they see God's mind in it—not the conscience part or man's evil. They chaunt glory to God, for His love is here, peace on this ruined earth—the place of their service—and en anthropois eudokia.

When Christ enters on His ministry, they are His servants in the wilderness, and in Gethsemane. The gospel revelation, which does not have them for its object, they desire to look into. The sufferings of Christ, and the glories that follow, bring a more solemn apprehension to their

minds; it is not simple joy like creation, or incarnation and its natural fruits; over every sinner that repents they rejoice, it is joy to them. In the church they learn, as in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God; they had seen the glory of God's revelation on earth; they are to us, in love, ministering spirits; they praise, in a circle outside the redeemed, in the Apocalypse; yet in our state we are but isaggeloi (Luke 20:36), united to Christ, and all the saints His redeemed.

Letters 2, Atonement; Government of God; Denial of Immortality of the Soul; Universalism; Wrath Revealed From Heaven, The

One great cause of error on this subject is, that the saints do not make the difference which scripture does between the government of God exercised over this earth and the necessary rejection of sin by God's nature-His wrath from heaven. The evangelical world does not make the difference, and hence is liable to be misled, and unable to answer, though God may preserve souls by the instinctive sense of what is in scripture. Israel may be carried to Babylon, but Daniel finds it his sure path to heaven. All above twenty years old fall, save two, in the desert, but Moses and Aaron, and very likely many others, find their place in heaven too.

These dealings of God must be in connection with God's character, and immediately flow from it; but they ate not the expression of it: they are His ways in and through men. Life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel. Just judgment was expressed in these ways, but not the judgment of the secrets of men's hearts, but of men on the earth, for their conduct on the earth. This is so true that, though there are passages which lead the spiritual mind to see the loss and ruin of man ("He drove out the man:" that God was lost to man: that man had left God, the way back to the tree of life being barred), yet the express positive judgment as pronounced does not go beyond this world, even when it reaches death. Man was made out of the dust, and returns to the dust: but that is man, the object of our senses here; nor was more openly revealed. But the breath of God was not dust nor made out of the dust. Hence death, and destruction, and the like, in the Old Testament, though they may imply that displeasure which is the sign of what is connected with eternal misery, yet mean habitually, in the Old Testament, death and destruction by judgment in this world: a solemn and dreadful thing as God's displeasure, but which is not in itself eternal misery. The state of the soul afterward may be learned from other truths, but what is expressed is present judgment without the smallest hint of what comes of the soul afterward. It is judgment here.

The New Testament recognizes this even to death, as judgment here too, but passes on to the revelation of what follows, because life and incorruptibility are brought to light, and that the absolute incompatibility of God's nature and sin (not merely His governmental approbation of righteousness) is plainly revealed. But these, those who deny the immortality of the soul confound; and for the most part evangelicals too. The latter hold the truth in effect, but they accept the application of terms and passages to what is eternal, which puts a weapon in the hands of those who teach error, against which it is logically hard to defend themselves, though their faith may be right. Universalists are in the same error, but it does not so immediately affect the question on the surface of the matter; but it does as really, because the nature of sin and wrath is in question.

Another source of error for the Universalist, allied to this, is the not perceiving that an entirely new life is given in Christ. The evil of the flesh of the old man is unaltered. They confound and forget, in looking only at the practical effect on our state, the real gift of life, and suppose that a process after death can form the soul for God. Where eternal life is, punishment can break the will, give seriousness, restrain under the sense of God's hand, and so work effects; but no punishment can ever give life, nor does grace alter the old man. I only speak of general principles, which lead to these errors here, because in universalism either Satan and the evil angels, to be more precise, can be saved without propitiation (and so can we then too), or their plea of God all in all is false, and mere human selfishness; and the evil spirits remain unsaved, for Christ did not take up the cause of angels.

But I return to general principles. The Old Testament passages which furnish the vast majority of alleged proofs of the destruction of the wicked, speak of judgment and destruction in this world only. All beyond, save glimmers which traversed the gloom for faith, was dark and invisible. That system was the government of God, not salvation for God's presence and eternal life, though these were saved and quickened. Destructionism holds that eternal life is given in Christ alone, but confounds eternal life and the immortality of the soul, two entirely distinct things. As regards spiritual divine life, we have no life in us at all; we are dead. It is not merely that it is not immortal life; we have none. It denies that we are alive-not that the soul is immortal but that we have life in us. They might as well, and more truly, use it to prove we are not alive at all-for that is what is said-than that the soul is not immortal. It does not apply to the question.

As regards destructionism, another false assumption, which formed the basis of thought in most minds affected by it, is that death is ceasing to exist. This is wholly groundless. Indeed it begs the whole question. It may or may not be, as far as man can say from what he sees; for beyond death he sees nothing. He may reason that the cessation of outward organization does not and cannot affect that of which he has the consciousness, and have the strongest ground for rejecting the supposition when `to be or not to be,' that is the question. He may speculate with Plato, or reason closely with Butler; but he knows nothing. As far as the intimations of the Old Testament go for faith, they furnish the thought which Pharisees had thus acquired of the subsistence of the soul after death. Thus Samuel is brought up: David says, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Enoch and Elijah gave yet brighter hopes in the darkness, though darkness still was there. So that the Lord could rebuke the Sadducees as not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God in rejecting the resurrection; and the resurrection involved the necessary truth expressed in Luke 20:37, 38, that "all live unto him." Nor did scripture know in this respect any difference between saints and sinners: not only was He the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ("not the God of the dead, but of the living"), but the ground of this was not their piety, but that for God all lived, even when for man they died. Sadducees are no new race; but they "err, not knowing the scriptures." The Old and New Testaments alike forbid the thought that in man's case death is ceasing to exist: believers die, Christ died just as much and as really as sinners. If death as such means ceasing to exist, then the saints and Christ ceased to exist. Nor can what has ceased to exist ever be raised again.

But there is another vital point in this question. The atonement is lost, and the responsibility in us to which it applies. If I have no more soul than a beast, though a more intelligent animal nature in degree, responsibility is gone. You cannot make a dog or an elephant responsible for sins. When I am converted, I repent, I judge my past sins; I feel I have failed in my responsibility; I learn that through infinite grace Christ has died for my sins. It is not merely that He becomes life-new life to my soul. Thank God that is true; but He died and has made atonement for my guilt, my sins, when I had not yet that life. He died for our sins; and this that I might live. If eternal life were given to an animal, it could

not repent of previous guilt; the Lord, with reverence be it spoken, could not make atonement for its previous sins: He has, blessed be His name, for mine.

Responsibility and atonement disappear with this doctrine, and in its value with universalism too; because, in the latter system, sin does not bring exclusion from God, but merely a measure of torment: the nature and character of sin is denied -by some, indeed, expressly. And in the destructionist system, even the punishment of sin, temporary punishment after death, has no ground. If I have only animal life, and can no more really sin than a dog or an elephant, what am I tortured for afterward, and so destroyed?

It is well to remark, that not only do the two systems of destructionism and universalism denounce each other as utterly unscriptural, but there are two parties among Destructionists. One holds death to be death, and the end of man as of a beast. They are consistent, at any rate; for if we cease to exist, we cease to exist. But then, if scripture be owned at all, we read "after this the judgment"; and so the other party bring them up again, though saying death is ceasing to exist, and then destroy them gradually in the fire: though, as I have said, what for, it is hard to tell if they have only animal life; or who is raised, is hard to tell if they have ceased to exist. But there is the judgment after death; that is, they have not ceased to exist at all. The soul is a distinct thing; it survives the body: " All live unto him."

I only seek here to review the bearing of the question, not to enter into detailed proofs.

1870.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 7, What Do I Learn From Scripture?

PREFACE

THE following paper was drawn up, on the request being made to the writer to give a statement of his faith.

It was replied that the writer would not sign a confession of faith which he had drawn up himself; that all human statement of truth was so inferior to scripture, even when drawn from it [the written word], that he could not do it; and the drawing up of this has only the more convinced him of it.

In the first place, there might be important points left out, or that put in which had better not be there. And supposing everything right that was there, it was like a made tree instead of a growing tree. The word gives truth in its living operations. It is giving in connection with God, in connection with man, with conscience, with divine life, and is thus a totally different thing. To use another image, it is not the growing tree, but supposing all there, sticks laid up in bundles. The writer had, however, no objection personally to say what he believed, to give an answer when asked the question. What follows is given with a deeper conviction than ever of the imperfection of a human assemblage of truth; the writer adding that there are many things more which he should teach. But he could say, " I believe this "; I have learned this from scripture.

I LEARN from the scriptures that there is one living God, fully revealed to us in Christ, and known through Him as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the unity of the Godhead, but revealed as distinctively willing, acting, sending, sent, coming, distributing, and other actings; or, as habitually expressed amongst Christians, three persons in one God, or Trinity in Unity. God is the Creator of all things; but the act of creating is personally attributed to the Word and the Son, and the operation of the Spirit of God.

(Gen. 1:1, 2; Job 26:13; John 1:1, 3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2)

I learn that the Word, who was with God and was God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us, the Father sending the Son to be the Savior of the world. That He, as the Christ, was born of a woman, by the power of the Holy Spirit coming on the Virgin Mary, true man, without sin, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, the promised seed of David according to the flesh, the Son of man, and Son of God,********** determined to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, one blessed Person, God and man, the man Christ Jesus, the anointed man, , Jehovah the Savior.

I learn that He died for our sins according to the scriptures, having appeared once in the consummation of ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; that He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree, suffering for sins the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; and that He is our righteousness before God.

I learn that He is risen from the dead, raised by God, by Himself, by the glory of the Father, and ascended up on high, having by Himself purged our sins, and sits at the right hand of God.

I learn that after Christ's ascension the Holy Ghost has been sent down to dwell in His people individually and collectively, so that in both ways they are the temple of God. We are sealed and anointed with this Spirit. the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts; we are led by Him, and He is the earnest of our inheritance; we cry, Abba, Father, knowing we are sons.

I learn that Christ will come again to receive us to Himself, raising those that are His, or changing them if living, fashioning their bodies like His glorious body, according to the power by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself, and that those of them who die meanwhile will depart and be with Him.

I learn that God has appointed a day in which He will judge this habitable world in righteousness by that man whom He has ordained, whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead, and that at the end He will sit on the great white throne, and judge the dead, small and great.

I learn that every one of us shall give an account of himself to God, and receive the things done in the body, whether they be good or evil; and as the righteous inherit eternal life, so the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, will go into everlasting punishment, be cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels; and that whosoever is not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire.

I learn that this blessed one, the Lord Jesus Christ, died for all, has given Himself a ransom for all, testified in due time, that He has made propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole world.

I learn that He has thereby obtained an eternal redemption, and that by one offering of Himself once for all the sins of all that believe on Him are purged, and that by faith in Him their consciences are also purged, and God remembers their sins and iniquities no more; that being called of God, they receive the promise of an eternal inheritance, being perfected forever, so that we have boldness to enter into the holiest by His blood, by the new and living way He has consecrated for us.

I learn that to enter into the kingdom of God we must be born of water and the Spirit, born again, , being naturally dead in sins, and by nature children of wrath. That which God employs, in order to our being born again is His word. Hence it is by faith that we become His children.

I learn that God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall have everlasting life, but that to this end, God being a righteous and holy God, the Son of man had to be lifted up upon the cross; that there He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

I learn that He loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

I learn that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and without blame before Him in love.

I learn that those that believe are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is the earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession; that by Him the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, that we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; that they who have received this Spirit not only cry, Abba, Father, but know that they are in Christ, and Christ in them; that thus not only He appears in the presence of God for them, but they are in Him who is sitting, at the right hand of God, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool; that they are dead to sin in God's sight, and to reckon themselves so; having put off the old man, and put on the new; alive to God through Jesus Christ (Christ is their new life); crucified to the world, and dead to the law.

I learn thus that if they are in Christ, Christ is in them and they are called upon to manifest the life of Jesus in their mortal flesh, and to walk as He walked, God having set them in the world as the epistles of Christ, whose grace is sufficient for them, and whose strength is made perfect in their weakness.

I learn that they are converted to wait for God's Son from heaven, and taught to do so; and that they have the promise that they shall never perish, nor shall any man pluck them out of Christ's hand, but that God will confirm them to the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I learn that they have part in these privileges through faith in Christ Jesus, in virtue of which righteousness is imputed to them; that Christ, who has obeyed even unto death, and wrought a perfect work upon the cross for them, is now their righteousness, made such of God to them, and that we are made the righteousness of God in Him; that as His precious blood cleanses us from all sin, so we are personally accepted in the beloved, that as by one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of One many shall be constituted righteous.

I learn that we are sanctified, or set apart to God, by God the Father, through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all, and by the operation and power of the Holy Ghost through the truth, so that all Christians are saints, and that in our practical state we have to follow after holiness, and grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, being changed into His image, to whom we are to be perfectly conformed in glory.

I learn that the Lord has left two rites, or ordinances, both significative of His death; one initiatory, the other of continual observance in the church of God-baptism and the Lord's supper.

I learn that, when Christ ascended up on high, He received gifts for men, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; and that from Christ the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love.

I learn that, as the grace and sovereign love of God is the source and origin of all the blessing, so continual and diligent dependence on that grace is that by which we can walk after Him and to His glory, who has left us an example that we should follow His steps.

I learn from the example and authority of the Lord and His apostles that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are inspired of God, and are to be received as the word of God, having His authority attached to it, and which works effectually in those that believe; and that the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, being understood, not by the wisdom of man, but by the teaching of God, being spiritually discerned, they are revealed, communicated, and discerned by the Spirit.

I learn that, while God alone is immortal in and by Himself, the angels are not subject to death, and that the death of a man does not affect the life of his soul, be he wicked or renewed, but that all live still as to God, though dead, and that the wicked will be raised again as well as the just.

I learn that every assembly of God is bound by the exercise of discipline, according to the word, to keep itself pure in doctrine and godly walk.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Prophetic 1, First Resurrection, or Resurrection of the Just

READ Luke 20:17.

FIRST RESURRECTION; OR, RESURRECTION OF THE JUST

THE subject which I propose for this evening's lecture, is the resurrection, and particularly the resurrection of the church apart; that is, the resurrection of the just as altogether distinct from that of the unjust.

We have already spoken of Christ, the Heir of all things; of the church as co-heir with Him; and of the coming of Christ to reign before the thousand years-an event which we must not confound with the day of the resurrection of the unjust, and of the judgment before the great white throne, which will not take place until after the millennium. We have now to see that the church will participate in this coming of Christ; it does so as the subject of the first resurrection.

There is no need to speak to you of the resurrection of Jesus as being the seal of His mission; it is an admitted truth; it is enough to quote Rom. 1:4, where the apostle tells us that " Jesus Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection of the dead."1 This resurrection was the great fact which demonstrated that Jesus is the Son of God; but it was likewise, for other reasons, the great theme of the preaching of the apostles, the basis of their epistles, and of all the New Testament.

Let us commence by saying, that the difficulty people find in the subjects of which we are treating do not arise from the word of God not being simple, clear, and convincing; but from this-that preconceived ideas often rob us of its natural sense. We have habits of thinking apart from the Scripture, before we know it; then it is we find inconsistencies-incompatibility-in that which presents itself to us, not suspecting that this incompatibility belongs alone to human preconceived opinions.

The doctrine of the resurrection is important under more views than one. It links our hopes to Christ and to the whole church, in one word, to the counsels of God in Christ; it makes us understand that we are entirely set free in Him, by our participation in a life in which, united by the Holy Ghost to Him, He is also the source of all strength for glorifying Him, even from the present time; it sustains our hopes in the most solid manner; finally, it expresses all our salvation, inasmuch as it introduces us into a new creation, by which the power of God places us, in the second Adam, beyond the sphere of sin, of Satan, and of death. The soul in departing goes to Jesus, but is not glorified. The word of God speaks of men glorified, of glorified bodies; but never of glorified souls. But, as before observed, prejudices and human teachings have taken the place of the word of God, and the power and expectation of the resurrection has ceased to be the habitual state of the church.

The resurrection was the foundation of the preaching of the apostles, Acts 1:22. " One must be with us a witness of his resurrection." This was the constant subject of their testimony. Let us now see in what terms they testified.

Acts 2:24. " Whom God hath raised up." So verse 32: " This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

Chapter 3: 15. " And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses."

Chapter 4: 2. This doctrine of the resurrection was acknowledged as the doctrine publicly preached by the apostles; it was not that the soul in dying went to heaven, but that the dead shall live again. As the Pharisees were the greatest enemies of the Lord whilst He was upon earth-that is to say, the falsely righteous ones, as opposed to the truly Righteous One-so in like manner, Satan, after His death, raised up the Sadducees, who were enemies to the doctrine of the resurrection; Acts 4; 5 17.

Acts 10:38, 40, 41. Peter testifies to this same fundamental truth before Cornelius the centurion and his friends. Paul preached it to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia, saying (Acts 13:34), " And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead... he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

Acts 17:18-30. He announces, in the midst of the learned Gentiles, this doctrine, which was the stumbling-stone of their carnal wisdom. Socrates and other philosophers believed, after a fashion,2 in the immortality of the soul; but when these men, curious in science, heard of the resurrection of the dead, they mocked. An unbeliever is able to discourse about immortality; but if he hears about the resurrection of the dead, he turns the subject into derision. And why? Because in virtue of the immortality of the soul he may exalt himself, he can elevate his own importance. There is something in the idea which can ally itself to man such as he is; but to think of dust raised again-of a living and glorious being made out of it-this is a glory which belongs only to God, a work of which God alone is capable. For if a body reduced to dust can be reconstituted by God into a living and glorified man, nothing is hid from His power. With the immortality of the soul man can still connect the idea of self-of power in the body; but when the leading truth is the resurrection of the body, and not the immortality of the soul, man's impotency becomes glaring.

See again (whether the apostle was right or not in appealing to the prejudices of the Pharisees), Acts 23 •: 6: where Paul directly affirms, that it was for the preaching of this doctrine he was called in question In chapter 24: 15, he tells the same truth. In chapter 26 he gives it to king Agrippa as the reason of his detention; so also verse 23. From these passages it is easily seen, that the resurrection was the basis of the preaching of the apostle and of the hope of the faithful.

We now come to the second part of our subject, the resurrection of the church apart, or the special resurrection of the just.

"There will be," says the apostle, " a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust "; but the resurrection of the just, or of the church, is a thing altogether apart-which has no relation with that of the wicked, which does not take place at the same time with this last, nor after the same principle. For, although both the one and the other are to be accomplished by the same power, there is in the resurrection of the just, a particular principle, namely the habitation of the Holy Ghost in them, which is foreign to the resurrection of the wicked; Rom. 8:11

The virtue of the resurrection embraces the life, the justification, the confidence, the glory, of the church. God Himself is made known unto us by the name of " God who raiseth the dead " (2 Cor. 1:9), who introduces His power into the last depths of the effects of our sin-into the domain of death-to bring men out of it by a life from which that moment puts them outside the reach of all the dreadful consequences of sin-a life close to God.

Rom. 4:23-25. It is in " God who quickeneth the dead " that we are called upon to believe; it is the resurrection of Jesus which is the power-the efficacy-of our justification. This is the truth presented in the passage before us. Our union with Jesus raised gives us acceptance with God. We ought to see ourselves already as beyond the tomb.

On this account the faith of Abraham was a justifying faith. " He considered not his own body now (already) dead "; but he believed in a God " who quickeneth the dead "; for this reason his faith " was counted to him for righteousness."3 The resurrection of Jesus was the great proof,

and as to all its moral effects, the establishment of this truth, that the object of our faith is that God raises the dead. This truth is pointedly expressed in the first epistle of Peter (chap. i: 21). The application is made to us by our union with the Lord.

Col. 2:12. " Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The church is raised now, because Christ is raised as its Head. The resurrection of the church is not a resurrection whose object is judgment, but simply the consequence of its union with Christ, who has been judged in its stead.

We may observe in this passage how these truths hang together. The resurrection of the church is a thing of itself, because the church participates in the resurrection of Christ; we are raised, not only because Jesus Christ will call us from the grave, but because we are one with Him. It is by reason of this unity, that, in partaking of faith, we are already raised with Christ, raised as to the soul, but not as to the body. The justification of the church is, that it is risen with Christ.

The same fact is expressed in Eph. 1:18, etc., and 2: 4-6. Paul never said, " If I am saved, I am content." He knew that it is hope that makes the soul active, which excites the affections, which animates and directs the whole man; and he desired that the church should have the heart full of this hope. Nor is it enough for one of us to say, " I am saved "; it is not enough for the love of God, which is not satisfied unless we are participators of all the glory of His Son; and we ought not to be indifferent to His will.

Eph. 2:6 shows forth the same truth. The presence of the Holy Ghost in the church is that which characterizes our position before God. As the Spirit of Christ is our consoler, and helps us in our infirmities, testifying withal that we are children of God, and making us able to serve God, so it is on account of the Holy Spirit who is in us that we shall be raised; and it is on account of the Holy Spirit also that the principle of the resurrection of the church is quite other than that of the resurrection of the wicked. Our resurrection, we say, is the consequence of the abiding of the Holy Ghost in us (Rom. 8:11)-a very essential difference. The world does not receive the Holy Ghost, " because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him," John 14:27. Now, " our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost " (1 Cor. 6:19); our soul in consequence is filled, or at least it ought to be, with the glory of Christ. Our body, also, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost, will be raised according to the power of the Holy Ghost who dwells in us; a thing which can never be said of the wicked.

It is the resurrection which, having introduced us into the world of the last Adam (even now as partaking of this spiritual life), will introduce us in fact into a new world, of which He will be the Head and the glory, since He has acquired it and will reign there as the risen Man.

Observe, in the passages concerning the resurrection, not one speaks of a simultaneous rising of just and unjust; and those which refer to the resurrection of the just speak of it always as of a thing distinct. All will rise. There will be a resurrection of the just, and a resurrection of the unjust, but they will not take place together. I will cite the passages successively, which refer to it. It is at the coming of Christ that the church will rise; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Cor. 15:23.

The idea of a resurrection of the just was familiar to the disciples of Christ; and such is represented as to happen in Luke 14:14, " Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

But before coming to direct proofs, I would express the conviction that the idea of the immortality of the soul,4 although recognized in Luke 12:5 and 20: 38, is not in general a gospel topic; that it comes,5 on the contrary, from the Platonists; and that it was just when the coming of Christ was denied in the church or at least began to be lost sight of, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came in to displace that of the resurrection. This was about the time of Origen. It is hardly needful to say that I do not doubt the immortality of the soul; I only assert that this view has taken the place of the doctrine of the resurrection of the church, as the epoch of its joy and glory.

Luke 20:35, 36. " They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." The resurrection, then, mentioned here, belongs only to those who shall be made worthy of it. " They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age," that is to say, this world of joy, of the reign with Christ. That resurrection of the dead, then, belongs to the period spoken of, and not only to eternity. " Neither," adds the Savior, " can they die any more... for they are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." The wicked shall be raised to be judged, but those others shall be raised because they have been accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection which Jesus has obtained. We see, in the passage quoted, the proof of a resurrection which concerns the children of God alone; they are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection. To be a son of God, and to have part in this resurrection, is the title and inheritance of the same persons.

John 5:25-29. " Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." It is customary to oppose the latter part of this passage to a view

of the resurrection of the just apart; but we shall see that the whole passage enunciates, and even explains and strengthens, the truth which is occupying us.

Two acts of Christ are presented as the attributes of His glory; one, to make alive; the other, to judge. He gives life to those whom He will, and all judgment is entrusted to Him; in order that all, even the wicked, should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. Jesus has been shamefully entreated here below; God the Father takes care that His claim of glory shall be recognized: He (Christ) gives life to whom He will-to their souls first, and then to their bodies. These glorify Him of good will. As to the wicked, the way of obliging them to recognize the rights of Jesus, is to judge them; and this judgment is in the hands of Jesus. In the work of vivification, the Father and Son act together, because those to whom life is given are put into communion with the Father and Son. But as to judgment, the Father judgeth no man, because it is not the Father that has been wronged, but the Son. The wicked will own Jesus Christ in spite of themselves when they are judged. At what epoch will these things be accomplished? For the wicked, at the time of the judgment- the judgment both of the living, and of the dead before the great white throne; for the just, the children of God, when their bodies shall participate in the life already communicated to their souls (the life of Christ Himself) at the resurrection of the just. The resurrection for these is not a resurrection of judgment, but simply, to repeat it again, the exercise, towards the bodies of God's children, of that quickening power of Jesus, in which He has already worked upon their souls, and which, in God's good time, shall work upon their bodies. " They that have done good," says our text, " unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."6

But the objection is made, Jesus has said (v. 28), " The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice." The wicked and the just will then evidently rise together. But three verses before (v. 25) it is said, " The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Hour comprehends here all the space of time which has elapsed since the coming of the Savior; and under this word is contained two states of things quite different, seeing that the dead heard the voice of the Son of God during the time He was living on earth, and that they have been hearing it for eighteen centuries since. This, then, is the interpretation. The hour7 for giving life to the soul is an hour which has lasted eighteen centuries already. And the hour is also coming for the judgment. The word hour has the same sense in the two passages. That is to say, there is a time of quickening and a time of judgment; there is a period during which souls are quickened, and a period when bodies shall be raised. For us, the resurrection is only the application of the quickening power of Jesus Christ to our bodies. We shall be raised, because we are already quickened in our souls. The resurrection is the crowning of the whole work, because we are children of God, because the Spirit dwells in us, because (as far as our souls are concerned) we are already risen with Christ.

There will be a resurrection of life for those who have been already quickened in their souls; and a resurrection of judgment for those who have rejected Jesus.

1 Cor. 15:20, 23, sets forth very clearly the connection which exists between the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. The order of the resurrection is explicitly shown. " Christ is become the first fruits of them that slept " (v. 20); " of those which slept," and not of the wicked. They that are Christ's shall rise at His coming; then cometh the end, the time when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. When He comes, He will take the kingdom, but at the end He will deliver it up. The appearing of Christ will therefore take place before the end; it will be for the destruction of the wicked. He will come to purify His kingdom. " Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's, at his coming. Then cometh the end."

1 Thess. 4:14-16. " Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him "; " and the dead in Christ shall rise first." It is the complement-the filling up-of our hopes; it is the fruit of our justification, the consequence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

The righteous dead shall rise first; then the living righteous shall be changed, and " shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord." All this is a matter which belongs exclusively to the saints-to those who, sleeping or living, are Christ's, and who will be, from that moment, forever with the Lord.

Phil. 3. " To know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead."

Why speak thus, if it be true that good and bad must rise together, and in the same manner? This resurrection from among the dead is just this first resurrection which Paul had before his eyes. I am willing, he says, as it were, to lose all, to suffer all, if, cost what it may, I arrive at the resurrection of the just: such is my desire. Evidently the resurrection from among the dead was a thing that concerned the church exclusively. I might say, like the apostle, " I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

As to the period or interval which elapses between the resurrection of the faithful and the wicked, it is a circumstance altogether independent of the principle itself, that is, of the distinction of the two resurrections. Our faith on this point depends upon a revelation, which has only importance, because God has so chosen to order it for His own glory. The period is only mentioned in the book of Revelation under the expression, " a thousand years." Between the two resurrections a thousand years elapse. The only point then on which I cite the book is upon the length comprised in the reign of the Son of man on the earth. The passage is found in Rev. 20:4, " And I saw thrones...."

The world will then know that we are the objects of grace, that we have been loved as Jesus Himself has been loved by the Father.

If the first resurrection-that of the just-is not to be taken literally, why should the second-that of the unjust-be so taken? As the object of our hope, and source of our consolation and of our joy, it is but a small thing to know that the unjust shall be raised; but the precious thing-the essential- is to know that the resurrection of the just will be the consummation of their happiness; that in it God will accomplish His love towards us; that, after having given life to our souls, He will give life to our bodies, and will make of the dust of the earth a form suitable to the life which has been given to us on the part of God. We never read in the word of God of glorified spirits, but always of glorified bodies. There is the glory of God, and the glory of those who will be raised.

I desire, dear friends, that the knowledge of this truth, by the power of Christ, on which depends its entire accomplishment, may strengthen us in our hearts unto all perfection. For this knowledge in all its extent is that to which the scripture applies the word " perfection." Christ was thus made perfect as to His state and position before God; we, also, ourselves are now perfect by faith, in acknowledging that we are raised with Him, as we shall be later as to our bodies. May your bodies, souls, and spirits, be preserved blameless until the coming of our Well-beloved! May this truth of the resurrection of the church become bound up, in our minds, with all the precious truths of our salvation consummated in Christ, and may it be accomplished in the plenitude of our salvation in our bodies also!

Things New and Old: Volume 30, Christ in Association With Israel and With the Church

Luke 20:40-47, and 21. (Notes of a Lecture by J. N. D.)

In the closing verses of Luke 20 the Lord takes up the chain which was the connection of the subject before Him. This is something distinct from being David’s Son or Jehovah. The Lord having confounded the unwilling Jews by His wisdom, now in His turn questions them, “David called him Lord: how is he then his son?” He quotes Psalm 110. He is seen not as David’s Son, going to take the earthly throne; He leaves for the present His place of Messiah’s throne down here, and takes His place in heavenly glory. “The Lord [Jehovah] said unto my Lord.[Adonai], Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” There ‘is a terrible testimony as to how He takes His place in glory for His enemies. It is not Zion’s king coming unto her, meek and lowly, riding upon an ass! but the One whose enemies; are to be His footstool, both His enemies among the Jews and others.

David’s Son having the place of David’s Lord, was the great hinge on which turned the change in the whole system. It was exactly what the Jews could not understand. Israel was to be set aside for a season, and the Messiah was not going to take the throne yet; but they wanted a present, earthly Messiah. The place He was about to take as seen in Psalm ex. was not simply as the One “who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh;” nor as “the Son of God” but as “Adonai”—Lord—Man exalted to the right hand of power—Man in glory. Of course, as to His Godhead He was Lord from eternity; but now He was about to be the Man in glory, as the One who did “drink of the brook in the way” (ver. 7); as the One who had taken the lowly place of the dependent man; who had been a pilgrim, like others, getting refreshment by communion with His Father. Thus, having emptied Himself, humbled Himself, He is now exalted by God.

This great universal principle—that “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased”—was fully brought out, as we have seen before, in both Adams. In the first Adam nature would exalt itself to be as God, until in its full ripeness Antichrist will exalt himself above all that is called God or is worshipped, so that he as God, sitting in the temple of God, showeth himself that he is God. (2 Thess. 2:4.) Satan will set him up, filling him with the very same spirit with which he tempted him at the beginning. Satan, not being able to exalt himself in heaven, will attempt to do it through the seed of man; but the end shall be abasement. “How art thou fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning!” Thou hast said in thine heart, “ I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.” (Isa. 14.12-15.)

In the Second Adam we have Him who was God humbling Himself, humbling, emptying Himself: going down, becoming obedient even to the vilest of deaths. And then we see that “humbled One” going back to the place He had before—but as Man. God highly exalting Him, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in the heaven, and things in the earth and under the earth.

All this was beyond the reach of Jewish promise to David’s Son. The Jews did not understand the scriptures, hut fulfilled them through not understanding them. God placed man on the earth. He exalted himself. But God goes on patiently trying him until man at last rejects God in Christ. Then, in the fulfillment of His blessed counsels, He takes up the heavenly Man—the Second Adam—and now all life and glory and righteousness descend from heaven, depending not on man’s responsibility, but on the faithfulness of God. Is it life now that is needed? God gives the life of Christ in resurrection. Is it glory? God gives heavenly glory. Is it righteousness? God gives divine righteousness. He puts us in heaven. All flows down, not simply from God in grace, but from the place which Man has in glory! The Man Christ Jesus has fully met all man s responsibilities. This is the reason of the fullness of the blessing of the gospel, and, also of that of the kingdom to come, the blessedness of which will flow from the heavenly Man, though the Jews would have liked it to be set up in an earthly way.

Thus in the largest way the turning-point in all the plans and counsels of God, is Jesus being set at the right hand of God. All the character, the stability, and the perfection of our blessing takes its source from the exalted Jesus. Then the Holy Ghost comes down to bear witness to this, on which the peace of the soul rests—even in the accomplished righteousness of Him who is taken into the glory that the heavenly life we have in Him should be manifested here. Thus, then, have we the Fountain, the very key-stone of all God’s plans. Mark the moral blessedness—this universal principle—“He that humbleth himself shall be exalted” is displayed in perfection in the Second Adam in contrast to the first; but let us remember that this is the place we are to take, and He hath left us an example. In one sense truly we are at the very bottom already; still as saints we may know what it is to be servants of all.

There was this spirit of self-exaltation in the scribes, the Pharisees, the rich; but the Lord looks to the simple-hearted devotedness of the poor widow, and cares not for all the religious pretenses, and for that which has a great appearance before men. (Chap. 20: 46, 47; 21:1-4. Having laid the great moral basis of all God’s ways in David’s son’s exaltation to be David’s Lord, the Lord goes on to show the practical results. (Compare Matt. 24 with Luke 21) In Matt. 24 we get God’s dealings with Jerusalem in special connection with the Jews. Up to verse 14 there is a general description of the testimony which was to go forth so long as there was any Jewish remnant to testify, or any Judea to testify in. Then in verse 15 He goes back and details the special circumstances of the close (the “times of the Gentiles” being quite passed over), that is to say, the last half-week of Daniel, quoting from Dan. 12, when the abomination of desolation will be set up by Antichrist, and the Jews will go back to idolatry, worshipping the idol. These will be the 1260, 1290, and 1335 days, at the close of which, full blessing will be brought in. This will be the time of Jacob s trouble, as in Jeremiah; but this is always connected with Jacob’s deliverance. The Lord will shorten—cut short—those days, or none could be saved: so dreadful will they be. And “they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” In Luke 21 it is not the Jews, but the Son of man and the Gentiles. It is the description of the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman emperor, Titus; and then that which is going on now—Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles, and the full time of the four beasts of Daniel, running out until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. After that there is the end of the age upon the earth distress of nations; but no reference to the events at Jerusalem are detailed in Matthew.

Thus we get, in the clearest way, the double character of these prophecies: that in Luke containing the description of Jerusalem during the times of the Gentiles, when Israel is set aside;

and Matthew giving us that which is specifically Jewish, passing over the times of the Gentiles and speaking of Jacob’s trouble at the close of those times, when the Jews will, under Antichrist, turn back again to idolatry, worshipping the idol he will set up in the temple.

The Lord then was rejected as the Son of David, but it resulted in the bringing in of the far wider and more glorious thing of the Son of man. The Lord dropped for a while His Son of David character, but it was to take up everything in the power of God. The church, life, righteousness, all comes down from the Son of man in glory. And thus it was that Stephen saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. In Psalm 1 we have God’s general principle of government under the law, that the righteous man should stand in the judgment. The Lord alone ever took this perfect place. In Psalm 2 The question is of God’s purposes. In spite of the rising up of the Gentiles, God’s decree should stand as to Christ “He shall be king in Zion.” This does not refer to the eternal Sonship of Christ. In the succeeding Psalm we have the Christ rejected, and the experiences of the Lord and of the remnant. Psalm 8 takes in the wider sphere, the glory which God gave to the Son of man when rejected. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings praise went forth, or the very stones must have cried out. The Lord must have the testimony of praise, though not set up in earthly power. The kingdom having rejected Christ on earth, He gets it in a heavenly way. God is pleased to give all that He has created to the Man in heaven—the Man in God’s counsels—who after all the sorrow He endured and death is crowned with honor and glory. As Man the Lord takes all the power and glory, to which He had a title as God. God, in His blessed wisdom, has centered all in the personal glory of Christ.

The church is the place into which the Holy Ghost brings us into union with Christ, whilst He is thus hid—hidden with Christ in God. The entire, distinct, definite place of the church is that while unknown here, we are united to Him by faith through the power of the Spirit, who comes down and gives us the display of the glory of Christ, not as being under it, but as associated with Himself in all the glory He has in the Father's house, where we have our place. Thus we never find the church brought in the displays of Christ's glory save as the bride—never as part of the inheritance—she herself being "joint-heirs with Christ." It is of the last importance for the saints to apprehend the distinct place which we have as united to the heavenly Man.

The word generation (chap. 21:32) usually, though not exclusively, in scripture, is used as designating a class of men, a multitude having a common character, who may or who may not live at the same period. A case in point is found in Deut. 32:20, when, in prophesying of this very period, the Lord says of Israel, "They are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith." The scene is earthly (Ver. 36;). We do stand before Him in one sense. There are certain, principles which are true, and apply, at all times, to God's people; but we do not take the place (at least I hope we do not) of dwellers "upon earth;" we are not looking for earthly events. We arc travelers. I do not dwell in France or Germany because I have to pass through them. We seek a country, we are traversing earth; but we are dwellers in heaven, our birthplace is heaven. It is true of us on a higher principle, for we shall stand before the Son of God.

Thus do we get the Lord's dealings with Jews and Gentiles. God reveals to the church what He is about to do in the world, as He did to Abraham about Sodom; and by this He proves that the church does not belong to the world. Our place is most blessed! The Lord give us to hold it in power, as our portion, that we may be indeed strangers and pilgrims here. Amen!

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Inspiration of the Scriptures*

ONE of the great efforts of the enemy in these days is against the written word of God. Ecclesiastical office and orthodoxy is in its nature no barrier against this inroad. In its most pretentious forms and highest claims it is injurious to true confidence in scripture, because the authority of the Church, not that of the word, lies at the root of these pretensions. Divinely given authority is its first principle; not divine truth from God.

If its true principle be scrutinized beneath conventional habits and fears, it will be found that the authority of the word is founded, according to this system, on the authority of the Church -that is, the word has none properly divine in itself. I say this, not with a view to controversy with that system, but as a warning that, in the struggle which is going on, such a barrier against unbelief is not to be trusted to.

The confidence in man and his intellectual powers and progress, which characterizes another considerable portion of the professing Church, is surely no security against man's assuming to judge what does and will surely judge him. The word has its authority from God; and God will make good and prove that authority in judgment, as He blesses us with it now in grace. The word, if it be the word of God at all, calls for submission. It forms, as a means, the link of renewed connection with God, granted to us by sovereign mercy when sin and flesh had separated us from God. It is sent out from Him, as was the living and eternal Word, as a point of contact in mercy and power for man with God; which comes to him where he is, deals with man exactly in the state man is in, and reveals God-and as He is pleased to reveal Himself-to man in that state. But for this God must be its author-none but God can rightly reveal Himself. Otherwise that word cannot bear witness of the love, the purpose of love, which is in God.

It cannot have the wise adaptation to the end which that love proposes to itself, and the gracious consideration for all the infirmities, all the varied circumstances, of those to whom it is addressed, so as to reveal divine love and truth, divine love and plans, to and in spite of those infirmities, if the purpose of doing so be not there- . Now I meet a great deal which takes the form of condescension to believers in divine inspiration, while it really assumes human intellectual powers to be on superior ground on this question, and adapts its reasonings, with great deference to their claims, to the theory of inspiration, so as to save something for the more feeble-minded. Help is allowed on God's part, the aiding the memory according to the Lord's promise. It is thought much to rescue such points as these from the invading grasp of rationalism. Now I do not doubt that the Holy Ghost did help-did recall to the memory of the New Testament writers what our Lord had said. But who was the author of the New Testament? How came it to be written? Is there no purpose in the history and other writings of the New Testament? and if so, whose purpose was it? Whence do the writings flow? Is the existence of the New Testament an accident, which has its origin in the will or circumstances of four men (I speak particularly now of the Gospels, though the principles apply to the whole New Testament, and with increasing force when it is looked at as a whole) who were afterward, when they thought fit to undertake the work, graciously assisted? Or is the scripture New Testament history the consequence of a purpose of God, a fruit of a divine intention and plan, of whose execution the Holy Ghost is the author?

We read in Peter, Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Here we have the source-the motive power in this work. The word of the Lord came to them. I have no theory as to the manner in which the New Testament writers were inspired. I recognize, in the fullest way, the diversities of style and the stamp of individuality in the different writers. The Lord was pleased to use men. But when I say that, it implies that He used them. I see the Lord declaring that He would use their memories. I see the apostle preferring an inspired communication in which his understanding had a part. But it is evident that if God recalled, by the Holy Ghost, certain events to the memory of a writer, He could recall them in such a way and form as He pleased; or as it had particularly struck the writer at the time the event happened; or while the facts were presented anew to his memory, with such additional apprehensions as the spiritual state of the writer made him capable of at the time of writing, and according to that peculiar form of apprehension wrought by His power and presence in the writer. He might recall these events to the writer's mind in the succession He thought fit, so as to produce a given order in the narration. But all this supposes the action and purpose-the will-of a divine Author, who acts with a plan and wisdom suited to its accomplishment. The wisdom of such an author might (by the combination of the events in a given order, and the selection of such as He recalled) produce a result from them, as a whole, which had a bearing and gave a witness to Christ entirely beyond the thoughts of the writer, though he might in every part be used according to the state of his own mind under the influence of the Spirit of God.

Now you will find that many discussions on inspiration, or statements on the subject, leave the thought of any purpose or motive power of the Spirit of God wholly aside, or deliberately deny it. The fact of distinct order in the recital of events in two Gospels is assumed to be a proof of the writers being left to themselves in these points; and such like, as I judge, shortsighted arguments are used.

Now either the Holy Ghost moved the inspired writers to compose their accounts, or He did not. If not, then the existence of the written accounts of the life of Jesus are a providential accident, and flow from no intention of God towards His Church and even a ruined world. If He did, then it was with a plan and purpose, flowing from and suited to the object to be attained and to the divine wisdom which so moved them. If this be so God has thought it right to give to us an account of the wonderful facts of incarnation and redemption and all that accompanied these great events. And if He has done so, He has done so with a purpose and plan. For the carrying of this out He used fitted instruments; but the plan was His. He worked in and by them- but to produce what? The uncertain fruit of their own researches, or that which would not answer to His intentions and the glory of Christ and the truth as it is in Him? It is the height of absurdity, a contradiction of the nature and working of God, to think so for a moment. It is in vain to talk of helping them. Whose will was it that it should be done? whose purpose to be carried into effect? whose work was it which was done? Was it God's will to have it done? Did the work flow from the action of the Holy Ghost? and was it, in carrying it out, left to go wrong and be executed contrary to the divine will and wisdom? I press the question-Whose action and purpose was it? The moment I believe it to be God's, I get a divine work. I look for divine wisdom, divine purpose displayed in carrying it out. One tells me that the various arrangements of contents prove human agency in their selection and disposition. Why so? If Christ be presented in various characters, why may not the Holy Ghost present facts which display those characters in a way calculated to do so, employing diverse human agency to do it? The whole argument assumes that there is no purpose or plan of the Holy Ghost in the New Testament narrative. The moment I believe there is, I must expect the materials to be selected and arranged according to that purpose and plan. And nothing can be more absurd and contradictory than the contrary supposition. It is admitted by such authors that the Holy Ghost recalled facts to the memory of the evangelists. Did He do it at haphazard-out of place, time, and order, and differently to the different evangelists, so that they have put them in different and, as to some or perhaps all, in incorrect order?

Where inspiration is wholly denied, then it is easy to understand that men hold that each evangelist did the best he could; and put the things out of due order because he did not know any better. If, on the other hand, God would glorify His Son Jesus, and give to us an adequate account of His life and sufferings- an object so perfectly suited to His grace and our need-we can easily understand the Spirit of God so ordering various accounts, as to present (for those who know in part and prophesy in part) the various aspects of His path on earth, its bearings and results, on Jews, on men at large, or on the hearts of sinners, or as unfolding before men the divine nature; and thus we should have the same true facts, but variously arranged, and with diversity of details. But of all theories, that which makes the Gospels the result of no purpose, or will, or plan of God at all, but that when men took the thought up, the Holy Ghost helped them, and recalled things to their memories, but so as to have all in disorder and confusion without a purpose; and that He did thus with several independent writers, so as to have inconsistency as well as disorder, is of all theories-for theory it is-the most unworthy of God, and absurd for man.

No man can doubt for a moment that the four Gospels present Christ each in a different way. Did this flow from the purpose and intention of God, or is it an accident? If from divine purpose, I must look for an ordering of the materials according to that purpose. It is in vain to say that this is an a priori theory. It is an a priori theory to say that the putting the history of the deliverance of the demonaic in Galilee before or after Matthew's call is a proof of human arrangement. Why not of divine? If chronological order had been alleged to have been preserved, or were it the object, then I should see that men had been left to their own weakness. But who says that chronological order is the object, say, in Matthew? I am satisfied it is not. This is not the place to prove that he had another. But the assumption that the Gospels are a compilation of memoirs in chronological order, as far as the writer was competent (which is not true even in many a well arranged human history), is the sole ground on which arrangement can be attributed to human agency. But the assumption is a very foolish one.

That the selection of facts depended on human agency is still more absurd. It is held that the Holy Ghost recalled to the remembrance of the writers what Jesus said. Where, then, is the writers' selection? Did the Holy Ghost come in aid when the evangelist remembered something imperfectly, and left we know not what-perhaps something much more important-wholly unremembered? Such an operation of the Holy Ghost as is here pretended is as irreverent an idea as it is absurd. But if He did move, the writer did not select, and could hardly be said to arrange. God may have led the writers to use all sources, all they had in their memoirs, or directly recalled or revealed what they had not. I make no limit as to the divine use of means: all are at the disposal of God. The question I urge is, Who is the author and mover in the history we have of the blessed Lord? If it be the Holy Ghost, then is He the source of. this history; and He had a purpose in giving it. He has carried it out according to that purpose. To suppose that the Holy Ghost wrought to leave us an imperfect, wrongly arranged, inconsistent account of the Lord Jesus, and of the unspeakable intervention of God in redemption, is the most irreverent-I do not say intentionally so; I do not the least think so: but in fact the most irreverent and absurd of all theories as to inspiration.

I have not a doubt the New Testament history bears the stamp and contains the proof of the most perfect divine arrangement, and that harmonies are wrong in principle. But into so large a subject as this I could not here enter. This would, of course, be a matter of spiritual intelligence and instruction, from the contents and order in which they are formed, and, if extended to the whole New Testament, from the scope of the whole book and the combination of its parts. My object in this flying communication is merely to draw attention to the question which is often in so strange a way silently dropped-Who is the author of the New Testament history? From whose will or purpose does it flow? Whose plan is this history of the Lord Jesus? Is it a divine or a human one? a thing flowing from human will in aid of which the Holy Ghost has wrought, or the fruit of God's counsels and the agency of the Holy Ghost accomplishing the purpose of God? If it be from the purpose and moving of the Holy Ghost, I must look for His carrying that purpose out.

I add one word as to the preface of Luke's Gospel. I say nothing as to the extent to which the writers were conscious of the Holy Ghost's purpose and action; but I wholly deny the construction put upon the words of Luke as a matter of fact. It is constantly stated both by rationalists and by others who hold loose views of inspiration that he declares he gave his own account from what he heard and from his inquiries. He does no such thing. He says, Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to compose an account of what is most surely believed among us, as it has been delivered to us by those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having accurate knowledge of all things from the origin, to write to thee with method, &c. Now the evangelist contrasts here the ground on which he wrote with that on which others had gone. I do not allege, as some of the fathers have, that he blames those others, as having "taken in hand" themselves in contrast with inspiration; but it shows that many having done it in that day was a motive for his doing it on more trustworthy ground. He does it because he has thorough personal knowledge of all from the outset. Paul says of Timothy (2 Tim. 3:10), "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life," &c. The same word is here used. The others had known what was delivered. Now it is not said Luke knew them himself, but . It would be hard to express personal accurate knowledge more strongly. It has nothing to do with the question of inspiration. It is the fitness of the instrument which appears. Whether the Holy Ghost made use of it is not touched upon; but the conclusion which is drawn from it, that Luke denied it and derived his materials from other accounts, is wholly unfounded.

Chap. 14:28. Jesus enters Jerusalem as Messiah. His rights as Lord of all were to be asserted and acted on (verses 29-36). He presents Himself for the last time to Israel, in the lowliness of grace, which was of far greater importance than the kingdom. This gives rise to the most marked contrast between the disciples and the Pharisees. The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with loud voice, saying, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven and glory in the highest.” Some of the Pharisees appeal to Him to rebuke the disciples, but learn from His lips that if these were silent, the very stones would cry out. There must be a testimony to His glory (ver. 37-40).

When Jesus was born, angels announced it to the poor of the flock, and the heavenly host praised God, saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace -good pleasure in men. Such will be the result, and the angels anticipate it, without reference to the hindrances, or to the means. But Christ was rejected here below; and now the disciples say, “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.” When the question of power is raised, in order to establish the kingdom, there will be war then. (Rev. 12). In fact there can be no peace in heaven till Satan and his host are cast out. Then will the King be established in power, when the obstacles shall be taken out of the way. Psa. 118 celebrates this, His mercy enduring forever, spite of all the people's sins. It is the song of the latter day. If God sends peace to the earth in the person of His Son, it is in vain, not as to the accomplishment, but as to present effect. Meanwhile, to faith there is peace in heaven, and when this is asserted in power against the evil spirits in the heavenly places, there will be blessing indeed. O, what a time will it be! What a relief to the working of God's grace! For now it is ever toil and watching What, always? Yes, always; and that is not the rest. But then it will be, as sure as God takes His great power and reigns. “The Lord shall hear the heavens,” &c. Hos. 2. There will be an unbroken chain of blessing, and that too on earth. It will not be one “building, and another inhabiting,” but blessing flowing down and around to the lowest and the least. Till then, as now, the word is suffering in grace, not victorious power. Never fear persecution: it will make your face shine as an angel's. But God could not be silent if His own Son were cast out. He might, leave Him to suffer, but not without a testimony. If there were no others, the stones would speak. And so if we are faithful and near to Christ, that will turn for a testimony.

Next (ver. 41-44) we have, not the cursing of the fig tree, but the Spirit of grace, in the Lord's weeping over the city. The counsels of God will surely be accomplished, but we ought also to know His real tenderness in Jesus. Those tears were not in vain, whatever the appearances. It was the time of Jerusalem's visitation, but she knew it not. We ought as having the mind of Christ, to know when and how to interfere spiritually. We are the epistle of Christ, whereby the world should be able to read what God is. Christ manifested Him perfectly. But what did He find in the people? See verses 45, 46. God declares His house to be one of prayer: men—the Jews—had made it a den of thieves. It was a terrible moral estimate, but this is the true way to judge; i.e. having God's word to take facts as they are. We are ignorant and morally incapable of judging without the word of God. Let the eye be fixed on Christ and our judgment be formed on things around by the word.

Chap. 20. The first question raised was by the scribes, as to the authority of Christ and its source. Jesus questions them about the baptism of John: Was it from heaven or of man? They reasoned without conscience. They owned their incompetency, rather than acknowledge His Messiahship. The simple child of God receives the word as certainly as Christ gives it. Reliance on God's word is the only sure ground. How can you be certain? God has said it. If God's speaking requires proof, I must have something more sure and true than God. Is the Church Alas! alas!... If God cannot speak so as to claim authority, without another to accredit what He says, there is no such thing as faith.

The parable of the husbandmen (9 et seq.) sets forth the Lord's dealings with Israel, to whom the vineyard was first let, and, upon the rejection of “the Heir,” the gift of it to others. Nor was this all. The rejected stone becomes the head of the corner. Whosoever fell on that stone, should be broken; but on whomsoever it fell, utter destruction would be the result. The past sins of Jerusalem illustrate the first: for the second we must wait for the execution of judgment when the Lord appears.

Verse 19. The question of tribute to Caesar was very subtle. They used the effect of their own wickedness to tempt the Lord. Abstractedly, the Jews ought not to have been subject to the Gentiles. And, moreover, the Messiah was come, the Deliverer of Israel. If He said obey the Gentiles, where was His delivering power? If He said Rebel, they would have had an excuse to deliver Him to Pilate. Because of Israel's sin, God has broken down the key-stone of nations, and given power to the Gentile. The Jew has been rebellious under the sentence, and ever craving deliverance from their thralldom. But the Lord answered with divine wisdom. He put them exactly in the place where their sin had put them: Caesar's things are to be rendered to Caesar, and God's things to God.

After settling the question as to this world between God and the people, He next meets the Sadducean or skeptical difficulty as to the next world. (Verses 27-38). The Lord shows the place of the risen saints in entire contrast with the world. The idea of a general resurrection is set aside. If all rise together, there is uncertainty, a common judgment, &c.; but if the saints are raised by themselves because they are children of God, leaving the rest of the dead for another and distinctive resurrection—a resurrection of judgment—all is changed. No passage of Scripture speaks of both rising together. The resurrection is that which most of all distinguishes, and this forever. It is the grand testimony to the difference between good and bad. The saint will be raised because of the Spirit of Christ that dwells in him—the application to his body of that power of life in Christ which has already quickened his soul. It is a resurrection from among the dead, as was Christ's. So here, “they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age,” for such it is, “and the resurrection from the dead.” “They are equal to the angels, and are the children of God.” Luke adds another characteristic point omitted elsewhere; “all live unto him.” It is the present, blessed living unto God of those who have died, and await the resurrection from among the dead.

Then in verses 41-44 the Lord puts His question, How is David's Son, David's Lord? This was just what the Jews could not understand. It was the hinge on which turned the change in the whole moral system. He had taken the place of the holy dependent One, a pilgrim as others, and He had drunk of the brook by the way. He was going on in meekness and quietness, but living by the refreshments which came from God His Father. Thus having emptied Himself, humbled Himself, He is now exalted by God. This great universal principle, “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased,” is fully exemplified in the two Adams. The first Adam, man's nature, would exalt itself to be “as God,” until in its full ripeness antichrist will exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. Satan tempted man at the beginning to make himself like God, and at the end God shall send them strong delusion, to believe a lie. Satan, not being able to exalt himself in heaven, will attempt to do it through the seed of man; but the end shall be abasement. (Isa. 14:12-15). In the second

Adam we have Him who was God humbling Himself, going down, becoming obedient unto death, even the vilest, and then we see that humbled One going back to the place of power at God's right hand, but as man, as well as God. God highly exalted Him, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Having been obedient all through, in humiliation, He is exalted to be David's Lord. This took Him out of the line of Jewish promises, though as David's son of course He had them. The Jews did not understand the Scriptures, and fulfilled them though not understanding them. God's ways have gone on through all, manifesting His grace and patience towards man. He placed man on the earth, and then sent law,-prophets, &c., until man gets to the end in rejecting all God tries man and then brings in the new man, who is the fulfillment of all His blessed counsels—the second Adam. Then He takes up the second Adam as the heavenly man into a heavenly place, and all now depends not on the responsibility of man, but on the stability of God. Life, righteousness, and glory descend from heaven. Is it life that is needed? God gives the life of Christ in resurrection. Is it righteousness? It is a divine righteousness that God gives. Is it a kingdom? It is the kingdom of heaven. All flows down not simply from God in grace, but from the place which man has in glory, from the counsels of God about the heavenly man in glory. He has first taken Him up, and thence the blessing flows down. The man Christ Jesus has fully met all man's responsibilities. This is the reason of the fullness of the blessing of the gospel, and also that of the kingdom to come. The gospel is the power of God, and the kingdom is to be set up in heaven. The king is gone into the far country, and when he returns, it will be to bring in the kingdom of heaven. All the counsels of God now take their center and seat in heaven. Thus, in the largest way, the turning point in all the plans and counsels of God is Jesus being set at the right rand of God. All the character, the stability, and the perfectness of our blessing takes its source from the exalted Jesus. The character of it is heavenly; the stability is what God has done; and the righteousness that fits me for it is God's.

The Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, has come down to bear witness to Him, on which the peace of the soul rests, even on the accomplished righteousness of Him who is taken up into glory. His office is to work within, and make us manifest what God is, down here. All this we have as the result of Christ, instead of accomplishing the promises as David's Son, bringing them in as David's Lord.

Mark the moral blessedness of this general principle: “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Christ humbled himself, not was humbled, that is another thing. “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” That is what we are to do—take the lowest place. We cannot do this till we are christians; but it is our glory to take the lowest, and hear Him say, “Come up higher.” “He hath left us an example that we should follow his steps.” The Lord Jesus has been rejected as David's Son. He will come forth as David's Lord.

Now, while He is thus hidden, we see the Church's place. We are “hid with Christ in God,” and have our portion by faith, as united to Him, while He is out of sight. The Holy Ghost, having come down, gives us a place as associated with Him in all the blessedness of the Father's house, and in all the glory which He has to be displayed by and by.

The place of Eve was one of union with Adam in the dominion over all things. (Gen. 1:26-28; 5:2). We find the church in the display of Christ's glory only as by grace the bride and companion of Christ; never as part of the inheritance. Viewed even individually, we are “joint-heirs with Christ.” It is of the last importance to the saints in these days, to apprehend the distinct place which we have, as one with Christ, the Heavenly Man.

At the close of chap. 20. and the beginning of chap. xxi. we have a most instructive, though painful, contrast between the selfish hypocrisy of the scribes, whom He condemns before the people, and the real devoted love of the widow, whom He singles out for honor. Remark also that the Lord knows how to separate the intention of a sincere soul from the system that surrounds it, judging the whole state of that with which the individual is associated. Observe, further, the difference of giving one's living and one's superfluity. It is easy to compliment God with presents, and thus really minister to self; but she who gives her living, gives herself in devotedness to God, and proves her dependence on God. Thus, the two mites of her who had these only, expressed all this perfectly; for there was need and everything else to hinder, while the applause of men and the pride of the donor found no place here. For Jewish splendor the act had little worth; but the Lord saw, and bore witness of, the poor widow, blessed in her deed.

Ver. 5 and seq. The account which the Lord gives in this gospel of the sorrows of Jerusalem is also, like the preceding, much more allied to the simple fact of the judgment on the nation and the change of dispensation. It differs much from Matt. 24 which fully refers to what is to arrive at the end; while our gospel bears, more than the first two, on the then present time and setting aside of Jerusalem. Hence, Luke plainly sets forth the siege and destruction by Titus, and the times of the Gentiles. Let it be observed also that the question in verse 7 extends only to the predicted destruction. Consequently, in what follows, we have the judgment on the nation taken as a whole, from its then destruction till the times of the Gentiles (with whose economy this gospel is so much occupied) be fulfilled. Nation should rise against nation, signs from heaven and sorrows on earth follow. And before all these the disciples would be objects of hostility, but that would turn for a testimony instead of destroying theirs. They were to go on testifying, while the unhappy devoted city where they were filled up its iniquity. The Lord would permit trial, but not a hair of their head would be lost. But this would close. The sign given here is in no wise the abomination of desolation, but an historical fact—Jerusalem encompassed with armies. Its desolation now approached. They were then to flee, not to return. These were days of vengeance (it is not said of the unprecedented tribulation, as in Matthew, which is only in the latter day). All that was written was to be fulfilled. Great distress there was in the land, and wrath on this people. Slaughter first and captivity afterward wrought their cruel work of devastation, and Jerusalem till this hour abides, the boast and prey of Gentile lords, and so must it be till their day is over.

In these earlier verses (8-19) the Lord dwells on the dangers, duties, and trials of the disciples before the sack of Titus. Specially were they to beware of a pretended deliverer, and of the cry that the time (i.e., of deliverance) was at hand. Neither were they to be terrified by wars or commotions, any more than seduced by fair promises. These things must first be, but the end not immediately. Besides, it was not only confusion and woes and signs of coming change and evil outside. Before all these they themselves were to be in affliction and persecution for Christ's sake. Then, in verses 20-24, comes the actual judgment of the city and people, already judged virtually by His rejection. This extends down to our own days in principle. But all is not yet fulfilled. For in verse 25 begins the Lord's description of the closing scene—a judgment not on the Jews merely, but on the Gentiles also; for the powers of the heavens, the source of authority, shall be shaken, as in Hag. 2 and Heb. 12 This is not said to be immediately after the siege of Titus; but, on the contrary, room is left for the long course of treading down of Jerusalem under Gentiles, till their times are run out. It is in Matthew that we must look for the great tribulation of the last days, occupied as the first evangelist is with the consequences of Messiah's rejection, especially to Israel. Therefore, it is said there, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days,” i.e., the short crisis of “Jacob's trouble” yet to come. Here, however, after mention of the times of the Gentiles, it is said that “there shall be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and waves roaring, men's hearts failing them,” &c. Men were astounded because they saw not the end, and trembled as they were dragged along to some unknown,

awful conclusion. For principles were at work, they knew not how, dragging them along whether or no. The coming of the Son of man disclosed all the scene to the disciples. But it is clear from the circumstances, and especially from the character of the redemption spoken of, (ver. 28,) that it is a question, not of Christians, but of earthly disciples, and of an earthly deliverance by judgment here below. The Lord in mercy turns the terror of man into a sign of deliverance for the remnant of that day.

Bible Treasury: Volume N7, Conversion and Salvation (duplicate Completed)

There are many people who bear the name of Christians who have not got beyond this state [i.e. who are converted, but do not know salvation]. These are like the prodigal son (Luke 15), when he repents and arises to go to his father. He was on the right way, but he did not know how he would be received by his father. Such people possess perhaps more light, but as to their relation with God, they are in the same state.

Cornelius was already converted, devout, faithful, and full of the fear of God, according to the light he possessed. But he did not know salvation, the work of the Savior, and its efficacy. Led only by the grace of God, he received with faith what Peter told him. Now it was declared to him that, according to the testimony of all the prophets, he who believed in Jesus received the remission of his sins. The Holy Ghost seals by His coming this truth received with simple faith into the hearts of Cornelius and his friends. The Holy Ghost is given then to the Gentiles, without their becoming Jews or being circumcised. Henceforth it was impossible not to receive them into the Christian assembly. God had received them, and had put His seal on them. Peter commands them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

We have here four distinct points: the conversion of the soul by grace (Cornelius was already converted, and his prayers and alms accepted by God); then the testimony for the remission of his sins by faith in Jesus, the victim by whom propitiation was made for us on the cross; then the seal of God in the gift of the Holy Ghost; and, finally, the formal reception among the Christians. This order is not that which is found elsewhere; because God was here sheaving that it was His will that the Gentiles should be received. But it is important to distinguish the four things, and to observe the true force of each of them.

It is important to ponder deeply the difference between conversion and salvation. I have already spoken on this subject, but it is one that is so much neglected, and Christians are so accustomed to be content with a low state of soul, and are so uncertain with regard to salvation, that I shall take the opportunity of adding a few more words. Cornelius was already converted; his prayers and alms were acceptable to God. He was to call for Peter, who would tell him words whereby he might be saved: God had been working in his soul, but he did not yet know the value of the work accomplished by the Savior. It is the same in the case of the woman in Luke 7; she loved the Lord deeply, had felt the height of His grace and the depth of her sins; but knew not that all was pardoned. The Lord tells her so. The prodigal son was converted, confessed his sins, and turned towards his father, but he was not yet clothed with the best garment. His father had not yet fallen on his neck, he knew not his love; he hardly hoped to be admitted as a servant, and was not in a fit state to enter into the house. Every privilege awaited him, but he did not possess them.

I doubt not that He who has begun the good work will continue it till the day of Christ Jesus. As long as a soul reasons about its state, seeks to know whether it is saved or converted, and judges by its own heart of what is in the heart of God, it is under law; salvation for such an one depends on his own state, not on the love of God and the efficacy of the work of Christ. He may perhaps say he is truly converted; he feels the need of salvation, and believes that others have found it; but he does not himself possess it; just as Israel was not out of the land of Egypt till the sea was crossed. Two things, which cannot be separated, are necessary; faith in the work of Christ, and the knowledge that it is finished. I say they cannot be separated, because, when we believe in the work of Christ, and by faith trust in it, we are sealed by the Holy Ghost; we enjoy peace (the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts), we are reconciled to God, and in Christ are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; and we know it by the Holy Ghost given to us. In spirit we are in the Father's house, partaking of the food with which He nourishes His beloved children. Not only has the heart turned towards God, but Christ is our righteousness, who also appears for us continually before the face of God.

J. N. D.

Letters 2, Exercises and Ground of Peace; Parable of the Prodigal Son; Righteousness of God; Self Knowledge

I doubt your having ever been stripped of self, in such a way as to rest with holy humility on a righteousness other than your own, the righteousness of God, but which is yours by faith.

This stripping of self is a deep work wrought by God, and by the revelation of what He is. The personal conviction of sin, and the discovery of our misery in the struggle against it, are but the means of reaching it. When I have found that the result of my efforts to attain to holiness—efforts that could not be wanting in a quickened soul—is but the discovery that I do not attain to it, I am compelled (having come in my rags into the presence of God, who desires nothing in us, in His house, but perfect conformity to Christ) to submit that God should be on my neck, and I still in my rags, and that God should clothe me (because that is His good pleasure in His grace) with the "best robe," with Christ Himself, which did not belong to me either before my sin, or since—no more the robe of Adam innocent than of Adam a sinner, but which was and which is in the treasures of God for those who are called by grace. Then I am called to walk as a son of the house, that is to say, as Christ walked. If we fail, we reproach ourselves for it a thousand times more than when we were outside, hoping to enter the house; but the question of knowing whether I belong to the house is not raised; it is because I do, that sin has so horrible a character in my eyes, so unsuitable to what I am, a child of God thus clothed—so horrible, when I think of what Christ has suffered on account of that sin.

God speaks to you now by the circumstances through which He is making you pass. Be assured it is in love that He leads you thus, and because He loves you. Remember that Christ is your righteousness from God, but the righteousness of a soul convinced of two things, first that it has no righteousness, and then that it has need of righteousness, need of being at peace with God—a need produced by the consciousness of its sin, without the hint of a desire that God should be less holy than He is.

This is why I said it is a deep work: it makes the soul simple, but it does not find it so. I do not look that you should be able to give an account of it intellectually, but that the thing itself should be done, and that you should find yourself stripped of self by the discovery of sin, leaning upon the righteousness of God which He has made ours, in giving us Christ, our precious Savior. Peace be to you then in the name of [Him who shed] that precious blood which cleanses from all sin. Be watchful and look to God, opening all your heart to Him in thorough confidence. This is what puts truth into the soul, and He is worthy of it, through His perfect goodness to us.

Letters 1, Full Gospel, The Effect of a

* * * I find everywhere that a full, clear, positive gospel, the proclamation of a real salvation, attracts souls; they need it. Insist on holiness as much as you please in nourishing the soul with Christ; but let the grace that saves be grace, let it be God; an entirely new life, and a divine righteousness accorded to mat already entirely lost, and being flesh, without resource, even in God—man led to own this condition in the presence of God, but there clothed by God with the best robe, a robe that he had not even in his innocence: a sovereign act of grace, of God, which having absolutely put away our sins, introduces us into an entirely new position, and that by the communication of the life of Christ risen, in which as He is so are we. For ourselves, dear brother, let us seek ardently, constantly, and with confidence, communion with God; so that self set aside, and our thoughts and intentions judged, we may have entire confidence in Him. He is faithful, and there is nothing sweeter than to have the conscience at home with this faithfulness, with this love that finds its joy in blessing us. Let us watch against the enemy in the path of God's will....

[1856.]

Letters 2, Decline; Moody's Work; Pastoral Care; Revivals; Unworldliness, The Tendency to

Dearest,—My date—a rare thing—will say where I am.

I felt, as I have said, on the perch in Canada, but, thank God, I get constantly fresh testimony to blessing from my visits.... So that though I was going as called for, more than any previously set purpose, I am comforted by the Lord's goodness. But I still feel, though peacefully working here, my work is more sedentary now; and then it would be in England, without precluding visits according to my ability. I have happy news from Holland.

I doubt the wisdom of making this young person ask her father's leave, he being unconverted. If it is professedly a question of owning Christ, a person must "hate" father and mother. I know not who gave this advice. The letter seems a strange one: if it was merely a question of waiting awhile, she fully intending to do it when she had an opportunity, she might, I think, have been let in, but I do not see why she should not have been baptized. The case was not, I think, dealt wisely with. As to any busy activity of Baptist brethren, we have only to let it pass: I do not believe it to be of God, but I believe it to be of God to bear with it, profitless as it may be.

Here the work is individual, no preaching does much—may help those who hear, but it is not so the work goes on: it is in reading meetings and personal intercourse, and this has gone on with blessing, and I trust is doing so.... What is important for brethren is not to take the world for granted and be conformed to it. I used to say fifty years ago that God's renewed actings in grace, revivals, in the old sense, were like fresh water poured on the ground; the next step was mud mixture: only I hoped since that the Lord might come before it happened. It was so with Christianity at the beginning; but that is the question for brethren now. The first were a testimony for separation; that brought in many. Are they so now? is the question; not speculating about Philadelphia. But I trust the Lord. But brethren's work has spread out far and wide beyond them as an effect, and these products of it are a hindrance. At the beginning it was faith acting on the word—conscience; now it is looking to see the state and effect. But while conscious of all around us, we have to go like a horse with blinkers, looking straight forward, undistracted, an afflicted and poor people that call upon the name of the Lord. He remains the same, and the word remains the same.

Affectionately yours in Him.

Boston,

December 22nd.

Letters 3, Work for the Lord

The Lord be with you, dear brother, and help you in your work. It is a mercy to be allowed to work for Him. The time will come when we shall know all else is vanity. Keep close to Him; there only is strength or help or wisdom. We must expect combat, and sorrow over failure, but let our eyes look straight forward. The Lord exercises us in these things. We have only to do His will, and walk in grace to others as those who may be tempted themselves.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

August, 1876.

Notes and Jottings, Luke 12:35-48, Lecture -

THIS world is in a state of ruin, the result of man having distrusted God and sinned and of his being driven out of Paradise. No one can shut out the fact that the evil is here. Outward things prove it. What is the magistrate for if there is no evil to stop? There it is, and God has dealt with it. He called out Abraham, He gave a law, He sent prophets, and He sent His Son. Yet the world has gone totally wrong. There has been great development in it, no doubt, such as telegraphs and railroads, arts and sciences, and so on, but all that is just what Cain set out to do because he was away from God. People will tell you, there is no harm in it. Why no, of course, there is not. The harm is in the use we make of such things. The trees in the Garden of Eden were good enough in themselves, but they were not intended for Adam to hide himself from God behind them. If I strike a man dead, the harm is not in my strength in itself, but in the use I am making of it. What is wrong in music? The sounds are beautiful, just look around in this great City and see the purpose music is serving at public houses, etc., etc.

Adam sinned against God, and Cain sinned against his brother, and then he builds a city in order to make himself as comfortable as he can without God. Workers in brass and iron and music are found therein. And the difficulty now is that Christians do not understand that they are to be witnesses of grace in a world that will only last for a time and then it will be given over to judgment.

People talk of the progress of the world! Well, I do not deny it, but what will that be to you when you are dead? For the next generation? And where will you be when the next generation comes? All sorts of conveniences have been made, but then are people morally nearer to God by these things? The moment they are used to make the need of reconciliation to God less important to people's souls, they are simply Cain's works. There may be hundreds of things yet to be found out, but can anybody say that my soul is in a better state before God because of telegraphs and other inventions? But directly my soul learns that I have got to do with God forever, I have a sense of what I am.

The truth is that God has brought light into this world, which tells me everything that concerns me for eternity, whilst it leaves other things where they are. And in the Christ of God I find that which gives me a relationship that shall last forever. Thus God has dealt with this world as with a world that has departed from Him, and yet He has dealt with it in perfect grace.

And Christ coming into this world has become a servant for the believer. He says, " I am among you as he that serveth," that is to say, to glorify God and to save us. As taking up our cause, He has set Himself to carry this out, and to be, eternally, the minister of blessing to us according to God. Alone with God He has done all that which was needed, for He has been " made sin." God cannot allow sin, and so Christ gave Himself for our sins that instead of putting me away for my sins He might put my sins away for me.

The effect of this is that Christ has become everything to us who believe, and our hearts are taken out of this world altogether. Christ is sitting at the right hand of God and faith follows Him there in Spirit, so that now we do not belong any more to this world. Quite true, we have to go through the wilderness, but it is with the consciousness of belonging to Christ outside of it.

Well then, Christ has redeemed us from this present evil world, and the more we see the world making progress, the more we need to learn that Christianity consists in our being Christ's and not the world's. The world that I am in, but not of, is the world that has rejected and crucified the Son of God. The Christian is to be gracious in the world as Christ was, but his heart is with Christ. How blessedly this works! It brings hearts down that have had too much of this world and it lifts hearts up that have much of sorrow and trial. " Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: but the rich, in that he is made low." Christ fixes our hearts upon Himself, outside of this world.

And we are to be as men that wait for their Lord. The meaning of " lights burning " is, that we have a distinct definite profession so that men should know what we are. " Your loins... girded," is the practical application of the power of the word. Christ looks for the distinct and full confession of Himself in word and deed, and also that your hearts should be all right and in order. Loins girded and lights burning should characterize Christians in the world. Truth in the heart and a good confession of Christ. It is an astonishing fact that nobody with a false religion is ashamed of it. A Mohammedan will say his prayers while he is making a bargain with you. And yet how many a true Christian is ashamed of Christ! But the Lord wants us to be as men that wait for their Lord. Are our hearts really waiting for God's Son from heaven? I do not talk of understanding the prophecies-very blessed in their place-but the Morning Star is what belongs to us, a heavenly Christ who has given His life for us. As, then, we are found looking to be with and like Christ forever, this helps us to go through this world. The character attaching to the Christian is, then, that of watching. It is not understanding prophecy, but it is attachment to Christ as having got the promise that He is coming so that we are waiting for Him. Such have found Christ precious to them, and they say, " Oh, that He would come! " Are we Christians, then, as men that wait for their Lord? If the Lord were to come to-night, would He be able to say of each one of us, " there is a blessed servant "? Remember He is waiting more truly than we are. Christ has become our servant-love likes to serve, and selfishness likes to be served-and He never gives up His service. In this wicked world we must keep our loins girt, whilst so watching, but when He comes He will gird Himself and make us sit down. Not merely shall we have the best in heaven, but we shall have Christ Himself to minister to us.

He adds another thing. " Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Here we have the service of Christians. We have had the state, now it is the service; we have just to fill up the little niche He has put us into. So, accordingly, the promise here is different: " He will make him ruler over all that he hath." This is not the best of heaven ministered by Christ to us, but it is the kingdom; "you must come and reign with me." The perfect love of Christ is not merely satisfied with ministering to our happiness, but all that is His own He makes ours.

Now what has brought in the evil around us? Just this, " My lord delayeth his coming." If we were really waiting for Christ, would we be heaping up money and property here? Would we be really glad if Christ came to-night, I mean as to the state of our hearts? Ah! the shaking that will next come will be the shaking of the things that can be shaken, so that the things which cannot be shaken may remain The Lord give us to have our loins girded and our lights burning, and ourselves to be as men waiting for their Lord!

The Lord give us to know Him in His love as manifested down here in the efficacy of His work on the cross, and then whilst waiting for Him, to have our hearts looking up to Him and longing to be like Him!

Notes and Jottings, Luke 12:35-53, Lecture -

THE Lord had been warning the world in the previous part of this chapter. There was the folly of those who sought their pleasure and comfort in it; and He says: " Seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good

pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Now what distinguishes the Christian is this, that by the revelation of what is not seen, he is borne up out of this world altogether. He has, of course, to pass through it, but, as a Christian, he does not belong to it at all. " They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Redemption being accomplished, this gives us a title, like the poor thief, into Paradise; but even so, we are strangers here, as in Hebrews, and we seek a country. There is nothing settled or established in this world; from the very beginning, its spirit has been that of seeking rest, whereas God, in judgment of it, has made _us strangers.

It was all over with Cain, and as God said to him, and as he also said, he was to be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. He declared he was made a vagabond, and then he went and built a city in the land of Nod, i.e., vagabond.

Man was driven out of Paradise. Cain was jealous of Abel, and God's judgment had come upon him; but he went out from the presence of the Lord and built a city and settled himself there, calling it by his son's name. The next element is " cattle," i.e., wealth; then, artificers in brass and iron; and then comes the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

Sin had made man a stranger to the Paradise of God, and so man sought to make for himself a rest.

But that is not quite all; for when the blessed Lord came into this world, man not only saw no beauty in Him, but man cast Him out and crucified Him.

And so as to the world now. Not only the world exists as the result of man being driven out of Paradise, but its present state is the consequence of his having driven God out of it, when He came in grace into it. That gave an occasion to God for the unfolding of all His ways; but the moment the Son of God was rejected, then the moral history of this world was closed.

Yet the Lord could say, " Now the prince of this world he shall cast out "; and He broke the power of Satan, though Satan is still the god of this world. " Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The world has not come to an end yet, but in the rejection of Christ, the blessed Son of God, man's moral history came to an end, and he is now treated as lost; not so lost that he cannot be saved, but lost as to his moral condition, and thus he now stands before God.

God has come down to this world and He says to man, not merely, where art thou? or, you have done this and that, but, what have you done with My Son? That is what He has to say to the world now; and what can the world say to this?

Christ came in goodness. Even Pilate asked, " Why, what evil hath he done? " But man cast Him out. And I cannot take up Christianity now without saying, the world has rejected Christ. That is the position in which the world is; it has rejected Christ, and man is lost.

But God said to Christ, " Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And the Lord. Jesus Christ, rejected by man, is sitting at God's right hand as Man, expecting until His enemies are made His footstool. Patient grace is working meanwhile to call sinners to a knowledge of the salvation which He has wrought.

First, He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and then, " Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." But that will surely be judgment for those who have rejected Him.

We stand between the first coming and the second coming of Christ; the first being when He accomplished redemption; and the second being the full fruits of it, including also the judgment of the dead.

Christianity is characterized as having this position between these two comings.

The prophets had prophesied beforehand of the sufferings of Christ. Look for a moment at 1 Peter 1:10. I only refer to it as regards the order of things. The prophets before the sufferings (and so, of course, before the glory), searched their own prophecies in order to understand them, and it was revealed to them that they ministered them to us; and they are now reported to us; they are not yet come, so that Christianity is not the accomplishment of the things themselves. The things are reported in the gospel by the Holy Ghost come down, and we are therefore to gird up the loins of our mind, waiting for the grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

This is simple and clear; they searched their own prophecies, and they found that the grace they spoke of was not for them, but for us.

But now, Christ is personally glorified at the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost has come, and we are walking here by faith, not by sight.

When the Lord was going away, He put the disciples into this place, knowing that the effect of it would be opposition from the world.

Peter testified; "whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand."

And so the Lord says, " 0 righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee." He had revealed the Father perfectly, but the world would not have that revelation; they rejected it. He had been faithful, and then, through accomplished redemption, He goes back to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

We have, then, this great fact, that the Lord Jesus has gone back as Man, having accomplished the work of redemption, to sit at the right hand of God. The One upon whom all had depended has finished the work, and accordingly He has gone to sit at the right hand of God.

He has finished it, as regards His friends, and just because it is finished, He has sat down.

Of old, the priests were ever standing, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which could never take away sins; but this Man, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down, i.e., He sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God. He is now sitting upon the Father's throne, expecting until His enemies be made His footstool. And, as regards His friends, i.e., all believers, it adds, " For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

In consequence of this, the Holy Ghost has come down. He never came until the day of Pentecost; just as the Son of God never came until the incarnation. There was a going and a coming, as He says, " If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."

But before the Holy Ghost could come, man must be in the glory of God; and the great fact is that man, the blessed Man, the Son of God, had been glorified in the glory of God, before ever the Holy Ghost came.

But on the day of Pentecost He did come to all them that had believed. There we have the Christian position. God had prophesied before of it, but God's word is a different thing from the accomplishment of the fact. Looked at as promises, " Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." But there is more than that, He was the Object of the promises.

There was no promise to us that Christ should die for us; it was not a promise to us that He should ascend up into heaven; Psa. 68. But He is sitting at God's right hand. What was testified is, " Thou hast ascended on high." Christ has come down here, and, dying and rising, is now set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

All was testified beforehand, and all has now been accomplished. The world rejected Christ when He came, but God has set Him there in glory. Man saw no beauty in Him- He was wounded for our transgressions-but He has glorified God in His death, and is now glorified of God at His right hand.

So that if my sins brought Christ to the cross, the consequence of it is that they are all put away. He “bare our sins in his own body on the tree." If I go to God and acknowledge that my sins brought Jesus there, under His holy judgment, then they can never bring me there. The whole thing is completely finished, not merely for lawless people, not merely for lawbreaking people as the Jews (and practically many people are now under the law), but God has stepped in, and settled the whole question of sin. Christ has come into this world and died, God manifest in flesh, so that I might be able to trust God in love, that I might say: Though I cannot trust man in the world, he is so vile, I can trust God who sent His Son; Christ has wrought such a work that He Himself who did it is at the right hand of God in righteousness. Here is the fact; it is not a promise.

There are precious promises to help us along the road more easily; but this is a fact. When I come to say, honestly as a sinner, my sins brought Christ to the cross, and that God has carried Him to His right hand, then do I know He is not sitting in my sins at the right hand of God. That is no place in which to sit in sins!

He glorified God on the earth. He " became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." The more we look at the cross of Christ, the more we shall see that everything that is in question as to good and evil has been all settled there.

In the cross, I find man in absolute wickedness, i.e., as hating God come in love; for God had come not to judge the world, but to save the world.

The prince of this world came, and led both Jews and Gentiles to get rid of Christ. Man is against Him; Satan is against Him; but Christ is perfect in it all, " that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do."

You have man here in absolute (it is hard to say perfect) wickedness, together with Satan having complete power over the world, getting rid of the Son of God; and though they hated Him without a cause, yet He goes through all in perfect obedience, showing thus absolute perfection in Man.

If we turn to God in this scene, we find perfect love to the sinner. All that man can be in perfection is seen in the Person of Christ, and also all that God is in His holy, righteous nature against sin, and in His perfect love to sinners.

So, every way, God is perfectly glorified in the cross; and every question has been settled there.

We find there both the perfect judgment of God against sin, and the perfect love of God towards the sinner.

If God had cut off Adam and Eve, it would have been all very right, but there would have been no love in that, and if He had passed over sin, there would have been no righteousness.

In the cross, and in nowhere else, you get all moral questions perfectly settled. It is the absolute bringing out of man, and of Satan, and of God.

And there all is settled.

Now God has owned that, in that He has raised Christ from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, as Man, in the heavenly places, i.e., after that He had by Himself purged our sins.

The great truth remains, that when everything had been morally settled, man is found at the right hand of God; and in this, too, God has displayed His righteousness.

Then, the Holy Ghost is given upon the earth, the One who, when He is come, shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The Savior came in grace; but the coming of the Holy Ghost testified to two things: first, that, having finished His work, Christ was gone forever; and next, that He was gone so that God could set Him at His own right hand.

In John 13, speaking of the cross, He says, " Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him," i.e., as Son of man, as well as Son of God. As God has been perfectly glorified in Christ on the cross, so God will perfectly glorify Christ.

Then comes the work of the Holy Ghost given down here. The Spirit of God brings to a man's conscience his own individual sins; but He convinces the world " of sin, because they believe not on " Christ; " of righteousness, because I go to my Father,... of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." There is the testimony and proof of righteousness, because there is One who is a Man, who, in the very place of sin, sinless but " made sin," perfectly glorified God; and bed has perfectly glorified Him.

That is the whole thing.

At His first coming, He died, was raised again, and was glorified in virtue of what He had done. All was finished first of all, and then the Holy Ghost came down.

Christ, who bore my sins, is now as Man, at the right hand of God in glory, and down here, the Holy Ghost is the witness that He is there.

That is our place, and, through the Holy Ghost we have received, comes the knowledge of that perfect love of God in which He did not spare His own Son.

What this accomplishes, then, is this: it puts me in the place where Christ is, and therefore, even from John the Baptist's father, we learn it was " to give knowledge of salvation unto his people." It is by the Holy Ghost that this knowledge comes; and I know that Christ is at the right hand of God, and also that He it is who bore my sins; if the work had not been complete, finished, accepted, He could not have been there, but it was God who raised Him from the dead.

And, the Holy Ghost given, that is where it puts those who believe. It is given to believers, i.e., it is only the portion of those who do believe.

It is the presence of the Holy Ghost which gives me the consciousness of the place I am brought into.

Here I get infinite; perfect love; for God gave His Son to be a man, and He died for me that I might be in glory; and He told me, when risen, " I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God."

' We are all the sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ.' That is the force of those words in John, " To them gave he power to become the sons [or the children] of God." Then again, " Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." It is my place through Christ's work, and the Holy Ghost has given me the consciousness of it, for God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into my heart. I cannot call a man ' Father' if I do not know whether I am his child or not.

Then I learn another thing by the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, and that is, I know that I am in Christ; that, of course, is perfect acceptance. "At that day "-i.e., when the Comforter is come, for they could not know it until then-" ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you," John 14.

People say, you cannot know; but the Lord says, " Ye shall know." Who am I to believe? " Ye in me, and I in you." Well, then, I know I am in Christ, and that is perfect acceptance. You must condemn Christ in glory, if you condemn the believer, for He is in Christ. The Spirit is given to us that we may know Christ is in the Father, " and ye in me, and I in you."

" But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin: but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

I get perfect acceptance, and, with it, the character of responsibility; we are the epistle of Christ.

It does not say, ye are to be, but ye are the epistle of Christ; and the world ought to read Christ in you, as they might read the ten commandments on the two tables of stone.

Mark, it is not responsibility as to our acceptance; we are in Christ; but if that is true, the other side is also true. " Walk worthy," therefore, " of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."

And again, in Colossians, where he speaks in the most definite way as to our acceptance, " giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," he prays that they " might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." He takes the Lord there as the One in whom it all is.

There is another character of responsibility in Ephesians: " Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

Now God, the Lord, and the Spirit are thus to be the measure of what suits us in this world.

Another thing: " He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." There is no need of taking us on the side of conscience: " Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." There I find what constitutes the Christian; the foundation is in Christ; the body of the Christian " is the temple of the Holy Ghost,... which ye have of God "; and so, " after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Having been washed from my sins by the blood of Christ, the Holy Ghost makes my body His temple. That is the Christian position consequent upon redemption; it is the Christian place, and thus I have to walk as Christ walked.

Forty days after His resurrection, the Lord ascended, and then He sent the Holy Ghost down here to dwell in those who believe, " whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." We know that He does dwell in us because we cry, " Abba, Father."

We look to Christ, and we know we are in Him; but the presence of the Holy Ghost is what characterizes the Christian, not, of course, in his inconsistencies, but as a Christian.

If your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and you are bought with a price, how, then, can you go and sin?

The believer is left here in this world as the epistle of Christ, and the life of Jesus is to be manifested in him This is his responsibility.

He knows his place; he cries, " Abba, Father "; the love of God is shed abroad in his heart; and he knows his relationship with God. He is in Christ, who is sitting at the right hand of God, while the Holy Ghost dwells in Him as His temple.

But if children, we are also heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

Christ being in me, my business now is to show out Christ down here, and it is my privilege to suffer with Him. Having the Spirit of Christ in me, I cannot pass through a world of degradation, and sin, and misery without feeling in some real measure what is the scene through which I

am passing, and what is its opposition as well as its character. Thus, having received the Holy Ghost, the Christian passes through the world as not being of it, and as having his conversation (i.e., living associations) in heaven.

Christ " gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world," and so I am called to pass through this world; supposing Christ had been crucified last night, well the question is, am I going on with the world that crucified Him, or am I going on with Him?

Again; I must have the Holy Ghost to know that I am accepted with joy. I cannot look up and say, " Even so, come," unless I know that my redemption is settled; and then I find that Christ is all, and in all; He is everything to us as Object, and He is in all as the power of life and joy.

Having washed me from my sins in His own blood, He has become everything to my soul.

I cannot find a thing in Christ the value of which has not been spent upon me.

Let me remark one thing here, and that is, that we know whom we love if we do not love Him enough. If anyone says, " I love my mother, and I think I love her enough," I say, " You wretch, you do not love her at all." But if a child says, " Oh, I do not half love my mother, for all her care, and painstaking, and labor for me," I say, that child does love its mother.

So it is with the Lord and us; and we long therefore to see Him. This characterizes the Christian position; the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, and we know that we are sons; He dwells with us consequent upon accomplished redemption; Christ has thus become precious to us, and the second thing, therefore, that characterizes the Christian is, that he is waiting for Christ; I say this advisedly.

Look at the Christian in the Christian place; not merely he has knowledge that characterizes him; but he is waiting for Christ to return. The Thessalonians were converted to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. Nothing can be simpler or plainer. All the various thoughts and feelings of Christians are connected with His coming again. Take the end of each chapter in 1 Thessalonians.

The first chapter connects His return with conversion;

The second, with Paul's ministry;

The third, with holiness which will be manifested at His coming;

The fourth, with the death of the Christian.

The Lord shall come, and the dead shall be raised first, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them; and then the apostle adds, " Wherefore comfort one another with these words "; but go and tell that to many a Christian now, and he will think you out of your mind!

I cannot go into all these points; but I just take one, " To wait for his Son from heaven." Not merely shall I be happy in heaven, but the Lord says, " I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." It is striking how it changes a person's feelings, whether it is, as people talk, that I am going to heaven, or that Christ is coming for me. Going to heaven is never spoken of in Scripture. The nearest approach to it is in the case of the dying thief: " With me in paradise." Going to be with Christ is what you do find. "Absent from the body,... present with the Lord" is blessedly true for us; but that is not quite the same thought. Not that the going to heaven is not true, but where there is only this before the soul, it shuts out the thought of Christ's coming for us.

If I die, I go to be with Him; but if I do not die, then He comes and takes me to be with Him.

And therefore, the calling of the church, the hope, the object, the thing before us-and this is what a man lives by-is the Lord's return, for that which characterizes a man is what he is going after.

What was the calling of the ten virgins? To go out and meet the Bridegroom. But what about the dear good men who died a hundred years ago? They fell asleep like the virgins. And what awoke the virgins? At midnight the cry came, and they all arose and trimmed their lamps; that cry woke them all up.

And herein is the test of everyone's state: Supposing the Lord should come to-night, am I ready to meet Him? I do not know when He will come; but it says, " in such an hour as ye think not."

Are our hearts, our thoughts, and our affections in good order? Are our lights burning? Are we confessing Him before men? Are we like men that wait for their Lord? For to such He comes and knocks, and opens to them immediately. That is the character we are to have.

Talking about prophecy is all very easy and interesting in its place, but when a soul has got salvation, then there are two subjects in Scripture; the government of this world, and the sovereignty of grace which takes poor sinners and sets them in Christ. Prophecy refers to the government of this world, and the Jews are the center of that; but as for the Christian, I find that he is predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. When will that be? If I die first, I shall go to be with Christ, and that is blessed; but it is not, what Scripture calls conformity to His image. When will that take place?

"We know"—a word that Scripture is fond of, for the Holy Ghost is come—"we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." That is when I shall be conformed to His image; and so I am going to be really like Him!

Meanwhile, we are to be like Him in spirit, and in view of that we must realize that " our conversation is in heaven."

We have, then, this blessed truth, that Christ is coming again to take us up to be with Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.

Again, we find that when the Lord was caught up, the disciples were looking up into heaven, and they were told that " 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."

Time will not allow me to multiply passages; I see the calling of the Christian is to be waiting for Christ to come: " Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord." And I only ask you, if you were waiting for Christ, would you care to heap up money to meet Christ with?

I add a word or two about the details of it; the Lord here speaks in a double way of His return to show how fully He would develop it.

Firstly, those are blessed who wait for Christ to come. We belong already to heaven and to what is eternal, although we do not know when Christ will come and take us there. Are our hearts taken out of this world, as out of a place from which He has redeemed us, so that we are watching for Him to come? The word of His patience is so called because He is expecting; and, if He is, of course we are. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; though of this, the world is willingly ignorant.

Secondly, those are blessed who are found watching. What characterizes the Blessed One, does also characterize those who are waiting for Him; they are watching to open for Him instantly He returns.

Then follows the statement of the blessedness of those who are so watching.

When the Lord cometh, " Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." He spreads the table for them in heaven, and then He sets them down at it. He spreads it with the best things of heaven; and not only so, but He comes Himself and ministers to diem. But until I do come, He says, you must have your loins girded, and your lights burning; presently I shall have it all My own way, and then I will have you to sit down to meat, and I will serve you Myself! What a thought that gives us of the love of Christ! Of course, it is only a figure, to show us He will never cease to minister the fullest blessedness to His own.

The Father has given all things into His hands; and so He takes a towel, girds Himself, and comes, and washes His disciples' feet; just as if He said to them, I want to have you with Me; and while you are down here on the way, you must be clean enough for the place where I am going. So, again, " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." That is for now.

When their hearts are no longer watching for Christ because they are with Him, He will make them sit down in blessedness, and He Himself will minister to them.

Here is, indeed, the reward of labor; and a wonderful place it is that we shall have in the kingdom as the " heirs of God, and the joint-heirs with Christ." When He takes the power and reigns, we shall reign with Him. But as to our intrinsic blessedness, the Lord girds Himself and makes us to sit down to meat, and then comes Himself to serve us!

When the Lord is speaking of watching and waiting for Him, He appeals to our affections, to encourage us to wait; and when He comes, He will make us enjoy the blessedness of heaven.

He is not going to rule alone over the works of His hands; we are joint-heirs with Him. He is the firstborn among many brethren.

Then comes a word of warning upon which I must not enlarge. " But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming," this is pretty much the position of the professing church; not that men say, He will not come, but they do not look for Him as a present thing. And so they " begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken "; i.e., they go on ruling and governing the world, and enjoying it, too. Then " the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." It is one in the place of a servant, who says, " My Lord delayeth," and then his Lord comes when he does not expect Him.

It is the judgment of the professing church.

You thus get the broad fact, that where the Lord's coming is deliberately put off in the heart, such an one will have his portion appointed with the unbelievers.

In watching for Christ, the heart's affections are drawn out to Him; that is the great thing; and then, He will set us down, and come forth to serve us.

Meanwhile, there is service for us here; but still His heart's delight is to serve us, and never will Christ be satisfied until He has us in the same glory with Himself.

He is now sitting on His Father's throne, waiting, but soon He will come and receive all true believers unto Himself, that where He is, there they may be also.

At first, Christians were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven; then they went to sleep and lost the expectation; that which woke them up was the cry of the Bridegroom.

And now comes the question for us: Are we waiting, and are we watching for Christ?

I do not believe this question has any relation to time. The government of the world, interesting enough in its place, has nothing to do with it.

There is no event between me and heaven. Plenty of events there are, but they belong to this world, and we do not. And the practical question for us is as to how far are our hearts up to this?

The world has rejected Christ; but He will return, and we shall then come with Him; but the proper portion of the Christian is for Christ to take him to be with Himself.

We who are believers, through grace, we do not half believe in the interest Christ personally takes in each one of us.

We have to go through the world, but can we say that we are watching for Christ?

Do our hearts answer to the love that Christ has to us now?

Are we answering to that love by waiting and watching for Him, because He is going to have us in the glory with Himself?

May the Lord give us to be as men that wait for their Lord: " Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching! "

Luke 12:35-41

THESE verses, and indeed the whole chapter, show how the saints are viewed apart from this world. There was a scene around which was plotting against them. They were not to fear-" Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." But there was something in it that they were to fear; they were to beware of hypocrisy (v. 1), for all would be disclosed. He presses that they should have their treasure in heaven. It is not as people often say, "Where your heart is, there is your treasure"; but, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." They were taken out of the world to serve in it; and He encourages them to have entire confidence in the care and love of God watching over them, and tells them that in God's mind and thought they were of value-of value to God. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His care. "Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." He is your Father-" Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." You must trust Him. For the present they were obliged to have their loins girded. This was not rest. They were to be tucked up ready for work and service; their lights burning, and they watching-ready for their Lord.

While that was their character in this world, there was a world that belonged to them-to the Father, and He was occupied with them about that world, though taking care of them through this. We have thus the constant abiding of His love. The Son of God has taken " the form of a servant," and He will never give it up. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, one with the Father, God over all, blessed forever; but that gives the more force to His being a servant. He has had His ear pierced through with the awl at the door-post. The Hebrew servant, when he had served seven years, if he said, " I love my master, I love my wife, I love my children, I will not go out free," became a servant forever; his ear, the sign of obedience, was bored. That is what He has done, and it is His glory-outward humiliation, but divine glory and love.

Love always delights to serve, but selfishness to be served. He is love, and He delights to serve; but if He is to serve us, He must come down low, and He comes in a love that is above everything that hinders; and the more He humbles Himself, the more I can see a love that can only be of God! It is this that is so touching in His life. He sits weary with His journey on the well, and says, " If thou knewest the gift of God, and "not, who it is that speaketh to you, but-" who it is that saith to thee " (who it is that has come low enough to say), " give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." He was a divine Person sitting talking to her, and He was her servant. He says again, " I am among you as he that serveth." He was their only Master and Lord, but being above all, He has the privilege of taking the title of servant; and having refused to go out free, He has taken this place of serving love, forever. It is His glory, and has nothing to do with His Godhead, except to show His unutterable grace.

We find in Phil. 2 His coming down to take this place. " He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." He served God; served us too in grace. He took the place in willing love. Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." And He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He lays the form of the glory of Godhead aside (Godhead He never could lay aside), and thus we find His perfect, infinite love. Where should we have been if He had not taken the form of a servant? Lost forever. But there was love enough in Him to come to this place. He goes to death, and there I find the power of divine love in His service. Nothing stopped it; Satan's power was there; man's bitter and base ingratitude, as He says in that beautiful fiftieth of Isaiah, " When I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? " He goes on: " Is my hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke, I dry up the sea," etc. As Jehovah God-He did as He pleased. He not only did miracles Himself; but what proved His divine power much more, He gave others power to do them. " He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my father," John 14:12. He is working in that perfectness of love in this world, and nothing stops it at all. " The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." I have not ceased to be Jehovah, but I have taken the place of a servant, to take up every sorrow you are in. And see the return-men found it an occasion to reject Him! " I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Nothing stopped Him-death did not stop Him. He came to die; and felt what it was to die as none of us can; for He has taken the sting out of it. He came to be " made sin," and felt how dreadful it was; for He was holy. He came to bear the wrath, and felt what it was; for He knew His Father's love. Desertion was there and betrayal, and the cup He had to drink was there. He felt it all; but in it all, divine love was there to serve and go through it, to serve us wretched sinners.

There was the power of divine love, when everything was gone (for God had forsaken Him), except bitterness and death, Satan's power, and the wrath of God. There you get divine love, and service too. It is a divine power and a power of love to us-to His Father, but to us too-a power that carries Him through everything, when everything was against Him; divine love that made Him serve through it, till it was finished. Then I adore the love that led Him to be made sin for me. There was the full testing of the love that carried Him through all. It is deeply instructive, though very dreadful to see there what man is. What do I expect of my friends if I am on trial? At least that they will not forsake me. They all forsook Him, and fled! In a Judge? I expect him to protect innocence. Pilate washes his hands of His blood, and gives Him over to the people! In a priest, what do I expect? That he will intercede for the ignorant and for them that are out of the way. They urge the people, who cry, " Away with him, away with him!" Every man was the opposite of what was right, and that One man was not only right, but in divine love He was going through it all!

First, I get Him serving me in His life; then, when He served us in death, in spite of ourselves (for man was against Him), there He was alone, all forsook Him, and God hid His face from Him. He went into the desert (Mark 6), and had no time to eat, but when the people come He ministers to them; " He could not be hid." If He is in agony on the cross, there is a poor thief to be attended to. He tells him, " This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." If He sits weary on a well, and a poor wretched woman comes, He waits on her. All through He takes the sorrows of human nature-weariness, hunger; but with a heart that never was weary when a service of love was to be performed; a Man who does not shrink from all the vileness and wretchedness of the world; a Man in all the perfection of holiness, carrying divine love to serve every need. It was, what was divine, in a Man who took the lowest place, and there is nothing like it. It is most sweet and blessed to see it, and to see He had no will of His own in it. When they tell Him, " He whom thou lovest is sick," we should have thought He would have started off at once. No, He abode two days still where He was, He had no commandment from His Father. We see it was to show His Godhead. Still, as a servant, He had no word, and He did not stir. It seemed very hard. His home, if He had one on earth, was that house at Bethany. You never find Him going out of the place of a servant, and He was never anything but the perfection of love in it. That service He took, and performed,

and finished, and now His service is over, and He is going to glory; Luke 12.

In John, where we find more the divine side than the servant's side, He shows that His going to the Father does not change His service, save the character of it. He is not serving among men, but He is serving His people up there. When He was going away, there came the thought that, now He is in the glory, His service is ended. That would not do for His heart. He says, In the glory I am not going to stop serving those poor things. Could His heart stop serving them? No, it could not! He is the Advocate, we find in the Epistle of John, and that is not in the world. He does not take it up till He goes to heaven. How could a heavenly person know the sorrows, temptations, and trials of us, poor sinful beings? He comes down here, sinless, of course; and, after being acknowledged by the Father, He is led of the Spirit to be tempted in the wilderness, because we were there. As soon as He has given the pattern of the place in which we are by redemption (Matt. 3:16, 17), He says, I must go there; and He is led of the Spirit (we are often led by other things) into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Now (John 13) He is going to glory, having so glorified God here as to have an earned place there, as well as having a rightful one there-an official place as well as a moral one. The world will not have me. I cannot stay here with you. You cannot have rest here; it is polluted. I can serve, but not rest here. He must go up to God. I must go on serving. He says, " If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." I cannot have part with you in this sinful place, and I must fit you to have part with Me on high. Though we are washed so as to have part with Him, we pick up dirt by the way; but He is our Advocate, and is still serving. He brings the heart to be humbled and broken at having dishonored His name, and it is restored. His blood is on us, but He is still washing our feet. I must make you clean, according to my idea of cleanness That is what He is doing now. It is blessed love, but it is service. Is He going to give up this satisfaction of His heart in serving us (it makes us adore Him)? He is not going to give it up, and never will. He is a Man, and a Man forever; that is what we have in this chapter. He is more than that, for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

There is one thing new for God, and that He could only do: to come down a Man here. No angel could do it; but God could come down, acting in divine supremacy and love. I cannot take the form of a servant, for if I am not a rebellious sinner, I am a servant. (I may have got into rebellion as one- that is another thing.) A divine Person can " take " on Him the form of a servant, and that is what He has done.

He says, " Let your loins be girded." Here I am in the middle of a world that says, " To-morrow shall be as yesterday, and yet more abundant." I am to be expecting Christ; the world goes on (He alone knows how long); but " the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, for when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." That is the character given it. " As in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man." (There is sin, and still more now, but that is not the point.) I believe that-not that it is the portion of believers-then I must have my loins girded. I cannot go on loosely with a world that is not going on forever. There ought to be a better motive: the heart drawn out to Him-oh! if it were only that. They go on saying, " To-morrow shall be as yesterday," etc., and yet terror is in their hearts; for there is uncertainty-nothing to reckon on for a day, or a week, or a year. He calls all Christians to take their places with their lights burning-the distinct, unequivocal testimony of what they are, carrying their lights as servants, and not going on with a careless world that is going to judgment. You cannot say when it is coming. The saints will be with the Lord before then. Can you say that it is the first thing the Lord will do-take you up in the air, to be forever with Himself? Can you tell what day He is coming? Are you ready for Him? You do not know what hour He is coming. I believe it is hastening on rapidly. The saints were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven, and when they lost that, all the mischief came in. It is their character-not a bit of knowledge, that is stuck up as a chief thing in teaching; but that is what you are to be. If you were constantly waiting for Him, would it not change you? Finding duties to do, and doing them-quite right; but would people be heaping up money or treasures when they know He is coming? They enjoy themselves while they can, and then comes death, and they hope it will be all right. If you are expecting the Lord and ready to open to Him, it gives a character, " Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord "-like a man that has his hand on the lock of the door, " that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately." The Lord keep us in that readiness of condition and heart as servants, waiting! That is our present condition when the Lord is not come. You cannot float down the stream of the world that is going to the ocean of judgment. You are to be looking for Him. If, by His first coming, I have been saved and justified, I look for Him to come again, that I may be where He is. Here we get what the believer's portion is who is waiting for Him.

Now, what follows? The characteristic of a person who has his ear open to the Lord, is watching. " Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat (that is a figure), and will come forth and serve them." I find Him serving then, in divine love, still in the same character. He comes and brings us to heaven-to His Father's house, that where He is, there we may be also. While you were in that wicked world, He says, I was obliged to keep you on the watch, in a state of tension, with diligent earnestness to keep the heart waiting, but I bring you to a place where you are to sit down, and it will be My delight to minister to you.

It is one of the greatest comforts to me that I shall not want my conscience in heaven. If I let it go to sleep for a moment now, there are temptations and snares; there, there is no evil, and the more my heart goes out, the more good it is. Here I dare not let it, but I must watch and pray. I shall not need that in heaven. The full blessedness of it is, the Lord being there, of course; and next, the saints being perfect. What does the heart desire that cares for the Lord's people? That they should be just what Christ's heart would have them. That will be there; He will see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Then there is after that this comfort, that my heart can go out-here it cannot-to God and the Lamb, and to the saints in measure too; but then, roam as it will, there is nothing to roam over but a Paradise where evil never comes, and it can never go wrong.

He comes then, and takes us there, and what heaven can find there for the heart to feed on is spread on the table of God. You shall rest there and feed on it, He says, and I will gird Myself and come forth and serve you. I am not going to give up My service of love. Thus, while I have the blessedness of feeding on what God has to give, I have increased satisfaction, that if I put a morsel of divine meat into my mouth, I receive it from the hand of love that brings it to me.

When He brings us there, all is turned round. Here He says, you must have your lights burning, and be watching; when I get My way, I must put you at ease, and make you happy. " Then shall the Son also himself be subject." He was serving here. It was man's perfection to serve-the very thing the devil tried to get Him out of. If he had, it would have been doing His own will; but " thou he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered." But when all things shall have been subdued unto Him, He is subject after that. In the meanwhile He has been on His own throne; now He is on His Father's throne, our High Priest; but He will take His own throne and power, and reign, bringing everything into subjection. Then it is not serving, but reigning: afterward He gives up the kingdom in that sense to His Father, for everything is brought to order. In the millennium it is a king reigning in righteousness; but then it is a new heavens and earth, wherein dwells

righteousness. Innocence dwelt in the first Paradise; sin dwells in the present earth; and then, in the new heavens and earth, it will be " wherein dwelleth righteousness." He gives up the mediatorial kingdom, as it is called, to God, and takes His place as a Man, " the first-born among many brethren." He never gives up a place, in which He can own us as associated with Himself in the blessedness of first-born of many brethren. As all was ruined in the first Adam, all shall be blessed in the Last. " As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Then I find myself enjoying everything that God can give to the objects of His love, and enjoying it with Christ then at the head of everything-Son of God and Son of man; we associated with all the blessedness, and He administering it to us, so that the heart can taste His love. And He does not just bring us there, but it is to all eternity. He has purchased us too dearly to give us up. His love will be in constant exercise towards us. It leads us to adore Him more than anything that can be thought of; but we can trust a love that never ceases in heaven.

You see here His heart going out to do it. Then you must have your lights burning. " Let your light (not your works) so shine before men," that they may know where your works come from, and " glorify your Father which is in heaven," that they may attribute them to God. I do whatever God tells me to do, and it is a testimony to Christ; people say, that is what comes from a man being a Christian! It is that there may be no uncertainty as to what we are, a well-trimmed lamp, the testimony of the life of Christ, that it may be manifested what I am, and what I am about-a pilgrim and a stranger, in a thousand different circumstances, the ordinary duties of life to perform, but one service, to be the epistle of Christ. I may be a carpenter, or a shoemaker, I must be a Christian. In various relationships, servants, masters, in eating or drinking, in our houses, wherever it is, I must be a Christian.

What characterized these servants was waiting, and they got the blessing. " Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so watching." Ah, beloved friends, are you watching, waiting for Christ practically? I cannot be watching, and going on in my own way. Are our lights burning, or have we slipped down to the ease and comforts of this world like other people? That is not having our loins girded. And it is not as a doctrine we are to have it only.

He refers to serving in verse 43, but the reward is connected with another thing-made ruler over all that He hath; it is the kingdom, the lower part. In my calling, I look up; in my reigning, it is looking down. It is better to look up than down.

The watching person gets the Person he is watching for. The calling is better than the inheritance-" Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." You find in Rev. 4 the elders sitting on thrones (" seats " they put in, for they thought it too much for us to be seated on " thrones " and crowned when He is there, but that is what it is); but when the nature of God is proclaimed, they leave their thrones, and that is the higher place. When they were on their thrones they had their own glory; when they are prostrated, they adore His glory. So, in the transfiguration, the voice came out of the cloud (the cloud was always the sign of Jehovah's presence in Israel), and they went into the cloud; that was more than the kingdom. A voice came from the excellent glory, and where it came from, they went into. It was a great thing to be standing there on the mountain, but still greater to go into the cloud-the Father's house, and they were afraid. It is a wonderful thing that the ruling is for us (v. 44); but it is not the greatest thing. His love takes us into the enjoyment with Himself of every place He has-not the Godhead of course- but of everything He has received from the Father as Man. He, in divine love, gives it to us; He gives not as the world gives. It gives liberally sometimes, but it gives away. Christ does not give away; He takes us where He is, and gives us what He has-His own peace, His glory.

It seems strange to Peter that the Lord should wash his feet. But where should we be if He did not wash our feet? In one sense we ought to be ashamed; but where should we be? If He were not a servant now, we should have our feet dirty, poor creatures that we are. Then it will be fullness of joy, His ministering of God's table in heaven to us, and half the happiness would be lost if it were not that. Now the Lord takes pains to assure us of His love, to persuade us of His love. " You are of more value than many sparrows." He says, do not fear, and then gives the strongest motive to serve Him. In the epistle of John He does not say we ought to love Him, because He first loved us-it is quite true; but He says, " we love him." Where there really is the sense of the Lord's love to us, there is the return of it. If you hear a child saying- oh! if you only knew my mother, her patience, her love, I am so tiresome, she never fails in affection, I cannot tell you what she is! I say, that child loves its mother; it has the sense of its mother's love in its soul, and that is love. It is the going back of the heart in the consciousness of the blessed love He has to us. The inflow of the love, with a new nature capable of receiving it, is the love.

How sweet and blessed is it thus to see how He has come down! He has not loved us from on high. He never says to the poor sinner, " Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden," till He had come to them. He never called for confidence in His love, till He had come to them Himself, however vile they might be. It will surely make us adore Him. A divine Person come to be a servant, that our hearts may know His love, and He wants us to know it. Does the Father say, This is My Son whom you ought to love? No, He tells His affection for Christ to lead us into it. Therefore, we are in fellowship with the Father. What is that? It is having the same thoughts and joys in blessing, the same feelings and affections in blessing. Depend on it, if you get near to God, it will not make you think lightly of Him. If you get near to the greatest man in the country you will find out his foibles; but being near to God will never give you want of respect to Him; you find out what God is. It is not dangerous, as people often say, to be on the mount; but to have been there. When Paul got out of the third heaven, he wanted the thorn in the flesh. Then there was a danger of his saying, no one but you, Paul, has been there. Everything is dangerous for the flesh to get hold of-law, gospel, and everything. Being near to God, never lets the flesh in.

If the Spirit is the spring of our thoughts and feelings, He can never give us anything but thoughts of the Son. We are poor, feeble things, and He is infinite, there is that exception, of course; but if I look at Christ's death I say, Look at that obedience; there is love to the Father, and giving up Himself, and love to us. Look at His devotedness, obedience, and giving up of self-love beaming through the agony of the cross if ever it did! Did not the Father delight in it? To be sure He did! Of course, all our thoughts are poverty itself; but He brings His love down to us in grace, and then takes us up to the glory. We learn the power of His obedience when nothing stopped Him. He brought it to us in grace here; washes our feet by the way, and then will serve us in glory up there. The Lord give us to have our loins girded and our lights burning, that we may be found watching: living in this town, or in any other, in our common every-day life; but that we may be there with our loins girded and our lights burning, and we like men that wait for their Lord, that when He comes and knocks we may open to Him immediately. " Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching." " He shall gird himself and make them sit down to meat, and come forth and serve them."

May the Lord's love and approbation be the things that govern us; and not the things that fade away!

Notes on Luke 12:34-45

The coming of the Lord does not present itself, when we think of it rightly, as a thing we learn, but I see in Scripture that it is constantly identified with all the feelings and character of a Christian, "as men that wait for their lord." It does not say, "As men that believe in the Lord's coming." The feeling of those who had grown cold was not that the Lord would not come, but that He delayed His coming (v'.-45). Now in the beginning of 1 Thessalonians they were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven. He was a living, personal reality to them. There is a great deal more in the passage, but that is the first thing-they were

converted for that. Expecting Him is the state that becomes a Christian. I do not say there is no other motive, for the blessed love He has shown in His death would lead us to follow Him too, but still the Christian is a person between Christ's first coming to save him and His second coming to take him out of this scene, and what characterizes him (if he acts on the Word of God) is, that he is waiting for Christ.

It is described in detail in Luke 12. First comes the "watching," and then the "doing," that is, serving Him, while He is away. Those who are watching (v. 37), with their hearts upon Himself, He makes sit down to meat (a figure, of course), and He girds Himself and serves them. But when it involves doing (v. 43), it is then that He makes them rulers over all that He has. Verse 37 suggests the blessedness of heaven, and then in verse 44 the privilege of reigning as co-heirs with Him-two distinct things-one watching for Him, and the other, doing. The Christian knows that he is a person in whom dwells the Holy Spirit who is the seal to us of the full efficacy of Christ's work on the cross (and our part in it too). He is waiting for Christ to come, that event which will bring him into possession of the inheritance. Christ entered into possession, not of all things in the inheritance yet, but He is sitting on the Father's throne till the joint heirs are gathered, and then He will put them into glory.

The thing I find most precious about the coming of the Lord is, that the Person of the Lord becomes so prominent. It makes Him more precious. He is coming to take me to be with Himself. It is the Person who is

the Object of our affections as Christians. But it will be a grand thing when we are with Him, never to be separated from Him. It is not our glory that is the great satisfaction, but being with Him. It sets Christ

personally as the. One before our eyes.

There is another thing it does. This expectation of Him at any moment detaches us from the world, and when this is the case, the life of every Christian is drastically changed and all thoughts for tomorrow and plans are gone. There are two things necessary in order to be looking for the Lord in that way, peace with God, and love enough for Him to long for His coming. Of course, we must have peace with God to be able to look for His coming, but it also depends a great deal on the heart's affection for Christ. "Unto you... which believe He is precious." It is wonderful how distinctly Scripture makes being with Christ the thing to hope for. It exercises the conscience also, because if I am looking for the Lord, evidently it will keep my conscience awake, lest I should have anything that will produce a jar in my own heart when He does come.

It is a striking thing as regards the present expectation, that in all the parables, whether it be Christ Himself speaking or the apostles by the Holy Spirit, it never supposes beforehand that His coming is beyond the life of the people He is speaking to. It is the present expectation. The virgins that slept were the same that woke. Those who received the talents were the same reckoned with. He would never present to them beforehand a thing that was beyond present expectation. It is evident we should like to be found, whether absent or present, agreeable to Him when He does come. It gives Christ the place. We are poor things, but if we heard Him saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," what a wonderful thing it would be to us

There is a little more than waiting in this chapter.

"Loins... girded about." The flowing garments are to be tucked up, not loosely going on with things as they are in the world, but hearts in order, according to the Word of God-"loins girt about with truth," and then "lights burning"-a full profession of Christ.

There is another thing quite distinct, a very blessed, touching expression of the Lord's love. Now we are to have our loins girded (our hearts in order), while the Lord has not yet come, but is sitting on the Father's throne, but then "He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." He says, You won't have to have your loins girded when you come into My house. I shall make you sit down to meat, and serve you. He will make us sit down and feed upon the things that are in heaven, and He will minister the blessings to us-infinitely more precious. It will mean not merely giving us things to eat, but Christ Himself ministering them to us. In that sense Christ never gives up the form of a servant, and when we think that Christ, the Son of God,. assumes this place, has already taken it, and never will give it up, what a wonderful thing it is.

"Blessed are those servants," etc. v. 37. He will make them enjoy themselves, for His satisfaction is to make them happy. We do not believe enough in Christ's. toward us, and we have not enough heart for Him either. He values our affections: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." What a Savior He is! It is constant expectation-not waiting merely, but watching. The second part is doing (v. 43)-in a certain sense an inferior part. He has entrusted us with talents,

perhaps it may be giving "a cup of cold water," but He says, "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." The Lord has

committed a service to all. An apostle, of course, is entirely given up to service, or it may come down to just the giving of a cup of cold water. The reward is not sitting down and enjoying heaven here. It is the kingdom, and yet more than the kingdom. The Father has set Christ over all the works of His hands, and He makes us joint heirs. But it is much more blessed to be with God Himself and to enjoy Him than to be heir with Christ, though, of course, that is a wonderful thing. It is especially in the kingdom that the ruling takes place; afterward Christ will give up the kingdom to the Father. There will then be no need for power to restore a kingdom to order, for it will all be done.

(Concluded from page 10)

Now, what follows? The characteristic of a person who has his ear open to the Lord, is—watching. “Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat (that is a figure), and will come forth and serve them.” I find Him serving then, in divine love, still in the same character. He comes and brings us to heaven—to His Father's house, that where He is, there we may be also. While you were in that wicked world, He says, I was obliged to keep you on the watch, in a state of tension, with diligent earnestness to keep the heart waiting, but I bring you to a place where you are to sit down, and it will be My delight to minister to you.

It is one of the greatest comforts to me that I shall not want my conscience in heaven. If I let it go to sleep for a moment now, there are temptations and snares; there, there is no evil, and the more my heart goes out, the more good it is. Here, I dare not let it, but I must watch and pray. I shall not need that in heaven. The full blessedness of it is, the Lord being there, of course; and next, the saints being perfect. What does the heart desire that cares for the Lord's people? That they should be just what Christ's heart would have them. That will be there; He will see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Then there is after that this comfort, that my heart can go out—here it cannot—to God and the Lamb, and to the saints in measure too; but then, roam as it will, there is nothing to roam over but a paradise where evil never comes, and it can never go wrong.

He comes then, and takes us there, and what heaven can find there for the heart to feed on is spread on the table of God. You shall rest there and feed on it, He says, and I will gird Myself and come forth and serve you. I am not going to give up My service of love. Thus, while I have the blessedness of feeding on what God has to give, I have the increased satisfaction that if I put a morsel of divine meat into my mouth, I receive it from the hand of love that brings it to me.

When He brings us there, all is turned round. Here, He says, you must have your lights burning, and be watching; when I get My way, I must put you at ease, and make you happy. “Then shall the Son also himself be subject.” He was serving here. It was man's perfection to serve—the very thing the devil tried to get Him out of. If he had, it would have been doing His own will; but “though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” But when all things shall have been subdued unto Him, He is subject after that. In the meanwhile He has been on His own throne; now, He is on His Father's throne, our High Priest; but He will take His own throne and power, and reign, bringing everything into subjection. Then it is not serving, but reigning: afterward He gives up the kingdom in that sense to His Father, for everything is brought into order. In the millennium it is a king reigning in righteousness; but then it is new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. Innocence dwelt in the first paradise; sin dwells in the present earth; and then, in the new heavens and earth, it will be “wherein dwelleth righteousness.” He gives up the mediatorial kingdom (as it is called) to God, and takes His place as a Man, “the firstborn among many brethren.” He never gives up a place in which He can own us as associated with Himself in the blessedness of First-born of many brethren. As all was ruined in the first Adam, all shall be blessed in the Last. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Then, I find myself enjoying everything that God can give to the objects of His love, and enjoying it with Christ then at the head of everything—Son of God and Son of man; we associated with all the blessedness, and He administering it to us, so that the heart can taste His love. And He does not just bring us there, but it is to all eternity. He has purchased us too dearly to give us up. His love will be in constant exercise towards us. It leads us to adore Him more than anything can be thought of; but we can trust a love that never ceases in heaven.

You see here His heart going out to do it. Then you must have your lights burning. “Let your light (not your works) so shine before men” that they may know where your works come from, and, “glorify your Father which is in heaven,” that they may attribute them to God. I do whatever God tells me to do, and it is a testimony to Christ; people say, That is what comes from a man being a Christian! It is that there may be no uncertainty as to what we are, a well-trimmed lamp, the testimony of the life of Christ, that it may be manifested what I am, and what I am about—a pilgrim and a stranger, in a thousand different circumstances, the ordinary duties of life to perform, but one service, to be the epistle of Christ. I may be a carpenter, or a shoemaker, I must be a Christian. In various relationships, servants, masters, in eating or drinking, in our houses, wherever it is, I must be a Christian.

What characterized these servants was waiting, and they got the blessing. “Blessed are those servants whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find so watching.” Ah, beloved friends, are you watching, waiting for Christ practically? I cannot be watching, and going on in my own way. Are our lights burning? Or have we slipped down to the ease and comforts of this world like other people? That is not having our loins girded. And it is not as a doctrine we are to have it only.

He refers to serving in ver. 43, but the reward is connected with another thing—made “ruler over all that he hath"; it is the kingdom, the lower part. In my calling, I look up; in my reigning, it is looking down. It is better to look up than down. The watching person gets the Person he is watching for. The calling is better than the inheritance—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. You find in Rev. 4 the elders sitting on thrones ("seats” they put in, for they thought it too much for us to be seated on “thrones” and crowned when He is there, but that is what it is); but when the nature of God is proclaimed, they leave their thrones, and that is the higher place. When they were on their thrones they had their own glory; when they are prostrated, they adore His glory. So, in the transfiguration, the voice came out of the cloud (the cloud was always the sign of Jehovah's presence in Israel), and they went into the cloud; that was more than the kingdom. A voice came from the excellent glory, and where it came from, they went into. It was a great thing to be standing there on the mountain, but still greater to go into the cloud—the Father's house, and they were afraid. It is a wonderful thing that the ruling is for us (ver. 44); but it is not the greatest thing. His love takes us into the enjoyment with Himself of every place He has—not the Godhead, of course—but of everything He has received from the Father as Man. He, in divine love, gives it to us; He gives not as the world gives. It gives liberally sometimes, but it gives away. Christ does not give away; He takes us where He is, and gives us what He has His own peace, His glory.

It seemed strange to Peter that the Lord should wash his feet. But where should we be if He did not wash our feet? In one sense we ought to be ashamed; but where should we be? If He were not a servant now, we should have our feet dirty, poor creatures that we are. Then it will be fullness of joy, His ministering of God's table in heaven to us, and half the happiness would be lost if it were not that. Now the Lord takes pains to assure us of His love, to persuade us of His love. “Ye are of more value than many sparrows.” He says, Do not fear; and then gives the

strongest motive to serve Him. In the Epistle of John it does not say, We ought to love Him, because He first loved us—it is quite true; but that “we do love Him” (1 John 4:19). Where there really is the sense of the Lord's love to us, there is the return of it. If you hear a child saying, Oh! if you only knew my mother, her patience, her love, I am so tiresome, she never fails in affection, I cannot tell you what she is! I say, That child loves its mother; it has the sense of its mother's love in its soul. And that is love. It is the going back of the heart in the consciousness of the blessed love He has to us. The inflow of the love, with a new nature capable of receiving it, is the love.

How sweet and blessed is it thus to see how He has come down! He has not loved us from on high. He never says to the poor sinner, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,” till He had come to them. He never called for confidence in His love till He had come to them Himself, however vile they might be. It will surely make us adore Him. A divine Person come to be a servant! that our hearts may know His love. And He wants us to know it. Does the Father say, This is My Son whom you ought to love? No, He tells His affection for Christ, to lead us into it. Therefore, we are in fellowship with the Father. What is that? It is having the same thoughts and joys in blessing, the same feelings and affections in blessing. Depend on it, if you get near to God, it will not make you think lightly of Him. If you get near to the greatest man in the country you will find out his foibles; but being near to God will never give you want of respect to Him; you find out what God is. It is not dangerous, as people often say, to be on the mount; but to have been there. When Paul got out of the third heaven, he wanted the thorn in the flesh. Then there was a danger of his saying, No one but you, Paul, has been there! Everything is dangerous for the flesh to get hold of—law, gospel, and everything. Being near to God, never lets the flesh in.

If the Spirit is the spring of our thoughts and feelings, He can never give us anything but thoughts of the Son. We are poor, feeble things, and He is infinite—there is that exception of course. But if I look at Christ's death, I say, Look at that obedience—there is love to the Father, and giving up Himself, and love to us! Look at His devotedness, obedience, and giving up of self-love beaming through the agony of the cross if ever it did! Did not the Father delight in it? To be sure He did! Of course, all our thoughts are poverty itself; but He brings His love down to us in grace, and then takes us up to the glory. We learn the power of His obedience when nothing stopped Him. He brought it to us in grace here; washes our feet by the way, and then will serve us in glory up there.

The Lord give us to have our loins girded, and our lights burning, that we may be found watching, living in this town, or in any other, in our common every-day life; but that we may be there with our loins girded, and our lights burning, and we like men that wait for their Lord, that, when He comes and knocks, we may open to Him immediately! Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. “He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” May the Lord's love and approbation be the things that govern us, and not the things that fade away! J. N. D.

“Wonder not, brethren, if the world hateth you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not the brother abideth in death. Every one that hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath life eternal abiding in him. Herein we know love, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought for the brethren to lay down our lives. Dear children, let us not love with word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth.”

Courtesy of BibleTruthPublishers.com. Most likely this text has not been proofread. Any suggestions for spelling or punctuation corrections would be warmly received. Please email them to: BTPmail@bibletruthpublishers.com.

The Lord Jesus a Servant for Ever, Lord Jesus a Servant for Ever, The: Part 1

Luke 12:35-41

These verses, and indeed the whole chapter, show how the saints are viewed apart from this world. There was a scene around which was plotting against them. They were not to fear. “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.” But there was something in it that they were to fear; they were to beware of hypocrisy (ver. 1), for all would be disclosed. The Lord presses that they should have their treasure in heaven. It is not as people often say, “Where your heart is, there is your treasure,” but, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” They were taken out of the world to serve in it; and He encourages them to have entire confidence in the care and love of God watching over them, and tells them that in God's mind and thought they were of value—of value to God. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His care. “Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.” He is your Father— “Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” You must trust Him. For the present they were obliged to have their loins girded. This was not rest. They were to be tucked up ready for work and service; their lights burning—, and they watching—ready for their Lord.

While that was their character in this world, there was a world that belonged to them—to the Father, and He was occupied with them about that world, though taking care of them through this. We have thus the constant abiding of His love. The Son of God has taken “the form of a servant,” and He will never give it up. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, one with the Father, God over all, blessed forever; but that gives the more force to His being a servant. He has had His ear pierced through with the awl at the doorpost. The Hebrew servant, when he had served seven years, if he said, “I love my master, I love my wife, I love my children, I will not go out free,” became a servant forever; his ear, the sign of obedience, was bored. That is what He has done, and it is His glory—outward humiliation, but divine glory and love.

Love always delights to serve, but selfishness to be served. He is love, and He delights to serve; but if He is to serve us, He must come down low, and He comes in a love that is above everything that hinders; and the more He humbles Himself, the more I can see a love that can only be of God! It is this that is so touching in His life. He sits, weary with His journey, on the well, and says, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and” —not, who it is that speaketh to you, but— “who it is that saith to thee” (who it is that has come low enough to say) “Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” He was a divine Person sitting, talking to her, and He was her servant! He says again, “I am among you as he that serveth.” He was their only Master and Lord, but being above all, He has the privilege of taking the title of servant; and having refused to go out free, He has taken this place of serving love, forever. It is His glory, and has nothing to do with His Godhead, except to show His unutterable grace.

We find in Phil. 2 His coming down to take this place. “He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.” He served God; served us too in grace. He took the place in willing love. “Lo I come to do thy will, O God.” And He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He lays the form of the glory of Godhead aside (Godhead He never could lay aside), and thus we find His perfect, infinite love. Where should we have been if He had not taken the form of a servant? Lost forever. But there was love enough in Him to come to this place. He goes to death, and there I find the power of divine love in His service. Nothing stopped it; Satan's power was there; man's bitter and base ingratitude, as He says in that beautiful fiftieth of Isaiah, “When I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?” He goes on; “Is my hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke, I dry up the sea,” etc. As Jehovah—God—He did as He pleased. He not only did miracles Himself; but what proved His divine power much more, He gave others power to do them. “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father” (John 14:12).

He is working in that perfectness of love in this world, and nothing stops it at all. “The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.” I have not ceased to be Jehovah, but I have taken the place of a servant, to take up every sorrow you are in. And see the return—men found it an occasion to reject Him! “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” Nothing stopped Him—death did not stop Him. He came to die; and felt what it was to die as none of us can; for He has taken the sting out of it. He came to be “made sin,” and felt how dreadful it was; for He was holy. He came to bear the wrath, and felt what it was; for He knew His Father's love. Desertion was there and betrayal, and the cup He had to drink was there. He felt it all; but in it all, divine love was there to serve and go through it, to serve us wretched sinners.

There was the power of divine love when everything was gone (for God had forsaken Him), except bitterness and death, Satan's power, and the wrath of God. There you get divine love, and service too. It is a divine power and a power of love to us—to His Father, but to us too—a power that carries Him through everything when everything was against Him; divine love that made Him serve through it, till it was finished. There I adore the love that led Him to be made sin for me. There was the full testing of the love that carried Him through all. It is deeply instructive, though very dreadful to see there what man is. What do I expect of my friends if I am on trial? At least that they will not forsake me. They all forsook Him, and fled! In a Judge? I expect him to protect innocence. Pilate washes his hands of His blood, and gives Him over to the people! In a priest, what do I expect? That he will intercede for the ignorant and for them that are out of the way. They urge the people, who cry, “Away with him, away with him!” Every man was the opposite of what was right, and that one Man was not only right, but in divine love was He going through it all!

First, I get Him serving me in His life; then, when He served us in death, in spite of ourselves (for man was against Him), there He was alone, all forsook Him, and God hid His face from Him. He went into the desert (Mark 6), and had no time to eat, but when the people come He ministers to them; “He could not be hid.” If He is in agony on the cross, there is a poor thief to be attended to. He tells him, “This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.” If He sits weary on a well, and a poor wretched woman comes, He waits on her. All through He takes the sorrows of human nature—weariness, hunger; but with a heart that never was weary when a service of love was to be performed; a Man who does not shrink from all the vileness and wretchedness of the world; a Man in all the perfection of holiness, carrying divine love to serve every need! It was, what was divine, in a Man who took the lowest place, and there is nothing like it. It is most sweet and blessed to see it, and to see He had no will of His own in it. When they tell Him, “He whom thou lovest is sick,” we should have thought He would have started off at once. No, He abode two days still where He was, He had no commandment from His Father. We see it was to show His Godhead. Still, as a servant, He had no word, and He did not stir. It seemed very hard. His home, if He had one on earth, was that house at Bethany. You never find Him going out of the place of a servant, and He was never anything but the perfection of love in it. That service He took, and performed, and finished; and now His service [here] is over, and He is going to glory (Luke 12).

In John, where we find more the divine side than the servant's side, He shows that His going to the Father does not change His service, save the character of it. He is not serving among men, but He is serving His people up there. When He was going away, there came the thought that now He is in the glory His service is ended. That would not do for His heart. He says, In the glory I am not going to stop serving those poor things. Could His heart stop serving them? No, it could not! He is the Advocate, as we find in the Epistle of John (1 John 2:1), and this is not in the world. He does not take it up till He goes to heaven. How could a heavenly person know the sorrows, temptations, and trials of us poor sinful beings? He comes down here, sinless of course; and, after being acknowledged by the Father, He is led of the Spirit to be tempted in the wilderness, because we were there. As soon as He has given the pattern of the place in which we are by redemption (Matt. 3:16, 17), He says, I must go there; and He is led of the Spirit (we are often led by other things) into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Now (John 13) He is going to glory, having so glorified God here as to have an earned place there, as well as having a rightful one there—an official place as well as a moral one. The world will not have Me. I cannot stay here with you. You cannot have rest here—it is polluted. I can serve, but not rest here. He must go up to God, I must go on serving. He says, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” I cannot have part with you in this sinful place, and I must fit you to have part with Me on high. Though we are washed so as to have part with Him, we pick up dirt by the way; but He is our Advocate and is still serving. He brings the heart to be humbled and broken at having dishonored His name, and it is restored. His blood is on us, but He is still washing our feet. I must make you clean according to my idea of cleanness. That is what He is doing now. It is blessed love, but it is service. Is He going to give up this satisfaction of His heart in serving us (it makes us adore Him)? He is not going to give it up, and never will. He is a Man, and a Man forever; that is what we learn in this chapter. Yet He is more than that, for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

There is one thing new for God, and what He only could do—to come down a Man here. No angel could do it; but God could come down, acting in divine supremacy and love. I cannot take the form of a servant, for if I am not a rebellious sinner, I am a servant. (I may have got into rebellion as one—that is another thing). A divine person can “take” on Him the form of a servant, and that is what He has done.

He says, “Let your loins be girded.” Here I am in the middle of a world that says, “Tomorrow shall be as yesterday, and yet more abundant.” I am to be expecting Christ; the world goes on (He alone knows how long); but “the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; for when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” That is the character given it. “As in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man.” (There is sin, and still more now, but that is not the point). I believe this—not that it is the portion of believers—and so must have my loins girded. I cannot go on loosely with a world that is not going on forever. There ought to be a better motive the heart drawn out to Him. Oh, if it were only that! They go on saying, “Tomorrow shall be as yesterday,” etc., and yet terror is in their hearts; for there is uncertainty —nothing to reckon on for a day, or a week, or a year. He calls all Christians to take their places with their

lights burning the distinct, unequivocal testimony of what they are, carrying their lights as servants, and not going on with a careless world that is basting to judgment. You cannot say how soon it may fall. The saints will be with the Lord before then. Can you say that it is the first thing the Lord will do—take you up in the air, to be forever with Himself? Can you tell what day He is coming? Are you ready for Him? You do not know what hour He is coming.

I believe it is hastening on rapidly. The saints were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven; and when they lost that, all the mischief came in. It is their character—not a bit of knowledge that is stuck up as a chief thing in teaching, but—that is what you are to be. If you were constantly waiting for Him, would it not change you? Finding duties to do, and doing them—quite right; but would people be heaping up money or treasures when they know He is coming? They enjoy themselves while they can, and then comes death, and they hope it will be all right. If you are expecting the Lord and ready to open to Him, it gives a character, “Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord” like a man that has his hand on the lock of the door, “that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.” The Lord keep us in that readiness of condition and heart as servants waiting! That is our present condition when the Lord is not [yet] come. You cannot float down the stream of the world that is going to the ocean of judgment! You are to be looking for Him. If, by His first coming, I have been saved and justified, I look for Him to come again, that I may be where He is. Here we get what the believer's portion is who is waiting for Him.

[J. N. D.]

(To be continued)

Letters 1, Life of Faith; Isolation; Principles of Meeting as Members of the Body of Christ; Dread of Narrowness; Path of Faith; Danger of Sectarianism, The

Very Dear Brother,—I was rejoiced to receive your letter, and to see that you are in fact working in the Lord's field, and for the Lord. Specially that you are able to trust yourself to the Lord to sustain you in your path, and to maintain you as to the things of this world. You have already, dear brother, made proof of His faithfulness, as you told me. Be very sure that He will never fail in it. Oh, for more faith, that we might be able to trust ourselves to His incomparable faithfulness, to His love, which will make us pass without doubt, through testings for our good, but which at least never wearies.

Dear brother, in the midst of much unfaithfulness, I have always found Him faithful—I can bear witness to it—and more than faithful, always full of mercy and goodness. It is a happy thing to be able to be witness to one's God, though in humbling oneself for all one's own wretchedness. When the goodness and will of our God have forced us out into His harvest, we have always need to be well on our guard against the wiles of the enemy, especially when we leave, even ever so little, the ordinary path of Christians. One is so accustomed to trust oneself to men, the habit of it is so rooted in the ways of Christians, and in their manner of working as to the gospel, that Satan is extremely jealous of those who separate themselves from it, and who trust themselves to our God, and he lays for them all possible snares, and even Christians look constantly to see them fall; so much so, that if we do not keep our spirit carefully, we are always in danger.

There are many Christians who withdraw from us from the first, saying that it is pride that prompts us to walk alone, when in fact they desert us in spite of ourselves; and this increases the danger, because the isolation in which we sometimes are, exposes us to the arrows of the enemy, either by the ordinary trials of life, or by the temptation of thinking too much of ourselves, and of leaning to either pride on the one side, or to depression on the other. Do I desire, dear brother, to discourage you in saying these things? far from it, but only to remind you that it is a life of faith, and that we cannot pass through this world of sin, when we are put ever so little forward, without constant communion of our souls with God. As you advance in your path of service, as I hope that you will advance, you will find that if you do not walk in the ordinary paths, a very great number of Christians will be opposed to you, an opposition much more painful than that of the world, which one ought to expect. And this because this question is agitated greatly at this moment, whether one ought to walk by faith or not. May God keep you in humility, and give you a firm and quiet faith which, recognizing the duty put upon you of serving Him, has nothing to do but to obey Him, and to do His will. As to your temporal circumstances, dear brother, it will always be to me a great pleasure to help you. I am not very rich, but what I have, I hope, through the grace of our God, will be always devoted to His work....

There is still one thing, dear brother, that has come upon my spirit. I suppose that you have continued relations with the established church; perhaps I am mistaken, but I discern the possibility that these relations may be enfeebled if you follow the call to evangelization which you think you have received from God. If this come to pass, I hope with all my heart that you will not throw yourself, on the other hand, into narrowness; it is this which has been one of the sores of Swiss Christians. I have nothing to hide from you in my christian ways (habitudes). It is my joy and my privilege to find myself in the midst of brethren who know one another in Christ, and to rejoice in the blessedness of brotherly communion in all the weakness in which it may be found at present; but I could not recognize an assembly that does not receive all the children of God, because I know that Christ receives them. I see the church in ruins: I follow my conscience according to the light that I have received from the word, but I desire to bear with the weakness or lack of light that I may find in other Christians, and do all that I can to unite those who love the Lord. The liberty of your ministry, if God bless it, may be a means to this desirable result; and I, according to the light that I have received, find it impossible to remain in nationalism, but I would rather remain alone and isolated, a position, I admit, not at all desirable, than to restrict the limits of the church of Christ to some brethren, even though they may be more correct in their thoughts than others, and to enfeeble the action of the Spirit of God in uniting the Lord's sheep, scattered by our wretchedness and by our sins.

I have ventured to say these things to you, dear brother, in all frankness, because in all my weakness I have at least the good of the beloved church of my Savior at heart, and further, because I love, and I ought to love in a special manner, the dear Swiss brethren, in the midst of whom I have received so many blessings, and so much love in Christ. I hope that God will keep you from every bond save the bonds of Christ, and that He will rivet these bonds of security and joy more and more.

If you are able not entirely to give up your calling, so much the better; the workman is worthy of his hire, but it is my experience that in the existing circumstances of the church, the more one is independent of men the better one is circumstanced. If you were able to apply yourself to it in leisure moments, or to work alone, and could sell what you made, even if you were not in an establishment, I do not know if the thing is possible, but for you even I am persuaded that it would be very desirable. I write in haste, dear brother, but I did not wish to delay my letter

any longer. Be assured of the cordial and sincere love of Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Geneva,

January 2nd, 1840.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Heart of Christ About His Own, Poured Forth Into the Heart of the Father, The

John 17

There is no chapter in the Bible which traces more, as a whole, the position of the Christian, and what Christ is for him. I do not say that it states such or such circumstances in which the Christian may be found, but all He is Himself in the presence of God, and how He has introduced us into that position.

You know that Christ Himself says, “I am no more in the world” (John 17:11). He views His position in the face of God and in the face of the world; He sets the Christian in the same position where He is in the face of God and in the face of the world, and He lays the foundation of all that. I do not explain at this time all that might be said on the chapter, because it contains a very great number of important truths. I will confine myself to developing some of them, which will make us understand how Christ presents Himself to us, and presents us to God. There is this grand thought, that Jesus is the source of everything for us. He takes it up from the Father.

We may consider Jesus in two ways: either as accomplishing certain promises (for example, those made to Abraham), or, moreover, as son of David; but He is, on the other hand, a source of life, coming from the Father (accomplishing the promise made in Him before the world was). And it is thus that the Lord Jesus is presented in this gospel.

It is not only as accomplishing certain promises, which besides is very precious, but which is far from being all He is for us. He is the Son of the Father, the Word in whom is life, according to that which is said in the first chapter of this gospel: “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the onlybegotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.... And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1:14,16). There is what He is. John says, This is the Word that has been made flesh, and we have received of His fullness, and grace for grace. The Gospel of John, having developed His history here below under this relationship, presents Him to us in this chapter at the close of His life; and He, being grace and truth, come forth from the bosom of the Father and ready to return to Him, gives the Father an account of all He has done.

There is something very special in the chapter. It is the only one which admits us to these wondrous conversations. It relates to us, not only what the Lord says to men, but what He says to His Father, while we hearken to Him. It is not trust merely, but confidence. We are here hearkening to Jesus, who is giving account of all to the Father.

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4). He gives account of all. He pours forth His heart about His own into the heart of the Father. It is the most intimate relation in which one could be, and wherein He has placed us. Christ the Son has satisfied the Father. He gives account to the Father of all that work of grace, whereof He Himself is the representative.

We find, in this chapter, the most intimate relationship between Him and His Father, and through Him with the Father between us and Himself. We find therein the basis on which to found our hope. In the preceding chapters He had spoken to His disciples of various circumstances; but now the time is come when all which would bring immediate relations between God and us was about to have its course. As regards men, His work was finished. All that the second Adam had to accomplish is accomplished in His Person. All the evil introduced from the creation by the fall of the first Adam has been but the occasion of what the Second came to accomplish. He was from heaven, and He is come, from His Father, to establish all the relations between God and us; and He places Himself before Him according to the basis established for what the Second man had to do. God does His own work. He would have a man for Himself in the place of the first Adam, and Christ perfectly fulfilled this end. It is the Second man who acts in the very circumstances into which the first Adam had plunged us; and it is not on what we have done, but on what God has done, that this basis is established. It is well to understand that our relations are based on what has been accomplished by God's Man. So far there had been on our side but sin and folly: what Christ did was the perfection of wisdom, purity, and obedience.

The hour was come for proving if man could present himself before God, if this new Man Jesus could stand before God. And He can do so. He can lift up His eyes to heaven. And, instead of beholding the cherubim, who barred the entrance of Eden in a terrestrial paradise wherein Adam had failed, and whence he had been cast out (Gen. 3:24), He can look on high and return whence He had come in grace, saying, “I have glorified thee on earth” (John 17:4). He could lift His eyes to that heaven whence He had descended, and the imprint of which He had borne all His life. “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. [Behold, I take a place before thee, in glory, to glorify thee on high, as I have already done on the earth.]” (vss. 1-2). We see that He always speaks in complete humiliation. I speak of the place that He not only has acquired, but that He has made for Himself. If man had been innocent, he would have had his place in Eden. But that a man should make his place in heaven before God, as Christ did, and did it for us, such a thing existed not yet, save in the mind of God. A man, who has the life of God, and has made His place by the work that He has accomplished—there is a new existence. And this is what is remarkable—that He takes the glory as a given glory, keeping His place as man, though Son; He places Himself with His own while He is their Head on the same level with them—as receiving all from the Father. He takes His place in the glory with the Father forever. As God has given Him authority over all flesh, He takes His place as Head, to give life to all those whom the Father has given Him; Himself thus receiving all from the Father. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

The righteousness of man is no longer the question: here it is eternal life. When a certain lawyer came to Jesus (Luke 10), and asked Him, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answered him, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” Christ's hour was not yet come; as to the ways of God, the door was not yet shut; the Christ was not yet rejected. Jesus said to him, “This do, and thou shalt live.” The lawyer had not asked, What must I do to be saved? but to inherit eternal life. Had a man fulfilled the law (though we know that man was

incapable of it), he would have had eternal life. But now, if there is not the knowledge of the Father and the Son, there is no eternal life; and if any one thinks that God gives eternal life, and that he so thinks according to his own thoughts and not according to what is revealed to us, that is not eternal life. If a man makes to himself a Bible of his own heart, how will he know what is life eternal? Will it be in his heart? Oh, no; God alone can say, This is life eternal. And if you cannot have it from Jesus, there is no eternal life for you. Nothing is needful in us in order to have it. It is entirely a new thought. It is no more sought in man here below, but only in Christ, who has established relations between God and man; and then, when a man knows the Father and the Son, he has eternal life.

There are those who cannot say, I know the Father, and the Son whom He hath sent. But if, through grace, we can say, I know the Father and the Son, we may say, I have life eternal; and what a happiness that the thing is so simply said! To bear fruit we must have life; and what happiness! A whole life need not be spent in order to know this. If you know the Father and the Son, you have life; and he who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself, and precious is the knowledge that the Lord can lay down a thing with such certainty. A soul may say to itself, I have not eternal life, for I do not glorify God. Dear friends, lay yourselves a little aside; it is the Son who speaks to the Father, and it does not become you to place yourself between them with your wretched thoughts. In what the Son says to the Father: “I have glorified thee on the earth,” and there is nothing that thou canst require, but that I have performed. Where did He find His glory?

God could not rest in man; but He could rest in Jesus. Before Jesus, it was with God as with the dove sent forth by Noah (Gen. 8:8), there was nowhere for God to rest; but when the Son comes, He could say, “I have glorified thee “; and on Him the eye of God can rest. He is daily His delight. Jesus can say, at the close of His life here below (that Satan may hear, that His own may rejoice in it, that the world may know, that angels may marvel at it), “I have glorified thee.”

Behold this accepted Man given from God; the Man who has perfectly fulfilled all that the Father could desire! His glory had not been entire, if one single point had failed; but He can say, “I have finished the work which thou hast given me to do.” (I have nothing more to do, and Thou hast nothing more to exact.) “I have glorified thee on the earth; and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). There is the basis of all, and of our salvation.

It is most interesting to observe how the Son, though God equal with the Father, and having right to the glory, asks it, because as man He is worthy of it. And He takes this glory in the position of man. Thus we understand how Christ has taken our place as man; as the responsible Man in our position as sinners (though Himself without sin), and thereby, even because He has perfectly glorified the Father, He has acquired the right to this glory. And in order that, in this position as man, He may be glorified with the Father, having acquired the right to this glory, He asks it, that it may be for us as for Himself. He humbled Himself unto death; wherefore God has exalted Him; Phil. 2:5-11. There is the basis of the whole thing: the Son glorifies the Father on the earth, and the Father must glorify the Son in heaven. He has taken His place, because all is accomplished. The Father has nothing more to require: all is done.

Now, what does He as to us? “I have manifested Thy name to the men which thou givest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.” (I place them in my own position, and there it is that they became cognizant of their own.) There was nothing left to be done, and Christ manifests the name of the Father to those that God has given Him.

About to ascend to His Father (ch. 20:17), He says, “My Father and your Father.” He manifests the Father's name such as He has known it Himself. He lays us on His Father's heart, as He Himself is laid there; weaker doubtless, just as a little child is weaker and knows much less than a bigger one, but not less therefore children of their father, no less the objects of care and tenderness. We do not understand all the love God witnesses to us. But Christ says to us, “I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:23).

“Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words that thou hast given me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves” (John 17:7-13). Thus are we set in intelligence and in truth, whatever the degree in which we realize this position. But, observe this: He was “not of the world.” Man, the first Adam, had no place before God, because of his sin in Eden. Having failed, he was going to be cast out into hell; Christ, the last Adam, places Himself in the position of sinful man, to fulfill God's purposes; but He was not of the world, and consequently there was no place for Him in this world. The men that God gave Him are taken out from the world, and He says of them, as of Himself, “They are not of the world” (John 17:14-16). He sets them in the position which He has made for Himself, and this position is not of the world. He will take the world for His inheritance, but the world now is neither His place nor ours.

In verse 25 Jesus says, “Righteous Father, the world has not known thee.” He says, “Righteous Father,” not “Holy Father,” because it was all over with the world. He appeals to righteousness against the world: the world has not known the Father, although He was fully manifested in flesh.

The hour was come for deciding the merits of Jesus and those of the world. God had to pronounce for one of the two; for they could no longer walk together. God could no longer love this world where His Son had been dishonored and contemned; and when Judas went out, and the measure of sin was thus filled up, the judgment of this world takes place, though as yet it be not executed. The prince of this world was cast out, and those to be withdrawn from his power are given to Jesus. “I have given them thy word,” added the Lord, “and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil,” vs. 14, is. Thus He describes these persons: “Thine they were”; and “They have kept thy word.” Observe when Jesus says, “They have kept thy word”; and how have they kept it?

There is much consolation in considering this word of Jesus. His disciples, of whom He was speaking to the Father, understood it but little. Their walk, the details of their connection with Jesus, were most sorrowful; but they had (except Judas) persevered, in weakness perhaps, yet they had persevered. Well, that was all. There were many things they did not understand, but they had kept the Father's word which spake of Jesus. When, one day, Jesus asked them, “Will ye also go away?” Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal

life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68-69). They had persevered, they had kept the Father's word: as soon as the word of the Father has our confidence, because Jesus has spoken it, we are His.

The. most advanced Christians need this interpretation of the judgment borne by the Lord on their lives. We may be very wretched, and we find that we all are so, if we compare our state with what we might be. These same disciples, a little after Jesus had been telling about the last circumstances of His life, were disputing between themselves who should be the greatest. Well, for all that, they had kept the word. The eye of God sees the smallest spark of grace. He blows on it and makes it become resplendent; and, notwithstanding all the wretchedness, the weaknesses, and the failures, it suffices that they have kept the word that Jesus has given from His Father. If confidence is there, Jesus says, "Thine are mine, and I am glorified in them."

They might have said, We have not kept Thy word as we ought to have done; but what they had kept was precious in the sight of Jesus and of God. Jesus always speaks according to the principle that is there. The great matter is that Jesus was the Sent One of the Father; and as to all that belongs to Jesus, to this poor carpenter's son, it is the Father who gave it to Him. The disciples had understood that the Son of God had received everything from the Father, that He was Heir of all things. Well, when Jesus takes this place in the heart, we are happy. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities (Isa. 53): but He is the beloved of the Father. This poor Jesus is but too often practically despised and set aside for thousands of frivolous things, even in the heart of the Christian; but we have understood what Jesus is—insulted, despised, and rejected though He be. The eye has penetrated by faith through all this contempt, and has seen in Him the Son of God, the Beloved of the Father; and this cheers, because we have understood that therein is life eternal. We have the same thoughts as God. Our desire has Christ for its object, and we find our delight in Him. We say, Yes, He is right: all comes from the Father. They have believed that Thou hast sent me, and that I came forth from Thee.

Such is the extent of the privileges of the Christian of whom Jesus speaks: we have seen how and why He can claim the glory. The Father owed it Him, and He gives it us. But, moreover, all the words that Jesus received from the Father, all the plans and secret counsels of the Father, whereof Jesus (taking the place of prophet on the part of God) as man has received the communication; all the testimonies of the favor and ways of God which comforted His soul—these all He has communicated to us. The glory that He has acquired (vs. 22), the words that He has received (vs. 8), He has given them to us. It is His will that we should have the same communion of thoughts with the Father, that we should have part intelligently in all His love and all His grace, having communicated to us all that the Father has said to Him. See what a position is ours as to communion, and what support for practice has been granted to our souls! And if the intelligence, by means of which the Father's love is poured into the heart of the Son, be given to us, we may say that we have known that Jesus is come forth from the Father, and that we have believed that He has been sent from Him. This love of the Father to the Son is also poured into our heart to strengthen us, and to make us justly appreciate (which, after all, we never can fully) our identification with the Son in His relations with the Father, and in the position that He has acquired for us, having glorified His Father upon the earth. It is thus eternal life to see all that the Father is to the Son; this is to know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

Jesus was the depositary of the outpourings of the Father's heart, and that is the place that He has willed that we should have. He wills also that we should know the glory that belongs to Him, being with Him where He is: we who have known Him in His humiliation, we who have shared in principle this humiliation. "Father, I will," says He, "that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory"—the glory of Him who, though the world despised Him, had been loved by the Father before the world was.

"I have given them thy word; [He does not say Thy words, but Thy word. When He speaks of our privileges, He says, Thy words; but when He speaks of our position in the world, He says, I have given them Thy word: that is to say, the position of testimony by the word which has reached us through Jesus, the word of the Father], and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And to whatever degree we enjoy the position of Jesus in heaven, we must also share His position here below, to be hated: it is the practical position of the Christian.

We have seen how God makes a Christian, by separating him from the world in the death of Jesus. At the moment in which Jesus speaks, God had tried all, and He had given up all His trials. It was quite another question now. God would have nothing more to do with the old man: God set up new relations for Himself in Jesus. Are they firm? They are immutable. He has glorified Jesus as man. God has received His Son; and He having entered in as man with the Father, He makes Christians, according to the principle after which this new Man is entered into the presence of God His Father. The Christian understands the activity of the love of the Father. He is based on this hope; all his joy is in the life which results from it. He no longer knows the old man but as a sinner, and the new man as having immutable relations with God. He knows Jesus Himself as the Beloved of the Father. The word that the Father has given to the Son he keeps, and recognizes the Son as the object of His love. And what can we say? Is our happiness on the side of truth? Can you say that you have received these words that Jesus gives us from the Father, and Jesus Himself as the only One that God can recognize?

It was the hour of the judgment of the world, as it was the hour of the reception of the Son. It is well worth our while to consider whether we receive this word of eternal life. Are you placed on this new basis? What a basis! What a position! A position to which Satan cannot reach; an immutable position, beyond all that Satan has been able to do, and whither he cannot enter. What largeness of grace! May our ears be opened to hear all that the Son says to the Father when He pours forth His heart before Him concerning His own! And what a happy position is that into which He has brought us! How ashamed ought we not to be that we know so little of these things, and that we make so poor a use of them! What have we learned of that which the Father says to the Son, and the Son to the Father? If you were asked, What have you learned of this love of the Father, what would you answer? But, on the other hand, remember that when Jesus says, "They have kept thy word," He declares to us that His grace has placed us there. Look at His disciples: they were very ignorant. But what I have quoted is not to make you satisfied with remaining in ignorance and indifference; it should rather humble us, if we are in the same case. Rather should we be encouraged to profit by this position, in recognizing it as ours. "They are thine" "They have kept thy word." What grace! How precious is this grace! How should it urge us to seek the realization of all these things, so much the more precious as they manifest our gratitude; and if we are led in truth, we shall make account of it to glorify Him, who through His grace has so much loved us!

Notes on Luke, Luke 10:38 and Luke 11, Notes on

Ver. 23, 24, “He said to them privately.” These things could only be enjoyed by faith. He would have them in consciousness of present blessing.

Ver. 25. Now that the Lord has shown out the dispensational change, He shows the moral change. A lawyer comes and asks how he is to get eternal life. The Lord brings him to the law—keep the law, and you shall live. But he is stopped directly with the simplicity of this, “thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” He does not love his neighbor as himself! He asks, “Who is my neighbor?” “This do and thou shalt live.” Who does love his neighbor as himself? The good Samaritan is the one who does not ask who the neighbor is, but acts in grace, without asking what title the other had. Christ has the title of doing good to him that is in need and misery. This is grace that gives without a title.

See how thoughtful this grace and love is. He went to him, did not send some one else, but went, bound up his wounds, poured in oil and wine, set him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, took care of him, gave him in charge to the host, and said, “When I come again, I will repay thee.” How beautiful are all the details of the actings of this love which flows from what is within, and acts according to what is working there, and not according to the claims upon it!

In the closing part of chap. x. (ver. 38-42) we see the one great thing was to hear Jesus' word. Hence the approval given to Mary above Martha, who, in a certain sense, was doing a very good work. She received Him into her house and served Him; but there is something better than this: “Mary hath chosen that good part which shall never be taken away from her.” He wanted His words to enter and to have power in the heart. The only thing that endures forever is “the word of the Lord.” The wisdom of this world is against it—human reasoning is against it; but it is the only thing worth waiting upon diligently; and if Christians reason about the things of God instead of appealing to the word, they are sure to be going down. We want to have the word in our hearts, to sit at Christ's feet that we may understand and treasure it up. To hear Jesus is the “one thing” needful. No attention, even to Himself in the flesh, though it were from one who loved Him and whom He loved, could replace this. The “many things” end only in disappointment and death, instead of leading into life eternal, as did the words of Jesus, issuing from a heart broken, that it might let forth the stream of life. The hearing ear for His word delighted Him. He was bringing in truth to people's souls. “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” “Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.” “Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken to you.” Truth sets everything to rights; it sets God and man in their place, or it is not truth. Sin, and righteousness, and love—these never came out fully by the law; but “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Everything was set morally in perfect light by Him; but men saw it not because they knew Him not. The word now is the instrument of revealing truth. The law was perfect because it was of God, but it did not tell what man was, much less what God was—it told what man ought to be. Christ comes in as the light and says, You are all dead, but I can give you life. His coming into the world showed out everything exactly as it was. As the living Word He came and revealed to those who could see God—not at first in redemption, but in testimony. What value to Him was it that Martha cumbered herself about serving, in comparison of a soul listening to His word! It is the same now to a Christian. When God's word comes with nothing else, it has a right to have power over the soul. It makes its way by its own authority and its attractive grace to the heart, and where received it gives life in Christ. There is no living power in a miracle to quicken a soul, but there is living power in the word. It is by the word that any soul can get into heaven. We are begotten by the word, If the word cannot do it, it will never be done. There are three things constantly pressed in connection with the power of the word. 1St, the words spoken will all come up against them another day (John 12, &c.); 2nd, though perilous times come (2 Tim. 3), the word is able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. There is another thing also. When a soul is quickened by the word, the moral effect is to make it dependent and obedient— “sanctified to obedience.” Such is the character of the new man, as the old man would be independent.

Chap. xi. 1. At the beginning of this chapter we have another instance of our Lord praying, the expression of dependence. And there the disciples ask Him to teach them to pray. They had not learned the simple confidence in the Father that would go up naturally to Him and tell him all. There may not always be wisdom in asking, but there should be confidence of communion by the Holy Ghost. Even Paul had not always intelligence of God's mind, or he would not have asked to have the thorn in the flesh taken away; but he was not afraid to make his request. The disciples had not this simple-hearted confidence. They understood not their place as children of the Father. He condescends to teach them when in this condition and gives them this prayer. The Lord teaches them to pray for things about which His own heart was occupied. “Father, glorify thy name,” was expressive of the grand desire of His heart. “Hallowed be thy name.” He first tells them of Him with whom they are brought into relationship. Not that they had the present power of the Holy Ghost, giving them the consciousness of their relationship—that they did not get till the day of Pentecost, but He teaches them to say, “Father, hallowed be thy name.” There we have perfection. It is the desire for Him to be glorified, though I cannot tell what it may involve me in. There will be the desire not to sin, &c. This was the expression of the perfect desire that was in Christ Himself— “Hallowed be thy name.”

“Thy kingdom come.” There will be the removing of those things that are made, that “those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” Are you quite sure that you would like Him to come in this kingdom that will involve the shaking out of everything that may not remain? Surely that will wrench the heart from a quantity of things that are attaching you to that which does not belong to the kingdom to come. There may be the desire for these things, while at the same time the consciousness that I have not the sense of the object, but a sense of distance from it which hinders my enjoyment, though I know Him to be “the chiefest among ten thousand,” and the “altogether lovely.” There are often complaining prayers, because there is not the present enjoyment of seeing Him in the sanctuary, though the remembrance of it. We may have the hope of the Lord's coming, being glad to get to the end of this desert, because it is a desert; or we may long to get out, because Canaan is at the end. If it is not the latter, we shall be in danger of being tired with running, which is always wrong. We should be in the spirit of waiting pilgrims, not weary ones. We ought not to be weary; I do not say we are not, but we ought to be ever desiring His coming, because He is precious. In Rev. 22:17, the bride says “come,” in answer to what He is, when He says, “I am the bright and morning star.” God does not reject the cry which comes to Him as “out of the depths,” but there is a difference between the cry of distress and the cry of desire.

When Christ was on earth, there was an answer in Him to all God's will, for He always did the things which pleased His Father. He did it as no angel ever could. Then He comes down to notice our daily need, and there is dependence, indeed, in this. “Give us day by day our daily bread.”

“Forgive us our sins,” &c. This chapter does not go into what we may call proper church privileges; the desires are perfect, but the place is not known. The Lord touches upon all the circumstances down here. Man is looking up from the earth, he is walking there, and needs his feet washed. There are trespasses to be forgiven, and the spirit of grace is wanted. There is no sin imputed to us now; it is all put away. But will that make me hard when others fail? No; my seeing that Christ has agonized on the cross for me, will give me a sense of my freedom, but not indifference about sin. Instead of hardness, it will give us tenderness and softness of spirit.

“Lead us not into temptation.” Why should God ever lead us into temptation? it may be asked. Sometimes the Lord has need to put us through a certain process to make us learn our weakness. Look at Peter. The Lord saw he needed to be sifted, or He could have prayed for him to be saved from that fall. A soul would always desire that he may not have this sifting. Christ Himself, though it was a different thing for Him, desired to be delivered from it when bearing sin. Paul prayed for the thorn to be removed. But Paul did not get a fourth heaven, that would have made him worse, but a “thorn in the flesh;” something to make him despicable in preaching, (otherwise people might have come to him and said, Paul, you must be better than any one else, for you have been to the third heaven,) to prevent his being puffed up, and to keep him even. It was a gracious provision for him, though it is a right thing for the soul to desire not to be led into temptation, but to be delivered from the evil.

(To be continued.)

Notes on Luke, Luke 9:51 and 10:1-37, Notes on

Chaps. 9:51, &c.; 10:1-37

“When the time was come that He should be received up, He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem.” In Isaiah, “I set my face as a flint” He was accomplishing His Father's will here, as in all His course. Redemption must be accomplished through the cross. He “learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” It was the same obedience as at the beginning, when He was coming amongst them with “Blessed are the poor,” &c—more painful, and of course He felt the difference; but still He goes in the same blessed spirit and earnestness. Are there not twelve hours in the day If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, &c. He had found it His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him. There was joy to Him in this; but in the cup of wrath which He was going to drink there was no joy. He had met with scorn here, smiting there, rejection all through, but nothing like this cup, and therefore He cried, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” &c. Christ proved his perfectness, for He felt what it was to be “made sin,” &c. His holy nature shrunk from it, yet there was the same quiet, steady, patient obedience, for “He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,” as all through. He knows His Father's will and He does it. He sets His face there, where His Father's will is to be done, not looking to this side or to that, but there—Jerusalem.

We, according to the measure we have of the single eye, shall be following in the same course, going to the cross steadily, with one purpose; and in proportion as we do so, will those who do not so set their face oppose us. But the Lord says, “If any man serve me, let him follow me.” Service is not doing a great deal, but following the master, and the world and half-hearted Christians do not like that. There is plenty of doing in the world, but “if any man serve me, let him follow me.” Paul wanted to serve every way, but we find the Spirit forbidding him to go into Bithynia or Troas, and yet two years afterward we read that “all Asia heard the word.” God's work was to be done, but it was to be in His time and of His ordering. His servant had only to follow in obedience. It was the same with Moses. Nature would say of him, Why not stay in Pharaoh's court that the people there may be converted, instead of leaving it? Flesh cannot understand what faith, leads to. Then after he goes out in all the earnestness of his spirit, natural energy comes in, but then there is no deliverance. Moses has to go and keep sheep for forty years, to be broken down, and made nothing of, and what were Israel to do all that time? To wait. Then when he comes back to serve them, how is it done? There is the flesh appearing in another way. “Lord, I am not eloquent.” Then Aaron is sent back with him, and the work is done in the power of God.

Ver. 52. “They went and entered into a village of the Samaritans,” &c. (ver. 53.) We see the very reason they did not receive Him was because His face was set towards Jerusalem. His very obedience, singleness of eye, going to do God's will without honor, or attractiveness, or repute, going to Jerusalem, is the very reason they would have nothing to do with Him. (ver. 54.) See the religious opposition of the disciples to them. The Samaritans would not submit to God's way: Christ did. That is the difference: and the disciples went to command fire to come out of heaven as Elias did, and at the very place where Elias worked the miracle. In fleshly reasoning they think Christ was as worthy as Elias to call down fire. This is a more subtle kind of self than the other. It seemed like direct zeal for Christ, but they did not understand the zeal of Christ. He was not come for judgment; not to destroy men's lives, but to suffer Himself for them. If they had known God's thoughts they would have submitted quietly. Peter again understood not the Lord's mind when he drew his sword and smote the servant of the high priest. All the miracles of Elias were characterized by the spirit of judgment, not like Elisha who had his commission from heaven. Elijah stood in the place of judgment and righteousness, like John the Baptist who came in the spirit and power of Elias, saying, “Every tree that bringeth not forth fruit shall be hewn down,” &c., and “the ax is laid to the root of the trees.” Elisha had life-giving power, on the contrary, and was a type of grace. Elijah passed through Jordan, (death in type,) while Elisha starts from the other side of Jordan in resurrection.

Ver. 56. He turned round and went to another village. It is not pleasant to be trodden upon in this world, but Christ was. To do well, and suffer for it, and take it patiently, is what we have; and is it to end there Yes, and that is “acceptable with God.” Christ came to suffer, to bear anything for the sake of others, and He would not have been doing that, if He had called down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans. We have to follow Christ in carrying the testimony of God's love into the world in all our walk through it. The world needs it. We must not be seeking for ourselves, but having Christ the object.

At the end of the chapter He goes on to show how the links with this world are to be broken.

Ver. 57, 58. One says, “Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,” but Christ puts him to the test. You cannot go if you do not take up your lot with One who had not where to lay His head; for you may sooner go to the birds of the air for a nest, or to the foxes for a hole, than to the Son of man for a home in this world. They were not now to come to Him as the One who had the promises, &c., but to One whose portion was utter and entire rejection. Following Him could not be accompanied with ease and comfort here. He was to be delivered into the hands of men. At His birth we see the same thing. Every one found room in the inn save He, but any who wanted to find Him whom angels celebrate, must go to the manger!

Ver. 59. He says to one, “Follow me.” The first one wanted something with Christ; but here where He says, “Follow me,” then immediately a difficulty is started; and it is when He calls a man that difficulties are felt. There was no sense of the difficulties in the one who said, “Lord, I will follow thee,” without His call. But this man who is called, says, “Let me first go and bury my father.” He is going presently, but there is a link felt. Jesus says, “Let the dead bury their dead:” you must leave them to follow me. You may be ready to say, the things of the earth have

no power over you; but just try what it is to have them, and you will learn the extent of their power. A man may go to the length of his cord, but when he gets to the end he is checked. A father had the first claim in nature, and especially to a Jew, but Christ says, I am calling you out in the power of life; I am putting in my claim for the life I give you, and it breaks every bond here. It is a question of life in the midst of death. This word, “first,” (let me first go and bury my father), shows something put before Christ, as though the man said, There is something I put before your calling. Death had come in, and this very plea told Christ they were all under death. It was quite a right thing for the man to bury his father; but if life has come in, and the question is one of redemption, to be lost or saved, you must give yourself up to it. In the divine light which is in the cross, He saw all dead, and therefore He said, “Let the dead bury their dead.” The one thing to be done now is to follow Christ. The question is, Death in the world or life in Christ? Where are the affections?

Ver. 61. “Another also said, Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house.” In the previous case it was just this: When my first affections are settled, then will I come and follow thee. There is no good in that, the Lord says: “Let the dead bury their dead.” But this case shows that those at home were not left in heart. He felt he had to break with them, and yet his heart lingered. “No man looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.” “Remember Lot's wife.” “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.” If Christ be not first and last, He will always be last, for faith is not in exercise. The question is, whether we are walking as seeing what the cross tell us. The cross lifts the veil, showing the skeleton of this world, and when I see this sentence on all that is in the world, self as well as what is outside, and our links of affections with it, I learn that all is to be given up; but there is Christ Himself and the love there is in Him to meet it. It will and must judge self; and it brings out the will too, for there is a great deal of will in all this shunning of the cross. People may speak of the claims of affection, but it is not really and only family affection, &c., but the end which connects with self is felt. Natural affection there should be—indeed it is one of the signs of the last evil days to be without it—but if you have power to judge yourselves, you will find that many an excuse you make has this secret at the end. So in affliction, bereavement, &c. It is not only the affection that is touched, but the will. There is sweetness in the sorrow, so long as we realize Christ in it, and affection only is sorrowing. But if the will is touched, there is rebellion, resistance, struggling, and all this the Lord must judge, for a mass of flesh and self can never follow Christ. What a wonderful detail all this is? It is God going through our hearts entering into every corner and crevice. Why? Because of the constant, undeviating steadfastness of His love; and as a father loves his child when it is naught, as well as when it is good, so our God takes pains, at it were, with us all, even when so bad.

The effect of all is not only to make us practically righteous, but happy— “imitators of God as dear children.” It is well, on the one hand, for us to judge ourselves and see what there is to detect in us, and, on the other, to see the fullness of his grace in Christ.

May the Lord give us to feel more and more that “the friendship of the world is enmity with God,” and that the energy of the flesh cannot accomplish the work of God, so that we may learn to work from God, for God, and with God.

Chap. 10. The Lord pursues the subject we have been looking at in the preceding chapter, connected with the change that has taken place in His own position amongst them. It is no longer the Messiah on earth, but the heavenly Christ, they are to look to. There is another thing brought out here in the amazing importance attached to that moment, the last testimony being applied to them; and those who heard it would be more the subject of judgment than Tire and Sidon. Any among them would have repented with the truth you have, but they had it not. The blessing now was the Lord Himself being there; and he was so glorious and excellent that to hear Him was the prime source of blessing. All hung upon their reception or rejection of Him. In the sending out of these seventy, we see the same patient grace at work as when He sent out the twelve. If they were not received, they were to shake off the dust from their feet, &c. God's love never stops, whatever the wickedness of man, until His work is done. His grace never fails. Christ looks at the power of grace in God, more than at the wickedness of men, and he went patiently on, and said, “the harvest is great,” though knowing what there was all around him. The Lord was not like Elijah, who needed to be reminded of the seven thousand, who, as God knew, had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. He came in by the door, and went through everything with God. Nothing stopped Him from seeking out His sheep, scattered on the dark mountains. He laid down His life to save His sheep, and not one should be lost. To gather them, He went on in the power of grace. Paul was of this spirit when he says, “I endure all things for the elect's sakes.”

Did Christ suffer nothing in it? Look at Him, weary with His journey, sitting at the well, and a poor, wretched, vile sinner coming to meet Him, to whom He gives the water of life. There He finds meat to eat that they know not of; and He says, “the fields are white unto harvest.” He was as fresh and happy in His testimony, while sitting at the well with this poor woman, as if all Jerusalem had received Him; because the fountain was within In Him was “a well of water, springing up,” &c. So with us. If we are going on with him, we shall be “troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed.” The testimony is in the earthen vessel, it is true, but the fountain is within, and they were to be perfectly dependent on God, and independent of everything else. They were to expect to meet enemies, wolves. “Go your ways, behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.” You cannot turn a lamb into a wolf to defend itself. Peter was for taking a sword to smite off the servant's right ear, but the Lord forbids him, and says, “All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” It is difficult to receive everything and do nothing, to be a lamb among wolves—like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in prospect of the fiery furnace, saying, “we are careful, O king, to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver,” &c.

“Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way.” Not be uncourteous, but waste not time in useless ceremonies, &c.

When in God's service, and among God's enemies, God must be everything. It needs concentration of heart in Him, as knowing that the world has rejected your Master, and will reject you, if you are faithful to Him. Faith knows this, and goes on, not with carnal prudence and worldly wisdom, but as knowing what to do and going on to do it. Faith always carries to the house peace; it produces enmity,—two against three, and three against two,—because some will receive it, and some not; but the thing brought is always peace. (ver. 7-9.) “The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” Not merely such and such a thing is God's will, but whatever you do, whether you receive or reject it, the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” The condition of the world now is, that it has rejected it. The Son of God, the King, has come into the world, put it to the test, and it says, We will have Him This fact has not lost its solemnity now, for we are walking through the world that has rejected Christ; we bring the testimony of peace to it—peace that has been made, for the sacrifice has been offered. It is also true that the testimony has been rejected. “Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” (ver. 10, 11.) Faith carries things in its own sphere, needing nothing but God's word. The sight of the eyes is constantly tending to dim the estimate which faith forms; and if faith is not nourished by the word, it sinks down and fades away. If I am not feeding on the word, faith is not fed, for it cannot be fed by sight of things all around. When the Lord spoke to Jerusalem, saying, Their house should be left unto them desolate, and there should not be one stone left upon another, they could not actually see the stones then falling, but it was Christ's word for them to believe. Natural reasoning is

fed by what we see, but faith is fed by what God has revealed to the soul.

Ver. 15. “Thou, Capernaum, shall be thrust down to hell” —in God's eye, not man's. In man's eye, it might be exalted to heaven. So with this world. And what does that prove? That it may last as long as God permits, but that His word will be fulfilled, “the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” There is nothing stable here. When God comes in, where will it all be? though there are scoffers who say, “Where is the promise of His coming?”

Ver. 16, “He that heareth you, heareth me.” That is where faith has its resource. In hearing the word the disciples spoke, I am hearing Christ Himself. That is where faith walks. I know it must be true, for Christ has said it. Everything may go wrong, the world, Jews, the Church, &c., but God's word never. And it has been given. It never changes, for it has been given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, &c. The Church, as ground of confidence in testimony, is gone, (though we know it is founded upon a rock; and as to its security, it can never be destroyed,) but God's word will not fail. Whatever we see tends to weaken and deface faith, puts to the test what the affections of the soul are, because it is not to be what I like, but what God says.

Ver. 17-20. “Rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” This shows the change of everything Devils may be subject to you, but the Lord says, That is not the portion for you to rejoice in; I am now showing my power in another way. This word, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,” alludes to the time when Satan the “accuser of the brethren” will be cast down. Now he is in heaven-not in God's presence, in light inaccessible, but before the throne of judgment—two different things. “Hast thou considered my servant Job.” Proving that when others came before the throne, Satan came also. Contrast ver. 19 and 20. The one speaks of what can be seen, the other what could be known only to faith. The unseen thoughts of your heart are much more important than what can be seen. The invisible is always more important than the visible.

In this world, it is not merely that man is a sinner, but there is the introduction into it of the power of evil. Satan has got hold of this world through man's sin. So in the case of the poor woman it is said, “whom Satan has bound these eighteen years,” But when the Church has been caught up, Satan will be cast down. There was war in heaven; but when he is on the earth, he will for three and a half years be raising up the man of the earth against the Lord from heaven. When He comes, Satan's power will be put away. He is not put into the “the lake of fire” until the close of the thousand years, but into “the bottomless pit.” That is just what the devils asked to be saved from when cast out of the man whose name was Legion; (chap. viii. 31;) “deep” meaning “bottomless pit.” The Lord did not cast them down to it, because the time was not then come.

This ability to cast out devils was a great thing. The communicating of the power by the Lord was a power above the immediate working of the miracles themselves. It required divine power, and none but that could give the power, to others. In the millennium, there will not be the power of good and evil together; the latter will be cast out. “Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee,” &c. The pit shall be digged for the wicked. Satan must be cast out. And when Christ was upon earth, He was presenting Himself in the power of God to bind the strong man, and spoil his goods, &c. It was a wonderful thing to meet a man under the power of Satan, and to cast Satan out. It was an earnest of the “powers of the world to come;” the “world to come” referring, not to heaven, but to this earth being renewed. He was then putting forth the same power, that He will exercise fully in the coming kingdom.

Ver. 19. “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents,” &c.; and it was at the point when He was rejected that He says this. He knew what was really going on, and though He said peace, they did not say peace to Him. “I give you power” over all the power of the enemy. “Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” That is the Church's place. When Christ was manifested on earth, it was a blessed thing; but it is better to be His companion in heaven, as we shall be when He comes to take us. Far better to be with Himself and as Himself in the Father's house. We have nothing to do with earth, our names are not written in the earth,—kings in it indeed, but our portion is not in it. “He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.” We shall have the inheritance with Him, but it is below us; our hope is to be with Himself above it. The inheritance is the consequence of having this place with Him. (Eph. 1) We are children of the Father, to be “holy and without blame before him in love.” Now we have our portion according to the riches of His grace, of poor sinners whom He has saved; and we shall be to the glory of His grace in the manifestation of it. The inheritance comes in afterward., “Rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” As though He would say to them, Do not let your minds be filled with things down here, but think of what you have in me and with me. We find two things brought before us in God's ways: first, the government of this world—that which is still prophetic, connected with the kingdom; and then the Church up in heaven. When the inheritance is spoken of, it is always future; but when our place is spoken of, it is always up in heaven. The Lord saw that the present setting up of the kingdom would all fail, and He was bringing in a better thing than any kingdom, and He rejoiced in that; for when He gives joy to another, He cannot help having it also Himself. When the thief on the cross asked Him to remember him in His kingdom, He said, “this day shalt thou be with me,” &c. He was gratifying the thief and also Himself. So with these disciples. He would have them not be rejoicing in the good down here, for it is not good enough. Not only do not be troubled with the bad, but rejoice not in the best thing in this world. “In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit.” “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” He felt the circumstances deeply, but His soul was up to the source, and He would say, It is quite right that these proud and haughty ones should see they are nothing, and that these poor despised lambs should get the glory. “Even so, Father.” He must bow to the evil, because the time to judge it was not yet come. Evil is going on; people are saying, Where is the God of the earth? We have to bear it; the Lord did. We must get our thoughts away from the expectation of having things better down here. The soul that enters into God's thoughts and purposes bows to His will. “Even so, Father.”

Then He, as it were, retires into the glory of His own person. The Son has to reveal the Father. The world rejects Him, and He submits to the rejection of the kingdom, and brings out, instead of it, the blessedness of the heavenly thing, and now speaks of Himself as the Son, and glories in that. The present result of His coming is the Son revealing the Father; and this is even better than the kingdom. The testimony is brighter, as to what God is about, when I take things quietly and submit, not desiring to be a wolf among the wolves. It is exceeding difficult for one's heart to bow and say, will be nothing but a lamb; but that is our place, for the Lord says, vengeance is mine,” “rather give place unto wrath;” (Rom. 12) and “neither give place to the devil.” (Eph. 4) But if you do not give place to wrath, you will give place to the devil. Shall we loose anything by being quiet, and taking things patiently? No, “all power,” he says, “is given unto me in heaven and on earth.” We must bow to what is, without, and be satisfied with what is written. If not we shall be only wearying ourselves in the greatness of our way. May we be satisfied to have our “names written in heaven.”

(To be continued.)