Luke - Commentaries by Charles Henry Mackintosh

Short Papers, Self-Denial

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“If only we exercise a little self-denial every day, we shall get on to heaven very comfortably.” What a volume of wholesome practical truth in this brief utterance! The path of self-denial is the Christian’s true path. “If any man,” says Christ, “will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23.) Mark, it is not, “ let him deny certain things belonging to himself.” No, he must “ deny himself;” and this is a “ daily é’ thing. Each morning, as we rise and enter afresh upon the pathway of daily life, we have the same grand and all-important work before us, namely, to deny self.

This hateful self will meet us at every step; for, although we know, through grace, that “ our old man is crucified”- that it is dead and buried out of God’s sight, still this is only as regards our standing in Christ, according to God’s view of us. We know, alas! that self has to be denied, judged, and subjugated, every day, every hour, and every moment. The principle of our standing must be wrought out in practice. God sees us perfect in Christ. We are not in the flesh, but the flesh is in us, and it must be denied and kept under by the power of the Spirit.

And, be it remembered, that it is not merely in its grossness that self must be denied, but in its refinement- not merely in its low habits, but in its cultivated tastes- not merely in its roughness and rudeness, but in its most polished and elegant forms. This is not always seen. It too often happens that, like Saul, we spare that which we consider “ the best,” and bring the edge of the sword to bear only upon “ the vile and refuse.” This will never do. It is self that must be denied. Yes, self, in all the length and breadth of that comprehensive word. Not merely some special branches, but the great parent stem-not merely some accessories of nature, but nature itself. It is a comparatively easy matter to deny certain things pertaining to self, while self is pampered and gratified all the time. I may deny my appetite to feed my religious pride. I may starve myself to minister to my love of money. I may wear shabby clothes while I pride myself in sumptuous furniture and a splendid equipage. Hence, the need of being reminded that we must deny self.

And, oh! who can sum up all that is contained in this weighty word, self-denial? Self acts everywhere. In the closet, in the family, in the shop, in the railway carriage, in the street-everywhere, at all times, and under all circumstances. It has its tastes and its habits, its prejudices and predilections, its likings and its dislikings. It must be denied in all these. We may frequently detect ourselves liking our own image. This must be denied with uncommon decision.

Then again in matters of religion, we like those who suit us, who agree and sympathize with us, who admire our opinions or mode of propounding’ them. All this must be brought under the sharp edge of the knife of self-denial. If not, we may find ourselves despising some dear and honored Christian, simply because of something which does not suit us; and, on the other hand, we shall laud to the skies some hollow, worthless character, just because of some feature which we like. Indeed, of all the ten thousand shapes, which self assumes, there is not one more hateful than that of religion. Clad in this garb it will make itself the center of a clique, confine its affections within that narrow enclosure, and call that Christian communion. Forth, from this contracted circle, it will diligently expel very one who happens to have a single disagreeable point or angle. It will obstinately refuse to accommodate itself to the scruples and infirmities of others. As to these it will not yield a single hair’s breadth, while, at the same time, it will surrender any amount of truth in order to hold fellowship with its own image. All this is terrible and should be most sedulously guarded against.

If my reader will study carefully 1 Cor. 8-10, he will find a most precious lesson on the subject of self-denial. The heading of this entire section might be thus worded, “Any length in self-denial; not an inch in surrendering truth.” This should ever be the Christian’s motto. If it be merely a question of self, surrender all; if it be a question of truth, surrender nothing. “ If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.” (chap. viii. 13.) Noble resolution! May we have grace to carry it out!

Again, “Though I be free from all, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more..... I am made all things to all, that I might by all means save some.” (chap ix. 19-22.) “Let no man seek his own” The very thing we are so ready to seek. “But every man another’s wealth.” The very last thing we feel disposed to do.

It is important and very needful to observe that when the apostle declares that he was “ made all things to all,” it was entirely a matter of self-denial and not of self-indulgence. He neither indulged himself, nor surrendered a single iota of the truth of God, but made himself servant to all for their good and God’s glory. This is our model. May the Lord endow us with grace to imitate it! We are called to surrender not only our points and angles, prejudices and predilections, but also our personal rights for the profit of others. This is the Christian’s daily business, and it is as he is enabled to discharge it that he will walk in the footsteps of Jesus, and “ get on comfortably to heaven.”

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 6, Risen Saviour's Challenge, A: Part 2

It is impossible to read this charming section of inspiration and not be struck with what we may venture to call the rallying power of a risen Savior's voice and presence. We see the dear disciples scattered hither and thither, in doubt and perplexity, fear and despondency—some running to the sepulcher; some coming from it; some going to Emmaus, and some crowded together at Jerusalem, in various states and conditions.

But the voice and realized presence of Jesus rallied, reassured, and encouraged them all, and brought all together around His own blessed Person, in worship, love, and praise. There was an indescribable power in His presence to meet every condition of heart and mind. Thus it

was; thus it is; thus it ever must be, blessed and praised be His matchless Name! There is power in the presence of a risen Savior to solve our difficulties, remove our perplexities, calm our fears, ease our burdens, dry our tears, meet our every need, tranquillize our minds, and satisfy every craving of our hearts.

"Jesus, thou art enough, The mind and heart to fill, Thy life—to calm the anxious soul, Thy love—its fears dispel."

The two disciples going to Emmaus proved something of this, if we are to judge from their own glowing words to one another, " Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while lie opened to us the scriptures?" Yes, here lay the deep and precious secret: " He talked with us,"—and " He opened to us the scriptures?" What seraphic moments!—what high communion! what loving ministry! A risen Savior rallying their hearts by His marvelous words, and mighty exposition of the scriptures.

What was the effect—what the necessary result? The two travelers instantly returned to Jerusalem to seek their brethren. It could not be otherwise. If we lose sight of a risen Savior we are sure to get away from our brethren, sure to get occupied with our own things—to pursue our own way—to get into coldness, deadness, darkness, and selfishness. But, on the other hand, the moment we get really into the presence of Christ—when we hear His voice, and feel the sweetness and power of His love—when our hearts are brought under the mighty moral influence of His most precious loving ministry, then we are led out, in true affection and interest, after all our brethren, and in earnest de-

sire to find our place in their midst in order that we may communicate to them the deep joy that is filling our own souls. We may lay it down as a fixed principle—a spiritual axiom—that it is utterly impossible to breathe the atmosphere of a risen Savior's presence and remain in an isolated, independent, or fragmentary condition. The necessary effect of His dear presence is to melt the heart and cause it to flow out in streams of tender affection toward all that belong to Him.

But let us pursue our chapter.

" And they rose up the same hour of the night"—thus proving they had but little business at Emmaus, " and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and path appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit."

They, too, needed a risen Savior's challenge to bring them to their senses—to calm their fears, and raise their drooping spirits. They needed to realize the power of His presence, as the risen One. They had just declared to their two brethren from Emmaus that " The Lord is risen indeed;" but yet when their risen Lord appeared to them, they did not know Him, and He had to challenge their hearts with His stirring words, " Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see: for a spirit bath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb, and he took it, and did eat before them."

What tender love! What gracious condescension to their weakness and need! What compassionate entrance into all their feelings, spite of their folly and unbelief! Gracious Savior! Who would not love thee? Who would not trust thee? May the whole heart be absorbed with thee, may the whole life be cordially devoted to thy blessed service! May thy cause command all our energies! May all we have and all we love be laid on thine altar as a reasonable service! May the eternal Spirit work in us for the accomplishment of these grand and longed-for objects!

But, ere closing this brief article, there is one point. of special interest and value to which we must call the attention of the christian reader, and that is, the way in which the risen Savior puts honor upon the written word. He rebuked the two travelers for their slowness, of heart to believe the scriptures. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

So also in His interview with the eleven and the rest at Jerusalem. No sooner had He satisfied them as to His identity, than He sought to conduct their souls to the same divine authority—the holy scriptures. " And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

All this is of the deepest possible importance, at the present moment. We feel persuaded that professing Christians, everywhere, need to have their hearts stirred up in reference to the paramount claims of the word of God, its absolute authority over the conscience, its formative power, its complete sway over the entire -course, character, and conduct.

It is to be feared, greatly feared, that holy scripture is fast losing its divine place in the hearts of those who profess to take it as the divine rule of faith and morals. We have often heard that watchword sounded in our ears, " The bible, and the bible alone is the religion of Protestants." Alas! alas! if this motto were ever really true, we fear that its truth, at this solemn moment, is more than questionable. Very few, comparatively, even of those who occupy the very highest platform of profession, seem to admit, and still fewer actually acknowledge practically, that in all things, whether of faith or morals—in all the practical details of life, in the Church, in the family, in the business, and in our private walk from day to day—we are to be governed absolutely by that commanding, that mighty, that morally glorious sentence, " It is written"—a sentence enhanced exceedingly in value, and heightened in its moral glory by the telling fact that it was used thrice by our adorable Lord, at the opening of His public career, in His conflict with the adversary; and sounded in the ears of His loved ones just as He was about to ascend into the heavens.

Yes, dearly beloved christian reader, " It is written" was a favorite sentence with our divine Master and Lord. He ever obeyed the word. He yielded a hearty and unqualified submission to its holy authority in all things. He lived on it and by it, from first to last. He walked according to it, and never acted without it. He did not reason or question, imply or infer, He did not add or diminish or qualify in any one way—He obeyed. Yes; He the eternal Son of the Father—Himself God over all blessed forever—having become a man, lived on the holy scriptures, and walked by their rule continually. He made them the food of His soul, the material and the basis of His marvelous ministry—the divine authority of His perfect path.

In all this He was our great Exemplar. Oh! may we follow His blessed footsteps! May we bring ourselves, our ways, our habits, our associations, our surroundings, to the test of holy scripture, and reject, with whole-hearted decision, everything, no matter what or by whom propounded, that will not bear that searching light.

We are most thoroughly persuaded that in hundreds of thousands of cases, the first grand point to be gained is to recall the heart to that delightful attitude in which the word of God is fully owned and submitted to as an absolute authority. It is positively labor lost to be arguing and disputing with a man who does not give scripture the selfsame place that our Lord Christ gave it. And when a man does this, there is no need of argument. What is really needed is to make the word of God the basis of our individual peace and the authority of our individual path. May we all do so!

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 6, Risen Saviour's Challenge, A: Part 1

The period during which our blessed Lord lay in the tomb must needs have proved a dark and bewildering Moment to many of those who looked for redemption Israel. It would demand a calm, clear and vigorous faith to raise the heart above the heavy clouds which gathered, just then, upon the horizon of God's people; and it does not appear that many possessed such a faith at that trying moment.

We may, doubtless, look upon the two disciples who traveled together to Emmaus as illustrating the condition of many, if not all the beloved saints of God, during the three days and three nights that our beloved Lord lay in the heart of the earth. They were thoroughly bewildered, and at their wits' end. " They talked together of all those things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they communed together and reasoned Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him."

Their minds were full of surrounding circumstances. All hope seemed gone. Their fondly cherished expectations were blasted, apparently. The whole scene was overcast by the dark shadow of death, and their boor hearts were sad.

But mark how the risen Savior's challenge falls upon their drooping spirits! " And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?"

surely this was a reasonable and a weighty question for those dear disciples—a question eminently calculated to recall them, as we say, to their senses. It was precisely what they wanted at the moment, occupied, as they were, with circumstances, instead of resting in the eternal and immutable truth of God. Scripture was clear and plain enough, had they only hearkened to its voice. But, instead of listening only to the distinct testimony of the Eternal Spirit in the word, they had allowed their minds to get thoroughly down under the action and influences of outward circumstances. Instead of standing, with firm foot, on the everlasting rock of divine revelation, they were struggling amid the billows of life's stormy ocean. In a word, they had, for the moment, fallen under the power of death, so far as their minds were concerned, and no marvel if their hearts were sad, and their communications gloomy.

And, beloved reader, does it not sometimes happen that you and I, in like manner, get down under the power of things seen and temporal, instead of living, by faith, in the light of things unseen and eternal? Yes, even we who profess to know and believe in a risen Savior—who believe that we are dead and risen with Him—who have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Do not we, at times, sink and cower? And do we not, at such moments, stand in need of a risen Savior's challenge? Has not that precious, loving Savior, ofttimes, occasion to put the question to our hearts, " What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another?" Does it not often happen that, when we come together, or when we walk by the way, our " communications " are anything but what they ought to be? It may be we are gloomily moping together over the depressing circumstances which surround us—the weather—the prospects of the country—the state of trade—our poor health—the difficulty of making both ends meet—anything and everything, in short, but the right thing?

Yes, and so occupied do we become with such things, that our spiritual eyes are holden, and we do not take knowledge of the blessed One who, in His tender faithful love, is at our side; and He has to challenge our vagrant hearts with His pointed and powerful question, " What manner of communications are these that ye have?"

Let us think of this. It really demands our consideration. We are all far too apt to allow our minds to fall under the power and pressure of circumstances, instead of living in the power of faith. We get occupied with our surroundings instead of dwelling upon " things above "—those bright and blessed realities which are ours in Christ.

And what is the result? Do we better our circumstances, or brighten our prospects by gloomily moping over them? Not in the smallest degree. What then? We simply make ourselves miserable and our communications depressing; and, worst of all, we bring sad. dishonor on the cause of Christ.

Christians have very little idea of how much is involved in their temper, manner, look and deportment, in daily life. We sometimes forget that the Lord's glory is intimately bound up in our every movement, and our every expression. We all know how that, in social life, we judge of the character of the head of a household by what we see of his children and servants. If we observed the children looking miserable and downcast, we should be disposed to pronounce their father, morose, severe, and arbitrary. If we see the servants crushed and overwrought, we consider the master hard-hearted and grinding. In short, as a rule, you can form a tolerably fair estimate of the head of a house by the tone, spirit, style and manner of the members of his household.

How earnestly, then, should we seek, as members of the household of God, to give a right impression of what He is by our temper, spirit, style and manner! If men of the world—those with whom we come in contact, from clay to day, in the practical details of life—if they see us looking sour, morose, downcast—if they hear us giving utterance to doleful complaints about this, that, and the other—if they see us occupied about our own things—grasping, griping, and driving as hard bargains as others—if they see us grinding our servants with heavy work, low wages, and poor fare—what estimate can they form of Him whom we call our Father and our Master in heaven?

Christian reader, let us not despise and turn away from such homely words. Depend upon it there is need of such in this day of high profession. There is a vast amount of intellectual traffic in truth which leaves the conscience unreached, the heart untouched, the life

unaffected. We profess to be dead and risen; but when anything occurs to touch US, either in our persons, in our relations, or in our interests, we very speedily show that the old thing is not practically dead at all, and that our belief in death and resurrection is very much of a mere theory.

May the good Lord give us grace to apply our hearts, very seriously and earnestly, to these things, that so there may be, in our daily course, a somewhat more faithful exhibition of a genuine Christianity—such an exhibition as shall glorify our own most gracious God and Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—and such, too, as shall afford to those who come in contact with us, a fair specimen of what pure religion really is, in its action upon the entire course and character.

If the Lord permit, we may resume this subject on a future occasion. Meanwhile, may we all realize more intensely, a risen Savior's presence, and find therein a triumphant answer to all the dark suggestions of the enemy, the depressing reasonings of our own hearts, and the deadening influence of surrounding circumstances. God, in His infinite mercy, grant it, for Jesus' sake!

Oh! how our doubting hearts would faint at seeing

The weary way;

But step by step His hand is gently leading,

And day by day.

New blessings lie before us, and new sorrow,

Darkness and light;

But soon will reach the glorious to-morrow,

With no more night.

We trust Him—trust Him for He knows the road;

We are His care;

And all He giveth us is for our good:

We trust, nor fear.

He lets us see the daylight in His love,

To cheer our night;

We try not now to see the road, but look above

Where all is light.

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 4, Great Commission: Part 4

Having, in former papers, dwelt a little upon the terms of "The Great Commission," we shall now, in dependence upon divine teaching, seek to unfold the truth as to the basis. It is of the very last possible importance to have a clear understanding of the solid ground on which "repentance and remission of sins" are announced to every creature under heaven. This we have distinctly laid down in our Lord's own words, " It behooved Christ to suffer, and in to rise from the dead the third day."

Here lies, in its impregnable strength, the foundation of the glorious commission whereof we speak. God blessed forever be His holy Name, has been pleased to set before us, with all possible clearness, the moral ground on which He commands all men everywhere! to repent, and the righteous ground on which He can proclaim, to every repentant soul, the perfect remission of sins.

We have already had occasion to guard the reader against the false notion that any amount of repentance, on the part of the sinner, could possibly form the meritorious ground of forgiveness. No doubt, the vast majority of those who read "Things New and Old' are, through the mercy of God, clear on this point. But, inasmuch as we write for those who may be ignorant of the very elements of the gospel, we feel bound to put things in the very simplest possible form so that all may understand. We all know how prone the human heart is to build upon something of our own, if not upon good works, at least upon our penitential exercises. If ever, it becomes our bounden duty to set forth the precious truth of the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only righteous ground of the forgiveness of sins.

True, all men are commanded to repent. It is meet and right they should. How could it be otherwise? How can we look at that cursed tree on which the Son of God bore the judgment of sin, and not sec the absolute necessity of repentance? How can we hearken to that solemn cry, breaking forth from amid the shadows of Calvary, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," and not own, from the deepest depths of our moral being, the moral fitness of repentance? If indeed sin is so terrible, so absolutely hateful to God, so perfectly intolerable to His holy nature, that He had to bruise His well-beloved and only-begotten Son on the cross, in order to put it away, does it not well become the sinner to judge himself, and repent in dust raid ashes'? Had the blessed Lord to endure the hiding of God's countenance, because of our sins, and we not be broken, self-judged and subdued on account of these sins? Shall we, with impenitent heart, hear the glad tidings of full and free forgiveness of sins—a forgiveness which cost nothing less than the unutterable horrors and agonies of the cross? Shall we, with flippant tongue, profess to have peace—a peace purchased by the ineffable sufferings of the Son of God? If it was absolutely necessary that Christ should suffer for our sins, is it not morally fitting that we should repent of them?

Nor is this all. It is not merely that it becomes us, once in a way, to repent. There is far more than this. The spirit of self-judgment, genuine contrition, and true humility must characterize everyone who enters at all into the profound mystery of the sufferings of Christ. Indeed it is only as we contemplate and deeply ponder those sufferings that we can form anything approaching to a just estimate of the hatefulness (vf sin, on the one hand, and the divine fullness and perfectness of remission, on the other. Such was the hatefulness of sin, that it was absolutely necessary that Christ should suffer; but—all praise to redeeming love t—such were the sufferings of Christ, that God can forgive us our sins according to the infinite value which He attaches to those sufferings. Both go together; and both, we may add, exert a formative influence, under the powerful ministry of the Holy Ghost, on the christian character, from first to last. Our sins are all forgiven; but " it behooved Christ to suffer;" and hence, while our peace flows like a river, we must never forget the soul-subduing fact that the basis of our peace was laid in the ineffable sufferings of the Son of God.

This is most needful, owing to the excessive levity of our hearts. We are ready enough to receive the truth of the remission of sins, and then go on in an easy, self-indulgent, world-loving spirit, thus proving how feebly we enter into the sufferings of our blessed Lord, or into the real nature of sin. All this is truly deplorable, and calls for the deepest exercise of soul. There is a sad lack amongst us of that real brokenness of spirit which ought to characterize those who owe their present peace and everlasting felicity and glory to the sufferings of Christ. We are light, frivolous, and self-willed. We avail ourselves of the death of Christ to save us from the consequences of our sins, but our ways do not exhibit the practical effect of that death in its application to ourselves. We do not walk as those who arc dead with Christ—who have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts—who arc delivered from this present evil world. In a word, our Christianity is sadly deficient in depth of tone; it is shallow, feeble, and stunted. We profess to know a great deal of truth; but, it is to be feared, it is only in theory. We talk about principles, which are not turned to practical account.

It may, perhaps, be asked, " What has all this to do with ' The Great Commission?" " It has to do with it, in a very intimate way. We are deeply impressed with a sense of the superficial way in which the work of evangelization is carried on at the present day. Not only are the terms of the great commission overlooked, but the basis seems to be little understood. The sufferings of Christ are not duly dwelt upon and unfolded. The atoning work of Christ is presented in its sufficiency for the sinner's need—and, no doubt, this is a signal mercy. We have to be profoundly thankful when preachers and writers hold up the precious blood of Christ as the sinner's only plea, instead of preaching up rites, ceremonies, sacraments, good works—falsely so called, creeds, churches, religious ordinances, and such like delusions.

All this is most fully admitted. But, at the same time, we must give expression to our deep and solemn conviction that much of our modern evangelical preaching is extremely shallow and bald; and the result of that preaching is seen in the light, airy, flippant style of many of our so-called converts. Some of us seem so intensely anxious to make everything so easy and simple for the sinner, that our preaching becomes extremely one-sided.

Thanks be to God, He has indeed made all easy and simple for the needy, broken-hearted, penitent sinner. He has left him nothing to do, nothing to give. It is " to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." It is not possible for any evangelist to go too far in stating this side of the question. No one can go beyond Rom. 4:5, in setting forth salvation by free grace, through faith, without works of any sort or description.

But then, we must remember that the blessed apostle Paul—the greatest evangelist that ever lived except his divine Master—did not confine himself to this one side; and neither should we. He pressed the claims of divine holiness. He called upon sinners to judge themselves, and he called upon believers to subdue and deny themselves. He did not preach a gospel that left people at case in the world, satisfied with themselves, and occupied with earthly things, lie did not tell people that they were saved from the flames of hell and were therefore free to enjoy the follies of earth.

This was not Paul's gospel. He preached a gospel which, while it fully met the sinner's deepest need, did also most fully maintain God's glory—a gospel, which, while it came down to the very lowest point of the sinner's condition, did not leave him there. Paul's gospel not only set forth a full, clear, unqualified, unconditional, present forgiveness of sins, but also, just as fully and clearly, the condemnation of sin, and the believer's entire deliverance from this present evil world. The death of Christ, in Paul's gospel, not only assured the soul of complete deliverance from the just consequences of sins, as seen in the judgment of God in the lake of fire; but it also set forth, with magnificent fullness and clearness, the complete snapping of every link with the world, and entire deliverance from the present power and rule of sin.

Now, here is precisely where the lamentable deficiency and culpable one-sidedness of our modern preaching are so painfully manifest. The gospel which one often hears now-a-days is, if we may be allowed the use of such a term, a carnal, earthly, worldly gospel. It offers a kind of ease, but it is fleshly, worldly ease. It gives confidence; but it is rather a carnal confidence than the confidence of faith. It is not a delivering gospel. It leaves people in the world, instead of bringing them to God.

And what must be the result of all this? We can hardly bear to contemplate it. We greatly fear that, should our Lord tarry, the fruit of much of what is going on around us will be a terrible combination of the very highest profession with the very lowest practice. It cannot be otherwise. High truth taken up in a light, carnal spirit, tends to lull the conscience and quash all godly exercise of soul as to our habits and ways, in daily life. In this way, people escape from legality only to plunge into levity, and truly the last state is worse than the first.

We earnestly hope that the christian reader may not fool unduly depressed by the perusal of these lines. God knows we would not pen a line to discourage the feeblest lamb in all the precious flock of Christ. We desire to write in the divine presence. We have entreated the Lord that every line of this paper and of all our papers should come directly from Himself to the reader. Indeed it has been our one desire and prayer, ever since we undertook the service of conducting this magazine, that it might be His messenger; and that when it ceased to be this, it should cease to be altogether.

Hence, therefore, we must ask the reader—and we do so most faithfully and affectionately—to ponder what is here put before him. We cannot hide from him the fact that we are most seriously impressed with the condition of things around us. We feel that the tone and aspect of much of the so-called Christianity of this our day arc such as to awaken the gravest apprehension in the mind of every thoughtful observer. We perceive a terribly rapid development of the features of the last days, as detailed by the pen of inspiration. " This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, head, high-minded, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn

away." 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

What an appalling picture! How solemn to find the very same evils that characterize the heathen, as recorded in Rom. 1, reproduced in connection with the highest profession of Christianity! Should not the thought of this awaken the most serious apprehensions in the mind of every Christian? Should it not lead all who are engaged in the holy service of preaching and teaching amongst us to examine themselves closely, as to the tone and character of their ministry, and as to their own private walk and ways? It does seem to us that we want a more searching style of ministry on the part of evangelists and teachers. There is a lack of hortatory and prophetic ministry. By prophetic ministry we mean that which brings the conscience into the immediate presence of God.

In this we are lamentably deficient. There is a vast amount of objective truth in circulation amongst us—more, perhaps, than ever since the days of the apostles. Books, and periodicals by hundreds of thousands, tracts by hundreds of millions arc sent forth annually.

Do we object to this? Nay; we bless God for it. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that by far the largest proportion of all this vast mass of literature is addressed to the intelligence, and not enough to the heart and conscience. Now, while it is quite right to enlighten the understanding, it is quite wrong to neglect the heart and conscience. We feel it to be a most serious thing to allow the intelligence to outstrip the conscience—to have more truth in the head than in the heart—to profess principles which do not govern the practice. Nothing can be more dangerous. It tends to place us, directly, in the hands of Satan. If the conscience be not kept tender, if the heart be not governed by the fear of God, if a broken and contrite; spirit be not cultivated, there is no telling what depths we may plunge into. When the conscience is kept in a sound condition, and the heart is humble and true, then every fresh ray of light that shines in upon the understanding ministers strength to the soul and tends to elevate and sanctify our whole moral being.

This is what every earnest spirit must crave. All true-hearted Christians must long for increased personal holiness, more likeness to Christ, more genuine devotedness of heart, a deepening, strengthening, and expanding of the kingdom of God in the soul—that kingdom which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

May we all have grace to seek after these divine realities! May we diligently cultivate them in our own private life, and seek, in every possible way, to promote them in all those with whom we come in contact! Thus shall we, in some measure, stem the tide of hollow profession around us, and be a living testimony against the powerless form of godliness so sadly dominant, in this our day.

Christian reader, art thou one with us in this current of thought and feeling? If so, then let us most earnestly entreat thee to join us in earnest prayer to God, that He will graciously raise our spiritual tone by drawing us closer to Himself, and filling our hearts with love to Him and earnest desire for the promotion of His glory, the progress of His cause, and the prosperity of His people.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 4, Great Commission: Part 7

We are now called to consider the deeply important subject of the authority on which the great commission proceeds. This we have presented to us in that one commanding and most comprehensive sentence, " It is written"—a sentence which ought to be engraved, in characters deep and broad, on the tablet of every Christian's heart.

Nothing can possibly be more interesting or edifying than to note the way in which our blessed Lord, on all occasions and under all circumstances, exalts the holy scriptures. He, though God over all blessed forever, and as such the Author of all scripture, yet, having taken His place as man on the earth, He plainly sets forth what is the bounden duty of every man, and that is to be absolutely, completely, and abidingly governed by the authority of scripture. See Him in conflict with Satan. How does He meet him? Simply as each one of us should meet him, by the written word. It could be no example to us had our Lord vanquished him by the putting forth of divine power. Of course He could, there and then, have consigned him to the bottomless pit or the lake of fire, but that would have been no example for us, inasmuch as we could not so overcome. But, on the other hand, when we find the blessed One referring to holy scripture—when we find Him appealing, again and again, to that divine authority—when we find Him putting the adversary to flight simply by the written word, we learn in the most impressive manner the place, the value, and the authority of the holy scriptures.

And is it not of the very last possible importance to have this great lesson impressed upon us at the present moment? Unquestionably it is. If ever there was a, moment in the history of the church of God when it behooved Christians to bow down their whole moral being to this very lesson, it is the moment through which we are just now passing. On all hands the divine authority, integrity, plenary inspiration, and all-sufficiency of holy scripture are called in question. The word of God is openly insulted and flung aside. Its integrity is called in question, and that, too, in quarters where we should least expect it. At our colleges and universities our young men are continually assailed by infidel attacks upon the blessed word of God. Men who are in total spiritual blindness, and who therefore cannot possibly know anything whatever about divine things, and are utterly incompetent to give an opinion on the subject of holy scripture, have the cool audacity to insult the sacred volume, to pronounce the five books of Moses an imposture, to assert that Moses never wrote them at all.

What is the opinion of such men worth? Not worth the weight of a feather. Who would think of going to a man who was born in a coal-mine, and had never seen the sun, to get his judgment as to the properties of light, or the effect of the sun's beams upon the human constitution? Who would think of going to one who was born blind to get his opinion upon colors, or the effect of light and shade? Surely no one in his senses. Well, then, with how much more moral force may we not ask, who would think of going to an unconverted man—a man dead in trespasses and sins—a man spiritually blind, wholly ignorant of things divine, spiritual, and heavenly—who would think for a moment of going to such an one for a judgment on the weighty question of holy scripture? And if such an one were audacious enough, in ignorant self-confidence, to offer an opinion on such a subject, what man in his sober senses would think of giving the slightest heed?

It will, perhaps, be said, "the illustration does not apply." Why not? We admit it fails in force, but most certainly not in its moral application. Is it not a commonly received axiom amongst us, that no man has any right to give an opinion on a subject of which he is totally ignorant? No doubt. Well, what does the blessed apostle say as to the unconverted man? We must quote the whole context for the reader. It is morally

grand, and its interest and value just now are unspeakable.

" And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith"—mark these words, beloved reader—" should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit"—otherwise they could not possibly be known—" for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we"—all true believers, all God's children—"have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual"—or communicating spiritual things through a spiritual medium. " But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them"—be he ever so wise and learned—"because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." 1 Cor. 2:1-16.

We dare not offer an apology for giving so lengthened an extract from the word of God. We deem it invaluable, not only because it proves that it is only by divine teaching that divine things can be understood, but also because it completely withers up all man's pretensions to give judgment as to scripture. If the natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God, then it is perfectly plain that all infidel attacks upon the word of God are absolutely unworthy of the very smallest attention. In fact all infidel writers, be they ever so clever, ever so wise, ever so learned, are put out of court; they are not to be listened to for a moment. The judgment of an unconverted man in reference to the holy scriptures is more worthless by far than the judgment of an uneducated plowman, as to the use of the differential calculus, or the truth of the Copernican system. As to each, we have only to say, he knows nothing whatever about the matter. His thoughts are absolutely good for nothing.

But how truly delightful and refreshing to turn from man's worthless notions, and see the way in which our blessed Lord Jesus Christ prized and used the holy scriptures! In His conflict with Satan, He appeals, three times over, to the book of Deuteronomy. " It is written" is His one simple and unanswerable reply to the suggestions of the enemy. He does not reason. He does not argue or explain. He does not refer to His own personal feelings, evidences, or experiences. He does not argue from the great facts of the opened heavens, the descending Spirit, the voice of the Father, precious and real as all these things were. He simply takes His stand upon the divine and eternal authority of the holy scriptures, and of that portion of the scriptures in particular which modern infidels have audaciously attacked. He uses as His authority that which they are not afraid to pronounce an imposture! How dreadful for them! What will be their end, unless they repent?

But not only did the Son of God—Himself, as God, the Author of every line of holy scripture—use the word of God as His only weapon against the enemy, but He made it also the basis and the material of His public ministry. When His conflict in the wilderness was over, " He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and stood up for to read"—His custom was to read the scriptures publicly. "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias."—Here He puts His seal upon the prophet Isaiah, as before upon the law of Moses.—" And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4

Let us turn now to that most solemn parable of the rich man and Lazarus, at the close of Luke 16, in which we have a most splendid testimony, from the Master's own lips, to the integrity, value, and surpassing importance of " Moses and the prophets"—the very portions of the divine word which infidels impiously assail. The rich man in the midst of the flames of hell—alas! no longer rich, but miserably and eternally poor—entreats Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brethren, lest they also should come into that place of ineffable torment. Mark the reply! Mark it, all ye infidels, rationalists, and skeptics! Mark it, all ye who are in danger of being deluded and turned aside by the impudent and blasphemous suggestions of infidelity! " Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" Yes; "Hear them"—hear those very writings which infidels tell us are not divinely inspired at all, but documents palmed upon us by impostors pretending to inspiration. Assuredly the rich man knew better; indeed the devil himself knows better. There is no thought of calling in question the genuineness of " Moses and the prophets;" but perhaps "if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." Hear the weighty rejoinder! "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Now, we must confess we rejoice exceedingly in the grandeur of this testimony. Nothing can be clearer, nothing higher, nothing more thoroughly confirmatory, as to the supreme authority and divine integrity of " Moses and the prophets." We have the blessed Lord Himself setting His seal to the two grand divisions of Old Testament scripture; and hence we may, with all possible confidence, commit our souls to the authority of these holy writings; and not only to Moses and the prophets, but to the whole canon of inspiration, inasmuch as Moses and the prophets are so largely and so constantly quoted everywhere, are so intimately, yea, indissolubly, bound up with every part of the New Testament, that all must stand or fall together.

But we must pass on, and turn for a moment to the last chapter of Luke—that precious section which contains " the great commission" whereof we speak. We might refer, with profit and blessing, to those occasions in which our blessed Lord, in His interviews with Pharisees, Sadducees, and lawyers, ever and only appeals to the holy scriptures. In short, whether in conflict with men or devils, whether speaking in private or in public, whether for His public ministry, or for His private walk, we find the perfect Man, the Lord from heaven, always putting the very highest honor upon the writings of Moses and the prophets, thus commending them to us in all their divine integrity, and giving us the very fullest and most blessed encouragement to commit our souls, for time and eternity, with absolute confidence, to those peerless writings.

But we turn to Luke 24, and listen to the glowing words uttered in the ears of the two bewildered travelers to Emmaus—words which are the sure and blessed remedy for all bewilderment—the perfect solution of every honest difficulty—the divine and all-satisfying answer to every upright inquiry. We do not quote the words of the perplexed disciples; but here is he Master's reply. " Then said he unto them, fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" Alas! now-a-days a man is counted a fool if he does believe all that the prophets have spoken. In many learned circles, yea, and in not a few religious circles likewise, the man who avows—as every true man ought—his hearty belief in every line of holy scripture, is almost sure to be met with a sneer of contempt. It is deemed clever to doubt the genuineness of scripture—fatal, detestable cleverness! from which may the good Lord deliver us!—cleverness which is sure to lead the soul that is ensnared by it down into the dark and dreary abyss of atheism, and the darker and more dreary abyss of hell. From all such cleverness, we again say, and say it from the profoundest depths of our moral being, may God, in His mercy, deliver us and all our young people!

Beloved reader, have we not much cause to bless the Lord for these words of His addressed to His poor perplexed ones on their way to Emmaus? They may seem severe; but it is the necessary severity of a pure, a perfect, and a divinely wise love. "0 fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And"—mark these words!—" beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." He Himself—all homage to His glorious Person!—is the divine center of all the things contained in the scriptures from cover to cover. He is the golden chain that binds into one marvelous and magnificent whole every part of the inspired volume, from Genesis to Revelation. Hence the man that touches a single section of the sacred canon is guilty of the heinous sin of seeking to overthrow the word of God; and of such a man, even charity itself must say, he knows neither the Christ of God, nor God Himself.

The man who dares to tamper in any way with the word of God has taken the first step on that inclined plane that leads inevitably down to eternal perdition. Let men beware, then, how they speak against the scriptures; and if some will speak, let others beware how they listen. If there were no infidel listeners, there would be few infidel lecturers. How awful to think that there should be either the one or the other in this our highly-favored land! May God have mercy upon them, and open their eyes, ere it be too late. Five minutes in hell will quash forever all the infidel theories that ever were propounded in this world. Oh! the egregious folly of infidelity!

We return to our chapter, which furnishes one more proof of the place assigned by our risen Lord to the holy scriptures. After having manifested Himself, in infinite grace and tranquillizing power, to His troubled disciples; having shown them His hands and His feet, and assured them of His personal identity by eating in their presence, " He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things mast be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written"

Here again we have the divine seal put upon all the grand divisions of the Old Testament. This is most comforting and strengthening for all pious lovers of scripture. To find our Lord Himself, on all occasions, and under all circumstances, referring to scripture, using it at all times, and for all purposes, feeding upon it Himself, and commending it to others, wielding it as the sword of the Spirit, bowing to its holy authority in all things, appealing to it as the only perfect standard, test, and touchstone, the only infallible guide for man in this world, the only unfailing light amid all the surrounding moral gloom—all this is comforting and encouraging in the very highest degree, and it fills our hearts with deepest praise to the Father of mercies who has so provided for us in all our weakness and need.

Here we might close this branch of our subject, but we feel bound to furnish our readers with two more uncommonly fine illustrations of our thesis: one from the Acts, and one from the epistles. In Acts 24 the apostle Paul, in his address to Felix, thus expresses himself as to the ground of his faith. " But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" Will anyone dare to say that Paul was an ignorant fool, or a clever knave? Alas! for the man who could either say it or think it. Well, then, he reverently believed in Moses and the prophets. He fully accepted the Old Testament scriptures as the solid foundation of his faith, and as the divine authority for his entire course. Now how did Paul know that the scriptures were given of God? He knew it in the only way in which any one can know it, namely, by divine teaching. God alone can give the knowledge that the holy scriptures are His own very revelation to man. If He does not give it, no one can; if He does, no one need. If I want human evidence to accredit the word of God, it is not the word of God to me. The authority on which I receive it is higher than the word itself. Supposing I could, by reason or human learning, work my way to the rational conclusion that the Bible is the word of God, then my faith would merely stand in the wisdom of man, and not "in the power of God. Such a faith is worthless; it does not link me with God, and therefore leaves me unsaved, unblessed, uncertain. It leaves me without God, without Christ, without hope. Saving faith is believing what God says, because He says it, and this faith is wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit. Intellectual faith is a cold, lifeless, worthless faith, which only deceives and puffs up; it can never save, sanctify, or satisfy.

We turn now to one of the very finest statements within the covers of the divine volume, namely, 2 Timothy iii. 14-17. The aged apostle, at the close of his marvelous career, from his prison at Rome, looking back at the whole of his ministry, looking around at the failure and ruin so sadly apparent on every side, looking forward to the terrible consummation of the " last days," and looking beyond all to " the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give in that day" thus addresses his beloved son, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect (09), thoroughly furnished unto all good works"

All this is unspeakably precious to every true lover of the word of God. The place here assigned, and the virtues here attributed, to the holy scriptures arc beyond all price. In short, it is utterly impossible to overstate the value and importance of the foregoing quotation. It is deeply touching to find the revered and beloved old veteran, in the full power of the Holy Ghost, recalling Timothy to the days of his childhood, when, at the knees of his pious mother, he drank at the pure fountain of inspiration. How did the dear child know that these holy writings were the word of God? He knew it just in the same way that the blessed apostle himself knew it, by their divine power and effect upon his heart and conscience, through the Holy Ghost. Did he want any human evidence? Did the holy scriptures need man's credentials? How monstrous the thought! What an insult to the dignity of scripture to imagine that any human seal or guarantee is necessary to accredit it to the soul! Do we want a Butler or a Paley to assure us that God has spoken to us in His word? Do we want the authority of the church, the judgment of the Fathers, the decrees of councils, the consent of the doctors, the decision of the universities, to accredit the word of God? Far away be the thought! Who would think of bringing out a flashlight at noon to prove that the sun shines, or to bring home its beams, in their genial virtue,

to the human frame? What son would think of taking his father's letter to an ignorant crossing-sweeper to have it accredited and interpreted to his heart?

These figures are feebleness itself when used to illustrate the egregious folly of submitting the holy scriptures to the judgment of any human mind. No, reader, the word of God speaks for itself. It carries its own powerful credentials with it. Its own internal evidences are amply sufficient for every pious, right-minded, humble child of God. It needs no letter of commendation from men. No doubt external evidences have their value and their interest. Human testimony must go for what it is worth. We may rest assured that the more thoroughly all human evidence is sifted, and the nearer all human testimony approaches to the truth, the more fully and distinctly will all concur in demonstrating the genuineness and integrity of our precious Bible. And, further, we must declare our deep and settled conviction that no infidel theory can hold water for a moment; no infidel argument can pass muster with an honest mind. We invariably find that all infidel assaults upon the Bible recoil upon the heads of those who make them. Infidel writers make fools of themselves, and leave the divine volume just where it always was, and where it always will be, like an impregnable rock, against which the waves of infidel thought dash themselves in contemptible impotency.

There stands the word of God, in its divine majesty, in its heavenly power, in its beautiful simplicity, in its matchless glory, in its unfathomed, because unfathomable, depths, in its never-failing freshness and power of adaptation, in its marvelous comprehensiveness, in its vastness of scope, its perfect unity, its thorough uniqueness. The Bible stands alone. There is nothing like it in the wide world of literature; and if anything further were needed to prove that that book which we call " The Bible" is, in very deed, the living and eternal word of God, it may be found in the ceaseless efforts of the devil to prove that it is not.

"Forever, Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" What remains, beloved reader, for thee? Just this, " Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I may not sin against thee." Thus it stands, blessed be His holy name; and when we have His word hid in the depths of our hearts, the theories and the arguments, the reasonings or the ravings, the questionings and the conclusions, of skeptics, rationalists, and infidels, will be to us of less moment by far than the pattering of rain upon the window.

Thus much as to the weighty question of the " authority" upon which the great commission proceeds. The immense importance of the subject, and the special character of the moment through which we are passing, must account for the unusual length of this article. We feel profoundly thankful for an opportunity of bearing our feeble testimony to the power, authority, all-sufficiency, and divine glory of " the holy scriptures." " Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"

(To be concluded in our next, if the Lord will)

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 4, Great Commission: Part 6

We have seen that the basis of " The Great Commission" is the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This must never be lost sight of. " It behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." It is a risen Christ that sends forth His heralds to preach " repentance and remission of sins." The incarnation and the crucifixion are great cardinal truths of Christianity; but it is only in resurrection they are made available for us in any way. Incarnation—precious and priceless mystery though it be—could not form the groundwork of remission of sins, for 1 ' without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9:22.) We are justified by the blood, and reconciled by the death, of Christ. But it is in resurrection that all this is made good unto us. Christ was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. (Rom. 4:25; 5:9, 10.) 'For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." 1 Corinthians xv. 3, 4.

Hence, therefore, it is of the very last possible importance for all who would carry out our Lord's commission, to know in their own souls, and to set forth in their preaching, the grand truth of resurrection. The most cursory glance at the preaching of the earliest heralds of the gospel will suffice to show the prominent place which they gave to this glorious fact.

Hearken to Peter on the day of Pentecost, or rather to the Holy Ghost, just come down from the risen, ascended, and glorified Savior. " Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should beholden of it.....This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2) So also in chapter iii.: " The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.... unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, by turning away every one of you from his iniquities." " And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them. Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead"

Their preaching was characterized by the prominent place which it assigned to the glorious, powerful, and telling fact of resurrection. True, there was the full and clear statement of incarnation and crucifixion, with the great moral bearings of these facts. How could it be otherwise? The Son of God had to become a man to die, in order that, by death, He might glorify God as to the entire question of sin; destroy the power of Satan: rob death of its sting, and the grave of its victory; put away forever the sins of his people, and associate them with Himself in the power of eternal life, in the new creation, where all things are of God, and where a single trace of sin or sorrow can never enter. Eternal and universal homage and adoration to His peerless name!

But let all preachers remember the place which resurrection holds in apostolic preaching and teaching. "With great power gave the apostles witness." Of what? Incarnation or crucifixion merely? Not so; but " of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." This was the stupendous fact that glorified God and His Son Jesus Christ. It was this that attested, in the view of all created intelligences, the divine complacency in the work of

redemption. It was this that demonstrated, in the most marvelous way, the complete and eternal overthrow of the kingdom of Satan, and all the powers of darkness. It was this that declared the full and everlasting deliverance of all who believe in Jesus—their deliverance, not only from all the consequences of their sins, but from this present evil world, and from every link that bound them to that old creation which lies under the power of evil.

No marvel, therefore, if the apostles, filled as they were with the Holy Ghost, persistently and powerfully presented the magnificent truth of resurrection. Hear them again before the council—a council composed of the great religious leaders and guides of the people. " The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree." They were at issue with God on the all-important question as to His Son. They had slain Him, but God raised Him from the dead. " Him hath God exalted with his right hand, a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins."

So also in Peter's address to the Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius, speaking of Jesus of Nazareth, he says, " whom they slew, and hanged on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."

The Holy Ghost is careful to set forth the weighty and, to us, profoundly interesting fact, that " God raised up his Son Jesus." This fact has a double bearing. It proves that God is at issue with the world, seeing He has raised, exalted, and glorified the very One whom they slew, and hanged on a tree. But, blessed throughout all ages be His holy name! it proves that He has found eternal rest and satisfaction as to us, and all that was, or could be, against us, seeing He has raised up the very One who took our place, and stood charged with all our sin and guilt.

But all this will come more fully out as we proceed with our proofs.

Let us now listen for a moment to Paul's splendid address in the synagogue at Antioch. " Men, brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath-day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher. But God raised him from the dead. And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he said in this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption; but he whom God raised again saw no corruption."

Then follows the powerful appeal, which, though not bearing upon our present line of argument, we cannot omit in this place. " Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Acts 13:26-41.

We shall close our series of proofs from the Acts of the Apostles by a brief quotation from Paul's marvelous address at Athens. " Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God overlooked; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts 17

This is a very remarkable and deeply solemn passage. The proof that God is going to judge the world in righteousness—a proof offered to all—is that He has raised His ordained Man from the dead. He does not here name the Man; but at verse 18 we are told that some of the Athenians deemed the apostle a setter forth of strange gods, " because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection."

From all this it is perfectly plain that the blessed apostle Paul gave a most prominent place in all his preachings to the glorious truth of resurrection. Whether he addresses a congregation of Jews in the synagogue at Antioch, or an assembly of Gentiles on Mars' Hill at Athens, he presents a risen Christ. In a word, he was characterized by the fact that he preached, not merely the incarnation and the crucifixion, but the resurrection; and this, too, in all its mighty moral bearings—its bearing upon man in his individual state and destiny; its bearing upon the world as a whole, in its history in the past, its moral condition in the present, and its certain doom in the future; in its bearing upon the believer, proving his absolute, complete, and eternal justification before God, and his thorough deliverance from this present evil world.

And we have to bear in mind that in apostolic preaching the resurrection was not presented as a mere doctrine, but as a living, telling, mighty, moral fact—a fact, the magnitude of which is beyond all power of human utterance or thought. The apostles, in carrying out " the great commission" of their Lord, pressed the stupendous fact that God has raised Jesus from the dead—had raised the Man who was nailed to the cross, and buried in the grave. In short, they preached a resurrection gospel. Their preaching was governed by these words, " It was necessary that Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead the third day."

We shall now turn for a moment to the epistles, and see the wondrous way in which the Holy Ghost unfolds and applies the fact of resurrection. But ere doing so we would call the reader's attention to a passage which is sadly misunderstood and misapplied. The apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, says, " We preach Christ crucified." These words are continually quoted for the purpose of casting a damper on those who earnestly desire to advance in the knowledge of divine things. But a moment's serious attention to the context would be sufficient to show the true meaning of the apostle. Did he confine himself to the fact of the crucifixion? The bare idea, in the face of the body of scripture which we have quoted, is simply absurd. The fact is, the glorious truth of resurrection shines out in all his discourses.

What, then, does the apostle mean when he declares, " We preach Christ crucified?" Simply this, that the Christ whom he preached was the One whom the world had crucified. He was a rejected, outcast Christ—One for whom the world considered a malefactor's gibbet quite good enough. What a fact for the poor Corinthians, so full of vanity and love for this world's wisdom! A crucified Christ was the One whom Paul

preached, "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but to those that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

Remarkable words! words divinely suited to people prone to boast themselves in the so-called wisdom and greatness of this world—the vain reasonings and imaginations of the poor human mind, which all perish in a moment. All the wisdom of God, all His power, all His greatness, all His glory, all that He is, in short, cornea out in a crucified Christ. The cross confounds the world, vanquishes Satan and all the powers of darkness, saves all who believe, and forms the solid foundation of the everlasting and universal glory of God.

Enough, we trust, has been said to prove to the reader that there is neither moral force nor spiritual intelligence in the use so frequently made of the words, "We preach Christ crucified." Indeed it is directly contrary to the entire body of apostolic preaching and teaching, and its effect upon the souls of those who accept it is pre-eminently mischievous.

We shall now turn for a moment to a very beautiful passage in Rom. 4, in which the inspired writer handles the subject of resurrection in a most edifying way for us. Speaking of Abraham, he says, "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief,"—which is always sure to stagger—" but was strong in faith, giving glory to God"—as faith always does. " And being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." And then, lest any should say that all this applied only to Abraham, who was such a devoted, holy, remarkable man, the inspiring Spirit adds, with singular grace and sweetness, " Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe in him that"—what? Gave His Son? Bruised His Son on the cross? Not merely this, but " that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,"

Here lies the grand point of the apostle's blessed and powerful argument. We must, if we would have settled peace, believe in God as the One who raised up Jesus from the dead, and who in so doing proved Himself friendly to us, and proved, too, His infinite satisfaction in the work of the cross. Jesus, having been " delivered for our offenses," could not be where He now is, if a single one of these offenses remained unatoned for. But, blessed forever be the God of all grace, He raised from among the dead the One who had been delivered for our offenses; and to all who believe in Him righteousness shall be reckoned. " It behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." See how this glorious theme, the basis of the great commission, expands under our gaze as we pursue our study of it!

One more brief quotation shall close this paper. In Heb. 13 we read, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

This is uncommonly fine. The God of judgment met the Sin-bearer at the cross, and there, with Him, entered thoroughly into, and definitively settled, the question of sin. And then, in glorious proof that all was done—sin atoned for—guilt put away—Satan silenced—God glorified—all divinely accomplished, " the God of peace' entered the scene, and raised from the dead our Lord Jesus, that " great Shepherd of the sheep."

Beloved reader, how glorious is all this! How enfranchising to all who simply believe! Jesus is risen. His sufferings are over forever. God has exalted Him. Eternal Justice has wreathed His blessed brow with a diadem of glory; and, wondrous fact! that very diadem is the eternal demonstration that all who believe are justified from all things, and accepted in a risen and glorified Christ. Eternal and universal hallelujahs to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!

(To be continued in our next, if the Lord will.)

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 4, Great Commission: Part 1

" And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:44-49.

This splendid passage of holy scripture sets before us the great commission which the risen Lord entrusted to His apostles just as He was about to ascend into the heavens, having gloriously accomplished all His blessed work upon earth. It is truly a most wonderful commission, and opens up a very wide field of truth, through which we may range with much spiritual delight and profit. Whether we ponder the commission itself, its basis, its authority, its 'power, or its sphere, we shall find it all fall of most precious instruction. May the blessed Spirit guide our thoughts, while we meditate, first of all, upon

THE COMMISSION ITSELF, The apostles of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ×were specially charged to preach "repentance and remission of sins." Let us all remember this. We are prone to forget it, to the serious damaging of our preaching, and of the souls of our hearers. Some of us are apt to overlook the first part of the commission, in our eagerness, it may be, to get to the second. This is a most serious mistake. We may rest assured that it is our truest wisdom to keep close to the veritable terms in which our blessed Lord delivered His charge to His earliest heralds. We cannot omit a single point, not to say a leading branch of the commission, without serious 10s# in every way. Our Lord is infinitely wiser and more gracious than we are, and we need not fear to preach with all possible plainness what He told His apostles to preach, namely, " repentance and remission of sins."

Now the question is, are we all careful to maintain this very important connection? Do we give sufficient prominence to the first part of the great commission? Do we preach " repentance?"

We are not now inquiring what repentance is; that we shall do, if God permit. But, whatever it is, do we preach it? That our Lord commanded His apostles to preach it is plain; and not only so, but He preached it Himself, as we read in Mark 1: " Now after that John was put in prison,

Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Let us carefully note this record. Let all preachers note it. Our divine Master called upon sinners to repent and believe the gospel. Some would have us to believe that it is a mistake to call upon persons dead in trespasses and sins to do anything. "How," it is argued, " can those who arc dead repent? They are incapable of any spiritual movement. They must first get the power ere they can either repent or believe."

What is our reply to all this? A very simple one indeed—our Lord knows better than all the theologians' in the world what ought to be preached. He knows all about man's condition—his guilt, his misery, his spiritual death, his utter helplessness, his total inability to think a single right thought, to utter a single right word, to do a single right act; and yet He called upon" men to repent. This is quite enough for us. It is no part of our business to seek to reconcile seeming differences. It may seem to us difficult to reconcile man's utter powerlessness with his responsibility; but " God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain." It is our happy privilege, and our bounden duty, to believe what He says, and to do what He tells us. This is true wisdom, and it yields solid peace.

Our Lord preached repentance, and He commanded His apostles to preach it; and they did so constantly. Hearken to Peter on the day of Pentecost. " Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." And again, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Hearken to Paul also, as he stood on Mars' Hill, at Athens: " But now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance () unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." So also, in his touching address to the elders of Ephesus, he says, " I kept back nothing that was profitable, [blessed servant!] but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying, both to the Jews, and also the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." And again, in his address to king Agrippa, he says, " Whereupon, king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

Now, in the face of this body of evidence—with the example of our Lord and His apostles so fully and clearly before us—may we not very lawfully inquire whether there is not a serious defect in much of our modern preaching? Do we preach repentance as we ought? Do we assign to it the place which it gets in the preaching of our Lord and of His early heralds? It is vanity and folly, or worse, to talk about its being legal to preach repentance, to say that it tarnishes the luster of the gospel of the grace of God to call upon men dead in trespasses and sins to repent, and do works meet for repentance. Was Paul legal in his preaching? Did he not preach a clear, full, rich, and divine gospel? Have we got in advance of Paul? Do we preach a clearer gospel than he? How utterly preposterous the notion! Well, but he preached repentance. He told his hearers that God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Docs this mar the gospel of the grace of God? Does it detract from its heavenly fullness and freeness? As well might you tell a farmer that it lowered the quality of his grain to plow the fallow ground before sowing.

No doubt it is of the very last possible importance to preach the gospel of the grace of God, or, if you please, the gospel of the glory, in all its fullness, clearness, and power. We are to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ—to declare the whole counsel of God—to present the righteousness of God and His salvation, without limit, condition, or hindrance of any kind—to publish the good news to every creature under heaven.

We should, in the very strongest possible manner, insist upon this. But at the same time we must jealously keep to the terms of "the great commission." We cannot depart the breadth of a hair from these without serious damage to our testimony, and to the souls of our hearers. If we fail to preach repentance, we are " keeping back" something " profitable." What should we say to a husbandman, if we saw him scattering his precious grain along the beaten highway? We should justly pronounce him out of his mind. The plowshare must do its work. The fallow ground must be broken up ere the seed is sown: and we may rest assured that, as in the kingdom of nature, so in the kingdom of grace, the plowing must precede the sowing. The ground must be duly prepared for the seed, else the operations will prove altogether defective. Let the gospel be preached as God has given it to us in His word. Let it not be shorn of one of its moral glories; let it flow forth as it comes from the deep fountain of the heart of God, through the channel of Christ's finished work, on the authority of the Holy Ghost. All this is not only most fully admitted, but peremptorily insisted upon; but at the same time we must never forget that our Lord and Master called upon men to "repent and believe the gospel;" that He strictly enjoined it upon His holy apostles to preach repentance; and that the blessed apostle Paul, the chief of apostles, the profoundest teacher the church has ever known, did preach repentance, and call upon men everywhere to repent, and do works meet for repentance.

And here it may be well for us to inquire what this repentance is which occupies such a prominent place in "the great commission," and in the preaching of our Lord and of His apostles. If it be—as it most surely is—an abiding and universal necessity for man—if God commands all men everywhere to repent—if repentance is inseparably linked with remission of sins—how needful it is that we should seek to understand its true nature.

What, then, is repentance? May the Spirit Himself instruct us by the word of God! He alone can. We are all liable to err—some of us have erred—in our thoughts on this most weighty subject. We are in danger, while seeking to avoid error on one side, of falling into error on the other. We are poor, feeble, ignorant, erring creatures, whose only security is in our being kept continually at the feet of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. He alone can teach us what repentance is, as well as what it is not. We feel most fully assured that the enemy of souls and of the truth has succeeded in giving repentance a false place in the creeds, and confessions, and public teachings of Christendom; and the conviction of this makes it all the more needful for us to keep close to the living teachings of holy scripture.

We are not aware of any formal definition of the subject furnished by the Holy Ghost. He does not tell us in so many words what repentance is; but the more we study the word in reference to the great question, the more deeply we feel convinced that true repentance involves the solemn judgment of ourselves, our condition, and our ways, in the presence of God; and, further, that this judgment is not a transient feeling, but an abiding condition—not a certain exercise to be gone through as a sort of title to the remission of sins, but the deep and settled habit of the soul, giving seriousness, gravity, tenderness, brokenness, and profound humility, which shall overlap, underlie, and characterize our entire course.

We seriously question if this aspect of the subject is sufficiently understood. Let not the reader mistake us. We do not mean for a moment to teach that the soul should be always bowed down under the sense of un-forgiven sin. Far be the thought! We think it will be found that our teaching in the pages of '"Things New and Old," for the last nineteen years, is the very reverse of such a thought. But we greatly fear that some of us, in running away from legality on the question of repentance, have fallen into levity. This is a serious error. We may depend upon it that levity is no remedy for legality were it proposed as such, we should have no hesitation in pronouncing the remedy much worse than the disease. Thank God we have His own sovereign remedy for levity, on the one hand, and legality on the other. " Truth" insisting upon " repentance,' is the remedy for the former. " Grace," publishing "remission of sins," is the remedy for the latter. And we cannot but believe that the more profound our repentance, the fuller will be our enjoyment of remission.

We are inclined to judge that there is a sad lack of depth and seriousness in much of our modern preaching. In our anxiety to make the gospel simple, and salvation easy, we fail to press on the consciences of our hearers the holy claims of truth. If a preacher now-a-days were to call upon his hearers to "repent and turn to God, and to do works meet for repentance," he would, in certain circles, be pronounced legal, ignorant, below the mark, and such like. And yet this was precisely what the blessed apostle Paul did, as he himself tells us. Will any of our modern evangelists have the temerity to say that Paul was a legal or an ignorant preacher? We trust not. Paul carried with him the full, clear, precious gospel of God—the gospel of the grace, and the gospel of the glory. He preached the kingdom of God—He unfolded the glorious mystery of the church—yea, that mystery was specially com-mi lied to him.

But let all preachers remember that Paul preached repentance. He called upon sinners to judge themselves—to repent in dust and ashes, as was meet and right they should. He himself had learned the true meaning of repentance. He had not only judged himself once in a way, but he lived in the spirit of self-judgment. It was the habit of his soul, the attitude of his heart, and it gave a depth, solidity, seriousness, and solemnity to his preaching of which we modern preachers know but little. We do not believe that Paul's repentance ended with the three days and three nights of blindness after his conversion. He was a self-judged man all his life long. Did this hinder his enjoyment of the grace of God or of the preciousness of Christ? Nay, it gave depth and intensity to his enjoyment.

All this, we feel persuaded, demands our most serious consideration. We greatly dread the light, airy, superficial style of much of our modern preaching. It sometimes seems to us as if the gospel were brought into utter contempt, and the sinner led to suppose that he is really conferring a very great favor upon God in accepting salvation at His hands. Now we must solemnly protest against this. It is dishonoring to God, and lowering His gospel; and, as might be expected, its moral effect on those who profess to be converted is most deplorable. It superinduces levity, self-indulgence, worldliness, vanity, and folly. Sin is not felt to be the dreadful thing it is in the sight of God. Self is not judged. The world is not given up. The gospel that is preached is what maybe called " salvation made easy" to the flesh—the most terrible thing we can possibly conceive—terrible in its effect upon the soul—terrible in its results in the life. God's sentence upon the flesh and the world gets no place in the preaching to which we refer. People are offered a salvation which leaves self and the world practically unjudged, and the consequence is, those who profess to be converted by this gospel exhibit a lightness and unsubduedness perfectly shocking to people of serious piety.

It will, perhaps, be said that those sad results of which we speak are owing to the fact that the heavenly of the gospel is left out—that a glorified Christ is not preached—that a full resurrection gospel is not proclaimed—that man and his need are made more prominent than God and His glory—that it is more a bringing Christ down into our circumstances than bringing us up into God's presence, in association with a risen and glorified Christ.

Well, there may be a good deal in this, and we are well disposed to admit a broad margin in which to in-ort all that has to be said on this side of the question, out we must still fall back on the weighty fact that the blessed apostle Paul—who most surely preached the gospel in all its fullness and in all its power—insisted upon repentance. This cannot be set aside. Man must take his true place before God, and that is the place of self-judgment, contrition of heart, real sorrow for sin, and true confession. It is here the gospel meets him. The fullness of God ever waits on an empty vessel, and a truly repentant soul is the empty vessel into which all the fullness of the grace of God can flow in saving power. The Holy Ghost will make the sinner feel and own his real condition. It is He alone who can do so; but He uses preaching to this end. He brings the word of God to bear on man's conscience. The word is His hammer, wherewith He breaks the rock in pieces—His plowshare, wherewith He breaks up the fallow ground. He makes the furrow, and then casts in the incorruptible seed, to germinate and fructify to the glory of God. True, the furrow, how deep so ever it may be, can produce no fruit. It is the seed, and not the furrow; but there must be the furrow, for all that.

It is not, need we say? that there is anything meritorious in the sinner's repentance. To say so could only be regarded as the most monstrous audacity. Repentance is not a good work whereby the sinner merits the favor of God. All this view of the subject is utterly and fatally false. True repentance is the discovery and hearty confession of our utter ruin and guilt. It is the finding out that my whole life has been a lie, and that I myself am a liar. This is serious work. There is no flippancy or levity when a soul is brought to this. A penitent soul in the presence of God is a solemn reality; and we cannot but feel that were we more governed by the terms of " the great commission," we should more solemnly, earnestly, and constantly call upon men " to repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance," we should preach "repentance" as well as "the remission of sins." (To be continued, if the Lord will)

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 4, Great Commission: Part 8

In full keeping with all that has passed in review before us is the sphere of " The Great Commission," as set forth in that comprehensive clause, " Among all nations." Such was to be the wide range of those heralds whom the risen Lord was sending forth to preach "repentance and remission of sins." Theirs was, emphatically, a world-wide mission. In Matt. 10 we find something quite different. There the Lord, in sending forth the twelve apostles, " commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not."

This was to be a mission exclusively to the house of Israel. There was no message for the Gentiles, no word for the poor Samaritans. If these messengers approached a city of the uncircumcised, they were on no account to enter it. The ways of God—His dispensational dealings—demanded a circumscribed sphere for the twelve apostles sent forth by the Messiah in the days of His flesh. " The lost sheep of the

house of Israel" were to be the special objects of their ministry.

But in Luke 24 all is changed. The dispensational barriers are no longer to interfere with the messengers of grace. Israel is not to be forgotten, but the Gentiles are to hear the glad tidings. The sun of God's salvation must now pour its living beams over the whole world. Not a soul is to be excluded from the blessed light. Every city, every town, every village, every hamlet, every street, lane, and alley, every hedge and highway, must be diligently and lovingly searched out and visited, so that " every creature under heaven" might hear the good news of a full and free salvation.

How like our God is all this! How worthy of His large, loving heart! He would have the tide of His salvation flowing from pole to pole, and from the river to the ends of the earth. His righteousness is unto all, and the sweet tale of His pardoning love must be wafted far and wide over a lost and guilty world. Such is His most gracious purpose, however tardy His servants may be in carrying it out.

It is of the very last importance to have a clear view as to this branch of our subject. It brings out the character of God in a very magnificent light, and it leaves man wholly without excuse. Salvation is sent to the Gentiles. There is absolutely no limit, no question, no obstacle. Like the sun in the heavens, it shines on all. If a man will persist in hiding himself in a mine or in a tunnel, so that he cannot see the sun, he has none but himself to blame. It is no defect in the sun if all do not enjoy his beams. He shines for all. And in like manner, " the grace of God that bringeth salvation unto all men hath appeared." No one need perish because he is a poor lost sinner, for " God will have all to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." "He willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

And then, that not a single feature might be lacking to set forth with all possible force and fullness the royal grace which breathes in " the Great Commission," our blessed Lord does not fail to point out to His servants the remarkable spot which was to be the center of their sphere. He tells them to " begin at Jerusalem." Yes, Jerusalem, where our Lord was crucified; where every indignity that human enmity could invent was heaped upon His divine Person; where a murderer and a robber was preferred to " God manifest in the flesh;" where human iniquity had reached its culminating point in nailing the Son of God to a malefactor's cross—there the messengers were to begin their blessed work, that was to be the center of the sphere of their gracious operations, and from thence they were to travel to the utmost bounds of the habitable globe. They were to begin with "Jerusalem sinners"—with the very murderers of the Son of God, and then go forth to publish everywhere the glorious tidings, so that all might know that precious grace of God which was sufficient to meet the crimson guilt of Jerusalem itself.

How glorious is all this! The guilty murderers of the Son of God were the very first to hear the sweet tale of pardoning love, so that all men might see in them a pattern of what the grace of God and the blood of Christ can do. Truly the grace that could pardon Jerusalem sinners can pardon any one; the blood that could cleanse the betrayers and murderers of the Christ of God can cleanse any sinner outside the precincts of hell. These heralds of salvation, as they made their way from nation to nation, could tell their hearers where they had come from; they could tell of that super abounding grace of God which had commenced its operations in the guiltiest spot on the face of the earth, and which was amply sufficient to meet the very vilest of the sons of Adam.

Precious grace of God! May it be published with increased energy and clearness throughout the divinely-appointed sphere. Alas, alas, that those who know it should be so slow to make it known to others! That slowness is, most surely, not of God. He absolutely delights in the publication of His saving, pardoning grace. He tells us that the feet of the evangelist are beautiful upon the mountains. He assures us that the preaching of the cross is a sweet savor to His heart. Ought not all this to quicken our energies in the blessed work? Ought we not, in every possible way, to seek to carry out the gracious desire of the heart of God? Why are we so slow? Why so cold and indolent? Why so easily discouraged and repulsed? Why so ready to make excuses for not speaking to people about their souls?

There stands the great commission shining on the eternal page of inspiration, in all its moral grandeur—its terms, its basis, its authority, its sphere! The work is not yet done. Eighteen hundred years have rolled past since the risen Savior sent forth His messengers; and still He waits, in sweet, long-suffering mercy, not willing that any should perish. Why are we not more willing-hearted in carrying out the gracious desire of His heart? It is not by any means necessary that we should be great preachers, or powerful public speakers, in order to carry on the precious work of evangelization. What we want is a heart in communion with the heart of God, the heart of Christ, and that will surely be a heart for souls. We do not, and cannot, believe that one who is not led out in loving desire after the salvation of souls, can really be in communion with the mind of Christ. We cannot be in His presence, and not think of the souls of those around us. For whoever cared for souls as He did? Mark His marvelous path!—His ceaseless toil as a teacher and preacher!—His thirst for the salvation and blessing of souls!

And has He not left us an example that we should follow His steps? Are we doing so in this one matter of making known the blessed gospel? Are we seeking to imitate Him in His earnest diligence in seeking the lost? See Him at the well of Sychar! Mark His whole deportment! Listen to His earnest, loving words! Note the joy and refreshment of His spirit, as He sees one poor sinner receiving His message! "I have meat to eat that ye know not of;" " Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.''

We would earnestly entreat the christian reader to consider this great subject in the divine presence. We deeply feel its importance. We cannot but judge that, amid all the writing and reading, all the speaking and hearing, all the coming and going, there is a sad lack of deep-toned, earnest, solemn dealing with individual souls. How often do we rest satisfied with inviting people to come to the preaching, instead of seeking to bring them directly to Christ? How often do we rest content with the periodical preaching, instead of earnestly seeking, all the week through, to persuade souls to flee from the wrath to come? No doubt it is good to preach, and good to invite people to the preaching; but we may rest assured there is something more than all this to be done, and that something must be sought in deeper communion with the heart and mind of Christ.

Some there are who speak disparagingly of the blessed and holy work of evangelization. We tremble for them. We feel persuaded they are not in the current of the Master's mind, and hence we utterly reject their thoughts. It is to be feared that their hearts are cold in reference to an object that engages the heart of God. If so, they would need to humble themselves in His presence, and seek to get their souls restored to a true sense of the magnitude, importance, and interest of the grand question before us. At least let them beware of how they seek to discourage and hinder others whose hearts the Lord has moved to care for precious immortal souls. The present is most assuredly not the time for raising difficulties, and starting questions which can only prove stumbling-blocks in the pathway of earnest workers. It becomes us to seek, in every right way, to strengthen the hands of all who are endeavoring, according to their measure, to publish the glad tidings, and make known the unsearchable riches of Christ. Let us see that we do so, so far as in us lies; and, above all things, let us never utter a

sentence calculated to hinder any one in the blessed work of winning souls to Christ.

But we must draw this paper, and this series of papers, to a close. We might do so here, wore it not that there is one more point in our subject which we feel must not be omitted, and that is the power by which "the Great Commission" was to be carried out. To leave this out would be a grand defect, a serious blank indeed; and we are the more anxious to notice it, inasmuch as the special form in which the power was communicated links itself, in a very remarkable way, with that which has been before us in this paper. If the sphere was to be " all nations," the power must be adapted thereto; and, blessed be God, so it was.

Our blessed Lord, in closing His commission to His disciples, said, " And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." This promise was fulfilled, this power was communicated on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Ghost came down from the ascended and glorified Man, to qualify His servants for the glorious work to which He had called them. They had to " tarry" until they got the power. How could they go without it? Who but the Holy Ghost could speak adequately of the love of God, of the Person, work, and glory of Christ? Who but He could enable any one to preach repentance and remission of sins? Who but He could properly handle all the weighty subjects comprehended in " the Great Commission?" In a word, the power of the Holy Ghost is absolutely essential for every branch of christian service, and all who go to work without it will find it to be barrenness, misery, and desolation.

But we must call the reader's special attention to the form in which the Holy Ghost came down on the day of Pentecost. It is fall of deepest interest, and lets us into the precious secret of the heart of God in a most touching manner.

Let us turn to chapter 2 of the Acts of the Apostles.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place"—instructive and suggestive fact!—" And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost"—He had full possession of their hearts and minds, full sway over their whole moral being—blessed condition!—" And they began 10 speak with other tongues"—not in the absurd and unintelligible jargon of cunning impostors or deluded fanatics, but—"as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven"—Remarkable fact!—" Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."—How real! How telling!—" And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were horn?"—not merely wherein we were educated—" Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

What a marvelous passage! How marked the coincidence! How striking and interesting all the details! God so ordered it, in His infinite wisdom and perfect grace, that there should be assembled in the city of Jerusalem, at the exact moment, people from every nation on the face of the whole earth, in order that—even should the twelve apostles fail to carry out their commission—all might hear, in the very dialect in which their mothers first whispered into their infant ears the accents of a mother's love, the precious tidings of God's salvation.

Can anything exceed this in interest? Who can fail to see in the fact here recorded that it was the loving desire of the heart of God to reach every creature under heaven with the sweet story of His grace? The world had rejected the Son of God, had crucified and slain Him; but no sooner had He taken His seat at the right hand of God, than down came the august Witness, God the Spirit, to speak to man—to every man—to speak to him, not in accents of withering denunciation, not in the thundering anathemas of judgment, but in accents of deep and tender love, to tell him of full remission of sins through the blood of the cross.

True, He called on man to judge himself, to repent, to take his only true and proper place. Why not? How could it be otherwise? Repentance is—as we have already fully shown, and earnestly insisted upon, in these papers—a universal and abiding necessity for man. But the Spirit of God came down to speak face to face with man, to tell him, in his own mother tongue, of the wonderful works of God. He did not speak to a Hebrew in Latin, or to a Roman in Greek; but He spoke to each in the very dialect in which he was born, thus proving to a demonstration—proving in the most affecting manner possible—that it was God's gracious desire to make His way to man's heart, in deepest, richest, fullest grace. All homage to His name!

How different it was when the law was to be published from Mount Sinai! If all the nations of the earth had been assembled round that fiery mount, they could not have understood one word—unless, indeed, any one happened to know the Hebrew tongue. The law was addressed to one people, it was wrapped up in one language, it was enclosed in the ark. God took no pains to publish the record of man's duty in every language under heaven. But when grace was to be published, when the glad tidings of salvation were to be sounded abroad, when testimony was to be borne to a crucified, risen, ascended, and coming Savior and Lord, then, verily, God the Holy Ghost came down, for the purpose of fitting His messengers to speak to every man in a tongue which he could understand.

Facts are powerful arguments, and assuredly the above two facts, in reference to the law and the gospel, must speak to every heart, in a manner the most convincing, of the matchless grace of God, God did not send forth heralds to publish the law to " all nations." No—this was reserved for " the Great Commission" on which we have been dwelling, and which we now earnestly commend, with all its great subjects, to the serious attention of every reader of " Things New and Old."

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 4, Great Commission: Part 3

We shall now turn for a few moments to the ministry of the apostle of the Gentiles, and see how he fulfilled the great commission. We have already heard him on the subject of " repentance." Let us hear him also on the great question of "remission of sins."

Paul was not of the twelve. He did not receive his commission from Christ on earth, but, as he himself distinctly and repeatedly tells us, from Christ in heavenly glory. Some have spent not a little time and pains in laboring to prove that he was of the twelve, and that the election of

Matthias in Acts 1 was a mistake. But it is labor sadly wasted, and only proves an entire misunderstanding of Paul's position and ministry. He was raised up for a special object, and made the depositary of a special truth which had never been made known to any one before, namely, the truth of the church—the one body, composed of Jew and Gentile, incorporated by the Holy Ghost, and linked, by His personal indwelling, to the risen and glorified Head in heaven.

Paul received his own special commission, of which he gives a very beautiful statement in his address to Agrippa, in Acts 26, "Whereupon as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests"—what a different " commission" he received ere he entered Damascus!—" at midday, king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Here the glorious truth of the intimate union of believers with the glorified Man in heaven, though not stated, is beautifully and forcibly implied. " But rise, and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins"— the same word as in the commission to the twelve in Luke 24—" and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me."1

What depth and fullness in these words! What a comprehensive statement of man's condition! What a blessed presentation of the resources of divine grace! There is a very remarkable harmony between this commission to Paul and that to the twelve in Luke 24 It will perhaps be said there is nothing about repentance. True, the word does not occur; but we have the moral reality, and that with singular force and fullness. What mean the words, " To open their eyes?"

Do they not most certainly involve the discovery of our condition? Assuredly. A man who has his eyes opened is brought to the knowledge of himself, the knowledge of his condition, the knowledge of his ways; and this is true repentance. It is a wonderful moment in a man's history when his eyes are opened. It is the grand crisis, the momentous epoch, the one turning-point. Till then he is blind, morally and spiritually blind. He cannot see a single divine object. He has no perception of anything pertaining to God, to Christ, to heaven.

This is truly humbling to proud human nature. Think of a clear-headed, highly educated, deeply learned, intellectual man, a profound thinker, a powerful reasoner, a thorough philosopher, who has won all the honors, the medals, the degrees, that this world's universities can bestow; and yet he is blind to everything spiritual, heavenly, divine. He gropes in moral darkness. He thinks he sees, assumes the right to judge and pronounce upon things, even upon scripture and upon God Himself. He undertakes to decide what is fitting for God to say and to do. He sets up his own mind as the measure in the things of God. He reasons upon immortality, upon eternal life, and eternal punishment. He deems himself perfectly competent to give judgment in reference to all these solemn and weighty matters; and all the while his eyes have never been opened. How much is his judgment worth? Nothing. Who would take the opinion of a man who, if his eyes were only opened, would reverse, that opinion in reference to everything heavenly and divine? Who would think for a moment of being guided by a blind man?

But how do we know that every man in his natural, his unconverted state is blind? Because, according to Paul's commission, the very first thing which the gospel is to do for him is " to open his eyes." This proves, beyond all question, that he must be blind. Paul was sent to the people and to the Gentiles—that is, to the whole human family—to open their eyes. This proves, to a divine demonstration, that all are by nature blind.

But there is more than this. Man is not only blind, but he is in " darkness." Supposing for a moment that a person has his eyesight, of what use is it to him if he is in the dark? It is the double statement as to man's state and position. As to his state, he is blind. As to his position, he is in darkness; and when his eyes are opened, and divine light streams in upon his soul, he then judges himself and his ways according to God. He sees his folly, his guilt, his rebellion, his wild infidel reasonings, his foolish notions, the vanity of his mind, his pride and ambition, his selfishness and worldliness—all these things are judged and abhorred. He repents, and turns right round to the One who has opened his eyes, and poured in a flood of living light upon his heart and conscience.

But, further, not only is man—every man—Jew and Gentile, blind and in darkness, but, as if to give the climax of all, he is under the power of Satan. This gives a terrible idea of man's condition. He is the slave of the devil. He does not believe this. He imagines himself free—thinks he is his own master—fancies he can go where he pleases, do what he likes, think for himself, speak and act as an independent being.

But he is the bond-slave of another! he is sold under sin, bound hand and foot. Satan is his lord and master. Thus scripture speaks, and it cannot be broken. Man may refuse to believe, but that cannot touch the fact. A condemned criminal at the bar may refuse to believe the testimony from the witness table, the verdict from the jury-box, the sentence from the bench; but that in nowise alters his terrible condition. He is a condemned criminal all the same. So with man as a sinner; he may refuse the plain testimony of scripture, but that testimony remains notwithstanding. Even if the thousand millions that people this globe were to deny the truth of God's word, that word would still stand unmoved. Scripture does not depend for its truth upon man's belief. It is true whether he believes it or not. Blessed forever is the man who believes; damned forever is the man who refuses to believe; but the word of God is settled forever in heaven, and it is to be received on its own authority, apart from all human thoughts for or against it.

This is a grand fact, and one demanding the profound attention of every soul. Everything depends upon it. The word of God claims our belief because it is His word. If we want any authority to confirm the truth of God's word, we are in reality rejecting God's word altogether, and resting on man's word. A man may say, "How do I know that the Bible is the word of God?" We reply, It carries its own divine credentials with it; and if these credentials do not convince, all the human authority under the sun is perfectly worthless. If the whole population of the earth were to stand before me, and assure me of the truth of God's word, and that I were to believe on their authority, it would not be saving faith at all. It would be faith in men, and not faith in God; but the faith that saves is the faith that believes what God says because God says it.

It is not that we undervalue human testimony, or reject what are called the external evidences of the truth of holy scripture. All these things must go for what they are worth; they are by no means essential in laying the foundation of saving faith. We are perfectly sure that all genuine history, all true science, all sound human evidence, must go to establish the divine authenticity of the Bible; but we do not rest our faith upon them, but upon the scriptures to which they bear testimony; nor if all human evidence, all science, and every page of history, were to speak against scripture, we should utterly and absolutely reject them, and cordially, reverently, and implicitly believe it. Is this narrow? Be

it so. It is the blessed narrowness in which we gladly find our pence and our portion forever. It is the narrowness that refuses to admit the weight of a leather as an addition to the word of God. If this be narrowness, we repeat it with emphasis, and from the very center of our ransomed being, let it be ours forever. If to be broad we must look to man to confirm the truth of God's word, then away with such broadness, it is the broadway that leadeth straight down to hell. No, reader, your life, your salvation, your everlasting peace, blessedness, and glory, depend upon your taking God at His word, and believing what He says because He says it. This is faith—livings saving, precious faith. May you possess it I God's word, then, most distinctly declares that man in his natural, unrenewed, unconverted state is Satan's bond-slave. It speaks of Satan as " the god of this world," as "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." It speaks of man as "led captive by the devil at his will." Hence, in Paul's commission, the third thing which the gospel is to do is to turn man from " the power of Satan to God." Thus his eyes are opened; divine light comes streaming in; the power of Satan is broken, and the delivered one finds himself, peacefully and happily, in the presence of God. Like the demoniac in Mark v., he is delivered from his ruthless tyrant, his cruel master; his chains are broken and gone; he is clothed, and in his right mind, and sitting at the feet of Jesus.

What a glorious deliverance! It is worthy of God in every aspect of it, and in all its results. The poor blind slave, led captive by the devil, is set free; and not only so, but he is brought to God, pardoned, accepted, and endowed with an eternal inheritance among the sanctified. And all this is by faith, through grace. It is proclaimed in the gospel of God to every creature under heaven—not one is excluded. The great commission, whether we read it in Luke 24 or in Acts 26, assures us that this most precious, most glorious, salvation is unto all.

Let us listen for a moment, ere we close this paper, to our apostle, as he discharges his blessed commission in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. Most gladly would we transcribe the whole of his marvelous and most precious discourse, but our limited space compels us to confine ourselves to the powerful appeal at the end. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man"—Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and glorified—" is preached"—not promised in the future, but preached now, announced, as a present reality—" unto you the remission of sins. And by him all who believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

From these words we learn, in the clearest possible manner, that every soul in that synagogue was called upon, there and then, to receive into his heart the blessed message which fell from the preacher's lips. Not one was excluded. " Unto you is the word of this salvation sent." If anyone had asked the apostle if the message was intended for him, what would have been the reply? " Unto you is the word of this salvation sent." Was there no preliminary question to be settled? Not one. All the preliminaries had been settled at the cross. Was there no question as to election or predestination? Not a syllable about either in the whole range of this most magnificent and comprehensive discourse.

But is there no such question? Not in that " Great Commission" whereof we speak. No doubt the grand truth of election shines in its proper place on the page of inspiration. But what is its proper and divinely appointed place? Most assuredly not in the preaching of the evangelist, but in the ministry of the teacher or pastor. When the apostle sits down to instruct believers, we hear such words as these, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." And again, " Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God."

But let it never be lost sight of, when he stands up as an ambassador of Christ, the herald of salvation, he proclaims in the most absolute and unqualified manner a present, a personal, a perfect salvation to every creature under heaven; and everyone who heard him was responsible, there and then, to believe. And every one who reads him now is equally so. If anyone had presumed to tell the preacher that his hearers were not responsible, that they were powerless, and could not believe—that it was only deceiving them to call upon them to believe—what would have been his reply? We think we are warranted in saying that a full and overwhelming reply to this, and every such preposterous objection, is wrapped up in the solemn appeal with which the apostle closes his address, " Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 4, Great Commission: Part 2

Since writing our paper for January, we have been much interested in the way in which repentance is presented in those inimitable parables in Luke 15 There we learn, in a manner the most touching and convincing, not only the abiding and universal necessity—the moral fitness, in every case, of true repentance; but also that it is grateful to the heart of God. Our Lord, in His marvelous reply to the scribes and Pharisees, declares that " there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." And, again, " Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Now this gives us a very elevated view of the subject. It is one thing to see that repentance is binding upon man; and another and very much higher thing to see that it is grateful to God. " Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." A broken heart, a contrite spirit, a repentant mind, gives joy to God.

Let us ponder this fact. The scribes and Pharisees murmured because Jesus received sinners. How little they understood Him! How little they knew of the object that brought Him down into this dark and sinful world! How little they knew of themselves! It was the "lost" that Jesus came to seek. But scribes and Pharisees did not think themselves lost. They thought they were all right. They did not want a Savior. They were thoroughly unbroken, unrepentant, self-confident; and hence they had never afforded one atom «of joy in heaven. All the learning of the scribes, and all the righteousness of the Pharisees could not waken up a single note of joy in the presence of the angels of God. They were like the elder son in the parable who said, " Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and jet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends."

Here we have a true specimen of an unbroken heart and an unrepentant spirit—a man thoroughly satisfied with himself. Miserable object! He had never touched a chord in the Father's heart—never drawn out the Father's love—never felt the Father's embrace—never received the Father's welcome. How could he? He had never felt himself lost. He was full of himself, and therefore had no room for the Father's love. He did not feel that he owed anything and hence he had nothing to be forgiven. It rather seemed to him that the father was his debtor. "Lo, these many years do I serve thee; and yet thou never gavest me a kid." He had not received his wages.

What egregious folly! And yet it is just the same with every unrepentant soul—everyone who is building upon his own righteousness. He really makes God his debtor. " I have served thee; but I have never gotten what I earned." Miserable notion! The man who talks of his duties, his doings, his sayings, his givings, is really insulting God. But on the other hand, the man who comes with a broken heart, a contrite spirit, repentant, self-judged, that is the man who gives joy to the heart of God.

And why? Simply because such an one feels his need of God. Here lies the grand moral secret of the whole matter. To apprehend this is to grasp the full truth on the great question of repentance. A God of love desires to make His way to the sinner's heart, but there is no room for Him so long as that heart is hard and impenitent. But when the sinner is brought to the end of himself, when he sees himself a helpless hopeless wreck, when he sees the utter emptiness, hollowness, and vanity of all earthly things, when like the prodigal he comes to himself and feels the depth and reality of his need, then there is room in the heart for God, and—marvelous truth!—God delights to come and fill it. " To this man will I look." To whom? To the man who does his duty, keeps the law, does his best, lives up to his light? Nay; but "To him who is of a contrite spirit."

It will, perhaps, be said that the words just quoted apply to Israel. Primarily, they do; but morally, they apply to every contrite heart on the face of the earth. And, further, it cannot be said that Luke 15 applies specially to Israel. It applies to all. " There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that"—what? Does his duty? Nay, it does not even say, "that believeth?" No doubt believing is essential in every case; but the interesting point here is that a truly repentant sinner causes joy in heaven. A person may say, "I fear I do not believe." Well, but do you repent? Have your eyes been opened to see your true condition before God? Have you taken your true place before God as utterly lost? If so, you are one of those over whom there is joy in heaven. What gave joy to the shepherd's heart? Was it the ninety and nine sheep that went not astray? Nay, it was finding the lost sheep. What gave joy to the woman's heart? Was it the nine pieces safe in her possession? Nay, it was finding the one lost piece. What gave joy to the father's heart? Was it the service and the obedience of the elder son? Nay, it was getting back his lost son. A repentant, brokenhearted, returning sinner wakens up heaven's joy. "Let us eat and be merry." Why? Because the elder son has been working in the fields and doing his duty? No; but, " This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

All this is perfectly wonderful. Indeed it is so wonderful that if we had it not from the lips of Him who is the Truth, and on the eternal page of divine inspiration, we could not believe it. But, blessed be God, there it stands, and none can gainsay it. There shines the glorious truth that a poor, broken-hearted, penitent, worthless, self-destroyed, hell-deserving sinner gives joy to the heart of God. Let people talk as they will about keeping the law and doing their duty. It may go for what it is worth; but be it remembered that there is no such clause within the covers of the volume of God—no such sentence ever dropped from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ as, " There is joy in heaven over one sinner that docs his duty."

A sinner's duty! What is it? "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." "What is it that can really define our duty? Surely the divine command. Well, here it is, and there is no getting over it. God's command to all men, in every place, is to repent. His commandment binds them to it; His goodness leads them to it; His judgment warns them to it; and, above all, and most marvelous of all, He assures us that our repentance gives joy to His heart. A penitent heart is an object of profoundest interest to the mind of God, because that heart is morally prepared to receive what God delights to bestow, namely, "remission of sins"—yea, all the fullness of divine love. A man might spend millions in the cause of religion and philanthropy, and not afford one atom of joy in heaven. What are millions of money to God? A single penitential tear is more precious to Him than all the wealth of the universe. All the offerings of an unbroken heart are a positive insult to God; but a single sigh from the depths of a contrite spirit goes up as fragrant incense to His throne and to His heart.

No man can meet God on the ground of duty; but God can meet any man—the very chief of sinners, on the ground of repentance, for that is man's true place; and we may say with all possible confidence that when the sinner as he is, meets God as He is, the whole question is settled once and forever. " I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." The moment mat! takes his true place—the place of repentance, God meets him with a full forgiveness, a divine and everlasting righteousness. It is His joy to do so. It gratifies His heart and it glorifies His name to pardon, justify, and accept a penitent soul that simply believes in Jesus. The very moment the prophet cried, "Woe is me; for I am undone,"—" Then flew one of the seraphims with a live coal from off the altar."

Thus it is always. The fullness of God ever waits on an empty vessel. If I am full of myself, full of my own fancied goodness, my own morality, my own righteousness, I have no room for God, no room for Christ. " He filleth the hungry with good things; but the rich he hath sent empty away." A self-emptied soul can be filled with the fullness of God; but if God sends a man empty away, whither can he go to be filled? All scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, goes to prove the deep blessedness as well as the moral necessity of repentance. It is the grand turning-point in the soul's history—a great moral epoch which sheds its influence over the whole of one after life. It is not, we repeat, a transient exercise; but an abiding moral condition. We are not now speaking of how repentance is produced; we are speaking of what it is according to scripture, and of the absolute need of it for every creature under heaven. It is the sinner's true place, and when through grace he takes it, he is met by the fullness of God's salvation.

And here we see the lovely connection between the first and second clauses of " The great commission," namely, " Repentance and remission of sins." They are inseparably linked together. It is not that the most profound and genuine repentance forms the meritorious ground of remission of sins. To say or to think so, would be to set aside the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, for in that and in that alone have we the divine ground on which God can righteously forgive us our sins. This we shall see more fully when we come to consider the "basis" of " the great commission." We are now occupied with the commission itself; and in it we see those two divinely settled facts, repentance and remission of sins. The holy apostles of our Lord and Savior were charged to preach among all nations; to declare in the ears of every creature under heaven, " repentance and remission of sins." Every man, be he Jew or Gentile, is absolutely commanded by God to repent, and every repentant soul is privileged to receive, on the spot, the full and everlasting remission of sins. And we may add the deeper and more abiding the work of repentance, the deeper and more abiding will be the enjoyment of remission of sins. The contrite soul lives in the very atmosphere of divine forgiveness; and as it inhales that atmosphere, it shrinks, with ever-increasing horror, from sin in every shape and form.

Let us now turn for a moment to the Acts of the Apostles, and see how Christ's ambassadors carried out the second part of His blessed commission. Hear the apostle of the circumcision addressing the Jews on the day of Pentecost. We cannot attempt to quote the whole of his marvelous address; we merely give the few words of application at the close. " Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Here the preacher bears down upon the consciences of his hearers with the solemn fact that they had proved themselves to be at issue with God Himself about His Christ. What a tremendous fact! It was not merely that they had broken the law, rejected the prophets, refused the testimony of John the Baptist; but they had actually crucified the Lord of glory, the eternal Son of God. " Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men, brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:36-38.

Here are the two parts of the great commission brought out in all their distinctness and power. The people are charged with the most awful sin that could be committed, namely, the murder of the Son of God; they are called upon to repent, and assured of full remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. What wondrous grace shines forth in all this! The very men that had mocked and insulted the Son of God, that had spit upon Him and crucified Him, even these, if truly repentant, were assured of the complete pardon of all their sins and of their crowning sin amongst the rest. Such is the wondrous grace of God—such the mighty efficacy of the blood of Christ—such the clear and authoritative testimony of the Holy Ghost—such the glorious terms of "the great commission."

But let us turn for a moment to Acts 3 Here the preacher, after charging his hearers with the same awful act of wickedness, enmity, and rebellion against God, even the rejection and murder of His Son, adds these remarkable words, " And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

It is not possible to conceive anything higher or fuller than the grace that shines out here. It is a part of the divine response to the prayer of Christ, on the cross, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This surely is royal grace. It is victorious grace—grace reigning through righteousness. It was impossible that such a prayer could fall to the ground. It was answered in part, on the day of Pentecost. It will be answered, in full, at a future day, for "All Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

But mark particularly the words, " Those things which God before had showed.... He hath so fulfilled." Here the preacher brings in God's side of the matter; and this is salvation. To see only man's part in the cross would be eternal judgment. To see God's part and to rest in it is eternal life, full remission of sins, divine righteousness, everlasting glory.

The reader will doubtless be reminded here of the touching scene between Joseph and his brethren. There is a striking analogy between Acts 3 and Gen. 45 " Now therefore," says Joseph, " be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life.....And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God"

But when were these words uttered? Not until the guilty brethren had felt and owned their guilt. Repentance preceded the remission. " They said one to another, We arc verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this distress come upon us." Joseph "spake roughly" to his brethren at the first. He brought them through deep waters, and made them feel and confess their guilt. But the very moment they took the ground of repentance, he took the ground of forgiveness. The penitent brethren were met by a pardoning Joseph, and the whole house of Pharaoh was made to ring with the joy which filled the heart of Joseph on getting back to his bosom the very men that had flung him into the pit.

What an illustration of " repentance and remission of sins!" It is ever thus. It is the joy of the heart of God to forgive us our sins. He delights in causing the full tide of His pardoning love to flow into the broken and contrite heart.

Yes, beloved reader, if you have been brought to feel the burden of your guilt, then be assured it is your privilege this very moment, to receive a divine and everlasting remission of all your sins—yea, your sins will never be mentioned to you. The blood of Jesus Christ has perfectly settled the question of your guilt, and you are now invited to rejoice in the God of your salvation.

(To he continued, if the Lord will.)

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 4, Great Commission: Part 5

In handling our subject, we have yet to consider the authority and the sphere of " The Great Commission;" but, ere proceeding to treat of these, we must dwell a little longer on the basis. The commission is truly a great one, and would need a solid foundation on which to rest it; and such it has, blessed be God, in the atoning death of His Son. Nothing less than this could sustain such a magnificent fabric; but the grace that planned the commission has laid the foundation, and this is enough for us. A full remission of sins can be preached among all nations inasmuch as God has been glorified, in the death of Christ, as to the entire question of sin.

This is a grand point for the reader to seize. It lies at the very foundation of the christian system. It is the keystone of the arch of divine revelation. God has been glorified as to sin. His judgment has been executed upon it. The claims of His throne have been vindicated as to it. The insult offered to His divine majesty has been flung back in the enemy's face. If the sweet story of remission of sins had never fallen upon a human ear or entered a human heart, the divine glory would, none the less, have been most perfectly maintained. The Lord Jesus Christ did, by His most precious death, wipe off the stain which the enemy sought to cast upon the eternal glory of God. A testimony has been given in the cross, to all created intelligence, as to God's thoughts about sin. It can there be seen, with all possible clearness, that a single trace of sin can never enter the precincts of the divine presence. God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity. Sin, wherever found, must be met by divine judgment.

Where, we may ask, does all this come most fully and forcibly out? Assuredly in the cross. Hearken to that solemn and most mysterious cry, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" What means this wondrous inquiry? Who is the speaker? Is He one of Adam's fallen posterity? Is He a sinner? Surely not; for were He such, there would be no moral force whatever in the question. There never was a sinner on the face of this earth who, so far as he was personally concerned, did not richly deserve to be forsaken of a holy, sin-hating God. This must never be

forgotten. Some people entertain the most foolish notions as to this point. They have, in their own vain imagination, manufactured a god to suit themselves—one who will not punish sin—one who is so tender, so kind, so benevolent, that he will connive at evil and pass it over as though it were nothing.

Now, nothing is more certain than that this god of the human imagination is a false one, just as false as any of the idols of the heathen. The God of the Bible, the God of Christianity, the God whom we see at the cross is not like this. Men may reason as they will; but sin must be condemned—it must be met by the just and inflexible judgment of a sin-hating God.

But, we repeat the question, who uttered those words at the opening of Psalm 22? If He was not a sinner, who was He? Wonderful to declare, He was the only spotless, perfectly holy, pure and sinless man that ever trod this earth. He was more. He was the eternal Son of the Father; the object of God's ineffable delight who had dwelt in His bosom from all eternity, " the brightness of His glory and the exact expression of His substance." (See Greek.)

And yet He was forsaken of God. Yes, that holy and perfect One, who knew no sin, whose human nature was absolutely free from every taint, who never had a single thought, never uttered a single word, never did a single act that was not in the most perfect harmony with the mind of God; whose whole life, from Bethlehem to Calvary, was a perfect sacrifice of sweetest odor presented to the heart of God. Again and again, we see heaven opening upon Him, and the voice of the Father is heard giving expression to His infinite complacency in the Son of His bosom. And yet, He it is whose voice is heard in that bitter cry, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Marvelous question! It stands alone in the annals of eternity. No such question had ever been asked before; no such question has ever been asked since; and no such question can ever be asked again. Whether we consider the One who asked the question, or the One of whom it was asked, or the answer, we must admit that it is perfectly unique. That God should forsake such an One is the most profound and marvelous mystery that could possibly engage the attention of men or angels. Human reason cannot fathom its depths. No created intelligence can comprehend its mighty compass.

Yet there it stands, a stupendous fact before the eye of faith. Our blessed Lord Himself assures us that it was absolutely necessary. " Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer." But why was it necessary? Why should the only perfect, sinless, spotless man have to suffer? Why should He be forsaken of God? The glory of God, the eternal counsels of redeeming love, man's guilty, ruined, helpless condition—all these things rendered it indispensable that Christ should suffer. There was no other way in which the divine glory could be maintained; no other way in which the claims of the throne of God could be answered; no other way in which heaven's majesty could be vindicated; no other way in which the eternal purposes of love could be made good; no other way in which sin could be fully atoned for, and finally taken away out of God's creation; no other way in which sins could be forgiven; no other way in which Satan and all the powers of darkness could be thoroughly vanquished; no other way in which God could be just, and yet the Justifier of any poor ungodly sinner; no other way in which death could be deprived of its sting, or the grave of its victory; no other way in which any or all of these grand results could be reached save by the sufferings and death of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ.

But, blessed forever be His holy Name, He went through it all. He went down under the heavy billows and waves of God's righteous wrath against sin. He took the sinner's place, stood in his stead, sustained the judgment, paid the penalty, died the death, answered every question, met every demand, vanquished every foe; and having done all, He ascended into the heavens and took His seat on the throne of God, where He is now crowned with glory and honor as the divine and all-glorious Accomplisher of the entire work of man's redemption.

Such then, reader, is the basis of " The Great Commission" whereof we speak. Need we wonder at the terms, when we contemplate the basis? Can there be anything too good, anything too great, anything too glorious for the God of all grace to bestow upon us poor sinners of the Gentiles, seeing He has been so fully glorified in the death of Christ? That most precious death furnishes a divinely righteous ground on which our God can indulge the deep and everlasting love of His heart in the perfect remission of our sins. It has removed out of the way every barrier to the full flood tide of redeeming love which can now flow through a perfectly righteous channel, to the very vilest sinner that repents and believes in Jesus. A Savior God can now publish a full and immediate remission of sins to every creature under heaven. There is positively no hindrance. God has been glorified as to the question of sin; and the time is coming when every trace of sin shall be forever obliterated from His fair creation, and those words of John the Baptist shall have their full accomplishment, " Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Meanwhile, the heralds of salvation are commanded to go forth to the ends of the earth and publish, without let or limitation, perfect remission of sins to every soul that believes. It is the joy of God's heart to pardon sins; and it is due to the One who bore the judgment of sin on the cross, that in His name, forgiveness of sins should be thus freely published, fully received and abidingly enjoyed.

But what of those who reject this glorious message—who shut their ears against it and turn away their hearts from it? This is the solemn question. Who can answer it? Who can attempt to set forth the eternal destiny of those who die in their sins, as all must who refuse God's only basis of remission? Men may reason and argue as they will; but all the reasoning and argument in the world cannot set aside the word of God which assures us, in manifold places, and in terms so plain as to leave no possible ground for questioning, that all who die in their sins—all who die out of Christ, must inevitably perish eternally—must bear the consequences of their sins, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

To quote the passages in proof of the solemn truth of eternal punishment would require a small volume. We cannot attempt it here; nor is it necessary, inasmuch as we have gone into the subject again and again, in former volumes of " Things New and Old."

But we would here put a question which arises naturally out of our present thesis. It is this: Was Christ judged, bruised and forsaken on the cross—did God visit His only-begotten and well-beloved Son with the full weight of His righteous wrath against sin, and shall impenitent sinners escape? We solemnly press this question on all whom it may concern. Men talk of its being inconsistent with the idea of divine goodness, tenderness and compassion, that God should send any of His creatures to hell. We reply, who is to be the judge? Is man competent to decide as to what is morally fitting for God to do? And further we ask, what is to be the standard of judgment? Anything that human reason can grasp? Assuredly not. What then? The cross in which the Son of God died the just for the unjust. This, and this only is the great standard by which to judge the question as to sin's desert. Who can hearken to that bitter cry emanating from the broken heart of the Son of God, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and question the eternal punishment of all who die in their sins? Talk of tenderness, goodness and compassion! Where do these shine out most brightly and blessedly? Surely in " The Great Commission" which publishes full and free forgiveness of sins to every creature under heaven. But would it be tender or good, or compassionate to suffer the rejecter of Christ to

escape? If we would see the goodness, kindness, mercy, and deep compassion of God, we must look at the cross. " He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." " It pleased Jehovah to bruise him. He hath put him to grief." " He hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him."

But if men reject all this and go on in their sins, in their rebellion, in their infidel reasonings, and impious speculations—what then? If men maintain that suffering for sin is not necessary, and that there is another and a better way of disposing of the matter—what then? Our Lord declared in the ears of His apostles that "it was necessary that Christ should suffer" that there was no other way possible by which the great question could be settled. Whom are we to believe? Was the death of Christ gratuitous? Was His heart broken for nothing? Was the cross a work of supererogation? Did Jehovah bruise His Son and put Him to grief for an end which might be gained some other way?

How monstrous are the reasonings or rather the ravings of infidelity! Infidel doctors begin by throwing overboard the word of God, that peerless and perfect revelation; and then, when they have deprived us of our divine guide, with singular audacity, they present themselves before us, and undertake to point out for us a more excellent way; and when we inquire what that way is, we are met by a thousand and one fine-spun theories, no two of which agree in anything save in shutting out God and His word.

True, they talk plausibly about a God; but it is a God of their own imagination—one who will connive at sin—who will allow them to indulge in their lusts, and passions, and pleasures, and then take them to a heaven of which they really know nothing. They talk of mercy, and kindness, and goodness; but they reject the only channel through which these can flow, namely, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. They speak not of righteousness, holiness, truth and judgment to come. They would fain have us to believe that God put Himself to needless cost in delivering up His Son. They would ignore that marvelous transaction which stands alone in the entire history of the ways of God—the atoning death of His Son. In one word, the grand object of the devil, in all the skeptical, rationalistic, and infidel theories that have ever been propounded in this world? is to shut out completely, the word of God, the Christ of God, and God Himself.

We solemnly call upon all our readers, specially our young friends, to ponder this. It is our deep and thorough conviction that the harboring of a single infidel suggestion is the first step on that inclined plane which leads straight down to the dark and terrible abyss of atheism—down to the blackness of darkness forever.

We shall have occasion to recur to the foregoing line of thought when we come to consider the " authority" on which " The Great Commission" comes to us. We have been drawn into it by the sad fact that, in every direction, and on every subject, we are assailed by the contemptible reasonings of infidelity; and we feel imperatively called upon to warn all with whom we come in contact against infidel books, infidel lectures, infidel theories in every shape and form. May the inspired word of God be more and more precious to our hearts! May we walk in its light, feel its sacred power, bow to its divine authority, hide it in our hearts, feed upon its treasures, own its absolute supremacy, confess its all-sufficiency, and utterly reject all teaching which dares to touch the integrity of the holy scriptures.

(To be continued in our next, if the Lord will)

" The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with the angels of his power, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

The Lord's Supper, Time and Manner of Observance of the Lord’s Supper, The

Having now considered, through the Lord’s mercy, the nature of the Lord’s Supper, the circumstances under which it was instituted and the persons for whom it was designed, I would only add a word as to what Scripture teaches us about the time and manner of its celebration.

Although the Lord’s Supper was not first instituted on the first day of the week, yet Luke 24 and Acts 20 are quite sufficient to prove, to a mind subject to the Word, that that is the day on which the ordinance should specially be observed. The Lord broke bread with His disciples on “the first day of the week” (Luke 24:1,30), and “upon the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread” (Acts 20:7). These scriptures are quite sufficient to prove that it is not once a month, nor once in three months, nor once in six months, that disciples should come together to break bread, but once a week at least, and that upon the first day of the week. Nor can we have any difficulty in seeing that there is a moral fitness in the first day of the week for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper: It is the resurrection day — the church’s day, in contrast with the seventh day, which was Israel’s day, and, as, in the institution of the ordinance, the Lord led His disciples away from Jewish things altogether (by refusing to drink of the fruit of the vine — the passover cup — and then instituting another ordinance), so, in the day on which that ordinance was to be celebrated, we observe the same contrast between heavenly and earthly things. It is in the power of resurrection that we can rightly show the Lord’s death. When the conflict was over, Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine and blessed Abram in the name of the Lord. Thus, too, our Melchizedek, when all the conflict was over and the victory gained, came forth in resurrection with bread and wine to strengthen and cheer the hearts of His people and to breathe upon them that peace which He had so dearly purchased.

If, then, the first day of the week be the day on which Scripture teaches the disciples to break bread, it is clear that man has no authority to alter the period to once a month or once in six months. And I doubt not, when the affections are lively and fervent toward the person of the Lord Himself, the Christian will desire to show the Lord’s death as frequently as possible — indeed it would seem, from the opening of Acts, that the disciples broke bread daily. This we may infer from the expression, “Breaking bread from house to house [or, at home].” However, we are not left to depend upon mere inference as to the question of the first day of the week being the day on which the disciples came together to break bread: We are distinctly taught this, and we see its moral fitness and beauty.

We have considered the time. Now let’s consider a word about the manner. It should be the special aim of Christians to show that the breaking of bread is their grand and primary object in coming together on the first day of the week. They should show that it is not for preaching or teaching that they assemble, though teaching may be a happy adjunct, but that the breaking of bread is the leading object before their minds. It is the work of Christ which we show forth in the Supper: Therefore, it should have the first place. And when it has been duly set forth, there should be a full and unqualified opening left for the work of the Holy Spirit in ministry. The office of the Spirit is to set

forth and exalt the name, the person and the work of Christ, and if He be allowed to order and govern the assembly of Christians, as He undoubtedly should, He will always give the work of Christ the primary place.

I cannot close this paper without expressing my deep sense of the feebleness and shallowness of all that I have advanced on a subject of really commanding interest. I do feel before the Lord, in whose presence I desire to write and speak, that I have so failed to bring out the full truth about this matter that I almost shrink from letting these pages see the light. It is not that I have a shadow of doubt as to the truth of what I have endeavored to state. No, but I feel that, in writing upon such a subject as the breaking of bread, at the time when there is such sad confusion among professing Christians, there is a demand for pointed, clear and lucid statements, to which I am little able to respond.

We have but little conception of how entirely the question of the breaking of bread is connected with the church's position and testimony on earth, and we have as little conception of how thoroughly the question has been misunderstood by the professing church. The breaking of break ought to be the distinct enunciation of the fact that all believers are one body, but the professing church, by splitting into sects and by setting up a table for each sect, has practically denied that fact.

In truth, the breaking of bread has been cast into the background. The table at which the Lord should preside is almost lost sight of by being placed in the shade of the pulpit in which man presides. The pulpit, which is too often the instrument of creating and perpetuating disunion, is, to many minds, the commanding object, while the table, which if properly understood would perpetuate love and unity, is made quite a secondary thing. And even in the most laudable effort to recover from such a lamentable condition of things, what complete failure have we seen. What has the Evangelical Alliance effected? It has at least developed a need existing among professing Christians, which they are confessedly unable to meet. They want union and are unable to attain it. Why? Because they will not give up everything which has been added to the truth to meet together according to the truth, to break bread as disciples — I say, as disciples, and not as Churchmen, Independents or Baptists. It is not that all such may not have much valuable truth, I mean those of them who love our Lord Jesus Christ; they certainly may. But they have no truth that should prevent them from meeting together to break bread. How could truth ever hinder Christians from giving expression to the unity of the church? Impossible! A sectarian spirit in those who hold truth may do this, but truth never can. But how is it now in the professing church? Christians of various communities can meet for the purpose of reading, praying and singing together during the week, but when the first day of the week arrives, they have not the least idea of giving the only real and effectual expression of their unity which the Holy Spirit can recognize, which is the breaking of bread. "We being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."

The sin at Corinth was their not tarrying one for another. This appears from the exhortation with which the Apostle sums up the whole question (1 Cor. 11): "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." Why were they to tarry one for another? Surely, in order that they might the more clearly express their unity. But what would the Apostle have said if, instead of coming together into one place, they had gone to different places, according to their different views of truth? He might then say with, if possible, greater force, "Ye cannot eat the Lord's Supper" (see margin).

It may, however, be asked, "How could all the believers in London meet in one place?" I reply, if they could not meet in one place, they could at least meet on one principle. But how did the believers at Jerusalem meet together? The answer is, They were "of one accord." This being so, they had little difficulty about the question of a meeting room. "Solomon's porch" or anywhere else would suit their purpose. They gave expression to their unity, and that, too, in a way not to be mistaken. Neither various localities nor various measures of knowledge and attainment could, in the least, interfere with their unity. There was "one body and one Spirit."

Finally, I would say that the Lord will assuredly honor those who have faith to believe and confess the unity of the church on earth, and the greater the difficulty in the way of doing so, the greater will be the honor. The Lord grant to all His people a single eye and a humble and honest spirit.

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 5, Three Crosses, The: Part 3

The case of the penitent thief furnishes a very fine illustration of Peter's weighty sentence, " Repent and be converted." It teaches us in a clear and forcible manner, the true meaning of repentance and conversion- two subjects so little understood—so sadly clouded by false teaching.

The human heart is ever prone to take divine things by the wrong end; and when false theology combines with this tendency of the heart, by presenting things in a one-sided manner, the moral effect upon the soul is something terrible. Hence it is that when men are called upon, in the gospel message to repent and turn to God, they think it needful to set about doing something or other, in the shape of reading, praying, and attending upon the ordinances and offices of religion, so called. Thus they become occupied with their doings instead of judging their state.

This is a fatal mistake—the result of the combined influence of self-righteousness and bad theology—these fruitful sources of darkness and misery to precious souls, and of serious damage to the truth of God.

It is perfectly marvelous to note the varied forms in which self-righteousness clothes itself. Indeed so varied are these forms that one would scarcely recognize it to be what it really is. Sometimes it looks like humility, and speaks largely of the evil and danger of being too presumptuous. Then again, it assumes the garb and adopts the language of what is called experimental religion, which, very often, is nothing more than intense self-occupation. At other times, it expresses itself in the thread-bare formularies of systematic divinity—that stumbling block of souls and the sepulcher of divine revelation.

What then is repentance? It is in one of its grand elements, the thorough judgment of self—of its history and its ways. It is the complete breaking up of the entire system of self-righteousness and the discovery of our complete wreck, ruin and bankruptcy. It is the sense of personal vileness, guilt and danger,—a sense produced by the mighty action of the word and Spirit of God upon the heart and conscience. It is a hearty sorrow for sin, and a loathing of it for its own sake.

True, there are other features and elements in genuine repentance. There is a change of mind as to self, and the world, and God. And further, there are various degrees in the depths and intensity of the exercise. But, for the present, we confine ourselves to that deeply important feature of repentance illustrated in the touching narrative of the penitent thief, which we may term, in one word, self-judgment. This must be insisted upon constantly. We greatly fear it is sadly lost sight of in much of our modern preaching and teaching. In our efforts to make the gospel simple and easy, we are in danger of forgetting that " God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." The sinner must be made to feel that he is a sinner—a lost sinner—a guilty sinner—a hell-deserving sinner. He must be made to feel that sin is a terrible thing in the sight of God—so terrible that nothing short of the death of Christ could atone for it—so terrible, that all who die unpardoned must inevitably be damned—must spend a dreary, never ending eternity in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

Is there, then, anything meritorious in repentance? Is there anything to build upon or to boast in? Has it aught to do with the ground of our salvation, our righteousness, or our acceptance with God? As well might we inquire if the consciousness of bankruptcy could form the basis of a man's credit or future fortune. No; no, reader, repentance, in its deepest and most intensified form, has nothing to do with the ground of our pardon. How could the sense of guilt have aught to do with the ground of pardon? How could the feelings of a drowning man have aught to do with the life boat that saves him? Or the agonies of a man in a house on fire have aught to do with the fire-escape by which he descends from the burning pile?

Look at the case of the thief on the cross. Hearken to his words. " Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed, justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." Here are the accents of a genuine repentance, "we indeed justly." He felt and owned that he was justly condemned—that he was reaping only " the due reward of his deeds." Was there anything meritorious in this? By no means. It was the judgment of himself—the condemnation of his ways—the sense of his guilt. And this was right. It was the sure precursor of conversion to God. It was the fruit of the Spirit's work in his soul, and enabled him to appreciate God's salvation. It was the hearty acknowledgment of his own just condemnation; and most surely this could, in no wise, contribute to his righteousness before God. It is utterly impossible that the sense of guilt could ever form the basis of righteousness.

Still, there must be repentance; and the deeper the better. It is well that the plow should do its work in breaking up the fallow ground, and making deep the furrows in which the incorruptible seed of the word may take root. We do not believe that any one had ever to complain that the plowshare entered too deeply into the soul. Nay, we feel assured that the more we are led down into the profound depths of our own moral ruin, the more fully we shall appreciate the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe.

But, be it well understood, repentance is not doing this or that. What did the thief do What could he do? He could not move hand or foot. And yet he was truly repentant. He is handed down, on the page of history, as " the penitent thief." Yes, he was penitent; and his penitence expressed itself in the unmistakable accents of self-judgment. Thus it must ever be. There must be the judgment of sin, sooner or later; and the sooner the better; and the deeper the better.

And what then? What is the divine order? " Repent, and be converted." " Repent, and turn to God." Beauteous order! It is conviction and conversion. It is the discovery of self and its ruin, and the discovery of God and His remedy. It is condemning myself and justifying God. It is finding out the emptiness of self, and finding out the fullness of Christ. It is learning the force and application of those few words, " Thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help."

And see how all this comes out in the brief but comprehensive record of the thief. No sooner does he give expression to the sense of his own just condemnation, than he turns to that Blessed One who was hanging beside him, and bears the sweet testimony, " This man hath done nothing amiss." Here he gives a flat contradiction to the whole world. He joins issue with the chief priests, elders and scribes who had delivered up the Holy One as a malefactor. They had declared, " If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." But the dying thief declares " This man hath done nothing amiss." Thus he stands forth in clear and decided testimony to the spotless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ—that grand truth which lies at the very base of, " The great mystery of godliness." He turns from a guilty self to a spotless Christ; and he tells the world that it had made a. terrible mistake in crucifying the Lord of glory.

And was not this a good work? Yes, truly, the very best work that any one could do. To bear a full, clear, bold testimony to Christ, is the most acceptable and fragrant service that any mortal can render to God. Millions bestowed in charity—continents traversed in the interests of philanthropy—a lifetime spent in the dreary exercises of mechanical religiousness -all these things put together are as the small dust of the balance when compared with one word of heartfelt, genuine, Spirit-taught testimony to God's beloved Son. The poor thief could do nothing and give nothing; but oh! he was permitted to enjoy the richest and rarest privilege that could possibly fall to the lot of any mortal, even the privilege of bearing witness to Christ, when the whole world had cast Him out—when one of His own disciples had denied Him—another had sold Him—and all had forsaken Him. This, indeed, was service, this was work—a service and a work which shall live in the records and the memory of heaven when the proudest monuments of human genius and benevolence shall have crumbled and sunk in eternal oblivion.

But we have some further lessons to learn from the lips of the dying malefactor. Not only does he bear a bright and blessed testimony to the spotless humanity of Christ; but he also owns Him as Lord and King, and this, too, at a moment, and amid a scene when, to nature's view, there was not a single trace of lordship or royalty. " He said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

Reader, think of this! Think of one who had, as it were, a moment before, been railing on the dying Savior, now owning Him as Lord and King! Truly this was divine work. Surely this was real conversion- a true turning to God. " Lord, remember me." Oh! how unspeakably precious is this golden chain with its three links! How lovely to see a poor worthless, guilty, hell-deserving " me " linked on to the divine Savior, by that one word, " remember! "

This was life eternal. A Savior and a sinner linked together, is everlasting salvation. Nothing can be simpler. People may talk of works, of feelings, of experiences; but here we have the matter presented in its divine simplicity, and in its divine order. We have first the fruit of a genuine repentance, in the words, " we indeed justly; " and then the sweet result of spiritual conversion in the one simple but powerful utterance " Lord, remember me." " Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." " Repent and turn to God."

What marvelous depth and power in those words! To repent is to see the utter ruin of self. To turn to God, is life and peace, and everlasting salvation. We discover self and we loathe and abhor it. We discover God and turn to Him with the whole heart, and find in Him all we want for

time and for eternity. It is all divinely simple and unspeakably blessed. Repentance and conversion are inseparably linked together. They are distinct yet intimately connected. They must neither be separated nor confounded.

And, now, let us note the divine response to the appeal of the penitent thief. He had said, " Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." What is the answer? " To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." It is as though the blessed Savior had said to him, " You need not wait for the glory of the kingdom; this very day thou shalt taste the grace of the house—the love of my Father's home above; I shall have you with me in that bright paradise, to enjoy full communion with me long before the glories of the kingdom shall be unfolded." Most blessed Savior! Such was Thy matchless grace!

And not one reproving word! Not a single reference to the past! Not even a glance at the recent heartless wickedness! Ah! no; there is never aught of this in the divine dealing with a penitent soul. The thief had said—said from the depths of a broken and contrite heart, " we indeed justly." This was enough. True, it was needful; but it was enough. " A broken and a contrite heart, 0 God, thou wilt not despise." No; and not only will He not despise it, but He will pour into it the rich and precious consolation of His grace and pardoning love. It is the joy of God to pardon a penitent sinner; and none but a penitent sinner can truly enjoy the pardon of God.

" Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. Here the glories of a present, personal, and perfect salvation pour themselves in divine luster, upon the gaze of the astonished thief.

And, be it noted, that there is not one syllable about doing, or giving, or feeling, or aught else that might turn the eye in upon self. The eye had been turned in, and rightly so; and it had seen nothing but a deep, dark abyss of guilt and ruin. This was enough. The eye must henceforth and for evermore be turned outward and upward; it must be fixed on the precious Savior who was bringing him to paradise, and on that bright paradise to which was bringing him.

No doubt the thief could Laver forget what a sinner he had been—never forget his gat and wickedness -never could he, never shall he; yea, throughout the countless ages of eternity, he and all the redeemed shall remember the past. How could it be otherwise? Shall we lose the power of memory in the future? Surely not. But every remembrance of the past shall only tend to swell the note of praise which the heart shall give forth as we think of the grace that shines in those most precious words, " Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more." Such is the style of divine forgiveness! God will never again refer to those sins which His own loving hand has canceled by the blood of the cross. Never. No, never. He has cast them behind His back forever. They have sunk as lead into the deep, unfathomable waters of His eternal forgetfulness. All praise to His glorious Name!

But we must now fix the eye, for a brief moment, upon the third cross. On it we behold—what? A guilty sinner? Not merely that. The penitent thief was that. They were in the same condemnation. No one need go to hell simply because he is a sinner, inasmuch as Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners " even the chief." There is not a sinner, this day, outside the precincts of hell, who is not within the reach of God's salvation if he only feel his need of it. No one need be lost, merely because he is a ruined, guilty, hell-deserving sinner.

But what do we behold on that third cross? We behold an unbelieving sinner. This is the solemn point. We may, without any hesitation, declare that had the occupant of that cross, like his penitent companion, cast himself upon the grace of the dying Savior, he would, most assuredly, have met with the same response. There was grace in the heart of Jesus to meet the one as well as the other. But he did not want it, would not have it. He remained impenitent and unbelieving until the dark shadows of death gathered round him, and the darker horrors of hell burst upon his guilty soul. He perished within arm's length of the Savior.

Tremendous thought! what finite mind can take it in? Who can fully estimate the contrast between those two men? True, the contrast was in one point; but that one point involved consequences of eternal moment. What was it! It was this—the reception or rejection of the Son of God—believing or not believing on that blessed One who was hanging between them -as near to the one as He was to the other. There was no difference in their nature; no difference in their condition; no difference in their circumstances. The grand and all important difference lay in this, that one believed in Jesus, and the other did not; one was enabled to say, " Lord, remember me; " the other said, " If thou be the Christ."

What a contrast! What a broad line of demarcation! What an awful chasm between two men so like in other respects—so near to one another—so near to the Divine Savior! But it is just the same in all cases, everywhere, and at all times. The one simple but solemn question for each and for all is this, " What is my relation to Christ? " All hinges upon this -yes, all for time and eternity. Am I in Christ? or am I not?

The two thieves represent the two great classes into which mankind has been divided, from the days of Cain and Abel down to this very moment. God's Christ is the one great and all deciding test, in every case. All the shades of moral character—all the grades of social life—all the castes, classes, sects and parties into which the human family has been, is, or ever shall be divided- all are absorbed in this one momentous point—" In or out of Christ." The difference between the two thieves is just the difference between the saved and the lost—the church and the world—the children of God and the children of God's great enemy. True it is that in the case of the two thieves the matter is brought to a point so that we can see it at a glance; but it is the same in every case. The Person of Christ is the one great boundary line that marks off the new creation from the old—the kingdom of God from the kingdom of Satan—the children of light from the children of darkness, and this boundary line stretches away into eternity.

Reader, what sayest thou to these things? On which side of this line art thou, at this moment, standing? Art thou, like the penitent thief, linked on to Christ by a simple faith? Or dost thou, like his impenitent companion, speak of Christ with an " if " Say, dear friend, how is it? Do not put this question away from thee. Take it up and look it solemnly in the face. Your eternal weal or woe hangs on your answer to this question. Oh, do, we beseech of thee, think of it now! Turn to Jesus now! Come now! God commands thee! Delay not! Reason not! Come just as thou art to Jesus who hung on that center cross for us.

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 5, Three Crosses, The: Part 1

We want the reader to turn aside with us for a few moments, and meditate upon those three crosses. If we mistake not, he will find a very wide field of truth opened before him in the brief but comprehensive record given at the head of this article.

I. And first of all, we must gaze at the center cross, or rather at Him who was nailed thereon—Jesus of Nazareth—that blessed One who had spent His life in labors of love, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, feeding the hungry, drying the widow's tears, meeting every form of human need, ever ready to drop the tear of true sympathy with every child of sorrow—whose meat and drink it was to do the will of God, and to do good to man—a holy, spotless, perfectly gracious man—the only pure untainted sheaf of human fruit ever seen in this world—" A man approved of God "—who had perfectly glorified God on this earth, and perfectly manifested Him in all His ways.

Such, then, was the one who occupied the center cross; and when we come to inquire what it was that placed Him there, we learn a threefold lesson—or rather, we should say, three profound truths are unfolded to our hearts.

In the first place, we are taught, as nothing else can teach us, what man's heart is toward God. Nothing has ever displayed this—nothing could display it, as the cross has. If we want a perfect standard by which to measure the world—to measure the human heart—to measure sin, we must look at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot stop short of the cross, and we cannot go beyond it, if we want to know what the world is, inasmuch as it was there that the world fully uttered itself—there fallen humanity fully let itself out. When the human voice cried out, " Crucify him Crucify him! " that voice was the utterance of the human heart, declaring, as nothing else could declare, its true condition in the sight of God. When man nailed the Son of God to the cross, he placed the topstone upon the superstructure of his guilt and moral turpitude. When man preferred a robber and a murderer to Christ, he proved that he would rather have robbery and murder than light and love. The cross demonstrates this tremendous fact; and the demonstration is so clear as not to admit of the shadow of a question.

It is well to seize this point. It, most certainly, is not seen with sufficient clearness. We are very prone to judge of the world according to its treatment of ourselves. We speak of its hollowness, its faithlessness, its baseness, its deceitfulness, and such like; but we are too apt to make self the measure in all this, and hence we fall short of the real mark. In order to reach a just conclusion, we must judge by a perfect standard, and this can only be found in the cross. The cross is the only perfect measure of man—of the world—of sin. If we really want to know what the world is, we must remember that it preferred a robber to Christ, and crucified between two thieves the only perfect man that ever lived.

Such, beloved reader, is the world in which you live.

Such is its character—such its moral condition—such its true state as proved by its own deliberately planned and determinedly perpetrated act. And therefore we need not marvel at aught that we hear or see of the world's wickedness, seeing that in crucifying the Lord of glory, it gave the strongest proof that could be given of wickedness and guilt.

It will, perhaps, be said, in reply, the world is changed. It is not now what it was in the days of Herod and Pontius Pilate. The world of the nineteenth century is very different from the world of the first. It has made progress in every way. Civilization has flung its fair mantle over the scene; and, as respects a large portion of the world, Christianity has shed its purifying and enlightening influence upon the masses; so that it would be very unwarrantable to measure the world that is by the terrible act of the world that was.

Reader, do you really believe that the world is changed? Is it really improved in the deep springs of its moral being—is it altered at its heart's core? We readily admit all that a free gospel and an open Bible have, by the rich mercy of God, achieved here and there. We think, with grateful hearts and worshipping spirits of thousands and hundreds of thousands of precious souls converted to God. We bless the Lord, with all our hearts, for multitudes who have lived and died in the faith of Christ; and for multitudes who, at this very moment, are giving most convincing evidence of their genuine attachment to the Name, the Person, and the cause of Christ.

But, after allowing the broadest margin in which to insert all these glorious results, we return, with firm decision, to our conviction that the world is the world still, and if it had the opportunity, the act that was perpetrated in Jerusalem in the year 33, would be perpetrated in Christendom in 1873.

This may seem severe and sweeping; but is it true? Is the Name of Jesus one whit more agreeable to the world today, than it was when its great religious leaders cried out, " Not this man but Barabbas! " Only try it. Go and breathe that peerless and precious name amid the brilliant circles that throng the drawing rooms of the polite, the fashionable, the wealthy, and the noble of this our own day. Name Him in the saloon of a steamboat, in a railway carriage, or in a coffee room, and see if you will not very speedily be told that such a subject is out of place. Any other name, any other subject will be tolerated. You may talk folly and nonsense in the ear of the world, and you will never be told it is out of place; but talk of Jesus, and you will very soon be silenced. How often have we seen our leading thoroughfares literally blocked up by crowds of people looking at a puppet show, or listening to a ballad singer or a German band, and no policeman ever told them to move on. Let a servant of Christ stand to preach in our thoroughfares and he will be summoned before the magistrates. There is room in our public streets for the devil, but there is no room for Jesus Christ. " Not this man but Barabbas."

We ask can any one deny these things? Have they not been witnessed in our cities and towns, times without number? And what do they prove? They prove, beyond all question, the fallacy of the notion that the world is improved. They prove that the world of the nineteenth century is the world of the first. It has, in some places, changed its dress, but not its real animus. It has doffed the robes of paganism, and donned the cloak of Christianity; but underneath that cloak may be seen all the hideous features of paganism's darkest clays. Compare Rom. 1:29-31 with 2 Tim. 4 and there you will find the very traits and lineaments of nature, in its darkest heathenism, reproduced in connection with " the form of godliness "—the grossest forms of moral pravity covered with the robe of christian profession.

No, no, reader; it is a fatal mistake to imagine that the world is improving. It is stained with the murder of the Son of God; and it proves its consent to the deed in every stage of its history, in every phase of its condition. The world is under judgment. Its sentence is passed; the awful day of its execution is rapidly approaching. The world is simply a deep, dark, rapid stream rushing onward, in an impetuous torrent, to the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Nothing but the sword of judgment can ever settle the heavy question pending between the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and that world which murdered His Son.

Thus it is, if scripture is to be our guide. Judgment is coming. It is at the very door. Eighteen hundred years ago, the inspired apostle penned the solemn sentence that " God is ready to judge." If He was ready then, surely He is ready now. And why tarries He? In long-suffering mercy, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Precious words! Words of exquisite tenderness and matchless grace! Words that tell out the large, loving, gracious heart of our God, and His intense desire for man's salvation.

But judgment is coming. The awful day of vengeance is at hand; and, meanwhile, the voice of Jesus, sounding through the lips of His dear ambassadors, may be heard, on every side, calling men to flee out of the terrible vortex, and make their escape to the stronghold of God's salvation.

II. But this leads us, in the second place to look at the cross as the expression of God's heart toward man. If on the cross of our adorable Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we read, in characters deep, broad, and unmistakable, the true state of man's heart Godward; in the selfsame cross, we may read, with no less clearness surely, the state of God's heart to manward. The cross is the divinely perfect measure of both.

"The very spear that pierced thy side, Drew forth the blood to save."

We behold, at the cross, the marvelous meeting of enmity and love—sin and grace. Man displayed, at Calvary, the very height of his enmity against God. God, blessed forever be His name, displayed the height of His love. Hatred and love met; but loved proved victorious. God and sin met; God triumphed, sin was put away, and now, at the resurrection side of the cross, the eternal Spirit announces the glad tidings that, grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. At the cross, the battle was fought and the victory won; and now the liberal hand of sovereign grace is scattering, far and wide the spoils of victory.

Reader, do you really desire to know what the heart of God is toward man? If so, go and gaze on that center cross to which Jesus Christ was nailed, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. True it is, as we have already seen, man did, with wicked hands, crucify and slay the blessed One. This is the dark side of this question. But there is a bright side also, for God is seen in it. No doubt, man fully let himself out at the cross; but God was above him. Yes, above him and above all the powers of earth and hell which were there ranged in their terrible array.

As it was, in the case of Joseph and his brethren; they told. out the enmity of their hearts in flinging him into the pit, and selling him to the Ishmaelites. Here was the dark side. But then, mark these words of Joseph: " Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me; for God did send me before you to preserve life."

Here was the bright side. But to whom were these wondrous words of grace addressed? To broken hearts and penitent spirits, and convicted consciences. To men who had learned to say "We are verily guilty." It is only such that can at all enter into the line of truth which is now before us. Those who have taken their true place—who have accepted the judgment of God against themselves—who truly own that the cross is the measure of their guilt—they can appreciate the cross as the expression of God's heart of love toward them—they can enter into the glorious truth that the selfsame cross which demonstrates man's hatred. of God, sets forth also God's love to man. The two things ever go together. It is when we see and own our guilt, as proved in the cross, that we learn the purifying and peace-speaking power of that precious blood which cleanseth us from all sin.

Yes, beloved reader; it is only a broken heart and a contrite spirit that can truly enter into the marvelous love of God as set forth in the cross of Christ. How could Joseph ever have said, " Be not grieved with yourselves," if he had not seen his brethren broken down in his presence? Impossible. And how can an unbroken heart, an unreached conscience, an impenitent soul enter into the value of the atoning blood of Christ, or taste the sweetness of the love of God? Utterly impossible. Joseph "spake roughly " to his brethren at the first, but the very moment those accents emanated from their broken hearts, " We are verily guilty," they were in a condition to understand and value the words, " Be not grieved with yourselves." It is when we are completely broken down in the presence of the cross, seeing it as the perfect measure of our own deep personal guilt, that we are prepared to see it as the glorious display of God's love towards us.

And then and there we escape from a guilty world. Then and there we are rescued completely from that dark, broad, and rapid current of which we have spoken, and brought within the hallowed and peaceful circle of God's salvation, where we can walk up and down in the very sunlight of a Father's countenance, and breathe the pure air of the new creation. " Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"

ITT. And, now, one word, ere closing this branch of our subject on the cross as displaying the heart of Christ toward God. We can do little more than indicate this-

point, leaving the reader to prove its suggestive power, under the immediate ministry of the Holy Ghost.

It is an unspeakable comfort to the heart, in the midst of such a world as this, to remember that God has been perfectly glorified by One, at least. There has been One on this earth whose meat and drink was to do the will of God, to glorify Him, and finish His work. In life and death, Jesus perfectly glorified God. From the manger to the cross, His heart was perfectly devoted to the one great object, namely, to accomplish the will of God., whatever that will might be. " Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." In the roll of God's eternal counsels, it was written of the Son that, in due time, He should come into this world, and accomplish the will of the Godhead. To this He dedicated Himself with all the energies of His perfect being. From this He never swerved the breadth of a hair from first to last; and when we gaze on that center-cross which is now engaging our attention, we behold the perfect consummation of that which had filled the heart of Jesus from the very beginning, even the accomplishment of the will of God.

All this is blessedly unfolded to us in that charming passage in Phil. 2 " Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, lie humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Verse 5-8.

How wonderful is all this! What profound depths there are in the mystery of the cross! What lines of truth converge in it! What rays of light emanate from it! What unfoldings of heart there! The heart of man to Godward—the heart of God to manward—the heart of Christ to God! All this we have in the cross. We can gaze on that One who hung there between two thieves, a spectacle to heaven, earth, and hell, and see the perfect measure of everyone and everything in the whole universe of God. Would we know the measure of the heart of God—His love to us—His hatred of sin? we must look at the cross. Would we know the measure of the heart of man—his real condition—his hatred of all that is divinely good—his innate love of all that is thoroughly bad? we must look at the cross. Would we know what the world is—what sin is—what Satan is? we must look at the cross.

Assuredly, then, there is nothing like the cross. Well may we ponder it. It shall be our theme throughout the everlasting ages. May it be, more and more, our theme now! May the Holy Ghost so lead our souls into the living depths of the cross that we may be absorbed with the One who was nailed thereto, and thus weaned from the world that placed Him there. May the real utterance of our hearts, beloved reader, ever be, " God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." God grant it, for Jesus Christ's sake!

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 5, Three Crosses, The: Part 2

Having dwelt, for a little, on that marvelous center cross to which the Lord of Glory was nailed, for our redemption, we shall now turn to the other two, and seek to learn some solemn and weighty lessons front the inspired record concerning the men who hung thereon. We shall find in these two men samples of the two great classes into which the human family is divided, from the beginning to the end of time, namely the receivers and the rejecters of the Christ of God—those who believe in Jesus, and those who believe not. In the first place, it is of the utmost importance to see that there was no essential difference between those two men. In nature, in their recorded history, in their circumstances, they were one. Some have labored to establish a distinction between them; but for what object it is difficult to say, unless it be to dim the luster of the grace that shines forth in the narrative of the penitent thief. It is maintained that there must have been some event in his previous history to account for his marvelous end—some redeeming feature—some hopeful circumstance on account of which his prayer was heard at the last.

But scripture is totally silent as to aught of this kind. And not only is it silent as to any redeeming or qualifying circumstance, but it actually gives us the testimony of two inspired witnesses to prove that up to the very moment in the which Luke introduces him to our notice, he, like his fellow, on the other side, was engaged in the terrible work of railing on and blaspheming the Son of God. In Matt. 27:44, we read that " The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." So also in Mark 15:32, They that were crucified with him reviled him."

Now, this is divinely conclusive. It proves, beyond all question, that there was no difference between the two thieves. They were both condemned malefactors; and not only so, but when actually on the very confines of the eternal world, they were both occupied in the awful sin of reviling the blessed Son of God.

It is utterly vain, therefore, for any one to seek to establish a distinction between these two men, inasmuch as they were alike in their nature, in their guilt, in their criminality, and in their profane wickedness. There was no difference up to the moment in which the arrow of conviction entered the soul of him whom we call the penitent thief. The more clearly this is seen, the more the sovereign grace of God shines out in all its blessed brightness. " There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And, on the other hand, " There is no difference, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Compare Rom. 3:22, 23 with chapter 10:12.

The only standard by which men are to be measured is " the glory of God; " and, inasmuch as all have come short of that—the best as well as the worst of men—there is no difference. Were it merely a question of conscience, or of human righteousness, there might be some difference. Were the standard of measurement merely human, then indeed some shades of distinction might easily be established. But it is not so. All must be ruled by the glory of God; and, thus ruled, all are alike deficient. " There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

But, blessed be God, there is another side to this great question. " The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." The riches of the grace of God are such as to reach down to the very deepest depths of human ruin, guilt and misery. If the light of the divine glory reveals—as nothing else could reveal—man's utter ruin; the riches of divine grace, as displayed in the Person and work of Christ, has perfectly met that ruin, and provided a remedy in every way adequate to meet the claims of the divine glory.

But let us see how all this is illustrated in the striking and beautiful narrative of the penitent thief.

It is very evident that the Spirit of God, in the evangelist Luke, takes up this interesting case at that special point in the which a divine work had really begun. Matthew and Mark present him as a blaspheming malefactor. We can hardly conceive a deeper shade of moral turpitude than that which he according to their inspired record exhibits to our view! There is not so much as a single relieving tint. All is dark as midnight—dark almost as hell; yet not too dark to be reached by the light that was shining straight down from heaven through the mysterious medium of that center cross.

It is well to get a very profound sense of our true condition by nature. *We cannot possibly go too deep in this line. The ruin of nature is complete—of nature in all its phases and in all its stages. If all have not gone to the same length as the thief on the cross—if all have not brought forth the same fruit—if all have not clothed themselves in forms equally hideous, it is no thanks to their nature. The human heart is a seed plot in which may be found the seed of every crime that has ever stained the page of human history. If the seed has not germinated and fructified, it is not owing to a difference in the soil, but a difference in surrounding circumstances and influences.

The testimony of scripture on this great question, is distinct and conclusive, " There is no difference." Men do not like this. It is too leveling for them. Self-righteousness is cut up by the roots by this sweeping statement of inspiration. Man likes to establish distinctions. He cannot bear to be placed in the same category with the Magdalenes, and the Samaritans and such like. But it must be so, and cannot be otherwise. Grace levels all distinctions, now; and judgment will level them all, by and by. If we are saved, it is in company with Magdalenes and Samaritans; and if we are lost, it will be in company with such likewise. There will, no doubt, be degrees of glory; as there will be degrees of punishment; but as to the real nature and character of the human heart, " there is no difference." " The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." What heart? Man's heart—the heart of the writer and the reader of these lines. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Out of what heart? Man's heart—the heart of the writer and the reader of these lines. These things could not come out of the heart if they were not there; and if they do not come out in action, it is not because they are not there, but that circumstances have operated to prevent.

Such is the clear and unvarying testimony of holy scripture; and whenever the Spirit of God begins to operate on the heart and conscience of a man He produces the deep sense and full confession of the truth of this testimony. Every divinely convicted soul is ready to adopt as his own these words, " In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good." Every truly contrite spirit owns the fact of his total ruin. All wisdom's children justify God, and condemn themselves. There is not a single exception; and not only so, but every repentant sinner will, without any hesitation, own himself the chief. All who are really brought under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit will, without any reserve, set their seal—the seal of their whole moral being to the inspired statement, " there is no difference."

Any who hesitate to own this have yet to learn themselves, in the light of the holiness of God. The most refined, polished and cultivated person, if enlightened by the Spirit of God, will readily take his place with the thief on the cross, inasmuch as the divine light shining in upon him, reveals the hidden springs of his being, leads him to see the profound depths of his nature—the roots and sources of things. Thus while relatives, friends and acquaintances—mere onlookers, judging from the surface, may think very highly of his character, he himself, knowing better, because of divine light, can only exclaim, "O wretched man that I am "—" Behold I am vile "—" Woe is me, I am undone "—" I am a sinful man."

These are the proper utterances of a divinely convicted soul; and it is only when we can thus truly and heartily express ourselves that we are really prepared to appreciate the riches of the grace of God as unfolded in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Grace takes up real sinners. " The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost; " and the more fully I realize my lost estate—my hopeless ruin—my utter wretchedness, the more fully I can enter into the fullness and freeness of God's salvation—a salvation purchased by the blood of the cross.

Hence we see how brightly grace shines in the salvation of the thief on the cross. There can be no possible mistake as to him. Clearly he had no good works to trust in. He had performed no deeds of charity. Of baptism and the Lord's Supper he knew nothing. The rites, ceremonies and ordinances of religion had done—could do nothing for him. In a word, his case was a thoroughly hopeless one, so far as he was concerned. For what could he do! Whither could he turn! His hands and his feet were nailed fast to a malefactor's cross. It was useless to talk to him about doing or going. His hands, while he had the use of them, had been stretched forth in deeds of violence; and now they were nailed to the tree, and could do nothing. His feet, while he had the use of them, had trodden the terrible path of the transgressor; and now they were nailed to the tree, and could not carry him anywhere.

But, reader, note this. Although the poor thief had no longer the use of. his hands and his feet—so indispensable to a religion of works—his heart and his tongue were free; and these are the very things that are called into exercise in a religion of faith, as we read in that lovely tenth of Romans, " With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Precious words! How suited to the thief on the cross! How suited and seasonable for every poor helpless, hopeless, self-destroyed sinner! For we must all be saved in like manner as the thief on the cross. There are no two ways to heaven. There is not one way for the religionist, the moralist, the pharisee, and another way for the malefactor. There is but one way, and that way is marked from the very throne of God down to where the guilty sinner lies, dead in trespasses and sins, with the footprints of redeeming love; and from thence back to the throne by the precious atoning blood of Christ. This is the way to heaven—a way paved with love, sprinkled with blood, and trodden by a happy holy band of redeemed worshippers gathered from all the ends of the earth, to chant the heavenly anthem, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

We have said that the heart of the thief was free—yes, free under the mighty action of the Holy Ghost, to turn toward that blessed One who hung beside him—that One whom he had just been reviling, but on whom lie could now fix his repentant gaze, and to whom he could now bear the noblest testimony ever uttered by men or angels.

But it is most instructive and interesting to mark the progress of the work of God in the soul of the dying thief. Indeed the work of God in any soul is ever of the deepest possible interest. The operations of the Holy Spirit in us must never be separated from the work of Christ for us; and, we may add, both the one and the other are founded upon, and inseparably linked with the eternal counsels of God with respect to us. This is what makes it all so real, so solid, so entirely divine. It is not of man. It is all of God, from first to last—from the first dawning of conviction in the soul until it is introduced into the full orbed light of the glorious gospel of the grace of God. The Lord be praised that it is so! Were it otherwise—were there a single atom of the creature in it, from beginning to end, that one atom would neutralize and destroy the whole, and render it not worth having.

Now in the case of the penitent thief, we discern the first touch of the Eternal Spirit—the very earliest fruit of His sanctifying work, in the words addressed to his fellow, " Dost thou not fear God?" He does not say, " Dost thou not fear punishment?" The sanctification of the Spirit, in every case, is evidenced by the fear of the Lord, and a holy abhorrence of evil, for its own sake. " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." There may be a fear of judgment, a fear of hell, a fear of the consequences of sin, without the smallest particle of hatred of sin itself. But where the Spirit of God is really at work in the heart He produces the real sense of sin and the judgment thereof in the sight of God.

This is repentance; let the reader ponder it deeply. It is a grand reality; an essential element, in every case. " God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent." (Acts 17:30.) There is no getting over this—no setting it aside. Some may seek to do away with man's responsibility on the plea of his inability to do anything right or good. They may seek to persuade us that it is useless, yea unsound, to call upon men to repent and believe, seeing that men can do nothing of themselves. But the question is, what is the meaning of the words which we have just culled from the apostle's address at Athens? Did Paul preach the truth? Was he sound in the faith? Was he sufficiently high in doctrine? Well then Paul declares, in the clearest and most emphatic manner, that " God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent." Will any turn round and say they cannot? Will any venture to deny man's responsibility to obey a divine command? If so, where are they? On very dangerous ground. If God commands all men to repent, woe be to those who refuse to do so; and woe be to those who teach that they are not responsible to do so.

But let us devote a few moments to the examination of this great practical question in the light of the New Testament. Let us see whether our Lord and His apostles called upon men—" all men—everywhere, to repent."

In the third chapter of Matthew's gospel, we read, " In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

It will, perhaps, be said that John addressed himself specially to Israel—a people in recognized relationship with Jehovah—and hence this passage cannot be adduced in proof of the universal and abiding necessity of repentance. Well we merely quote it here in order to show that man, whether Jew or Gentile, is responsible to repent, and that the very first voice which falls upon the ear, in the time of the New Testament, is heard calling sinners to repentance. Was the Baptist right or wrong? Was he trespassing upon the domain of sound doctrine when he summoned men to repent? Would some of our modern theologians have called him aside, after he was done preaching, and taken him to task for deceiving men by leading them to suppose that they could repent? We should like to have heard the Baptist's reply.

But we have the example of a greater than John the Baptist, as our warrant for preaching repentance, for in Matt. 4 we read, " From that time, Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Dare any one turn round and say to the Divine Preacher, " We cannot repent. We have no power. We are not responsible!" Ah! no; men may argue and reason, and talk theology; but there stands the living record before us—Jesus called upon men to repent, and that, too, without entering, in any way, upon the question of man's ability here or there. He addressed man as a responsible being, as one who was imperatively called to judge himself and his ways, to confess his sins, and repent in dust and ashes. The only true place for a sinner is the place of repentance; and if he refuses to take that place, in the presence of divine grace, he will be compelled to take it in the presence of divine judgment, when repentance will be too late. " God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent."

Passing on to the opening of the Acts of the Apostles, we are privileged to hearken to Peter's great sermon on the day of Pentecost—the most fruitful sermon ever preached in this world—a sermon crowned with the glorious result of three thousand souls! And what did Peter preach? He preached Christ and he called upon men to repent. Yes, the great apostle of the circumcision insisted upon repentance—self-judgment—true contrition of heart before God. " Then said Peter unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.) And, again, " Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Chapter iii. 19.

Was Peter right in calling upon men to repent and be converted? Would any one be justified in saying to him, at the close of his preaching, " How can men repent How can they be converted? They can do nothing. They are not responsible." We should vastly like to hear Peter's reply. One thing is certain, the power of the Holy Ghost accompanied the preaching. He set His seal to it, and that is enough. " God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent." Woe to all who refuse.

We have already referred to the preaching of the blessed apostle of the Gentiles, and the great teacher of the church of God. He himself, referring to his ministry at Ephesus, declares in the audience of the elders, " I kept back nothing that was profitable, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:20, 21.) So also, in his marvelous address to Agrippa, he says, " I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

Thus we have a body of evidence, drawn from scripture, such as cannot be gainsayed, proving the universal and abiding necessity of repentance. " God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent." There is no avoiding this. Let men beware how they set it aside. No system of theology can be sound that denies the responsibility of the sinner to repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

We have digressed; but the digression was needful, and we hope, in our next issue, to return to our theme.

Handfuls of Pasture: Volume 1, Absent From the Body: Part 1

We are often, it may be, disposed to wonder at how little is said, in the New Testament, in reference to the state of the spirit, from the moment in which it leaves the body, until the morning of the resurrection. And yet, when we look more closely at it, we are struck with how much is said of it. True, there are but four passages which can properly be said to apply to that interesting interval; but oh! how much does any one of these four passages involve! If my reader will just turn with me, for a few moments, to the word, he will find this subject presented in its application to four distinct phases of the christian life. He will see the ransomed spirit passing into the presence of Christ from four distinct conditions. He will see one departing simply as a sinner saved by grace. He will see another making his exit as a martyr. He will hearken to the groanings of a burdened spirit desiring to be " absent from the body and present with the Lord." Finally, he will mark the earnest breathings of a laborer longing to be at rest forever in the Master's presence.

I. Our first reference shall be to Luke 23: "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Ver. 36-43.

It is not my purpose, at present, to dwell upon this lovely passage, or to unfold, in detail, its rich evangelic teaching. I merely quote it in order that my reader may have the testimony of holy scripture fully and clearly before him.

We here see the case of one who entered Paradise in the simple character of a sinner saved by grace. He was a condemned malefactor, in the morning—a railing blasphemer, in the course of the day—a ransomed spirit in heaven, ere the day closed. " Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." He had been led to cast himself on Christ, as a justly-condemned sinner, and he went to heaven with Christ as a blood-bought saint. He was not called to wear a martyr's crown. He was not permitted to bear any golden sheaves into the Master's garner. His was not a long and checkered christian course. But he was a sinner saved by grace. And, what is more, he was enabled by grace to bear testimony to the sinless humanity of our blessed Lord, at a moment when the great religious leaders of the people had given Him up to the secular power as a malefactor. And further, he was led to own Him as Lord, and speak of His coming kingdom, at a moment when, to mortal vision, not a trace of lordship or royalty was discernible. These were good works. To confess Christ, and flatly contradict a Christ-rejecting world, are works of the very first order—works that shed forth the sweetest perfume, and shine with the brightest luster. One of our own poets has beautifully and strikingly said, "Talk they of morals? thou bleeding Lamb, The great morality is love to thee."

The dying thief exhibited this "great morality." He owned Christ when a hostile world had cast Him out, and when terror-stricken disciples had forsaken Him. " Lord, remember me," said he. "when thou comest into thy kingdom." Sweet were these words, as they fell upon the heart of the dying Savior; and sweeter still the response which fell upon the heart of the dying thief, " Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." This went far beyond the thief's expectations. The gracious Savior was about to do " exceeding abundantly, above all that" the thief " could ask or think." The thief asked to be remembered in the time of the kingdom. The Savior said, " I shall have you with me today" And, hence, when the Roman soldiers, in the discharge of their brutal functions, came to break the legs of this dying saint, he could smile and say, " Ah! these men are just coming to send me straight to heaven!"

Yes, my reader, the thief went to heaven to be with that very One who had hung beside him on the cursed tree, and spoken words of soothing power to his stricken heart. There was nothing dark, vague, or uncertain about this. The thief had never met such a friend as Jesus. No one had ever loved him like Jesus, or comforted his heart like Jesus. The grace of Jesus had poured a flood of heavenly light around that awful cross to which the thief was nailed for his crimes, and now he was going to heaven to be with that gracious One forever. This was a blessed reality. Heaven would be no strange place to him, seeing that Jesus was there.

" There no stranger-God shall meet thee—Stranger thou in courts above; He who to His rest shall greet thee, Greets thee with a well-known love."

It is happy to think of this. Heaven is much nearer, much more familiar, than we, at times, suppose. Moreover, it is the very home of that love which sheds its bright and blessed beams upon this dreary scene through which we are passing. To be with Jesus secures everything. To be in the company of the "one who loved me and gave himself for me " will make me feel quite at home in heaven. "We need not ask where is heaven? What kind of a place is it? What are its occupations? " With Jesus, "answers all these, and many more such like questions. Where the tender affections of a Father's heart flow forth in divine purity and never-varying strength—where the love of a Bridegroom glows with unabating intensity—where the fellowship of a Brother's heart, and the sympathy of a Friend are tasted in all their divine freshness and power, there is heaven, thither went the thief from his cross. " Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.'" Well may we say, " What must it be to be there?" True, the thief left his poor body behind him, until the bright morning of the resurrection, when it will be raised in incorruption, immortality, glory, and power. True it is that he, in company with all those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, waits for that happy moment. Yet it is equally true that Christ said unto him, " Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." What a thought! To pass from the cross—the ignominious cross of a malefactor, into the paradise of God—from a scene of blasphemy, mockery, and cruelty, into the presence of Jesus. Such was the happy lot of the dying thief, not for any merit of his own, but simply through the precious sacrifice of Christ, who " entered in once into the holy place, by his own blood," and took the thief along with Him.

II. I shall now quote for my reader, the second passage in the New Testament, which bears upon our subject. It occurs in the Acts of the Apostles. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Chap. vii. 59, 60.

Here we have the case of a martyr—the very first of that "noble army" who have yielded up their lives for the name of Jesus. Stephen was not merely a sinner saved by grace, but also a sufferer for the cause of Christ—a sufferer even unto death. He passed from amid the stones of his murderers into the presence of his Lord, who had so recently gone before, and now stood ready to receive the spirit of His martyred servant. What an exchange! What a contrast! And be it observed that Stephen was favored with a very vivid view of the scene into which he was about to enter. " He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Wondrous sight! Heaven would be no strange place to Stephen. "The Son of man" was there, so that he should feel quite at home there. He did not, like the thief, see Jesus hanging beside him; but he saw Him up in heaven before him. He did not, like the thief, see Him dying; but he saw Him risen and glorified—crowned with glory and honor, at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

Thus, then, if the thief could think of heaven as the home of that blessed One who was nailed to the cross, Stephen could look at it as the home of that One who had gone before him into glory. It was the same heaven and the same Jesus to both the one and the other. It was no vague or far off region to either. It was the happy home of the crucified and glorified Jesus. The dying malefactor might look at it from one point of view, and the dying martyr might look at it from another; but it was the same attractive, happy home to both. True it is that the martyr as well as the malefactor had to leave his poor body behind him, to sleep in the dust until the morning of the resurrection. True it is that he, too, waits for that long-expected, blissful moment. Still his spirit has been with Jesus ever since. Yes; the malefactor and the martyr have both been up yonder with their Lord, for the last eighteen hundred years. What a happy eighteen hundred years it has been to them! Not a cloud, not a ripple, not a single interruption to their communion. Their condition is one of expectancy; but it is also one of perfect repose. No conflict, no sin, no sorrow, no change. All these things are over forever with them; so that, although they are not " more secure," they are far "more happy," than we. There is something peculiarly attractive in the thought of the unbroken repose which the spirit enjoys in the presence of the crucified and glorified Jesus. To be done with a world of sin, selfishness, and sorrow—done with the ceaseless tossings and heavings of a corrupt nature—done with the ten thousand snares and devices of a subtle foe, to be forever at rest in the bosom of Jesus! What deep unutterable blessedness! Well may the spirit long to taste it.

(To be continued.)

The Lord's Supper, Circumstances of the Institution of the Lord’s Supper, The

Having now treated of what I conceive to be by far the most important point in our subject, I shall proceed to consider, in the second place, the circumstances under which the Lord’s Supper was instituted. These were particularly solemn and touching. The Lord was about to enter into dreadful conflict with all the powers of darkness—to meet all the deadly enmity of man and to drain to the dregs the cup of Jehovah’s righteous wrath against sin. He had a terrible morrow before Him — the most terrible that had ever been encountered by man or angel, yet, notwithstanding all this, we read that on “the same night in which He was betrayed, [He] took bread.” What unselfish love is here! “The same night”— the night of profound sorrow — the night of His agony and bloody sweat — the night of His betrayal by one, His denial by another, and His desertion by all of His disciples — on that very night, the loving heart of Jesus was full of thoughts about His church — on that very

night He instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. He appointed the bread to be the emblem of His body broken and the wine to be the emblem of His blood shed, and such they are to us now, as often as we partake of them, for the Word assures us that "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

Now all this, we may say, attaches peculiar importance and sacred solemnity to the Supper of the Lord, and, moreover, gives us some idea of the consequences of eating and drinking unworthily.1 The voice which the ordinance utters in the circumcised ear is always the same. The bread and the wine are deeply significant symbols, the bruised corn and the pressed grape being both combined to minister strength and gladness to the heart. And not only are they significant in themselves, but they are also to be used in the Lord's Supper as being the very emblems which the blessed Master Himself ordained on the night previous to His crucifixion, so that faith can behold the Lord Jesus presiding at His own table — can see Him take the bread and the wine and can hear Him say, "Take, eat; this is My body," and again, of the cup, "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." In a word, the ordinance leads the soul back to the eventful night already referred to — brings before us all the reality of the cross and passion of the Lamb of God, in which our whole souls can rest and rejoice; it reminds us, in the most impressive manner, of the unselfish love and pure devotedness of Him who, when Calvary was casting its dark shadow across His path and the cup of Jehovah's righteous wrath against sin, of which He was about to be the bearer, was being filled for Him, could, nevertheless, busy Himself about us and institute a feast which was to be the expression of our connection both with Him and with all the members of His body.

And may we not infer that the Holy Spirit made use of the expression "the same night" for the purpose of remedying the disorders that had arisen in the church at Corinth? Was there not a severe rebuke administered to the selfishness of those who were taking "their own supper," in the Spirit's reference to the same night in which the Lord of the feast was betrayed? Doubtless there was. Can selfishness live in the view of the cross? Can thoughts about our own interests or our own gratification be indulged in the presence of Him who sacrificed Himself for us? Surely not. Could we heartlessly and willfully despise the church of God — could we offend or exclude beloved members of the flock of Christ, while gazing on that cross on which the Shepherd of the flock and the Head of the body was crucified?2 No. Let believers only keep near the cross — let them remember "the same night" — let them keep in mind the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there will soon be an end to heresy, schism and selfishness. If we could only bear in mind that the Lord Himself presides at the table to dispense the bread and wine — if we could hear Him say, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves" — we should be better able to meet all our brethren on the only Christian ground of fellowship which God can own. In a word, the person of Christ is God's center of union. "I," said Christ, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Each believer can hear his blessed Master speaking from the cross and saying of his fellow-believers, Behold thy brethren, and, truly, if we could distinctly hear this, we should act, in a measure, as the beloved disciple acted towards the mother of Jesus: Our hearts and our homes would be open to all who have been thus commended to our care. The word is, "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

There is another point worthy of notice in connection with the circumstances under which the Lord's Supper was instituted, namely, its connection with the Jewish Passover. "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. . . . And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup [that is, the cup of the Passover], and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come" (Luke 22:7-18). The Passover was, as we know, the great feast of Israel, first observed on the memorable night of their happy deliverance from the thralldom of Egypt. As to its connection with the Lord's Supper, it consists in its being the marked type of that of which the Supper is the memorial. The Passover pointed forward to the cross; the Supper points back to it. But Israel was no longer in a fit moral condition to keep the Passover, according to the divine thoughts about it, and the Lord Jesus, on the occasion above referred to, was leading His apostles away altogether from the Jewish element to a new order of things. It was no longer to be a lamb sacrificed, but bread broken and wine drunk in commemoration of a sacrifice once offered, the efficacy of which was to be eternal. Those whose minds are bowed down to Jewish ordinances may still look, in some way or another, for the periodical repetition either of a sacrifice or of something which is to bring them into a place of greater nearness to God.3

There are some who think that in the Lord's Supper the soul makes, or renews, a covenant with God, not knowing that if we were to enter into covenant with God, we should inevitably be ruined, as the only possible issue of a covenant between God and man is the failure of one of the parties (that is, man) and consequent judgment. Thank God, there is no such thing as a covenant with us. The bread and wine, in the Supper, speak a deep and wondrous truth; they tell of the broken body and shed blood of the Lamb of God — the Lamb of God's own providing. Here the soul can rest with perfect complacency; it is the new testament in the blood of Christ and not a covenant between God and man. Man's covenant had signally failed, and the Lord Jesus had to allow the cup of the fruit of the vine (the emblem of joy in the earth) to pass Him by. Earth had no joy for Him — Israel had become "the degenerate plant of a strange vine"; wherefore, He had only to say, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." A long and dreary season was to pass over Israel, ere her King could take any joy in her moral condition. But during that time, "the church of God" was to "keep the feast" of unleavened bread, in all its moral power and significance, by putting away the "old leaven of malice and wickedness," as the fruit of fellowship with Him whose blood cleanses from all sin.

However, the fact of the Lord's Supper having been instituted immediately after the Passover teaches us a very valuable principle of truth: The destinies of the church and of Israel are inseparably linked with the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. True, the church has a higher place, even identification with her risen and glorified Head, yet all rests upon the cross. Yes, it was on the cross that the pure sheaf of corn was bruised and the juices of the living vine pressed forth by the hand of Jehovah Himself to yield strength and gladness to the hearts of His heavenly and earthly people forever. The Prince of Life took from Jehovah's righteous hand the cup of wrath, the cup of trembling, and drained it to the dregs in order that He might put into the hands of His people the cup of salvation, the cup of God's ineffable love, that they might drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more. The Lord's Supper expresses all this. There the Lord presides. There the redeemed should meet in holy fellowship and brotherly love, to eat and drink before the Lord. And while they do so, they can look back at their Master's night of deep sorrow and forward to His day of glory — that "morning without clouds," when "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

Prayer and the Prayer Meeting, Prayer and the Prayer Meeting: Part 4

The more deeply we ponder the subject which has been for some time engaging our attention, and the more we consider the state of the entire church of God, the more convinced we are of the urgent need of a thorough awakening everywhere in reference to the question of prayer. We cannot—nor do we desire to—shut our eyes to the fact, that deadness, coldness, and barrenness seem, as a rule, to characterize our prayer-meetings. No doubt we may find here and there a pleasing exception, but, speaking generally, we do not believe that any sober spiritual person will call in question the truth of what we state, namely, that the tone of our prayer-meetings is fearfully low, and that it is absolutely imperative upon us to inquire seriously as to the cause.

In the papers already put forth on this great, all-important, and deeply practical subject, we have ventured to offer to our readers a few hints and suggestions. We have briefly glanced at our lack of confidence; our failure in cordial unanimity; the absence of definite-ness and importunity. We have referred, in plain terms—and we must speak plainly if we are to speak at all—to many things which are felt by all the truly spiritual amongst us to be not only trying and painful, but thoroughly subversive of the real power and blessing of our reunions for prayer. We have spoken of the long, tiresome, desultory, preaching prayers which, in some cases, have become so perfectly intolerable, that the Lord's dear people are seared away from the prayer-meetings altogether. They feel that they are only wearied, grieved, and irritated, instead of being refreshed, comforted, and strengthened; and hence they deem it better to stay away. They judge it to be more profitable, if they have an hour to spare, to spend it in the privacy of their closet, where they can pour out their hearts to God in earnest prayer and supplication, than to attend a so-called prayer-meeting, where they are absolutely wearied out with incessant, powerless hymn-singing, or long preaching prayers.

Now, we more than question the rightness of such a course. We seriously doubt if this be at all the way to remedy the evils of which we complain. Indeed, we are thoroughly persuaded it is not. If it be right to come together for prayer and supplication—and who will question the rightness?—then surely it is not right for any one to stay away merely because of the feebleness, failure, or even the folly of some who may take part in the meeting. If all the really spiritual members were to stay away on such a ground, what would become of the prayer-meeting? We have very little idea of how much is involved in the elements which compose a meeting. Even though we may not take part audibly in the action, yet, if we are there in a right spirit, there really to wait upon God, we marvelously help the tone of a meeting.

Besides, we must remember that we have something more to do in attending a meeting than to think of our own comfort, profit, and blessing. We must think of the Lord's glory. We must seek to do His blessed will, and try to promote the good of others in every possible way; and neither of these ends, we may rest assured, can be attained by our deliberately absenting ourselves from the place where prayer is wont to be made.

We repeat, and with emphasis, the words, " deliberately absenting ourselves"—staying away because we are not profited by what takes place there. Many things may crop up to hinder our being present—ill-health, domestic duties, lawful claims upon our time, if we are in the employment of others. All these things have to be taken into account; but we may set it down as a fixed principle, that the one who can designedly absent himself from the prayer-meeting is in a bad state of soul. The healthy, happy, earnest, diligent soul will be sure to be found at the prayer-meeting.

But all this conducts us, naturally and simply, to another of those moral conditions at which we have been glancing in this series of papers. Let us turn for a moment to the opening lines of Luke 18 " And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint: saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Verse 1-8.

Here, then, we have pressed upon our attention the important moral condition of perseverance. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." This is intimately connected with the definiteness and importunity to which we have already referred. We want a certain thing; we cannot do without it. We importunately, unitedly, believingly, and perseveringly, wait on our God until He graciously send an answer, as He most assuredly will, if the moral basis and the moral conditions be duly maintained.

But we must persevere. We must not faint, and give up, though the answer does not come as speedily as we might expect. It may please God to exercise our souls by keeping us waiting on Him, for days, months, or perhaps years. The exercise is good. It is morally healthful. It tends to make us real. It brings us down to the roots of things. Look, for example, at Daniel. He was kept for "three full weeks" waiting on God, in profound exercise of soul. "In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three full weeks were fulfilled."

All this was good for Daniel. There was deep blessing in the spiritual exercises through which this beloved and honored servant of God was called to pass during those three weeks. And what is specially worthy of note is, that the answer to Daniel's cry had been dispatched from the throne of God at the very beginning of his exercise, as we read at verse 12: " Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard and I am come for thy words. But"—how marvelous and mysterious is this!—"the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one-and-twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days."

All this is full of interest. Here was the beloved servant of God mourning, chastening himself, and waiting upon God. The angelic messenger was on his way with the answer. The enemy was permitted to hinder; but Daniel continued to wait. He prayed, and fainted not; and in due time the answer came.

Is there no lesson here for us? Most assuredly there is. We, too, may have to wait long in the holy attitude of expectancy, and in the spirit of prayer; but we shall find the time of waiting most profitable for our souls. Very often our God, in His wise and faithful dealing with us, sees fit to withhold the answer, simply to prove us as to the reality of our prayers. The grand point for us is to have an object laid upon our hearts by

the Holy Ghost—an object, as to which we can lay the finger of faith upon some distinct promise in the word, and to persevere in prayer until we get what we want. " Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all, perseverance and supplication for all saints." Eph. 6:18.

All this demands our serious consideration. We are as sadly deficient in perseverance as we are in definite-ness and importunity. Hence the feebleness of our prayers, and the coldness of our prayer-meetings. We do not come together with a definite object, and hence we are not importunate, and we do not persevere. In short, our prayer-meetings are often nothing but a dull routine, a cold mechanical service, something to be gone through, a wearisome alternation of hymn and prayer, hymn and prayer, causing the spirit to groan beneath the heavy burden of mere profitless bodily exercise.

We speak plainly and strongly. We speak as we feel. We must be permitted to speak without reserve. We call upon the whole church of God, far and wide, to look this great question straight in the face—to look to God about it—to judge themselves about it. Do we not feel the lack of power in all our public reunions? Why those barren seasons at the Lord's table? Why the dullness and feebleness in the celebration of that precious feast which ought to stir the very deepest depths of our renewed being? Why the lack of unction, power, and edification in our public readings—the foolish speculations and the silly questions which have been advanced and answered for the last forty years? Why those varied evils on which we have been dwelling, and which are being mourned over almost everywhere by the truly spiritual? Why the barrenness of our gospel services? Why are souls not smitten down under the word? Why is there so little gathering power?

Brethren, beloved in the Lord, let us rouse ourselves to the solemn consideration of these weighty matters. Let us not be satisfied to go on with the present condition of things. We call upon all those who admit the truth of what we have been putting forth in these pages, on " Prayer and the Prayer-meeting," to unite in cordial, earnest, united prayer and supplication. Let us seek to get together according to God; to come as one man and prostrate ourselves before the mercy-seat, and perseveringly wait upon our God for the revival of His work, the progress of His gospel, the ingathering and upbuilding of His beloved people. Let our prayer-meetings be really prayer-meetings, and not occasions for giving out our favorite hymns, and starting our fancy tunes. The prayer-meeting ought to be the place of expressed need and expected blessing—the place of expressed weakness and expected power—the place where God's people assemble with one accord, to take hold of the very throne of God, to get into the very treasury of heaven, and draw thence all we want for ourselves, for our households, for the whole church of God, and for the vineyard of Christ.

Such is the true idea of a prayer-meeting, if we are to be taught by scripture. May it be more fully realized amongst the Lord's people everywhere! May the Holy Spirit stir us all up, and press upon our souls the value, importance, and urgent necessity of unanimity, confidence, definiteness, importunity, and perseverance, in all our prayers and prayer-meetings!

Yes, there's a power which man can wield,

When mortal aid is vain;

That eye, that arm, that love to reach,

That list'ning ear to gain.

That power is prayer, which soars on high,

Through Jesus to the throne,

And moves the hand which moves the world

To bring deliverance down.

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Christian Truth: Volume 12, Lord Our Shepherd, The

It is ever soothing to the spirit to ponder the character of the Lord Jesus as our Shepherd, in whatever aspect of that character we view Him; whether as "the good shepherd," laying down His life for the sheep; "that great shepherd," coming up out of the grave having, in the greatness of His strength, deprived death of its sting, and the grave of its victory; or, as "the chief Shepherd," when surrounded by all His subordinate shepherds, who from love to His adorable Person and, through the grace of His spirit, have watched over and cared for the flock, He shall wreathe the brow of each with a diadem of glory. In any or all of these stages of our divine Shepherd's history, it is happy and edifying to consider Him.

Indeed, there is something in our Lord's character as Shepherd, which is peculiarly adapted to our present condition. Through grace we have been constituted "the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand" (Psalm 95:7); and, as such, it is a shepherd we specially need. As sinners, ruined and guilty, we need Him as the "Lamb of God"; His atoning blood meets us at that point in our history, and satisfies our utmost need. As worshipers, we need Him as our "great high priest," whose robes, the varied expression of His attributes and qualifications, most blessedly prove to our souls how effectually He fills that office. As sheep, exposed to countless dangers in our passage through this dark wilderness in this gloomy dark day, we truly stand in need of the voice of our Shepherd, whose rod and staff give security and stability to our footsteps as we journey on toward home.

Now, in these verses of Luke 15, we find the Shepherd presented to us in a deeply interesting stage of His gracious work; He is here seen in search of the sheep. The parable derives peculiar force from the fact that it was put forth, together with the lost piece of silver and the lost son, as an argument in favor of God's gracious actings toward sinners.

God, in the Person of the Lord Jesus, had come so very near to the sinner, that legalism and Pharisaism, as represented by the scribes and Pharisees, took offense at it. "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Here was the offense of which divine grace stood charged at the bar of man's legal, proud, self-righteous heart. But it was the very glory of God—God manifest in the flesh—God come down to earth thus to receive sinners. It was for that He came down into a ruined world. He left not the throne above to come down here to search for righteous people; for why should He search for them? Who would think of going to look for anything but that which was lost? Surely the very presence of Christ in the world proved that He had come in search of something and, moreover, that that something must have been lost.

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10. The soul should greatly rejoice in the fact that it was as a lost thing that it drew forth the grace and pity of the Shepherd's heart. We may inquire what it was that could have drawn the heart of Jesus toward such as we are; yes, we may inquire, but eternity alone will unfold to us the answer to the inquiry. We might ask the shepherd in this parable why he thought more about the one solitary lost sheep than he did about the ninety and nine which were not lost. What would have been his answer?—The lost one is my object, it is valuable to me, and I must find it.

Jesus alone could see, in a helpless sinner, an object for which He thought it worth stooping from His Father's bright throne to save.

Answers to Correspondents: From Things New and Old 1858-1863, 42. Leaven

“N. L. S.” In Luke 13:20-21, and in the parallel passage in Matthew 13, our Lord is speaking of the evil which the enemy should introduce into the kingdom. Hence it is He compares it to leaven. So also in the parable of the tares. In the former, we have evil doctrine; in the latter, evil persons.

Short Papers, He From Within

(Luke 11:7.)

The word of God judges, with perfect accuracy, the human heart, and discloses all its most secret springs of thought and action. Indeed, this is one special way in which we may know that it is the word of God. The poor Samaritan woman could say, “ Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” She judged that a man that could lay bare before her the deep secrets of her heart and of her life, must needs be the long expected Messiah; and she judged rightly. In like manner, we may say, “ Come, see a book that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the word of God?” No one can read the heart but God. No book can disclose the human heart but God’s book; wherefore, inasmuch as the Bible doth perfectly disclose the human heart, we may know, even had we no other mode of judging, that the Bible is the word of God.

Such an argument may be utterly contemned by an infidel, a skeptic, or a rationalist, who must, therefore, be met on other grounds; but it is impossible for any upright mind to ponder the simple fact that the Bible perfectly unfolds man’s very nature, his thoughts, his feelings, his desires, his affections, his imaginations, the most secret chambers of his moral being, and not be convinced that the Bible is nothing less than the very word of God, which is “ quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Heb. 4:12.

Nor is it, merely, in the word of God, as a whole, that we observe this intense power of “ discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart,” but also in detached passages, in brief sentences, in a verse or clause of a verse. Look, for instance, at the three words which appear at the head of this article. What a revelation of the selfishness of the human heart do these words contain! What an expression of the narrow enclosure within which it retires! What a brief, pointed, pithy commentary upon man’s reluctance to be intruded upon, when he has made arrangements for his personal ease! Who can read them, and not see in them a perfect mirror in which the very pulsations of his own heart are reflected? We do not like to be intruded upon, when we have retired, from the scene around us, into the narrow circle of our personal or domestic enjoyment. When we have drawn the curtains, made ready the fire, opened the desk or the book, we do not like to have to respond to a call from without It is at such times, we can enter into the words, “He from within” They really contain a volume of profound moral truth. They graphically and vividly set forth an attitude of heart in which we are all far too frequently to be found. We are all too ready, when a call comes, to send forth our answer “ from within.” We are too prone to say, “Dear me! this is a most untoward moment for that person to call, just when I am so particularly engaged.” All this is precisely the attitude of heart set forth in the words-the selfish words, “He from within.”

And, let us inquire, what answer is sure to be returned from the one who speaks “from within?” Just what might be expected. “ Trouble me not.” The man who has retired into the narrow circle of his own personal ease and enjoyment, closed his door, and drawn his curtains around him, does not like to be “ troubled” by any one. Such an one is sure to say, even though appealed to as a “ friend,” “I cannot rise.” And why could he not “ rise?” Because “ the door was shut, and his children were with him in bed.” In a word, his reasons for not rising were all selfish, and when he did rise, it was only from a selfish desire to avoid further trouble. “Importunity” prevailed over a selfishness which was proof against the appeals of friendship.

How unlike all this was the blessed Lord Jesus Christ! His door was never shut. He never answered “from within.” He ever had a ready response to every needy applicant. He had not time to eat bread, or take rest, so occupied was He with human need. He could say, “ I forget to eat my meat,” so entirely was He given up to the service of others. He never murmured on account of the ceaseless intrusion of needy humanity. He kept no record of all he had to do, nor did he ever complain of it. “ He went about doing good.” “ His meat and his drink were to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work.” To Him the poor and the needy, the heavy-laden and the heart-broken, the outcast and the wretched, the homeless and the stranger, the widow and the orphan, the diseased and the desolate, might all flock, in the full assurance of finding in Him a fountain ever flowing over, and sending forth, in all directions, the copious streams of living sympathy, toward every possible form of human need. The door of His heart was always wide open.. He never said to any son of want, or child of sorrow, “ I cannot rise and give thee.” He was ready to “ arise and go” with every needy applicant, and His gracious word ever was, “Give.”

Such was Jesus when down here; and He is still “the very same, whose glory fills all heaven above” His door stands open, so that the vilest, the guiltiest, and the neediest of sinners are welcome. They can have their crimson and scarlet sins washed away in His atoning blood. They can have pardon and peace, life and righteousness, heaven and its eternal weight of glory, all as the free gift of grace divine; and, while on their way from grace to glory, they can have all the love of His heart and the strength of His shoulder-that heart which told forth its deathless affection on the cross, and that shoulder which shall bear up the pillars of divine government forever.

And, now, Christian reader, suffer the word of exhortation. Remember that Christ is your life, and that Christianity is nothing less than the living exhibition of Christ in your daily walk. Christianity is not a set of opinions to be defended, or a set of ordinances to be observed. It is far more than these. It expresses itself thus, “ To me to live is Christ.” This is Christianity. May we know and manifest its power! May we be more occupied with Him who is our life! Then we too shall keep the door of the heart open to the sorrows, the miseries, the wants, and the woes of fallen and suffering humanity. We shall be ready to “ rise and give” to every case of real need. If we cannot give “three loaves” or the price of them, we shall, at least, give the look of love, the word of kindness, the tear of sympathy, the accents of fervent intercession; and, in no case, shall we suffer ourselves to get into the attitude of intense selfishness expressed in the words, “ He from within.’’ “ For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he be came poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

Short Papers, Law and the Gospel, The

Read Luke 10:25-35.

We now desire to dwell for a little upon two grand questions which are suggested and answered in our Lord’s interview with the lawyer, namely, What is written in the law? What is revealed in the gospel? These questions have only to be named to secure the attention and awaken the interest of every intelligent and thoughtful reader. It is surely most needful to understand the object, the nature, and range of the law, and in no way can these things be so clearly seen as when examined in contrast with the glorious gospel of God’s free grace in Christ. Let us, then, in the first place, proceed to inquire,

WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW?

This question may be very simply answered. The law reveals what man ought to do. This is what is written in the law. We often hear it said that “The law is the transcript of the mind of God.” This definition is altogether defective. What idea should we have of God, were we to regard “the ten words” uttered on the top of Mount Sinai, amid thunderings and lightnings, blackness, darkness and tempest, as the transcript of His mind? How should we know God, if it be true that “the ministration of death and condemnation, written and engraven in stones,” is the transcript of His mind? May we not, with great justice, inquire of the framers of the above most objectionable definition, “Is there nothing in the mind of God, save death and condemnation? Is there nothing in the mind of God, save “thou shalt,” and “thou shalt not”? “If there he more than these, then it is a mistake to affirm that “The law is the transcript of the mind of God.” If it be said that “The law declares the mind of God as to what man ought to do,” we have no objection to offer, for that is what we hold the law to be. But, then, let the reader remember that the declaration of what man ought to do, and the revelation of what God is, are two totally different things. The former is the law; the latter is the gospel. Both, we need hardly say, are perfect—divinely perfect, but they stand in vivid contrast; the one is perfect to condemn, the other is perfect to save.

But let us see how this point is unfolded in the scripture before us. “And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, what is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.”

Now, it in no wise interferes with the teaching of this passage to say that the lawyer stood up with the wicked intention of tempting Christ, or that he could flippantly and unfeelingly repeat what was written in the law. What we have to see is this, that the great law-question, “What must I do?” is here proposed and answered. If a man is to get life by keeping the commandments, he must keep them. There is no mystery about this. It is so plain that the question is, “How readest thou?” A man has only to read the twentieth chapter of Exodus in order to know his duty toward God and his duty toward his neighbor.

But, then, dear reader, the solemn inquiry is, “Have I done my duty? have I loved God with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself”? Alas! alas! I have not; far—very far from it. I have proved, times without number, that I loved many things which are quite contrary to God; that I have indulged in lusts and pleasures which God condemns; that my will is most thoroughly opposed to God’s will; that I hate the things which He loves, and love the things which He hates. In a word, then, it is perfectly manifest that I have not loved God with all my heart, yea, that I have not given Him a single affection of my heart. And as to my neighbor, have I loved him as myself? Have I, at all times, and under all circumstances, as sedulously sought to promote my neighbor’s interests as though they were my own? Have I rejoiced as unfeignedly in his prosperity as in my own? I dare not answer in the affirmative. I have only to bow my head and confess that I have utterly and shamefully failed in my bounden duty, both toward God and toward my neighbor I own it, most fully, to be my duty to love God, with all my heart! and my neighbor as myself; but I own, as fully, that I have done neither the one nor the other.

What, then, can the law do for me? Curse me and slay me, on the spot. Is there no mercy? Not in the law. There is no mercy at Mount Sinai. If a man stands before that fiery mount, the tremendous alternative is duty or damnation. There is no middle ground. “This do, and thou shalt live” is the solemn, conclusive, and emphatic language of the law. “The man that doeth these things shall live in them,” but, on the other hand, “cursed is every one (without a single exception), that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. 3:10). “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses” (Heb. 10:28). The law makes no provision for imperfect obedience how ever sincere. It makes no allowance for infirmity. Its one brief, pointed inquiry is, “Have you continued in the things?” If you say no; (and who can say otherwise?) it can only curse you. And why? Because it is perfect. Were it to pass over a single transgression, it would not be what it is, namely, a perfect law. Its very perfection insures the condemnation of the transgressor. As many as are of works of law, (that is, as many as work on the principle, stand on the ground, occupy the platform, of works of law) are under the curse,” and cannot possibly be anything else. This establishes the point unanswerably. The law can only prove to be a ministration of death

and condemnation to the sinner simply because he is a sinner, and “the law is holy, and just, and good.” It is no use for a man to say, “I am not looking to the law for life or justification, but merely as a rule, and for sanctification.” As a rule for what? For the sanctification of what? If you say, “for my old nature,” the answer is, so far from being “a rule of life,” it is “a ministration of death,” and so far from sanctifying the flesh, it condemns it, root and branch. If, on the other hand, you say it is for the new nature, then is your mistake equally obvious, inasmuch as the apostle expressly declares that “the law is not made for a righteous man” (1 Tim. 1:9).

This is plain enough for any one who is content to take the holy scriptures as his guide. The law can neither be the ground of life nor the rule of life to a fallen creature; neither can it be the ground of righteousness nor the power of sanctification. “By deeds of law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20). This one passage is conclusive both as to justification and sanctification. No flesh can be justified in God’s sight by the law; and as to sanctification, how can I ever become holy by means of that which only shows me my unholiness? If I measure a short web by a true measure I must prove it short. A true measure cannot make a short web the proper length, it can only show what it is. Just so with the law and the sinner. Again, “The law worketh wrath” (Rom. 4:15). How is this? Just because it is pure and I am impure. The law and the sinner are perfect opposites — wholly irreconcilable. I must get a new nature, stand upon new ground, be in the new creation, before I can delight in the law of God. “I delight in the law of God, after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22). But how do I get this “inward man,” this new nature? How do I get into the new creation? Not by works of law of any shape or description, but by faith of Jesus Christ. I become united to Christ in the power of a new and endless life, upon which the law has no claim. I died in Christ, and hence the law has no further demand on me. If a man is in prison for murder, and dies there, the law is done with him, inasmuch as the life in which the crime was committed is gone. Thus it is with the sinner who believes in Jesus. God sees him to be dead. His old man is crucified. The sentence of the law has been put into execution upon him in the Person of Christ. Had it been executed upon himself, it would have been death eternal; but having been executed upon Christ, His death is of infinite, divine, and eternal efficacy; and, moreover, having the power of eternal life in Himself, He rose, as a Conqueror, from the tomb, after having met every claim, and — wonderful to declare I the believer, having died in Him, now lives in Him forever. Christ is his life; Christ is his righteousness; Christ is his rule of life; Christ is his model; Christ is his hope; Christ is his all and in all. See carefully Romans 6 and 7; Galatians 2:20-21; Galatians 3-4; Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 2:10-15.

But we must not anticipate what properly belongs to the second grand division of our subject, to which we shall pass on, having first sought to meet a difficulty which may perhaps exercise our reader’s mind. It is possible that some may feel disposed to inquire, “If the law cannot yield life, furnish righteousness, or promote sanctification, then for what end was it given?” The apostle anticipates and answers this question. “Wherefore then the law? it was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal. 3:19). So also, in Romans, we read, “Moreover, the law entered (or came in by the way, between the promise and the accomplishment) that the offense might abound” (Gal. 5:20). These two passages declare in simplest terms the object of the law. It is not said, “the law entered in order that we might get life, righteousness, or sanctification by it”; quite the opposite, it was “because of transgression,” and “that the offense might abound.” Where is it said in scripture that the law was given that we might get life, righteousness, or sanctification by it? Nowhere. But it is expressly declared that, “the law was added because of transgression,” and that “it came in by the way that the offense might abound.” It is not possible to conceive two objects more diverse. The legal system speaks of life, righteousness, and sanctification by law; the scripture, on the contrary, speaks of “offense,” “transgression,” and “wrath.” And why? Because we are sinners, and the law is holy. It demands strength, and we are weak; it demands life in order to keep it, and we are dead; it demands perfection in all things, and we are perfect in nothing; it is holy, and just, and good, and we are unholy, unjust, and bad. Thus it stands between us and the law; and it matters not in the least, as regards the principle of the law, whether we are regenerate or unregenerate, believers or unbelievers, saints or sinners. The law knows nothing of any such distinctions. It is addressed to man in the flesh, in his old-Adam condition, in his old-creation standing. It tells him what he ought to do for God, and, inasmuch as he has not done that, it curses him, and it cannot do anything else. It shows him no mercy! but leaves him in the place of death and condemnation.

Thus much as to “what is written in the law.” Let us now proceed to inquire, in the second place,

WHAT IS REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL?

This is unfolded with uncommon beauty and power, in the touching parable of “the good Samaritan.” The lawyer, like all legalists, “willing to justify himself,” sought to ascertain who was his neighbor; and, in reply, our blessed Lord draws a picture in which is most vividly presented the true condition of every sinner, be he lawyer or else. “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead” What a picture of man’s career and man’s condition! “A certain man” — the writer or the reader of these lines, “went down.” How true! Reader, is it not so? Has not thy course ever been a downward one? Hast thou ever, when left to thyself, taken a step upward — a step in the right direction? There is no use in generalizing, in making statements about mankind, the whole human race, Adam’s posterity, and the like. What we want is to bring the matter home to ourselves, and say, each for himself, “I am the ‘certain man’ of this singularly beautiful parable; it is my own very figure that appears in the foreground of this masterly picture; my course has been a downward one; I have gone down from the innocency of childhood, to the folly of youth, and from the folly of youth to the matured wickedness of manhood, and here I am, ‘stripped’ of every shred in which I might wrap myself; ‘wounded’ in every region of my moral being; and having the painful consciousness that death has already begun its terrible work in me.”

Such is the career, such the condition of every sinner —his career, downward — his condition, death. What is to be done? Can he keep the law? Alas! he is not able to move. Can the “priest” do aught for him? Alas! he has no sacrifice, and no ability to rise and get one. Can the “Levite” not help him? Alas! he is so polluted with his wounds and bruises that neither Levite nor priest could touch him. In a word, neither law nor ordinances can meet his case. He is utterly ruined. He has destroyed himself. The law has flung him overboard as a defiled, good-for-nothing, condemned thing. It is useless talking to him about the law, or asking him will he take it as a means of justification, a rule of life, or the power of sanctification. It has curbed, condemned, and set him aside altogether, and he has only to cry out from the profound and awful depths of his moral ruin, “ wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Now, it is when a man is really brought to this that he is in a position to see the moral grandeur of the gospel. It is when he has discovered his own guilt, misery, and ruin, and also his entire inability to meet the just and holy claims of the law, or profit, in any wise, by the appliances of the legal system in its most attractive forms, that he is prepared to appreciate the ample provisions of the grace of God. This is most strikingly illustrated in the scene before us. When the poor man had got down from Jerusalem to Jericho, from the city of God to the city of the curse (Josh. 6:26; 1 Kings 16:33-34) when he lay stripped, wounded, and half-dead; when both priest and Levite had turned from him and gone their way; it was just then that he was in a position to prove the grace of the good Samaritan who, assuredly, is none other than the blessed Lord

Jesus Himself, who, blessed forever be His balmy, precious name! here appears in the form of a Samaritan only to enhance the grace that breathes forth upon our souls in this lovely scene. “The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans,” and, hence, had the Jew in this parable had sufficient strength, he would not, we may safely aver, have suffered the stranger to touch him. But he was so far gone, so powerless, so under the power of death, that the gracious Samaritan had it all his own way. And oh! what a tender way it was!

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.”

Here, then, is what is revealed in the gospel. Man has ruined himself. He has gone down from God. He has fallen under the power of the enemy. He is the victim of Satan, the slave of sin, the subject of death. His case is hopeless, so far as he is concerned. But, blessed be God, the true Samaritan has come down into all the ruin. The Son of God left His Father’s bosom, His eternal dwelling-place, came down into this world, to remedy our ruin, to bear our guilt, to endure the wrath of God in our stead. All this he did, beloved reader, as the expression of His own tender compassion and love. “He had compassion,” and came to bind up our wounds, to pour “the wine and oil” of His own most precious grace into our souls, to heal, restore, and bless us, to put us into His own position, according to the power which had brought Him into ours, to make ample provision for all our need, until that bright and happy moment when we shall be ushered into His presence to go no more out forever.

The page of inspiration does not present a more touching picture than that which the Master’s pencil has drawn for us in “The good Samaritan.” It is perfectly beautiful, and beautifully perfect. It is divine. Every expression is fraught with exquisite moral loveliness. “He came where he was”—not half-way, or nine-tenths of the way, but all the way. “And when he saw him,” what then? Did he turn away in disgust at his appearance, and despair of His condition? Ah! no; “He had compassion on him.” His tender heart yearned over him. He cared not what he was or who he was, Jew or Gentile, it mattered not; the streams of tender compassion came gushing up from the deep fountains of a heart that found its own delight in ministering to every form of human need. Nor was this “compassion” a mere movement of sentimentality — an evanescent feeling uttering itself in empty words and then passing away. No; it was a real, living, acting thing, expressing itself in the most unmistakable manner. “He went to him.” For what? To meet his every need, and not to leave him until he had placed him in a position of security, rest and blessing.

Nor was this all. Not only did this gracious stranger fully meet the wounded one’s present need; but, ere leaving, he dropped these touching words, “Take care of him.” How this must have melted the poor man’s heart. Such disinterested kindness! And all from a stranger! Yea, from one with whom he would naturally have “no friendly dealings.”

Finally, as if to complete the picture, he says, “when I come again.” He awakens in the heart, by these last words, “the blessed hope” of seeing him again. What a lovely picture! And yet it is all a divine reality. It is the simple story of our blessed Jesus who, in His tender compassion, looked upon us in our low and utterly hopeless condition, left His eternal dwelling-place of light and love, took upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh, was made of a woman, made under the law, lived a spotless life, and fulfilled a perfect ministry down here for three and thirty years, and, finally, died on the cross as a perfect atonement for sin, in order that God might be just and the Justifier of any poor, ungodly, convicted sinner that simply trusts in Jesus.

Yes, dear reader, whoever you are, high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, Jesus has done all this; and He is now at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The One who was nailed to the cross for us, is now on the throne. Eternal Justice has wreathed His sacred brow with the chaplet of victory, and that, be it remembered on our behalf. Nor is this all. He has said, “I will come again.” Precious words! Say, wouldst thou be glad to see Him? Dost thou know Him as the good Samaritan? Hast thou felt His loving hand binding up thy spiritual wounds? Hast thou known the healing virtues of His oil, and the restoring, invigorating, and cheering influence of His wine! Hast thou heard Him speak those thrilling words, “Take care of him”? If so, then, surely, thou wilt be glad to see His face: thou wilt cherish in thine heart’s tender affections the blessed hope of seeing Him as He is, and of being like Him and with Him forever. The Lord grant it may be so with thee, beloved reader, and then thou wilt be able to appreciate the immense difference between the Law and the Gospel — between what we ought to do for God, and what God has done for us — between what we are to Him, and what He is to us — between “do and live” and “live and do” — between “the righteousness of the law” and “the righteousness of faith.”

May the blessing of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit rest upon the reader of these lines, now, henceforth and for evermore!

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