

THE GOSPEL
OF OUR
SALVATION



A survey of the fullness of the grace of God,
who delivered, doth deliver and will yet
deliver from so great a death!

H. FORBES WITHERBY

#254 Little Flock Mrs. J. A. Trench

1. Death and judgment are behind us,
Grace and glory are before;
All the billows rolled o'er Jesus,

There they spent their utmost power.

2. "First fruits" of the resurrection,
He is risen from the tomb;
Now we stand in new creation,
Free, because beyond our doom.

3. Jesus died, and we died with Him,
"Buried" in His grave we lay,
One with Him in resurrection,
Now "in Him" in heaven's bright day.

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PREFACE

IF our reader should be led by the perusal of these pages to a more prayerful and careful searching of the Holy Scriptures, one great object of the writer will be realized. Our every thought about God, or about ourselves in relation to Him, should be brought to the test of the written Word; we each one must stand before God, and the character of our everlasting future will depend upon our present obedience to the truth. We cannot too strenuously urge upon our reader to search the Scriptures, and yet, while so doing, to look to God for the guidance of His Spirit, so that both *heart* and *conscience* may be searched through and through by the Word.

An attempt has been made in these pages to indicate some of the different stages by which God leads His people to a more distinct knowledge of Himself. Many can recall the time when the great hope of their souls was to know the forgiveness of sins; and—before God had made good to them His way of delivering His people from thralldom to self—their anguish, during this struggle after peace with God, and that strife within, almost threatened to end in despair.

It may be also that the knowledge of *forgiveness*, *peace*, and *deliverance*, having been given by God, the heart turns with joy to the memories of those hours when God first unfolded to the soul the fact of the glory of the risen Christ; spread before faith's eye the bright and heavenly things which are the Christian's in Christ; and filled the affections with the invigorating yet patience-giving hope of the Lord's coming again.

Further still, the fact of *the Holy Spirit indwelling* God's children, and *the knowledge of the Father's love* may be amongst the holy things which the reader has been given by God to rejoice in, and to prize.

Our souls grow as we know more of God, and these pages are issued with the earnest desire that God, by His Spirit, may use them to help seekers after one truth, to *a clearer knowledge of the Christian's privileges*, and to *a more earnest searching into the exhaustless treasury of His Word*.

FORGIVENESS – CHAPTER ONE

OUR first need, as sinners, is forgiveness; and there is forgiveness with God, of which His word thus speaks: “*Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*” (Rom. iv. 7, 8.)

This blessedness is a present possession, “*We have the forgiveness of sins*” in Christ (Eph. 1:7); and the portion is that of the simplest, as well as that of the most advanced believer, for we read—“*I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you.*” (1 John ii. 12.)

FORGIVENESS IS THE ACT OF GOD TOWARDS THE SINNER.

We must not mix in our minds our tears, prayers, repentance, or any inward work with God's act of forgiveness. Suppose a man, having no means whatever, owes twenty pounds. His creditor pities him, and forgives him the debt. The forgiveness is not a long process worked within the mind of the debtor, but the act of the creditor: “I forgive you,” he says, and the forgiveness is accomplished. The debt no doubt made the debtor feel miserable; but when the creditor forgave the twenty pounds, the debt was gone, every farthing of it, not because of what the debtor felt, but because of what the creditor did.

FORGIVENESS IS AN ACT OF PURE GRACE UPON THE PART OF GOD.

We are entirely without resources we are sold under sin, and we have no strength to do any single good thing whereby we can merit favour from God. On the contrary, every day and hour of our lives we add to sin. Yet whatever the debt of our sins may be there is with God abounding grace to forgive it. Our Lord tells us of “*two debtors the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty, and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both;*” at the same time showing us that the sinner, who has the greatest sense of sin, has the greatest sense of the grace which forgives sin.

Forgiveness being the act of God, and His own pure grace to sinners, we inquire—

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WHAT IS THE HINDRANCE TO THE SINNER RECEIVING THE KNOWLEDGE OF FORGIVENESS OF SINS?

Pride of heart, which refuses to believe his real state, his utter sinfulness and helplessness, is the great hindrance. Pride sends man to the treadmill of his own doings; and there Satan drives the helpless worker to despair, as the taskmasters lashed the Israelites of old, crying to them, when they could not make bricks without straw, *“Ye be idle! ye be idle!”* Brick-making did not bring the Israelites out of the house of bondage; neither will works bring a sinner out of his sins. Grace brought Israel into liberty, and grace frees the soul. Seeking to obtain forgiveness by our doings is spiritual slavery. God will not be in debt to any man. Listen to what He says: *“To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”* (Rom. iv. 4, 5.)

WORKS AND GRACE CANNOT BE MIXED.

One drop of the poison of man's works let fall into a vessel full of God's grace deprives grace of its character. God will not allow that man shall spoil His gracious act of forgiveness by any mixture of works, for *“If by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.”* (Rom. xi. 6.)

THE GROUND UPON WHICH GOD FORGIVES SIN.

Self must be set aside and God brought in, if we would know His forgiveness. God consulted Himself and glorified His throne. God magnified His own character of righteousness regarding sin by the death of Christ. The blood which Jesus shed is of sufficient value to discharge the debt of every sinner; and God in grace forgives sins upon the ground of what the Lord has done. The blood of Jesus is available for all and God's grace is like an exhaustless deposit placed at the bank, so that all, who are poor and needy, may obtain *“the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.”* (Eph. i. 7.)

God's righteousness has been magnified about the very sins which burden the sinner's conscience, so that He declare *“at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.”* (Rom. iii. 26.)

FORGIVENESS – CHAPTER ONE

The following homely illustration of debt being forgiven was used of God to give the subject of the story assurance as to the forgiveness of her sins. May our reader have equally simple faith!

At a village shop the old woman, into whose debt her customers ran, would carefully mark upon the back of her shop door how much each one owed her. There, in white chalk, as well as upon her memory, was written the name of each purchaser with the exact amount owing beneath it. Name and debt were riveted together in the old woman's mind, and could be only separated by due and full payment of all that was owed.

Amongst the old woman's customers was one, whose conscience sorely troubled her on account of the debt of her sins, and who dreaded the opening of the books when small and great shall stand before the great white throne, and be judged according to their works. Our friend knew that her sins could never be erased from God's book by her own doings, and that unless they were blotted out she must be everlastingly lost.

“Why do you mourn thus over your sins?” said one to her; “why do you not believe what God says respecting those who really desire forgiveness? Has He not told such that *the debt is paid*? You never trouble about the chalk marks upon the shop door after the money is put down. Can you not likewise rest in what the blood of Christ has done in paying the debt of sin, and satisfying the demand of divine righteousness?”

“I will go to the shop and see what she has against your name, and will pay the due; she will then rub out the chalk marks, so that when you next go there, she will tell you that not a mark stands against your name, and you will thankfully believe her. Yet in this work you will have no part, save the satisfaction that flows from believing your debt is paid.”

And thus, dear friend, it is with the terrible debt of your sins over which you mourn, and for which you own you have nothing to pay. Justice is satisfied, for the blood of God's Son has been shed for the sins of His people, and not one sin is left against their names. Jesus has paid the price of them all in His own blood. Indeed, Justice has, as it were, by that

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precious blood, wiped out all the debt of their sins; and we, who believe God, can and do rejoice in freedom from the debt of sin; and more, it is God's own joy to tell us that our names are no longer connected with our sins, but that our names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

God graciously owned the illustration from her every-day life, and our friend believed, and henceforth rejoiced in God.

THE SINS OF GOD'S PEOPLE ARE NOT ONLY FORGIVEN THEY ARE ALSO FORGOTTEN.

An earthly sovereign once said when granting a pardon, "I forgive, but I cannot forget." If God acted thus, we could never be happy in His presence, but He says: "*Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*" (**Heb. viii. 72.**) Thus we can dwell in liberty in His presence, and rejoice in His grace.

THE SINS WHICH GOD FORGIVES ARE ALL SINS.

Some seem to think that a line is drawn at conversion, and that all sins up to that day are blotted out, but they are not at rest when thinking of what sin they may possibly yet commit. "I am safe up to this moment," said one to us. "But what of to-morrow?" we inquired. "Ah, of that I cannot tell," was the reply. Self, not God, was his confidence.

God does not say He forgives past, present, or future sins, but **SINS**.

"Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." (**Acts xiii. 38, 39.**) The two "*alls*" in this verse take in every believer, and everything, *all who believe* are justified from *all things*. Whether it be strong faith or weak faith is not the question; but, do we believe? And, if we do believe, the question is not great sins or small sins, but *all* sins; nay God, in His grace, has spoken of things—not gross sins merely, but every kind of thing which we have done, or shall do, so that our consciences may be at rest, and our hearts rejoice before Him.

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The perfect work of Christ embraces all sins. Could it do less? It is terrible unbelief to weigh out our sins against Christ's blood in the scales of our imagination. In the balances of the sanctuary we find that our sins, however heavy, are nothing at all in view of the preciousness of Christ's blood. The grievous hindrance to our rejoicing in God's forgiveness is unbelief in what Christ has done, and in God's grace which forgives all sins.

God knew every one of our sins when He *“laid on Him the iniquity of us all”* (Is. liii. 6), and Jesus endured the weight of them all when *“His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.”* (1 Pet. ii. 24.)

WHERE THEN ARE YOUR SINS, BELIEVER?

They are not upon you, for God laid them upon Jesus, They are not upon Jesus, for He has borne them and is in glory; where then are your sins? *They are gone.*

Rest in the work of Christ, believe and rejoice. Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake; you have the forgiveness of sins through Christ; you are one of God's blessed people. *“Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.”* (Ps 32:1)

PEACE – CHAPTER TWO

There are many believers who, while having life in Christ, have not simple faith in His work upon the cross, and in Himself in the glory. We meet with these souls daily, for there are thousands of them, and the more in earnest the more melancholy they are—the more zealous, the more sad.

It is to such that this chapter is addressed. Yes! beloved reader, peace is that which you long for; peace is that which now and again you seem to see through the mists and clouds of unbelief—but solid peace you have not. And each fresh struggle after the longed-for peace ends in deeper dejection, as feelings, tears, and resolves, rise up against you in condemnation, adding heavier weights to your already over-burdened spirit. Nor is the Tempter still; his insinuations, his suggestions, are your sorrowful companions in the dark valley of your grief. But, beloved, burdened soul, there is peace—peace now and forever—peace for you!

Peace with God, as forgiveness, is the proper portion of all believers. Many are looking within their hearts for peace; but the *true ground* of peace must be looked for in *God's word*. Peace with God is a very different thing from a peaceful state of soul; the former is the result of Christ's work in atonement; the latter of a work in the believer. The basis of the one is outside self, and is the work accomplished by Christ; the other is the effect of a work within the believer wrought by the Holy Spirit. The first great fact for us to lay hold of is, that—

PEACE HAS BEEN MADE.

This God Himself tells us in His word; and can any news be more welcome to the distressed and anxious heart?

WHAT HAD TO BE DONE IN ORDER THAT PEACE COULD BE MADE?

This is our first question. God Himself had to be satisfied. His wrath against sin had to be met. His righteousness had to be magnified. His heart had to find its rest. How could poor worms of the earth have peace with God, until God could say that the offending thing was put out of the way? So long as one single sin remained without a propitiatory, and one act of

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unrighteousness remained with the claims of justice against it unmet, so long there could not be peace. It is vain to ask our consciences whether they are at peace until we know that upon God's side it is peace.

What is the burden that bows down your head, and bears so heavily upon your troubled heart? It is your sense of your sins, your sense of your own unworthiness, or perhaps it may be the conscious want of a due sense of sin! But the cup which the Lord drank was not filled with our sense of sin, but with God's wrath and indignation against sin. Therefore as we think of peace with God, let our hearts fully heed, that God Himself has been magnified; that His righteousness and holiness have been glorified by the work of His Son. And the measure of God's righteousness is nothing less than Himself—the standard of His holiness, Himself.

HOW WAS GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS SATISFIED?

None but an infinitely holy Being could meet the infinite holiness of God— infinite perfection alone could satisfy the requirements of the infinite justice of God. Christ alone could magnify God in regard to sin. The countless offerings by the law never afforded God's heart rest regarding sin: *“Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein.”* (Heb. x. 8.) Therefore God prepared a body for His Son, wherein He might suffer for sin, and the Holy One said, *“Lo I come to do Thy will, O God.”* Having finished the work which His Father gave Him to do, having drunk the bitter cup to the dregs, and having gone back to the glory on the right hand of the Majesty on high, nothing more remains to be done, and through Him the *“Gospel of Peace”* is preached to sinners.

And as there was only one Person capable of satisfying the righteousness of God regarding sin, so, there was only one way whereby that one Person could accomplish this end. Jesus did not make peace by becoming the Babe of Bethlehem, by His tears, by His mighty works of love, by His holy life— no, the work could be alone accomplished by His death, for *“without shedding of blood is no remission.”* (Heb. ix. 22.)

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Until Divine Justice was at rest about our sins there could not be peace. Our sins had to be taken out of the way. Jesus took our place and suffered in our stead. “*The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.*” (Is. liii. 5.) And we have nothing whatever to do in this mighty work of making peace; our happy portion is simply to believe, and to praise God for what His Son has done for us.

But not only were our sins borne, our evil nature also was judged and condemned at the cross of Christ. “*He hath made Him sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*” It was God who made our iniquities to meet upon the Substitute; it was God who made His Son, when upon the cross, sin for us—that is, what we are by nature. And for this great end, that we, who are sin by nature, might become, in Christ risen from the dead, the righteousness of God! Sins not only taken away, and our sinful nature condemned, but a new and divinely righteous standing ours in the sight of God!

God, in His own righteousness and holiness, has been magnified by what the Lord did for us, and what He was for us upon the cross. The Divine Son has finished the work which His Father gave Him to do! **Righteousness** and **Love** speak in their respective tongues of His precious blood; both proclaim, “*Peace made through the blood of His cross.*” (Col. i. 20.) When He bore our sins, when He was wounded for our transgressions, when He satisfied every claim of Righteousness and met every wish of Love, when He bled and died upon the accursed tree—peace was made.

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS SATISFIED?

How do we know that all our sins are borne, and that Christ's work meets the uttermost requirements of infinite Justice? Because He who was our Sinbearer on the cross, and who died for our sins, has been raised from the dead by God. The righteousness of God demanded that “*Christ,*” who “*died for our sins*” (1. Cor. xv. 3), and, who had magnified God about the sins for which He died, should be raised from the dead. He was crucified through weakness; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter; He was taken by wicked hands and slain, but He was raised by the glory of the Father. Our offences

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are linked with the cross of Christ; our justification is linked with the resurrection of Christ. The justice of God demanded satisfaction in full for our offences, and meted out to Him, when in our place, all that which we deserve, so that Jesus cried, “*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*” But when the Lord had completed the work God raised Him from the dead, and seated Him upon the throne in heaven. And now God proclaims to us, “Peace by Jesus Christ!”

Let us place these words of the Lord together:

“Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

“It is finished!”

“Peace unto you.”

How exquisitely do they unfold to us the gospel! He was forsaken because He took our place; but the wrath has been borne, the work is completed, He Himself has finished it; therefore in the fulness of that work He says, “*Peace unto you.*”

Yes! Our Lord risen from the grave, brought with His own lips the glad tidings of peace to His sorrowing disciples.

As Victor from the fight He stood in their midst, and proclaimed the result of His anguish; the fruit of His sufferings and death—

PEACE.

The billows had rolled over Him; the storm had exhausted itself upon Him; the sword had found its sheath in His bosom, when, risen out of the grave, He announced “*Peace*”—peace established in resurrection-power peace, eternally secure. And having proclaimed peace, Jesus showed the Divine evidence of it: “*His hands and His side.*” (**John xx. 20.**)

Upon Himself He bade His disciples look. We behold Jesus risen from the dead, and see in His once wounded hands, and feet, and side, the evidence that our sins have been borne, and that the justice of God has raised the

PEACE – CHAPTER TWO

Sin-bearer from the dead. There is none other evidence of peace having been made, like the Person of Him who made it.

It is the wonder-working love of God in the gift of His Son, the miracle of grace in Jesus shedding His blood upon Calvary for wicked man that overwhelms the natural hatred of our hearts to God. The love of sin stood between our hearts and God, and by wicked works we were enemies to Him; but God's love to us in our sins, and the blood of Jesus shed for our sins, draw out our hearts in love to God. Having made peace by the blood of His cross God hath reconciled us to Himself by the death of His Son. The enmity of our hearts is subdued, and in the righteousness of God we learn His love. God is light—God is love.

Thus, before we were born, long centuries ago, peace was made. The Eternal God, according to His own Majesty and Being, devised the plan. In the depths of His wisdom He settled the mighty way of peace, and His own Son came down to this earth to make it good. And faith now says of the once crucified but risen Saviour, “*He is our peace.*” (**Eph. ii. 14.**)

HOW IS PEACE OBTAINED?

“Have you made your peace with God my good woman?” said a kindly-intentioned visitor to an old friend of ours. Now although our old friend was dying, yet she knew perfectly well what she was saying, when she replied “No; that I have not, sir.”

“Then see to it at once, and make your peace with God before you die, I entreat you,” replied the visitor, with solemn earnestness. After a few moments' silence, the aged believer fixed her eyes upon him, and said, slowly, “It was all done eighteen hundred years ago. He hath made peace through the blood of His cross.”

It is a fearful thing to attempt to make our peace with God! a dreadful delusion for a dying hour. “*We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (**Rom. v. i.**)

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The stone over which so many stumble is their feelings. But our experiences do not affect God's fact. Whether the believer is in a peaceful state of soul, or harassed and disturbed, the fact that peace is made remains unchanged. The sun has risen, and though clouds blot out his beams from sight, and a chilly atmosphere takes the place of his genial glow, yet the fact that the sun shines, remains unchanged. What the believer has to do is, by faith, to forsake the valley of distrust over which the clouds hang, and to climb the mountains above the clouds.

Some little time ago a friend of ours was speaking to one who doubted the unchanging favour of God towards His people, and who had not the blessing of settled peace with God.

“Is God not satisfied with what Jesus was and is for you?” he enquired. “Can He then hide His face from you? No; it is you, who, by looking within yourself, and pulling the blind down, shut Him out. You must keep the blind up. If the sun is pouring forth all its golden beauty, and you are keeping the blind up, it will show forth all its power to you; but if you draw the blind down you hinder its rays from entering your room. And if you become occupied with self, and are taken up with your own feelings and thoughts, instead of with Christ, you are in darkness, for you thereby shut out the light of His presence.”

Our hearts are truly deceitful, and our thoughts and feelings often very evil, but God looks at us who believe, not in the flesh, but in Christ. It is this fact which gives our souls peace.

This illustration of “keeping the blind up” has helped many a poor doubter. Let the truth of the perfect satisfaction which God has in Christ, and peace coming to us through Christ in glory, be the sunlight you would have pouring into your soul. Keep the blind up, reader; look not within the dark chamber of your heart, but outside of yourself to Christ.

Again, many doubts are bred in the bosom, because *there is not faith in a risen Saviour*. Too many linger over the cross as if Jesus were still there. As if He were still a dying and not a living Redeemer. Upon the cross the work was

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done; by the blood there shed the peace was made; but a living Jesus, a risen Jesus, is the object of faith, and His words to you, as He shows you His hands and His side, are— *“Be not faithless, but believing.”*

“I am ever looking to Jesus upon the cross,” said one; another gently replied, “He is not there.” No, He is not upon the cross; He is upon the throne. He has made the peace, and now He is our peace. Reader, do you believe on God who raised up Jesus from the dead? Then you are justified. And when did this justifying occur? Upon your believing! There and then God justified you. God did this; and what then shall you say? Oh! in the words of scripture, these great and sweet words— *“Therefore,”* because God has justified me, I have *“peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

REDEEMED FROM JUDGMENT – CHAPTER THREE

REDEMPTION is directly taught in God's word, for the first time, in the story of the Passover. God would have the bondsmen of Egypt His freedmen. Rest had been promised them, the tidings of the pleasant land had been brought them, but not one step towards liberty could the bondsmen take until they were redeemed by the blood of the paschal lamb.

Love wafted the gentle tidings of the good land to the fainting slaves, but the stern fact remained unmoved—they were in a land under judgment. Justice had drawn its sword, it exacted its claims against them, and from justice they could not escape.

But the judgment which fell upon Egypt was forestalled for Israel; the blood outside their houses forbade the Destroyer entering within. The crimson stain upon lintel and door-posts uttered its voice, and the angel passed over.

There was no escape save by blood. Mercy retired from the land, chased away by the Destroyer. Wherever the blood was not, there fell the sword. Whatever house bore not the evidence of having already been under the sentence of judgment, which had not appropriated the blood to its own door, lay under the wrath. Honour, titles, personal worth were no shield; the sword clave through them all and smote the firstborn dead. *“From the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat upon his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon,”* all perished. The very customs of Egypt augmented the horrors of that night, for at death's entry the living fled from their houses—the women with breasts bared and hair loose, the men wildly crying—all hurrying hither and thither, till every street and village in the land echoed with their terror. *“There was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.”*

When the great day of His wrath has come, who shall be able to stand? Who? The great, the mighty, the noble of the earth? Who? The well-disposed, the upright, the moral? They, and they only, who are redeemed *“with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

REDEEMED FROM JUDGMENT – CHAPTER THREE

“SHEW ME PROOF THAT I AM SAVED. OH! FOR EVIDENCE THAT I AM AMONGST GOD'S PEOPLE!”

“The blood shall be to you for a token.” There is none other granted. Look not for a sign within your breast, see it in the blood of Christ; look not at your feelings, but at His sufferings; not at your joy, but His pain. It would not have been faith but disobedience in Israel to have spent their night in inquiring and looking if the blood marks were upon their house-doors. *“None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning,”*

God had said. And they sat within and waited for the daybreak. Are they, whose doors are shut, and who assemble in fear and trembling around their paschal lamb, less safe than their neighbours who calmly wait for liberty's coming morn as they keep the feast? Is the first-born of the pale dejected mother less secure than hers whose strong faith in Jehovah already accepts God's freedom? Nay, it is the blood without the door, not the feelings of them within the house, wherein the safety lies. Faith obeyed God, took the blood and sprinkled it, and in the redeeming blood was the security.

“BUT GIVE ME EVIDENCE THAT GOD IS SATISFIED RESPECTING MY SINS.”

Heed His words: *“When I see the blood I will pass over you.”* His sword of justice has been plunged into the adorable Substitute. His justice asks for no second judgment, no double dying for sin. The very sword which slew the lamb, now shelters those for whom the blood was shed.

We once bent over a poor dying man and said, “Friend, you are leaving this world. You will very soon appear before God. How is it about your soul? Where are your sins?” He was too weak to lift a finger, but looked up calmly and whispered, “My sins are under the blood.”

The poor man had received the truth in the love of it. He had believed what God says respecting the blood of His Son. He rested in this—that God looks upon the sacrifice of His Son, and not upon the sins of those who put their trust in Him.

REDEEMED FROM JUDGMENT – CHAPTER THREE

There is a fine illustration of redeeming love in the 25th chapter of **Leviticus**.

The case is brought forward of an Israelite, who sinks down lower and lower into poverty, until at length he sells himself to a stranger, and becomes a bondsman; for, according to the ancient law, there was a necessity that debts should be paid, and if the debtor had no means wherewith to pay them, then he himself was sold. The law of God did not allow the principle that because a man is unable to pay his debts therefore he may go free. Neither does the gospel permit excuse upon the ground of inability. There is no bankruptcy court in divine justice where a man's sins can be arranged for. God will never receive as an excuse, "I was led astray; I was unfortunate, and so became ruined." The law of God is firm to the letter, and His justice cannot yield to the petition of human weakness. But while the law was stern, there was room left for the entrance of redeeming love; though the debtor's debts have to be paid to the uttermost farthing, yet grace has provided for his redemption; "After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him; either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able he may redeem himself." (v. 48, 49.) The law maintained its rights, while grace asserted hers.

As for our redeeming ourselves, that is utterly out of the question. Every sin must be atoned for, and we are by nature sold under sin and we are the servants of sin. We have no power whatever to reduce the number of our daily sins, much less to lay up a store of good deeds to procure us liberty from past sins.

Our redemption must come from another, and from One who is not like ourselves, the servant of sin. Our Redeemer has need to be rich, and rich in the perfection of His person as well as in the love of His heart—rich in God's sight, and in love towards men. In order to be our Redeemer, the Lord became our kinsman, and having become a man, in the free love of His heart He bought us from our bondage. He paid for us with the price of His own precious blood. We are not our own; we are bought with a price.

REDEEMED FROM JUDGMENT – CHAPTER THREE

The redeeming love of Jesus cannot be other than the constant theme of our hearts. Like the poor slave whom the rich stranger ransomed, and then, to her astonishment, set at liberty, we are constrained to cry, “He redeemed me, he redeemed me.” She became the willing servant of her redeemer. It was not strange to her to devote her life to her compassionate deliverer; and surely, like her, we would treasure our Redeemer’s infinite grace and devote ourselves to His service crying, “He redeemed me!”

BROUGHT TO GOD – CHAPTER FOUR

GOD'S ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. The compassion of man rejoices over the freed slave. It is a solace to him to think of the Arab children of our great cities taken out of their degradation, rescued from their friendless lives, and nurtured in a home. Who would take the starving, evil-taught child out of his vile misery, and bring him into his own family to dwell amongst the children there? No, a moral barrier between man and man seems to say; thus far shalt thou come and no further. Christ died not only to cleanse us and to bring us out of our degradation and our sin, but to bring us to God—not as the starving child—not in the corruption of sin—not in the rags of our former alien state. No, by grace we are bought out of our old state, and far more than this we are brought into a new one.

THE PRODIGAL'S RECEPTION:

The prodigal returning from the far country approached his father's house with the thought that there he should find bread, and a place amongst the servants. Such were not however his father's thoughts for there was a feast prepared for the son, and a place for him at his father's table. The young man left his home with that portion of the goods which fell to him. He came back penniless, ragged, and starving. And to find the best robe and all things new and suited to his father's thoughts about him! We do not read that when in his father's presence the son said a word about the servant's place, which he had mentally assigned to himself: the love of his father prohibited the rising of such thoughts in his mind. The father's heart and the father's welcome henceforth occupied his soul. And we are so perfectly fitted for God by the work of His Son that His presence is our dwelling-place.

HOW ISRAEL WAS BROUGHT TO GOD:

The mercy of God towards Israel did not cease when He saw the blood upon their doorposts and passed over them. It did not cease in saving them from judgment, but He brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and from the house of bondage. And well did they realize this, for upon the wilderness shore of the Red Sea they lifted up their voices in mighty chorus,

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singing, “*Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.*” (Ex. xv. 13.)

They were no longer in Egypt or of Egypt, but clean out of it; and, by faith, they saw themselves guided by Jehovah's strength unto His holy habitation.

How often do we hear a newly-converted soul speak of himself as if he were delivered from judgment in order to in order to find his way to heaven. But though we are not yet brought to heaven, we are already brought to God.

A MORAL CHANGE IS EFFECTED IN THE SOUL WHEN BEING “BROUGHT TO GOD” IS KNOWN.

There is wonderful repose for the soul in the fact that we are “*brought to God.*” When this is realized a new view of spiritual things opens before us. Doubtless, Israel, upon the standpoint of the rocks of the Canaan side of the Red Sea, viewed God's good news to them very differently from when waiting with their loins girt within their houses in Egypt, eating the passover. They *sang* upon the other side of the Red Sea (we read of no song in Egypt), and right glorious is that song; so glorious that God has recorded in His book none other song of praise from human lips before it. There are numerous songs given after this redemption triumph, sweet and tender, victorious and exulting; some sung by men upon earth, and some by men in heaven; time songs and eternity songs, but not one before this grand utterance of perfect redemption. And what is true regarding the book is true regarding our lives. There is no real praise to God from the heart of man antecedent to the praise for perfect redemption.

Israel had groaned and cried upon the Egypt side of the sea. They thought that God had brought them to the borders of their land of toil to make for them a vast grave at the sea; but the grave they feared was for their enemies; for themselves it was the gateway of liberty. “*Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.*” They stood still. They saw His salvation. “*The waters were a wall unto them, on their right hand and on their left.*” “*They walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea.*” Within those waters Pharaoh's chariot and host were

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cast—his chosen captains drowned. *“The depths covered them —they sank into the bottom as a stone.”*

Satan may pursue—he may make to tremble —as did Pharaoh up to the Red Sea; but as at the sea Pharaoh's power was forever broken, so at the resurrection of Christ the power of Satan finds its eternal end. God's people are saved, and great is God's salvation. The Lord is risen. He has passed through death for us, though death shall overwhelm the foe. The force of the enemy ceases at the grave of Christ. Resurrection ground he cannot reach. The blood of the Lamb of God is our redemption: the resurrection of Christ is our liberty. The virtue of both is ours; and, in Him who died and rose again, we are reconciled to God. *“All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.”* **(2 Cor. v. i8.)**

His grave is our gateway of freedom. The powers of darkness cannot pursue the saint beyond the borders of the grave of Jesus. We were redeemed when in the world; but now we are brought out of its judgment; we are brought to God in Christ.

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THE value of the work effected by our Lord once upon the cross is everlasting. No addition can be made to it, for it is complete; no repetition can be made of it, for it is finished; no interruption of its efficacy can occur, for its value is abiding; what Christ has done upon Calvary once, has been done for ever. We gather from the Epistle to the Hebrews four facts concerning the glorious fulness of Christ's work:

SINS ARE GONE.

THE MAJESTY OF GOD IS MAGNIFIED.

CHRIST ABIDES IN GOD'S PRESENCE FOR US.

THE QUESTION OF SIN IS NOT TO BE REOPENED.

I. Sins are FOR EVER gone, because Christ ONCE shed His blood.

“Such an high priest became us ... who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.” (Heb. vii. 26, 27.)

Under the law, there was a daily need for sacrifice, and a daily offering of the same sacrifices. The priest of Israel offered up the daily sacrifice (**Lev. viii.**), the blood of which availed for the day upon which it was shed. It neither covered past sins, nor future sins. Fresh sins called for fresh blood. There was no abiding value in the bloodshed. God required constant sacrifices, and the sins of the people required constant offerings. Daily sins had to be met by the sacrifice of the day; but the conscience of the comer to God was never at rest, he was ever remembering sins, and ever coming to God for his sins to be put away. There was divine design in this; He who gave the law declared,

“the law made nothing perfect.” (vii. 19.)

How different the sacrifice of Jesus! The sin less Offerer offered Himself once and for ever “*He needeth not daily . . . to offer up sacrifice*” (**vii. 27**), are the

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words of the Holy Ghost, for He met the need “once,” when He offered up His own peerless body upon Calvary. Once and for ever is the divine record of the sacrifice of the cross; once offered--never repeated. Faith allows no darkening thought of twice or thrice doing the same thing; no presumptuous daring that there can possibly be of any sort whatever the shadow of a repetition of this sacrifice. And the result of His work, so far as our need as sinners is concerned, is this, never repairing to Calvary for a second putting away of our sins, but constant and daily praising of God for the one offering of His Son, the efficacy of whose blood lasts forever and ever; a continual remembrance, not of sins, but of His offering, which more than eighteen hundred years ago met our need as sinners.

Glorious as is this view of the work of our Lord meeting our need as sinners, yet there is a second view of the fulness of His work magnifying the throne of God, and meeting its requirements, to which we do well to turn our earnest gaze.

II. The majesty of the nature and character of God are FOR EVER magnified, because Christ has entered into the Holy place by His blood ONCE.

“By His own blood He entered in once into the Holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” (ix. 12.) The Holy place, typically, is that within the veil of the tabernacle, where God dwelt, and where His throne was; the Holiest, actually, is the very presence of God. The cherubim, figurative of God's government, overshadowed the Mercy Seat upon the Ark, wherein were the tables of the law setting out His righteous requirements from man. They were represented as looking upon the Mercy Seat, whereon the blood was sprinkled. The blood of the sacrifice was the execution of the claims of divine justice, and the cherubim were so designed that their faces looked upon the blood. The blood which was carried into the Holiest was that of the yearly sacrifice of the great Day of Atonement, and made for the whole nation; and the blood thus carried into the Holiest had a peculiar typical value, for it was that of the sacrifice termed the Lord's lot; and was, therefore, in a special way the Lord's portion in the sacrifice. It was the

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sacrifice which should make atonement for the Holy place respecting the sins of the people, and the efficacy of which should enable the Holy God, morally speaking, to dwell amongst a naturally sinful people. The blood of this sacrifice was sprinkled not upon an earring people to satisfy their consciences, but upon His throne—His Mercy Seat, to satisfy His righteousness about their sins.

Here is an insight given us into the claims of the divine nature—a subject of the deepest value to us as God's creatures. We turn from the deep need of our consciences to that which is deep beyond comparison--the requirements of God Himself. Let us suppose an ordinary throne or seat of justice in our own land, upon which the judge is seated. However mercifully-minded he may be, yet so long as he occupies the throne of justice, the judge must of necessity uphold its honour and dignity. If the judge were to make light of the laws of his country, and set the prisoners free, he would dishonour the throne of justice. Should even the judge's chief friend be proved a criminal, he would be bound either to vacate his judgeship or to condemn the guilty man. When we speak of the throne of God, His holiness and His justice are present to our minds. God cannot deny Himself. He hates sin. Sin is the defiance of His holiness; therefore He cannot pass it by. But the blood of Christ has rendered full satisfaction to the holiness of God respecting sin, and the requirements of His throne of justice are perfectly met. If, then, His throne, if His righteousness, and the holiness of His being, are satisfied respecting human guilt, how surely may our consciences rest where God rests! If God, in His holiness, finds no fault in those who trust in the blood of Jesus, surely the voice of their consciences maybe still.

Now, the Lord has obtained eternal redemption—not merely redemption, for in that there might be a slipping back into servitude, Israel might return to slavery, the freed bondsman might again fall into debt and bonds—but having obtained *eternal redemption* the Lord entered into the Holiest by His own blood. He went into the presence of the Majesty on High as priest,

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having poured out His sacrificial blood upon the cross, and He went in there in the virtue of the atoning blood.

As years rolled round, the sacrifices of the great Day of Atonement were annually repeated, and the veil ever remained hiding the Mercy Seat and the throne of God; “*The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest.*” (ix. 8.) For until there should be a sacrifice capable of magnifying divine majesty, there could be no liberty of access for man to God Himself. But when the Lord shed His blood, the veil of the temple was rent in the midst in twain from top to bottom.

The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, had magnified the nature of God about sin, and thereupon God unveiled the Holiest. The way into His presence was made manifest. God has now revealed His righteousness to us in the gospel, and has shown us the death of Christ satisfying His righteousness, and hence the very throne of God's justice becomes the security of our salvation.

It is our great privilege to see by faith God in His righteousness, with Jesus in His presence for us, and not a veil before the Holiest. The high priests of old went yearly into Jehovah's presence about sin; took the blood there, which spoke for the year's sins, and then retired from God's presence only to return again another year, once more to raise the question of atonement, for the blood of their sacrifices could not avail to meet the majesty of His throne. Our eyes witness the glorious contrast— “*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*” (ix. 24.) “*He entered once into the Holiest.*” We see Himself having gone into the presence of God upon our behalf—the accepted Offerer at the right hand of the Majesty on high. What peace there is in thus beholding Jesus! His work upon the cross has told us all our sins are gone. His entering into the Holiest by His own blood has told us that “*by the blood of Jesus*” we have “*boldness to enter the Holiest,*” whither He has gone.

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III. Christ having effected the work, **ONCE**, by which sin will be put away, abides **CONTINUALLY** in God's presence for us.

“Once in the end of the world bath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” (ix. 26.) It is a glorious fact that not only are our sins gone, and the nature of God is magnified, but that Christ having put away our sins, He, and not our sins, is continually before God. Instead of looking upon our sins God looks upon Him who put our sins away. The high priests of old could not remain within the veil. They were the representatives of the people, and the blood which they brought in with them could not avail to sustain them within the Holiest. Our High Priest, bearing our names upon His Person, abides within the Holiest of heaven itself, in the presence of God, for us. The blood which He shed once having put away our sins from God's presence, nothing now remains to be done. But He who did the work for His people abides upon their behalf in the Divine presence. He is always there for us.

The high priests of old *stood* before the Mercy Seat and sprinkled there the blood which was to atone for sins, and departed. Our High Priest *sits* on the right hand of God for us in continuance. Within the tabernacle of old there was no seat provided, for there was no rest obtained by its sacrifices. God has said to His Son, *“Sit Thou upon My right hand,”* for He has finished the work which His Father gave Him to do, and now He rests from that work. Once God in His justice forsook Him upon the cross, now God in His justice has established Him as man upon the throne.

What a scene of rest in the presence of God does this view of Christ unfold to us—His toil ended—His work completed—the sins for which He died atoned for—the people for whom He died, at liberty to enter into the Holiest where He is—He Himself seated up on the throne, their Representative! Ponder these three facts, Christian reader. Your need as a sinner met; the majesty of God's throne magnified about your sins by the death of His Son; God's risen Son seated upon His throne, and God looking upon Him instead of upon your sins—and gladly own that, therefore there can be —

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IV. No re-opening of the question of sin, since Christ has settled it ONCE and FOREVER.

When the Lord came to the earth it was to take up and settle, once for all, the awful question of sin. He is coming a second time: “*As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*” (v. 27, 28.) He is coming again, but not to suffer a second time; not to go into the question of sin a second time, but “*without sin—apart from sin—unto salvation.*” He is coming to bring His own into the fulness of salvation, to save them from the circumstances, the sorrow, the death of this scene, even as He has already saved them from judgment.

The high priest of Israel entered within the veil on the great Day of Atonement, and the anxious gaze of the people fixed itself upon the door of the tabernacle. If he came not out, if he died in the presence of God, their hopes were utterly blasted; the blood was not accepted; their sins remained upon them. But the folds of the drapery of the tabernacle doors move; the eyes of ten thousands gladden; the anxious hour of suspense is over. Their high priest appears; Jehovah has accepted the blood. Because he lives they live also.

No anxious expectation “Is He accepted?” fills our hearts. Our expectations are bound up in this great word *Salvation*. We look for Him to come again, not as high priests of old came, out from the Holiest, to take blood again into God's presence, but to take us ourselves into the Father's house in the fulness of resurrection and joy; “*for unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin (i.e., apart from the settled question of sin), unto salvation.*”

Some, indeed, look for Him with deeper love and more longing desire than others; but all for whom He died look for Him, and unto all such will He appear before long unto salvation.

Then, Christian reader, we shall know more deeply, and speak together more admiringly of the value of the precious blood of Christ.

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**“UNTO HIM
WHO LOVES US
AND
WASHED US
FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD,
AND HATH MADE US
KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD
AND HIS FATHER;
TO HIM
BE GLORY AND DOMINION,
FOR EVER AND EVER.
AMEN.”**

Rev. i. 5, 6

THE FRUIT OF THE TREE – CHAPTER SIX

No right estimate can be formed of what sin is in God's sight, until the gospel itself be known: hence our chapters upon God's grace towards us, precede this and the following chapter upon the fruit and root of the tree, human nature.

True, the Holy Spirit makes us to feel our need of Christ before showing to us who Christ is, and what He has done for us, yet as a matter of fact, we learn more about what we are, after having the knowledge of Christ, than during our anxiety to be assured of salvation; and the farther advanced we are in the knowledge of grace the more fit are we to read self in the light of divine holiness.

In the grand gospel epistle—that to the **Romans**—God first shows what man is by the evidence of his acts, and next by the setting out of what he is by nature. **Chapter i., verses 1-15**, are the introduction to what may be called the divine gospel sermon, the text of which

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is found in **verses 16-18**. This sermon has, so far as it relates to fallen man, two great parts—one discovering what the fruit of the tree is; the other, what the tree itself is. And God in His abounding grace first reveals His remedy for the corrupt fruit, and next His provision for the state of the root. In other words, the gospel of God first meets the guilt of man; next, the nature of man.

Looking at and judging the tree by its fruits, God—from **verse 19 of chapter i. to verse 20 of chapter iii.**—divides the world into three parts, and surveys man in each. The field of the world is mapped out into three portions, and the crops borne by each are judged by God. We have—**first**, the uncultivated portion (**i. 19-32**); **second**, the portion tended by the hand of philosophy (**ii. 1—11**); **third**, that favoured part which was ploughed by the law and watered by the prophets. (**ii. 12—iii. 20.**)

Before the cross of Christ a large part of the world was allowed to grow on without any restraint. A section of it, however, had human hands to tend it; it was sown with philosophy and reason. But a part of the world had been

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under the direct care of God, whose watchful energy over His nation we well know. When Christ died the period of human cultivation ended, and in our epistle the fruits are brought in and examined.

MAN'S ESTIMATE OF THE FIELD!

Let us inquire what was man's idea of the fruits of the field. The philosopher, walled around with reason and human wisdom, gloried in his powers of mind, but, while judging the vile weeds and evil growth in the barbarians around him, he acted as vilely as they. The Jew—the religious man, who had been fenced in by Jehovah—boasted in the fence, boasted in the possession of the letter of the law, and of having the oracles of God committed to his custody, yet brought forth fruits as worthless as the rest. Then, as now, man was very well satisfied with himself.

BUT WHAT WAS GOD'S ESTIMATE OF THE FIELD?

Of the wild part, we read: “*As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind*” — “*they are without excuse.*” (i. 28, 20.)

Of that which man's philosophy had cultivated, God says, “*Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*” (ii. 3.) Of the religious, the Jewish part, the record is, “*They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*” (iii. 12.) And the condition of the whole world is summed up with these solemn and terrible words – “**GUILTY BEFORE GOD.**” (iii. 19.)

Wherever God looked at man's works He found them utterly bad—the fruits of the tree were hopelessly evil.

Jew or Gentile, philosopher or simple, none were righteous, none understood, none sought after God. Man's throat was an open sepulchre; his tongue the instrument of deceit; under his lips was poison; his mouth was filled with cursing and bitterness; his feet were swift to shed blood; his ways were destruction and misery; the way of peace he knew not; and no fear of God was before his eyes.

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SUCH IS GOD'S PHOTOGRAPH OF MAN!

Yes, in such terrible language the God of Light and Truth photographs His guilty creature—man. This was the end of the choicest religious and mental cultivation. This was the fruit borne after four thousand years of testing. Reader, do you believe God? Do you bow to this view of yourself as a human being? Do you practically confess that eighteen hundred years ago God declared man to be utterly evil?

Faith refuses to excuse self, owning before God, man's hopeless guilt, and learns, by grace, the way of peace. Unbelief, on the contrary, attempts to improve self, persists in seeking to cultivate the tree, and then proceeds wilfully and deliberately upon the way of destruction.

NO DIFFERENCE EXISTING:

The grace of God meets us just as and where we are, and meets all men alike, whether Jew or Gentile, philosopher or simple. The whole race of man is guilty before God; “*there is no difference; for all have sinned*” (iii. 22, 23): the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ is “*unto all; and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference.*” (v.22.) All are alike in the ruin—all are alike the objects of the remedy.

We place in column side by side.

<i>The righteous record of God concerning man:</i> “GUILTY BEFORE GOD.” (iii. 19.)	<i>The righteous remedy of God for man:</i> “THE BLOOD OF HIS SON” (iii 25.)
<i>The declaration of God respecting man's powerlessness in his lost state:</i> “BY THE DEEDS OF THE LAW THERE SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS SIGHT.” (iii. 20.)	<i>The declaration of God respecting His grace for man in his lost slate:</i> “JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.” (iii. 24.)

Thus righteousness condemns, and on the ground of righteousness God justifies.

THE FRUIT OF THE TREE – CHAPTER SIX

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE GROUND WHEREON GRACE IS BUILT.

God forgives in righteousness; God justifies in righteousness; God's gospel reveals His righteousness.

Our guilt calls for righteous judgment; the blood of God's Son is the righteous answer for our guilt. When Jesus took the sinner's place upon the cross, God in righteousness hid His face from Him. When the Lord had finished the work, God in righteousness raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in glory. And now God holds forth to the eye of faith His own Son a propitiatory through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness ... that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. (iii. 25, 26.)

UPON WHOM IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD?

Mark well, if judged according to divine righteousness, the most moral, the most religious of men, will be levelled down to hell along with the vilest, “for there is no difference” degrees of distance from God are not to be brought into the question. Since, then, none can merit divine favour, grace flows freely to all. The satisfaction rendered by Christ to divine righteousness is perfect. God Himself is the source of His gospel, His Son the essence of it, the cross the channel for it to reach us. The righteousness of God is “*unto all*,” it is towards all men; but it is also as circumscribed as the number of those hearts which delight in it, for it is only “*upon all them that believe*.” Man in himself is thus completely set aside as a fruit bearer, treated as helpless and utterly bad, but God, in Christ, has wrought out a righteousness for man, and “*whosoever*” believes receives the blessing. “*It is of faith that it might be by grace*.” The blood of Jesus has perfectly answered to the righteous God for the sins of all who believe. By that blood, God in His grace counts such as believe to be righteous. God justifies such through the blood of His Son.

THE ROOT OF THE TREE – CHAPTER SEVEN

WE now turn to the second section of the book, subject of the early part of the Epistle to the Romans, namely, man's nature.

A man's conscience tells him that he does wrong and is an inward voice speaking to him of right and wrong. Even the heathen have this candle within them, the glimmering light of which shines with varied clearness in every human breast. But conscience is not the standard of what is right and wrong. Now while conscience within discriminates between good and evil, and detects our works, conscience never discovers to man what his nature is. This the light of the word of God reveals. We learn what we are, what our nature is, in the invariable light of God's own truth.

If a man could possibly know what he is, in himself, in God's sight, without the knowledge of God's grace, his end would be utter despair, for “*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all*” (i **John i. 5**); while man by nature is “*of the night and darkness.*” (i **Thess. v. 5**.) God cannot change; “*I am the Lord; I change not.*” (Mal. **iii. 6**.) Man cannot change his nature; “*can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?*” (Jer. **xiii. 23**.)

The gospel of God does not propose to develop man's nature, to reform it, or to cultivate it; on the contrary, God regards it as a worthless thing. The gardener does not cultivate the crab tree, but grafts a sweet apple upon it, and with his knife cuts down the stem of the old tree. God does not allow the old nature any place in His presence, but brings in Christ, the life, instead.

The result of cultivating our old nature is sorrow. Yet we find sometimes even aged believers attempting to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, endeavouring, after a long life of religious disappointment, to bring themselves into a fit state for God's presence, and, perhaps, looking to Christ, as to a means, for effecting their desires.

A little while ago, an inexperienced hand had trained a rose tree over a porch. The leaves of the tree were green, and the growth was strong, but not a flower was there. “Why is this?” inquired the master of a skilled gardener. The answer was given by an act, not by words, for, taking out his

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pruning knife; the gardener in one moment levelled the rampant growth to the ground. “What have you done?” cried the master. “Don't you see, sir,” was the reply, “your man has been cultivating the wrong shoot!” and, at the same time, the gardener pointed out the grafted rose, which had barely struggled two inches above the ground, and which the wild shoot had completely overwhelmed. In a few months, the graft, set free from the encumbering growth of the wrong shoot, sent out in vigorous life its beautiful Not all the cultivation or training in the world could have made that wrong shoot become a beautiful and flowering tree, neither will the efforts of a whole life succeed in making our “old man” like Christ, or fruitful towards God. God has condemned our nature in the cross of Christ: He has judicially cut it down; and no fruit fit for God shall grow upon it forever. The practical word, then, to those Christians who are seeking to produce out of self, fruit acceptable to God is—*Do not cultivate the wrong shoot.*

Alas! that so many boast of what man is in himself, and so few believe what God declares the nature of man to be. Some suppose that they see in the flickering light of conscience sparks of life left in man at the fall; some imagine that in the senses, whereby man has the power of enjoying the externals of religion, lies the germ of life; others argue that it is to be found in reason. God declares that not only are the fruits of the tree corrupt, but that the tree itself is evil.

The latter part of the **5th chapter of Romans** treats of our nature, and from it we take five divine proofs of man's condition opposite to which we place five views of divine grace abounding towards man in his lost condition, “*for where sin abounded grace did much more abound*” (v. 20.)

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<p style="text-align: center;">RUIN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I (V. 12.)</p> <p>SIN, AND DEATH BY SIN, BROUGHT INTO THE WORLD: <i>BY ONE MAN - ADAM</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GRACE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">IA (end of V. 15.)</p> <p>THE GRACE OF GOD BROUGHT TO MEN: <i>BY ONE MAN - CHRIST</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">II (v. 15.)</p> <p>MANY BEING DEAD; OR HAVING DIED: <i>Through the offence of one man - Adam</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IIA (v. 15.)</p> <p>THE FREE GIFT BY GRACE ABOUNDING TO MANY: <i>By one Man – Jesus Christ.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SINFULNESS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">III (v. 18)</p> <p>THE OLD JUDICIAL STANDING BEFORE GOD – TO CONDEMNATION: <i>By one offence of Adam</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RIGHTEOUSNESS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">IIIA (v. 18)</p> <p>THE NEW JUDICIAL STANDING BEFORE GOD – JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE: <i>By the one righteousness of Christ.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">IV (v.19.)</p> <p>MANY MADE SINNERS <i>By one man’s – Adam’s - disobedience</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IVA (v.19.)</p> <p>MANY MADE RIGHTEOUSNESS <i>By one Man’s – Christ’s - obedience</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">DEATH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">V (v.21.)</p> <p>THE REIGN OF SIN UNTO DEATH: <i>Brought in through one man – Adam.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LIFE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">VA (v. 21.)</p> <p>THE REIGN OF GRACE UNTO ETERNAL LIFE: <i>Brought in through one Man – Christ Jesus.</i></p>

We arrange these five views of God's grace in the three divisions of **Grace**, **Righteousness**, and **Life**, opposite to man's Ruin, Sinfulness, and Death.

THE ROOT OF THE TREE – CHAPTER SEVEN

First, then, there is the **RUIN** - The ruin of God's work when He made man upright.

I. SIN IS BROUGHT INTO THE WORLD:

“By one man sin entered into the world.” Innocence existed in *one man*—*Adam*. God made Adam free from evil; without the knowledge of sin. This was the starting point of man's existence upon earth—a life in its moral characteristics totally distinct from our present life. But Adam preferring disobedience to obedience, and exercising his will, his nature became evil, and thereupon the character of the fountain of human life became changed. Innocence disappeared from the earth, and sin entered the world. This is the origin of our sinful nature which we received through our parents, and with which we were born. We trace the river from this present day to the past generation—we follow it back further and further till we reach its source—and we find that every age has produced a nature which is sinful.

The nature of man is, moreover, *actively* evil, and the activities of our nature are our own individual responsibilities. If a wicked father beget a wicked son, the wickedness of the son is his own wickedness and his own responsibility, and not that of his parent. The law of the land would not excuse a thief because his father and grandfather had been thieves before him, and neither does the divine law excuse us individually because of the sinful nature of the parent of our race.

Had any man been born innocent, and retained his innocency, from him a fresh stream of life should have flowed; but, “*all have sinned.*” This is the plain fact. It is unalterable. Neither does God Himself elect to change it; but in contrast to the dark reality of sin's entrance into the world there is **GRACE**.

IA. THE GRACE OF GOD IS BROUGHT TO MEN.

One man—Adam—by wilful transgression of God's command introduced sin and death into the world; by *one Man—Jesus* Christ willingly, and in obedience to God's word, doing God's will, grace came to man.

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Man failed in his state of innocence, and brought ruin upon the whole human race, thereupon God promised One by Whom man should be blessed, and Jesus, dying for sinners in the activity of divine love, brought grace to the ruined race, and brought it by accomplishing redemption. God's justifying grace flows to man from Christ, who died for the ungodly.

God does not repair the ruin, or rebuild what man has overthrown, but God brings grace to man in the ruin, and grace meets us just as we are, and just where we are. The grace of God brought to man in his present state by the one Man, Jesus Christ, is as distinct a reality as the ruin and the sin brought into the world in its first state by the one man —Adam. Sin entered the scene of innocence. Grace has entered the scene of ruin.

Not only has sin been brought into the world, but death also by sin, and thus

II. TO MAN, AS THE ESPYING OF ADAM, IS ATTACHED THE PENALTY OF DEATH.

“Through the offence of one many be dead,” or have died. (v. 15.) As a king, upon surrendering to the enemy, involves his kingdom by his act, and as, in his fall, his kingdom also falls, so the race of man suffers the penalty of its head—the many, the multitude of mankind has fallen with Adam under death's power.

“The wages of sin is death;” which solemn sentences Adam and myriads of men have proved in it their own bodies. Death is the wages of sin, not the debt of nature. God did not make man in order to die, but by sin man forfeited his life, and now hath *“death passed upon all men for all that have sinned,”* and he who dies in his sins will be eternally banished from the presence of the holy God.

Thus, we have by Adam's act, innocence gone, continuous life upon this earth lost, and man sinning a few short years in a scene of suffering, and then leaving this earth altogether. No power in man to recover what is lost, no strength to lift himself out of his natural condition—Paradise behind, death before, and after death judgment.

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Now, what is God's answer to this desolation? God looked from heaven upon man, and sent from heaven by the Person of His own Son *the free gift*. Nothing but a gift could avail for helpless man. Man had ruined himself and forfeited his life, and could not give God any single thing whatever. But, thanks be to God, in His love,

IIA. THE FREE GIFT BY GRACE, BY ONE MAN, JESUS CHRIST, HATH ABOUNDED UNTO MANY.

Divine grace, with its free gift, may, if God choose, enter the dark scene for purposes of blessing. And grace has entered. Christ has died; righteousness is accomplished. We fix our eyes upon the Christ of God. By Him comes to us, just as we are, the free gift in grace. There is, moreover, wondrous greatness in the way which this grace comes to us.

It *abounds* to many! There are riches in God's grace which cannot be limited or exhausted. "*Much more*," says the scripture, when viewing the extent of the ruin, "*much more the grace of God and the gift by grace . . . hath abounded unto many*." And there are multitudes upon earth and myriads in heaven who have proved the aboundings of God's grace.

Now, how is this gift to be had? It is to be had upon only one principle. There are none other terms. It is to be had for nothing. It is to be **received**. The "*free gift*" is not to **be** won by works, or merited by anything which we can do or feel. It is sent to us by God through His Son, and faith rejoices to receive from God, and, those who do receive the free gift, are not occupied with what they have lost, but with what they have obtained.

Thus God does not recover man again to his primal innocence, or restore him to His presence by infusing a spirituality into him in his present sinful condition, but God bestows upon all who believe, by the one Man, Jesus Christ, a new thing—His free gift.

God's grace, then, is the contrast to man's ruin; and God in His grace does not amend man's ruined condition, but bestows a free gift upon man, and brings him into a new condition. The **RIGHTEOUSNESS** which God brings in is in contrast with the natural sinfulness of man. We must abide

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forever in our natural condition if we are not justified according to the righteousness which subsists by the death of Christ. For man, being a sinner, occupies a judicial position before God, and

III. MAN'S JUDICIAL STANDING BEFORE GOD IS THAT OF BEING UNDER JUDGMENT, AND THIS RESULTS IN CONDEMNATION.

“By the offence of one ... upon all men to condemnation.” (v. i8.) By one false step, Adam fell from the heights of innocence, where God had placed him. We all received our life outside paradise, away from God. There is no ladder to reach the heights whence we fell, and even if we could regain those elevations we should carry ourselves with us. If we could get back to paradise, we should be ourselves still. If the paradise which Adam knew yet existed, and we could return there, we should enter it fallen creatures. As for entering heavenly glory, fallen as we are, it is out of the question; neither do any, save God's own people, so much as desire to enter the glory of God at all. In our natural standing the judgment of God is upon us, and that must result in condemnation: neither does God allow, that for man, as upon this standing, there is any cure whatever; on the contrary, God deals with us as those who occupy a position which results in condemnation, while in His grace, He brings in a

III.A. NEW STANDING WHICH IS THAT OF JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE.

This standing is beyond condemnation, and condemnation must be passed through in order that it may be reached in righteousness. And we have been judicially put aside in the cross of Christ, where God *“condemned sin in the flesh.”* The cross of the Son of God was God's declaration of man's condition. The cross was not a bettering of man's condition. The cross, in the Person of the Substitute, was the execution of the divine sentence against man as condemned. The black flag flying upon the walls of a prison is not a witness that there is still a period for the culprit's probation, neither is it a token of the culprit's reformation, but it is the voice of the law of the land declaring that the state of the prisoner is so utterly bad that death is his portion.

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Now, how does God, in grace, bring us out of this terrible condition? How does God deal, in blessing, with the question of man's standing according to His own righteousness? He bestows upon man His free gift of righteousness—that *is justification*. Being under judgment, as we are by nature, and guilty of many offences as we are personally, God sets us in a standing of judicial righteousness before Himself. By virtue of the death of Christ, God maintains His justice, and by grace justifies such as believe on Jesus. Ours is blessing upon the ground of righteousness.

Further, having condemned sin in the flesh by the cross of Christ, God introduces those who believe, into a condition of life beyond condemnation. And this is termed justification of life. An accomplished righteousness has been effected by Christ's death. Those who believe are justified by God. But they are not only justified persons; they are brought into a new condition of life before God. They were alive in their sins, Christ by His death answered for them in righteousness, and now God has set them “in Christ,” who is alive from the dead.

The term “justification of life” is abstract, and not a little difficult to understand. When God speaks of our justification in relation to our sins, He tells us that we are justified by the blood of Christ. **(Ch. v. vs. 9.)** When God speaks of our justification in relation to our standing before Him, He presents to us ourselves linked in life with Christ alive from the dead.

Every claim which divine righteousness had against us was answered by the cross, and being justified by God, we are freed from every claim according to the measure of His righteousness. Thus the believer's position before God is judicially according to God's own standard of righteousness, and he himself is “*in Christ*,” who dies no more.

Clearly, then, this state is not that of innocence regained, or of the fallen condition improved. There is no mingling of the two rivers. Each is absolutely distinct from the other. The one uprises from Adam, fallen from innocency and subject to death, the other flows from Christ, who has passed through death, and Who lives to die no more. Innocence was held upon the tenure of a frail man's obedience and was lost. Now the fallen

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condition of man has been judged by God, and set aside for ever. Justification of life is the believer's present standing, and it is his, because Christ, who was condemned in his stead, lives to die no more.

Let us note how God contrasts our old standing with the new into which His grace brings such as believe.

The judgment was of one to
CONDEMNATION.

By one offence unto all men to
CONDEMNATION.

The act of favour of many offences
unto **JUSTIFICATION.**

By one righteousness unto all men
to **JUSTIFICATION** of LIFE.

Not only is man's standing in fault, but his nature also is contrary to God.

IV. WE ARE BY NATURE SINNERS:

By one man's disobedience mankind came to be sinners. Adam overstepped the boundary of obedience. He hearkened not to the direct command, and we, as his children, have his nature, and are sinners. It is as when a man is sold into slavery, not only has he become a slave, but the children he begets are also bondsmen, and grow up into slavery, with the thoughts and feelings natural to the slave. In spite of himself, he sins. He commits the crimes he resolved to shun. Whatever man may do he cannot change his nature. The brand, *sinner*, is upon his brow, as the spots are upon the leopard's skin. He can no more forsake being a sinner than a fish could become a bird, neither has he in him the instinct after divine liberty. An entire change must occur, a radical change; the root is in fault, and cannot be transplanted into God's presence to blossom there. Now what God does is not to help man to become righteous in himself by works, nor to assist man to repair the old garment of unrighteousness by adding thereto a little of the new cloth of righteousness, but what God does is to bring in

IVa. The new standing by grace—those who believe are constituted righteous:

“By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” The Lord was the

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obedient Man upon earth. From His cradle onwards His path was that of unwavering faithfulness. His ear was ever open to His Father's bidding; even from heaven itself we read of Him, "*Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.*" Such was He. And as the one disobedient act of Adam made us sinners, so by the one obedience of the perfect Man — Jesus, in becoming "*obedient to death, even the death of the cross,*" God has made many righteous. The Lord's death, and His enduring divine judgment, results in those, who believe, being constituted righteous before God; "*He hath made Him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*" (2 Cor. v. 21) Thus the slaves not educated or clothed, but he ceases to be a slave. His old condition is gone; he is, in Christ, in a new state. In this—which is his entirely because of what Christ has done—God regards the believer with perfect satisfaction.

First, then, as we have seen, God brings in His *grace* to meet man in his *ruin*; **next**, God brings in *righteousness* for man in his *sinfulness*; now, we have the third thing, *eternal life* brought in for *dying* man. For nearly six thousand years upon this earth has been

V. THE REIGN OF SIN UNTO DEATH:

And death obtained its throne, and sin its rule over the world by Adam's one act. His disobedience was the key which opened the door to their entrance into the world. Sin reigns still, its kingdom is as wide as the world, and its end is death. But God has an answer even to this. He does not reform the old ruler, or alter the kingdom, but God brings in that which is altogether new, and that which is so noble, that the heart of the believer rejoices; God brings in

Va. THE REIGN OF GRACE THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO ETERNAL LIFE.

Grace, upon the ground of righteousness, brings in for the offspring of Adam, sinful and subject to death, new life, eternal life.

Grace reigns upon the principle of righteousness, through what God has done by the cross and resurrection of His Son. Righteousness has throned

THE ROOT OF THE TREE – CHAPTER SEVEN

grace and given it its sceptre and sway. The very being of God is now glorified by the satisfaction made by Christ for sin, and consequently, without, in any degree, setting aside the eternal claims of His throne of justice, God's heart of love can go out in grace to the vilest of sinners and the most resolute of His foes. Whenever we speak of the grace of God to ruined man, we must remember that His grace is seen in the blood, the death, the empty grave of Jesus, in other words, the righteousness; and whenever we bring in the righteousness, there we have grace reigning unto eternal life.

Eternal life is God's answer to the graves and the death which surround us. Adam, the disobedient man, brought death into the world; Christ, the obedient Man, brought in eternal life. Through Him, and from Him, we obtain it, and in Him we have it. And this life is of such perfection that none who have it sigh for the innocence and the condition of things before the fall which Adam lost. It is greater than that which is lost, even as the Son of God, in His adorable Person, is above and beyond comparison with the head of our fallen race.

Once more let us trace these actings of God's grace to man. His gift in grace; His free gift of righteousness; His gift of eternal life and each of those ours, who believe, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Man, alas, too frequently ignores his own ruin by seeking to raise himself to God, and thus despises the gift brought to him in grace; and by trying to work out a righteousness acceptable to God, he practically denies his own sinfulness, and so despises the free gift of righteousness brought to him in grace; and by saying he hopes to obtain eternal life in the future, he blinds his eyes to the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, which is now, to-day, but never tomorrow, set before the sinner.

The glory of God, in these His gifts shines in the words *“Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

“The gift in grace is by one Man, Jesus Christ.” (v. 15.)

“The free gift of righteousness . . . by One, Jesus Christ.” (v. 17.)

THE ROOT OF THE TREE – CHAPTER SEVEN

And “*grace reigns through righteousness unto Eternal life by Christ Jesus our Lord.*” (v. 21) May it, therefore, be ours to accept not only what God has said respecting the tree—human nature—that tree the root of which is ruin; the stem, sinfulness; the fruit, death; but also to accept God's thoughts of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, by Whom the priceless gifts of His grace are brought to us. Let us seek for nothing from the old tree of self, but let us make everything of the new tree. For Christ is our life and through Him righteousness and free grace are ours.

God' s way of meeting man's condition as that of a sinner departed from Him, and whose nature is actively evil, is this:—

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST. (Gal. ii. 20; Rom. vi. 6.)

DEAD WITH CHRIST. (Rom. vi. 8; Col. ii. 12.)

BURIED WITH CHRIST. (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12.)

And God introduces those who believe into a new state—He sets them *in Christ* alive from the dead to die no more.

DEAD IN SINS – ALIVE IN CHRIST – CHAPTER EIGHT

WE may liken the way in which the truth of God respecting man's condition is presented in the epistle to the Romans, to tracing a river upwards in order to find its source, while in the epistle to the Ephesians, the course of the river is followed from the fountain-head. In the first case we are given to see our sinfulness by our actions, and then are shown that the spring of our actions is the sin of our nature; in the other we begin with the fact of what our nature is. In one case man is seen in the activities of his sins; in the other he is looked upon as dead in sins. Yes,

DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS

is God's record of man. Of all, the unalterable record stands, "*All are dead.*" (2 Cor. v. 14.) To all it is said, "*Ye must be born again.*" (John iii. 7.)

God declares the fact He alone is judge of what man is by nature. We can only bow to His word and believe; but nothing is harder, even in common life, than for a man to believe he is what he is. The miser loves his niggard ways, and his pleasure consists in hoarding; the proud man loves his haughtiness, for to him pride is nobility; the creature of gaiety delights in the butterflyism which the thoughtful pity and the diligent despise. A generous man, however, can discern the miser and a gracious man see through the proud one. From His infinite standard of holiness the eternal God regards man just as he is, weighs his very being, and declares of man that his spiritual state is a "*dead*" state.

And faith thus speaks: "*We thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead (or have all died): and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again,*" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) He died, and by His death (which demonstrates man's moral state as well as meets it) those who believe on Him "live." Of those who live, Christ is the head. And thus it is that Adam is "the figure of Him which was to come," for as Adam is the head of the fallen human race, so Christ is the head of those, who live in the power of the new and resurrection-life which He has communicated to them.

Thus, then, is man's spiritual state of death and the new life which is ours in

DEAD IN SINS – ALIVE IN CHRIST – CHAPTER EIGHT

Christ set forth; “*But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.*”
(Eph. ii. 4, 5.)

The Gentile—the “ye” of the epistle to the Ephesians— “*walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*” **(v. 2.)**

The Jew—the “we”— “*all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*” **(v. 3.)**

Godless Gentiles and religious Jews were by nature alike, “*dead in sins,*” yet were alike loved by God in His great love, and such as believed had new life imparted to them by the power of the Holy Ghost when in that condition.
(v. 4, 5, 6.)

The life that comes through Christ is in no sense the polluted stream of Adam-life purified. It is entirely new. Christ is its fountain-head; from His Person its river flows to dead sinners. Christ is “*the life,*” and “*He that hath the Son hath life.*” **(I John v. 12.)**

Yes, new life is imparted to dead sinners— the new life flowing from the risen One, Christ! So wonderful is this grace, and so slow are our hearts to realize it, that the Holy Spirit puts into the apostle's lips the petition for us: “*That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.*” **(Eph. i.)**

This then is the divine record of man—

DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS.

And God's new state for man lies here—

QUICKENED WITH CHRIST. (Eph. ii. 5; Col. ii. 13.)

DEAD IN SINS – ALIVE IN CHRIST – CHAPTER EIGHT

RISEN WITH CHRIST. (COL III. 1.)

There cannot exist a single pulsation of the divine life within the soul till the life be there. God took us up in our nature state and gave us new life out of the aboundings of His own heart of love. He exercised the prerogative of His own nature, and by His own power communicated the new life to us when we were dead towards Him.

“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph. ii. 8, 9.)

IN the roots of a tree lies its strength—of which its fruit is the result. Pluck off all the fruit, yet another crop will grow, and of the same nature as before; but cut off the roots, and the tree withers away and dies. Our actions are the outcome of our nature—the fruit, not the root, of our being. Self, “I,” is the source of what we do. Bitter waters flow from a bitter spring, bad actions from a bad nature. A fountain does not send forth both sweet and bitter water; a tree does not bring forth good and corrupt fruit. Our nature, ruined and alienated from God, is incapable of pleasing Him, and, because it is our nature, cannot be altered. God forgives our sins, but He has condemned our nature. The blood shed upon Calvary cleanses us from all sin, but the death of Christ does not change our nature—it is God's judgment of it, and, in His sight, its judicial end. It frequently happens that the believer, after being assured of the forgiveness of his sins, is distressed and burdened, because he finds that in himself he is only evil. Resolutions to become different result in disappointment, and all the efforts put forth to be holy tend to the practical discovery that, “*in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*” This experience is for future blessing, and since the gospel of God shows more than the forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit will not allow His people to rest short of its full blessing.

We say God does not forgive or improve the nature which bears the fruit of sin, neither does the blood of Christ cleanse it, nor the Holy Ghost sanctify it, and thus it is clear that our pathway to blessing and deliverance lies in believing God's word upon the matter. We should

TAKE GOD'S SIDE AGAINST OURSELVES:

And since God has shown that the very spring of our being is corrupt in His sight, and that He has passed sentence upon it, and condemned it by the cross of His Son, when “*He was made sin for us,*” what we have to do is, to bow to the divine fact, and to deal with ourselves accordingly.

It was when we believed God's word about the blood of Jesus and our sins that we obtained peace respecting our sins before God; and when we believe what God says concerning the death of Christ in connection with

our nature, we have peace with God about ourselves. God declares that our old nature is condemned in His sight, and we have to treat it as such. No one would seek to educate or to nourish a corpse, neither should the believer endeavour to reform nor improve; to pander to or to flatter self. We should not preach sobriety to the dead body of a drunkard, or humility to that of a proud person; neither should we eulogize the lifeless frame of the most amiable or wise. The dead body is a grievous thing which must of necessity be put out of sight. God has, in His grace, enabled us to treat ourselves, children of fallen Adam, as dead, and thus to take His side, by faith, respecting self, that self which He condemned eighteen hundred years ago when His Son died upon the cross; for He has declared that

“Our old man is crucified with Christ.” (Rom. vi. 6.)

It is comparatively simple to believe what Christ did *for* us: *“Christ died for our sins,”*

He paid our debt of sins for us, He bore the punishment we deserved; but more, we have a part *with* Christ through His cross. Our *“old man,”* our fallen nature, *“sin in the flesh,”* the tree which bears the fruit, *“is crucified with Christ.”* God so regarded us when Christ was made sin for us, that in His mind, we were judicially associated with Christ when He was crucified. A prisoner might obtain a substitute to take his place and to die for him; and then the law would accept the death of the substitute as the death of the prisoner, so that in a sense it might be said the prisoner died *with* the substitute. In the mind of God we have been crucified with Christ; and now God looks upon us in Christ, Who dies no more—in Christ, who is risen out of death and from among the dead. Therefore we have to believe God's word about our *“old man,”* and to count it to be crucified with Christ. Power enters the soul wherever faith opens the door.

The love of sin in a man, and the rule of sin over him are broken when death comes. How can a dead man long for the evil he once followed, or how can sin be longer his ruler? And

“WE HAVE DIED (OR ARE DEAD UNTO SIN.” (v. 2.)

*It is not said that as progress is made in holiness we shall die unto sin, because the dying unto sin relates solely to our having been crucified with Christ. The glorious doctrines of deliverance taught in the latter portion of the Romans were in danger of being turned by a licentious spirit into an occasion for fleshly liberty. The answer to such a spirit is— “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” The sinner alive to sin, but dead to God, might practice sinning at his list; not so he, who was alive to God, but dead to sin by the cross of Christ. We have to believe this great first truth of the **6th of Romans**, which is really the starting-point of practical victory over self.*

And this first principle the Apostle illustrates by the first practice in Christianity. He reminds us that we took up the profession of Christ by baptism— *“Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized to Jesus Christ were*

BAPTIZED TO HIS DEATH.” (v. 3.)

Our starting-point as Christians is Christ's death. We begin Christianity with a crucified Christ. We were not baptized to His incarnation, which was the beginning of the holy life of Jesus upon earth; but to His death—the end of our sinful life in judgment. We were not baptized to become followers of Messiah, as were those baptized by John and the Lord's disciples before the cross, but to become followers of the risen Lord, who died that we might live.

Goodness or badness ends at death, and in Christ's death faith sees the end of man, as man, before God, and by baptism, owns that the only way of becoming Christ's is by Christ's death, for

“WE HAVE BEEN BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM UNTO DEATH.” (v. 4.)

“With Him!” Here is an association with Christ; with Him *“unto death.”* In burial, the body is put out of sight; it is hidden to be seen no more. And God has done this for our *“old man”* which was crucified with Christ. God

has hidden it from His view. The body is placed beneath the water in baptism, symbolizing the hiding in the grave of Christ of what we are in self and by nature. No place of any kind is thus allowed for self—our old Adam— but in the death of Christ, hence

“WE HAVE BEEN PLANTED TOGETHER IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH.” (v. 5.)

There has been a like place for us, and for the dead body of our crucified Lord and Saviour. Faith should and does love to accept the place for self which Christ took in grace for us. We are identified with Christ in His death. Nothing teaches us our badness like the death of Christ for us, and when we fully realize what the need was, that He should die for us, it is not difficult to bow to the fact that our place is the place He took for us, and that we have been planted together in death. Our power is in Christ risen from the dead; but a risen Christ cannot be known until we apprehend the meaning of a dead Christ, neither can we know, morally, our power *in* Him risen until we have accepted our place *with* Him dead.

The Christian has two natures; his own fallen nature, and the divinely given nature. He is like those creatures whose early existence is beneath the water in the mud of a river, which, after a while, receive a new force that draws them up to the surface of the stream. This enables them to shake off their old coil and rise into the air beautiful and bright-winged, to delight in the sunshine and atmosphere above the water. Henceforth the air is their home, and their former element would be to them destruction. But with the Christian, alas, there is always the tendency to return to the mud of the stream. It is only as we bear in our minds Christ's death, His going down beneath the deep waters of judgment in order to bring us up into resurrection-life and blessing, that we have the practical enjoyment of the place which is ours in Christ.

Christ having passed through judgment and beyond death, and being our life, we are not only told to believe these truths, but to count the facts of His death and of His resurrection as realities in our selves.

“RECKON YE ALSO YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.” (v. 11.)

Faith counts things that are not as though they were. If our “*old man*,” our fallen nature, were actually gone, we should not have to reckon ourselves to be dead, for the old nature would not exist; but because Christ died unto sin once, and liveth unto God for ever, we are to count ourselves to be what Christ was and is for us. We are not told that there is no sin in us, nor that the flesh is not in us, nor that “*our old man*” is taken out of us, but we are told that we are in Christ, and are bidden live as to those that are alive unto God in Him. Our “*old man*” is crucified with Him, for a practical end:

(1) “*That the body of sin might be destroyed,*” or annulled.

That it might have its power taken away. That self should not be the asserting force within us, which it is its nature to be. The power and force of self are annulled, the Spirit applying to our hearts what the cross of Christ for us and what our being crucified with Christ is.

(2) “*That henceforth we should not serve sin.*”

The mastership of sin is frustrated by death. Sin ruled over us when we were alive in the energy of our fallen wills. But who rules dead men? We obtained our discharge from the old ruler by death. He that is dead is freed, or discharged, from sin. He is out of the dominion of his former master. We are not said to be free from sin, as if the longing after sin, and the tendency to sin, were not in us; but we are said to be freed from the dominion of sin, and, consequently, it is our shame to practise sin—to commit it. There is no license left for the Christian to say “I cannot help practising evil ways, I am so weak and sin is so strong in me that I cannot help it.” God has given us a place of liberty.

Hence, because we are freed from the rule of sin, it is said-

(1) “*Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body.*” (v.12.)

(2) *“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.” (v.13.)*

(3) *“Sin shall not have dominion over you.” (v.14.)*

This, then, was the form of doctrine delivered to the believers in Rome, and which they obeyed from the heart, as the Apostle thanked God. (v.17.) The doctrine related to deliverance from self by the death of Christ, and His resurrection power; and faith therein, mingled with obedience, gave them liberty from the mastership of sin. *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey.” (v.16.)* Let us *“then yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead” (v.13);* let us surrender ourselves to Him as those whom He has given eternal life in Christ.

The practical issues of the past and the present service in daily life are summarized in the following table:

THE PAST SERVICE	THE PRESENT SERVICE
<p style="text-align: center;">POSITION</p> <p><i>Ye were the servants of sin. (V. 17.)</i></p> <p>Ye yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity. (V. 19)</p> <p>When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. (v. 20)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">POSITION</p> <p><i>Ye are the servants of righteousness (v. 18.)</i></p> <p>Now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. (v. 19)</p> <p>Now being made free from sin, ye became servants of God. (v. 22)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">FRUIT</p> <p><i>Shame – and the end death. (v. 21)</i></p> <p><i>The wages of sin is death. (v. 23)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FRUIT</p> <p><i>Holiness and the end, everlasting life. (v. 23)</i></p> <p><i>The gift of God is eternal life. (v. 23)</i></p>

CHAPTER NINE

And in the following table of truths of doctrine and practice, from the 6th of Romans, the fact of Christ's *death* and *resurrection*, and the practical issues therefrom to our faith and obedience, are set out:

“We have *died*, or are dead, unto sin.” (v. 2.)

“We were baptized unto His *death*.” (v. 3)

“We were buried with Him by baptism unto *death*.” (v. 4.)

“We have been planted together in the likeness of His *death*.” (v. 5.)

“Our old man is *crucified* with Him.” (v. 6.)

“He that is *dead* (or has *died*) is freed from sin.” (v. 7.)

“*Dead* with Christ.” (v. 8.)

The above statements of the divine word, it must be remembered, are not put forth as attainment, but given as facts. Therefore what we have to do is simply to believe God's word about ourselves, and our part with Christ in His death for us.

“*If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.*” (v. 8.)

“*Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath dominion over Him no more. He died unto sin once: He liveth unto God.*” (v. 9, 10.)

Here again both our living with Christ and our being “*alive from the dead*” (v. 13) are determined by Christ's resurrection for us. It is the common privilege of all who believe.

PRACTICAL RESULTS

“*Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” (v. 11.)

CHAPTER NINE

This is not standing or place, but is distinctly the obedience of faith respecting the great facts of Christ's death and resurrection. Here then we may and we do fail. But our failure does not affect God's facts. Our failure to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God through Christ (and instead thereof our trying to improve and curb self, and evolve a life out of self) cannot touch the accomplished results of Christ's death and resurrection, and what that death and resurrection have effected for all believers. Yet, failure to believe and obey this form of doctrine does result in dishonour to God and in sin having the rule over us.

DELIVERANCE FROM SELF – CHAPTER TEN

THERE is a remarkable scripture upon the subject of our last chapter, which concisely gives us the essence of the important truth of the **6th of Romans**. It is this: “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.*” (**Gal. ii. 20.**) Three truths stand before us in this passage:

1. The end of “I”
2. The new life;
3. The power of practical Christianity. *The end of “I.”*

To such as have had no struggle to be free from self, our passage will, we fear, be mystical, and the statements of God respecting human nature, opposed to their common sense. It is only they who have longed for deliverance, that prize God's way of freedom.

It is our nature to do certain things; we commit sin because our nature is sinful, and it is he who has tried, as in God's presence, to be holy, and has learned how impossible it is to keep evil out of his heart, who knows practically something of the meaning of “I.” He knows what self is by experience of himself.

But there is a truer way of learning what “I” means than by experience of self, and that is by looking to Christ upon the cross, hanging there in our place, suffering there what we merit—there as our substitute. For if Jesus took our place, we deserve what Jesus suffered in our stead. Consider how God forsook Him when He was made sin for us. Consider that Jesus Himself justified God as the Holy One, when forsaken upon our account, saying: “*Thou art holy,*” and consider also what the wrath-bearing of Christ was, what the cross was, and thus enter into the deep dark meaning of “I,” which caused the Lord His woe yes,

CHRIST VERILY LOOK OUR PLACE.

Many accept in a general way the truth of Christ being their substitute, without being fully and believingly clear that they were really, in God's sight, with Christ in the place He took. During one of the late wars a man who

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was called to serve in the army obtained a substitute. At the close of the battle, when the list of the killed and wounded was made public, amongst them was recorded the name of him who had obtained the substitute. The substitute had died upon the field, and the man for whom he died was counted amongst the dead. After a while, soldiers being scarce, the man was called upon to serve again, but he pleaded to this effect, "I am dead; my name is written amongst the dead; and indeed I have died in the person of my substitute: therefore I cannot serve." His plea was received; he was accepted might be read as a victory over self by self- strength, and might be understood as spiritual attainment, but "*I am crucified with Christ,*" which is a fact of grace, and accordingly belongs to every believer. God has not only taken our sins and laid them upon the Sin-bearer, but He has crucified our "*old man*" with Christ, therefore in His sight the "I" of the believer is dead. Let us take God simply at His word, remembering that the highest faith is that which most resembles childhood's simplicity, and by faith count ourselves to be the dead thing which the Divine fact of a crucified Christ discovers us to be.

THE NEW LIFE:

"Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Here also is a fact, the blessings of which belong to all Christians. New life is no attainment; "*this is the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son; he that hath the Son hath life.*" (1 John v. 11, 12.) If it were an attainment it were no gift; and the gift is bestowed upon those who have no merit are crucified with Christ. Thus God presents us with self dead in His sight, and Christ living in us.

Now, what is that which, in a divine way, lives within the person of the believer? For we read— "*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.*" Does this new life—this God- given life—enter into our old, fallen nature? Does "I" reappear with Christ helping it. Is this new life, fallen nature Christianized— modernized? Ah! how carefully does the gospel bar out self! Were it not so, "I" would reappear dressed in new garments, and would stand erect, as vigorous and more reliant than before; for what kind of "I" is more difficult to convince of its utter death-state in the sight of

DELIVERANCE FROM SELF – CHAPTER TEN

God than religious “I”? What, then, is this new life? “*I live, yet not I;*” not the “I,” my fallen nature, my own self, which was and is crucified with Christ, “*but Christ liveth in me*”—Christ, who has left the sins of His people behind Him forever—Christ, who was dead but is alive again, lives in the believer.

Christ and “I” stand here in contrast. The holy desires, the spiritual upspringings, the risings Godward, the peace and gladness in the divine presence, all that which expresses itself as divine life in the believer, is Christ in me, not “I.”

Moreover it is as true of a believer, that Christ liveth in him, as it is true that his own nature is a dead thing in the sight of God. He is not to look to himself or in himself for resources, but to “*yield himself to God as one alive from the dead.*”

We again beg our reader to bear in mind that what we have thus far spoken of is not attainment. Self is judicially gone in the cross of Christ, and when we believe, Christ lives within us. This is the portion—whether enjoyed or not enjoyed—of all God's people. A man may have a fortune left him, yet because he does not know of the fact, he may describe himself as penniless. Thousands of God's people with all the wealth of the gospel theirs, are mourning and doubting whether after all they are Christians, and so will they mourn, until they believe God. We now come to attainment, to **the power of practical Christianity.**

“And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

This emphatically is attainment, and appeals to such as, by grace, believe the facts already put forth. It may be missed, or not lived out. For there are certain blessings by grace the common portion of all Christians, whilst there are others relating to our walk, which it is our responsibility not to miss. The Apostle speaks of himself as a person, as an individual believer, and tells us that he was, day by day, hour by hour, living by faith. He was not living by experiences, or by feelings, or by keeping the law, but upon another principle altogether. To live practically by faith was the sum and

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substance of Paul's daily life below. His faith was a carrying out of the divine principle of self being dead, and Christ being the believer's life. The life in the flesh might last one month or a series of years, but short or long there was to him only one way of living, viz., by faith.

And not only was his life that of faith, but it was the faith of the Son of God, the risen Christ, He who had borne his sins, but who had gone to glory. Paul's faith connected his soul with Christ, where Christ is, and this affected every detail of his life below. His life in its character obtained its energy from the Christ who is the source of the life, and the affections of the Apostle were fixed upon His life, and Christ Himself was the object that Paul had before him while upon the earth.

In such a daily life self is practically out of sight, as by the death of Christ self is judicially out of God's sight, and Christ alone is seen as He who lives in His people. The Christian can indeed say our *"life is hid with Christ in God,"* and his practical walk ought to express the absent Christ to the world. The world cannot see the source of the Christian's life, nor the object for whom the Christian lives, but the world should be able to see *"Christ in you."*

None, save such as are fully delivered according to the measure of the first two points of our passage, can tread the path of liberty this third sets forth. This life of daily faith of the Son of God cannot be practically known by those who question the blessings brought to them by Christ's death and resurrection. A believer endeavouring to draw sweet waters from the bitter fountain of self, or seeking to wash the Ethiopian white, is not upon the ground of reckoning himself to be dead, and has not faith in the declaration of God, *"Ye are dead."* He sets Christ aside as his only strength by his self efforts. Self must be counted what God says it is, *"dead,"* must be left alone if the practical life of faith of the Son of God would be known. Power for living the life of faith flows from

FAITH IN THE PERSON OF THE LIVING CHRIST

Thus, while the principle of the believer's daily walk is faith, our passage says it is *"the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."* First,

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faith which attaches itself directly to the Son of God in His risen glory—faith which dwells in spirit with Jesus, now out of the world, and at the Father's right hand; but next, faith which, while connecting itself with the risen and exalted Jesus, remembers His past love and past sufferings, "*Who loved me and gave Himself for me.*"

It is the faith of one whose heart is tender towards his own blessed Substitute. We recall the touching story of him, who, travelling through the United States shortly after the terrible civil war there came to a newly made grave, by the side of which a man was weeping. Moved by the sorrower's distress, the traveller turned and expressed his sympathy, and at length enquired, "Friend, let me ask to whose memory have you raised this grave?"

"Sir," the man replied, the tears coursing down his cheeks, "I was called to the war: he took my place—he died for me." Shortly afterwards this short simple inscription was placed over the grave - "To the Man who died for me."

Our lives should be monuments of gratitude to "Him who liveth and was dead;" the memory of the cross should ever be fresh within our breasts. For never does genuine practical faith, by any means, omit or forget the love of Jesus in *dying* for His people; nay, the more Christ in glory is personally and experimentally known, the more does the soul love to repeat, the Son of God "*loved me and gave Himself for me.*"

This passage, Christian reader, is a noble confession of faith. "I," self, absolutely gone from the sight of God— "*crucified with Christ.*" Life mine, which naught can defile or harm, for it is "*no longer I, but Christ, who liveth in me.*"

And, lastly, practical behaviour, based upon love to the Lord, conformable to the truths of the great facts of His cross and resurrection.

DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW – CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE conflict of the **7th chapter of Romans** seems to come in very strangely after the peace and the deliverance of the **5th and 6th chapters**, and to make a strange introduction to the triumph of the **eighth**, observed a young believer. “It is a parenthesis, we answered, and in full accordance with the general plan of the epistle, which, after developing the fulness of grace, takes up the law and those who are under it. In the early chapters this is seen when our sins are treated of; and in the latter the same plan is found when God's governmental dealings with Israel are in question; and, in the portion before us, we have it once more, but from an experimental point of view.”

As a matter of fact, numbers of Christians do find themselves in this **7th of Romans parenthesis**; and some remain there a very long time; while a few go so far as to say, that the condition therein described is that which gives the truest evidence of divine life existing in the soul.

The **7th of Romans** describes a believer without deliverance of soul. “I,” “me,” continually recur in the experimental part of the chapter, and only at its close does the note of victory ring out: “*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

No doubt, if the believer be really established upon the ground of the **6th chapter** “*Dead to sin,*” “*buried with Christ,*” “*crucified with Him,*” “*freed from sin,*” he *is* delivered from the conflict and consequent experiences of the seventh. But many Christians are practically “*under the law,*” and like the Galatian believers have to be asked, “*Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*” (**iii. 3.**) Though Christ was once joyfully accepted as their all, and they rejoiced in Him, yet they are now occupied with self; “*Where is then the blessedness you spake of?*” (**iv. 15.**)

The reason of the loss of the blessedness is, they have gone back to the standing of being alive in the flesh before God; they have forsaken the ground of “*the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free,*” and have become debtors to the law! Indeed, with many believers, it might be almost thought that Christ was but the introduction to Moses. That His death procured the payment of sin's debt, so that the debt being paid, the believer might be in a

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position to keep the law, and that, accordingly, the law, and not Christ, might be the Christian's rule of life.

The flesh, "I," is not reckoned to be dead. True, it is looked upon as being weak and wilful, but still, as capable of being made into a better thing under the hand of the law. We do not say that such a believer looks to his own efforts for his justification, or as his ground of hope for getting to heaven, but we do say that he does look to his obedience to the law to fit him, in some way, for God's presence, and to make him different and more holy. Thus it is forgotten, that not only are we justified by faith, but that the daily life of the soul must be that of faith, for *"the just shall live by faith."* For the believer needs hourly supplies of Christ's power, which Christ does not grant, so long as, by going back to Moses, the Christian practically affirms, that within himself there is something which can be worked upon. Now, *"the law is not of faith; but the man that doeth them shall live in them,"* and for the believer to act as if he had strength of his own, is practically to deny the grace of God (**Gal. iii. 1 2**), that he is *"buried with Christ," "crucified with Christ,"* and that in Christ and Him alone, he lives to God.

The believer, in the case we have touched upon, notwithstanding that he once knew the blessedness of forgiveness, has so sunk down into the quicksands of self-effort that his constant cry is, *"Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"*

Other believers are to be found in the experiences of the **7th of Romans**, because they have never been taught the fulness of God's good news to man. The life of those who believe upon the Lord Jesus has, by the Holy Spirit's action, a yearning after holiness, and where the written word of God, which gives the way of holiness, is not understood, Christians go to Moses, instead of to Christ, for sanctification. Having begun in the spirit, they hope to be made perfect by the flesh.

It is no light thing to be delivered from the law. God gave the law to man to obey, but man has broken it, and cannot obey it. And God has now given Christ by whose death man may be freed from the condemning law. For if we are not delivered from the law by grace, we shall be doomed to bear the

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eternal consequences of having broken it, as it is written; *“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”* (**Gal. iii. 10.**) Men speak of the presumption of faith which believes God, and thanks Him for forgiveness and peace through Christ; but what shall we say of the presumption of unbelief, which brings to God the fruits of the evil soil of our hearts! Such presumption is like that of Cain, who *“brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.”* (**Gen. iv. 3.**) That ground, which the Lord had cursed for the sake of Adam's sin. (**iii. 17.**) Let us remember, that to Cain's offering the Lord had not respect; and that, however religious a man may be, it is of no avail unless his religion be according to God. Alas, how many professing Christians in our day, in *“going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”* (**Rom. x. 3.**)

Let us look into the **7th of Romans**, with the figure of a sick man—his pain, his symptoms, his disease, his physician, and his deliverance, before us.

THE PAIN:

Now pain is not disease, but if there be an ache anywhere in our body, it is because some part of the frame is injured or unhealthy. It is not everyone who groans with the pain of the experience of the **7th of Romans**; there are many believers who have not yet felt the pangs it describes, and such believers will hardly enter into the description of them; for in this spiritual exercise we must have gone through the suffering detailed, if we would enter into the case of such as suffer from it. Thus we find, that some who have not for themselves passed through deep and emptying experiences concerning self, by bidding the afflicted soul *“You can and you *must* believe,”* really throw the hearer back upon self effort and legality. Such teaching does not lead to Christ as the Saviour and the Strength of His people. Again, there are some who bid their hearers believe that to live a life of doubts and fears, groans and bondage, moans and misery, is the only thing which is Christianity! The reason of this is evident.

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Such teachers have no notion of a healthy Christianity and of deliverance themselves, and, therefore, can see signs of life only in pain and sorrow. No doubt we can tell that a man is not dead by hearing his cries, but such evidence of vitality betokens disease or wounds, and it would be a slander upon God and His good news to man, should we accept as genuine Christianity such tokens of life. The evangelist should be like the doctor, who not only knows what disease is by having made the human frame his study, and what remedy to apply by having read about medicine and tested its effects; but, who has also suffered himself, and has partaken of the remedy he prescribes.

Any one suffering the soul sickness of the **7th of Romans** cannot but cry out; for it is such an awful soul-pain that it is impossible to be still. The spiritual whereabouts of the sufferer is at once detected by his sorrowful lament, "*Oh, wretched man that I am!*"

THE SYMPTOMS

Are thus expressed—"*That which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I.*" "*The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that do I*" (v. 15, 19). Ten times over in these two short verses does the sufferer cry out "I." It requires no argument to prove to a man, who exclaims, "I" suffer, what self is. It is not merely that he laments bad things which he has done, but the misery of what his heart is; that he has no power over himself whatever; that within him there is a power which is against him; and that, "self," "I," is that power. He hates the things he does; what he wishes to do he cannot do. Does our reader know those symptoms in his own soul? Has he ever known them? If this be his present grief, he is not delivered. If he never has thus felt, he does not appreciate what deliverance is.

THE DISEASE ITSELF

We discover disease by symptoms. Pain makes the patient miserable; but it is to the disease itself the doctor addresses his attention. He does not attack the pain, he wars against the disease. And though it is not every doctor who

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will tell his patient his real condition, if he be hopelessly ill, yet God is love, and loves His people too well to allow them to remain in ignorance of their real state. His word speaks the truth clearly enough; the *pain*, which causes the groans, “*Oh, wretched man that I am;*” the *symptoms*, which cry of self continually—what I do, what I do not do, what I love, what I hate—are all from this incurable constitutional *disease*—“**IN ME, THAT IS IN MY FLESH, DWELLETH NO GOOD THING.**”

The Apostle said, “*I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing*”. He had practically learned it. It would be impossible to *know* this fact, and yet to be trying to be better, as it would be impossible to *know* it and still to be looking to self for power. The Apostle gives us an experience; and no man gives an experience till he has passed out of the state he describes. A drowning man could not write about what he felt; he would struggle to be saved; but when saved he could calmly tell us what drowning feels like. It is a mistake to suppose that the groans of the **7th** and the liberty of the **8th chapters of Romans** are at one and the same time the experience of any believer. He who knows the liberty of the **8th chapter** has assuredly come out of the bondage of the **7th**; and we as surely know when he is out of the thrall by his triumphant cry, “*I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,*” as we know when he is in it by his lament, “*Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?*”

The root of the pain, which to the soul, having life in Christ, produces the distressing symptoms, is the utter helplessness and badness of self—incurable self. Yet who has not striven and struggled to bring a good thing out of himself? Who has not resolved and been miserable over his broken resolutions? Who has not laboured in vain, and yet laboured again? Be sure of this, nature, self, “I,” is not to be remedied.

THE PHYSICIAN

A physician is spoken of in the chapter; “*I speak to them that know the Law,*” The Law then is the physician. Now there are two ways of knowing a physician. We may know his carriage, and bow to him; this is knowing him by sight; and in this way many know the Ten Commandments; they know

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them by seeing them written up in church, or by having learnt them as a bible lesson. But we may also know the physician by having been under his treatment—know him by having tasted his drugs and having felt his knife; and this is experimental knowledge. Thousands sing and say the Commandments and are never “wretched;” but the experimental knowledge produces a cry.

Does our reader know the law by being under it? Has he ever honestly tried to keep the law and not sin, to do what the law bids him? And did the law make our reader better? What saith the scripture? Simply this, the law makes a man feel worse than ever; “*I had not known sin, but by the law.*” (v. 7.) It does not cure self at all; and it was never intended by God that it should do so.

The question is likely to arise, If this be so, if the effects produced are these, “*Is the law sin?*” (v. 7.) God forbid. The law is spiritual; it is of God, and from God. The point is that we *are sin*. The tool is good, but the wood is rotten. The best of workmen, with the finest of instruments, could not carve a flower out of a crumbling piece of wood. The medicine is good, but there is no strength within the patient to enable him to benefit by it. God tried man under the law, just as a workman might try what kind of thing the wood he would fashion was like; but since the cross of Christ God has not had man under probation. The law said, “Do this yourself and live.” The gospel says, “Believe in Christ and live.” The law demanded righteousness of man; the gospel brings salvation to man.

A MAN'S MORAL FEELINGS BEFORE KNOWING THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE LAW

Are now described: “*Without the law sin was dead—I was alive without the law once.*” Immediately, however, he applied the law to his own case, took its medicine, as it were, his eyes were opened, and he became sensible to his condition; “*But when the commandment came sin revived and I died.*” It stirred up the evil of his heart. Not that it made his heart worse, but it made him feel his badness. The law said, “*Thou shalt not covet;*” thou shalt not have an acquiring or a grasping desire; and no sooner did the commandment go

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forth not to wish for a special thing, than it roused up the bad nature to long for that which was forbidden. Like a child who, when told not to look into the basket, immediately desires to do it, so poor, weak, and sinful human nature, when told by the law of God not to covet, immediately falls a longing. It is not that the commandment makes the child naughty, but the fact of the prohibition proves what the child is. The motions of sin are thus rendered active by the law. Sin exists; the nature is there; but the desires of sin are brought into action by the law bidding them be silent. And this sense of what self is, wrings from the broken heart of the believer the cry, “*Ob, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?*”

THE DELIVERANCE

But is it just to blame the physician because the patient has a bad constitution? Shall we say, as some, the law has nothing to do with us, because it cannot cure us? No, the law is “*holy and just, and good;*” there is no fault in the law. “*The commandment was to life.*” The fault lies in self, not in the physician and his treatment.

The law cannot give life. “*If there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law*” (**Gal. iii. 21**); this is not its province. It *demand*s righteousness. Neither can it keep alive, for where are they to whom it was said, “*Do this, and thou shalt live?*” Are not their graves with us?

But if the law does not give life, nor keep alive, does it not deliver? Nay, nor was it ever intended to do so. Whence, then, is deliverance? How does the patient in a hospital, having a painful and incurable disease, escape the doctor's treatment and his own pains? There is only one way of freedom for him. So long as he remains in the hospital, he will be miserable; so long as he is what he is he will suffer. He will not leave the hospital, for he is too ill, and he cannot get free from himself. How, then, shall he become free? *By death!* There is no other way of escape for him. He cannot be cured, because he is incurable, and the more medicine he takes the more it proves his state.

DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW – CHAPTER ELEVEN

DEATH IS THE ONLY DELIVERANCE

So says the scripture of him at whose spiritual pains and symptoms we have glanced: “*Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;*” “*Dead to that wherein ye were held;*” (see margin.) The law remains in its dignity, but poor, wretched “I” is delivered by being crucified with Christ, and by escaping from the law by the *death of Christ*. And when faith reckons self to be *dead*, and *life* to be alone in Christ, the deliverance is experienced.

We Quote At Length the **Fourth Verse of This Chapter**—

“My brethren, ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ. That ye should be married to another, Even to Him who is raised from the dead, That we should bring forth fruit unto God—”

For herein lies the germ of the whole question. We are not by nature dead to the law (**see 1 Tim. i. 8-10**), but grace has come in, and a new thing has occurred—“*We are become dead.*” This marks an era in the soul's history; and the manner in which this was accomplished is by the body of Christ—the dead body of Christ upon the cross, which is the judicial end of self, and the freedom of self from the law. We died with Christ, and thus are dead to that wherein we were held. A prisoner is sentenced to die, but he dies before his sentence is executed, and thus escapes the law which would have put him to death. Surely none would say that he was a *better* man for dying. And because of our utter badness Christ died for us, and thus, by His death, we escape from under the law which demanded goodness and obedience from us in vain. This is God's grace for His believing people. But if a man will not have Christ, and lives on in his own righteousness, as he terms it, and dies without Christ, then he will have to bear in his own person throughout eternity the awful penalty of having broken God's law and rejected God's Son.

We have also the new place, which Christ has acquired by resurrection; it is not as upon our old ground—as alive in our old state, that we are married to another, but as beyond the jurisdiction of the law, as alive unto God, that the union occurs with Him, who is raised from the dead.

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It is in this position and thus connected with Christ that we bring forth fruit unto God—spiritual fruit, in which God has pleasure. When a man is under the law he is always trying in his own strength to be obedient—he is trying to make the weeds of his garden become beautiful flowers; but when he knows his connection with Christ risen from the dead, he serves in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, We are not under law, we are under grace; not under the rod of the schoolmaster, but under the guidance of the Spirit. Old things are passed away, all things are become new, and all things are of God.

“THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION”– CHAPTER TWELVE

THE first few verses of the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans are the summing up of the truths opened out in the three preceding chapters of that epistle, and the result of these truths is stated in these glorious words-

“THERE IS, THEREFORE, NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.”

Two reasons are given for this statement: the first, based upon the doctrine of the **6th chapter**; the second, upon that of the **7th**. God has His “*therefore*” for the security of His people, and it is their privilege to be aware of it, and to see that their “*therefores*” are God's.

Reason I. *“For the law of the spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”*

What is the law of sin and death? We speak of laws in nature by which, for example, the sun shines and the summer goes, and in virtue of which laws the natural world continues in its course. And, as there is a governing law in nature, so there is, spiritually speaking, one over man and that is “*the law of sin and death.*” God did not make man subject to this; He made him innocent of sin, and not under the necessity of death; but since the fall, the law of sin and death rules over man.

Man is *helpless* to vary the law under which he finds himself. Just as the fish, which, at the approach of danger, fly above the waves, man may make efforts to be free from sin, but his very efforts only demonstrate his inability to deliver himself. The short flights of the fish do not change them into birds, or deliver them from the law of their existence, and they soon drop again into their native element; and man cannot elevate himself out of himself. Nor does he, by efforts to rise above himself, escape from the law under which he is born.

Condemnation is attached to this governing principle of sin and death. Man gravitates to destruction, as the apple falls to the earth. Man does not rise to glory, as the flame ascends upwards. It is not in man's being to direct his course to God and to heaven; alas, it is his nature to get as far away

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from God as possible, and to tread the broad road.

The *extent* of this terrible law of sin and death is as wide as the circle where the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is not found. Everywhere outside of Christ, man is under its power, and wherever he may be, in heathendom, Christendom, circles moral and religious, or in those debased and profane, it matters not.

Let us suppose ourselves in winter time in the arctic regions. No sun is visible, and night continues for many months. The only way to escape from the long, long night would be to quit the arctic regions, and to travel southwards, where the law of daily sunrise and sunset holds sway. To light a candle in the arctic night would not change the character of the long darkness, and man's search after light amounts, at the very highest, to nothing more than illuminating his night; no efforts of his produce the sunlight, or bring him out of nature's darkness into the marvellous light of God.

But *we are made free* from the law of sin and death. God has by His Spirit communicated a new life to us. The spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus has met us in our *helpless and condemned state*, and, being in Christ, who is risen, we are lifted up out of our former condition. The Christian lives in another element from that which was natural to him, and his life exists in Christ Jesus alone.

We may use in illustration of the law of the life which is in Christ freeing the believer from condemnation, that creature typical of resurrection—the butterfly. And who, not knowing its marvellous history, could believe that the slow, creeping caterpillar, becomes the swift and gloriously-winged butterfly? It grovelled and fed amongst the leaves till the time for freedom from its first state arrived. Then it died to its first state, and thus entered upon its chrysalis condition. Death terminated its former existence and its first history, and out of death it rose a creature of beauty to live a new life, to feed upon different food, and to flutter through the sunshine.

Yet far more wonderful is the moral change, the change in habit of life,

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bent of thought, energy of mind—yes, the whole existence of him whom God has truly converted. The evidence is unmistakable, and commands even the respect of those who are not in Christ Jesus. Such an instance is now before us. A man, whose whole life of some forty years had been spent in the pursuit of every kind of evil that could possibly engage him, was turned to God suddenly under the preaching of Christ. His townsmen confess to the unmistakable reality of his new life, his old companions bow before it, and his home testifies to it. Nature's miracle of new life, from the caterpillar to the butterfly, is not to be compared with this miracle of God's grace, which has changed a ringleader in iniquity to a pattern of piety and gentleness.

The Christian has died with Christ to his former state, and out of Christ's death, in the power of His resurrection, he has the new life, and thereby is freed from the old governing law of sin and death. The Spirit of life, which exists alone in Christ, has wrought the believer's deliverance. He does not belong to the old judged state, and being in Christ, “there is, therefore, now no condemnation.”

Reason 11. *“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”*

The law given to man by Moses was rendered ineffective for producing righteousness in man, by reason of the incapacity of man's moral being for obedience to its behests. It was weak through the flesh. The best of laws will not make men good. “*The flesh*,” like an intractable and hopelessly dull scholar, yielded no result to the commands of the “*Schoolmaster*.” And this went on up to the time of, or until, Christ. (**Gal. iii. 24.**) Then God, who gave the law, sent His Son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, not to perfect the work of the law, not to add to its instruction or to continue its efforts to produce good out of man, but to die in the stead of the intractable and unteachable scholar—man. God sent His Son into the world for the question of sin. The law had relation to sin. It forbade sin. Christ came and took up and determined the question. It was by forsaking Him who was His own Son upon the cross that God condemned sin in the flesh,

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and this God did to deliver us, so that, being in Christ Jesus, and having a new life, and a new force in Him, the righteous demands of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE – CHAPTER THIRTEEN

OUR endeavour hitherto has been chiefly to show God's grace to man in his ruin, to lead the heart to God's forgiveness, and to establish it in God's peace, to take away every hope in self, and to fix faith upon Christ alone. We have hardly touched upon our possessions in Christ; but let us not think that Christianity consists merely in forgiveness of sins and deliverance from self: for, as the pot of oil met the widow's need, so does grace meet us. First, that pot of oil gave her enough to pay all her debts, and thus saved her children from bondage; next, it gave her a lifelong sufficiency. And God delivers us from the terrible burden under which we groaned, so that we may live the life of faith of a now risen Christ, and thus rejoice in His fulness.

Let us now endeavour to point out some of our wealth, or, rather, to point to the treasury where the wealth is stored. The power of practical Christianity lies in what we have. The religious man without Christ is constantly trying to obtain something out of himself to give to God; the sceptic is ever telling us that he has done with religion; but the Christian lives in the enjoyment of the blessings wherewith he is blessed—he possesses. The gospel comes to the weary and needy heart with positive good. It brings blessings to man, it fills the soul with satisfaction; it removes want by pouring in exceeding riches. The satisfied sheep lies down when she wants nothing more. The abundance which is ours occasions our rest; *“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.”*

The gospel of our salvation first answers every need which the Spirit of God, by showing us our real condition, awakens within us; next it satisfies all the longings which God Himself, by His Spirit, creates in our souls. Brought, as we are, into a new relationship with our God, we know Him in a new way; we know Christ in a new way. All things are become new to us, and we are made new to enjoy the new things.

Of our blessings, Christ's resurrection is the foundation. Resurrection, which each seed sown in the earth and rising up in new life, and which each waking spring teaches, is the very essence of the gospel of God. Our dull hearts too often travel no further than the benefits of Christ's death; we reach the cross and there sit down. Sometimes the sluggish spirit, having

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found forgiveness by the blood of Jesus, returns to earthly things, resting in forgiveness, not rising above the circumstances around us in the vigour of resurrection-life. The believer is, indeed, a forgiven man, but he is also delivered from the power of Satan, and the world, and death, and himself, in the resurrection of Christ. The blood of the sacrifice has cleansed away his guilt, but he is not only cleansed, he is risen with Christ. He lives already in the life of the eternal spring. Resurrection is the guarantee of our blessings; for “*if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*” (**1 Cor. xv. xvii.**) If Christ be not raised, the Christian’s hope in God is utterly vain. But by Christ’s resurrection we are established in a standing of absolute liberty before God—a standing upon the other side of death, the bright side, where Christ is. He is the “*Resurrection and the Life;*” first the resurrection, then the life. He first overcomes death, and then gives life to them for whom He died. After having borne the judgment and death due to their sins, He imparts, to man dead in sins, eternal life in the power of His resurrection. Death precedes judgment, “*After death the judgment,*” and from death the sinner cannot escape. The Lord has destroyed the power of death, and has taken us out of our state of death in trespasses and sins, and has given us a life which is beyond death and free from judgment.

We are, alas, so occupied with this world and its vanity that we are dull to discover and slow to receive the fulness of our resurrection blessings! Besides which, many of God’s people are, in spirit, trembling upon the Egyptian side of the Red Sea: they are not, in faith, upon resurrection ground. Israel was safe in Egypt when under the shelter of the blood of the slain lamb, but Israel, though equally safe, was in despair when hedged up between the pursuing enemy and the Red Sea. Then came the third day—the day typical of resurrection—and Israel proved God’s power in opening a way for them through the waters. When standing upon the opposite side of the Red Sea, they knew God’s salvation. And, though we are safe the moment we trust Him Who shed His blood for us, yet we know not God’s salvation until we lay hold, by faith, of God’s power in raising Him from the dead, and in bringing us through His death and by His resurrection into perfect deliverance.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE – CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Should there be a reader of this page, still wanting the full assurance of the knowledge of his acceptance before God, let him turn his eye of faith to Christ in the glory of God. The Sin Bearer upon the cross is the Crown Wearer upon the throne; the Forsaken of God upon Calvary is now glorified by God in heaven. Our sins, which nailed Him to the tree, our judgment, which brought Him to death, are gone in His sufferings. Our very selves, like fruitless trees, are cut down and hidden in His grave. His cross and His crown are linked together. There is no separation between having been crucified with Christ and being glorified with Christ. The new life which is ours in our risen Christ should assert itself in our daily walk and ways; it should, like the freshness of spring, hide the death and efface the very memory of the winter of our unconverted days.

From among the numerous blessings which God declares we have by virtue of Christ's resurrection, we will make mention of the following:—

I. WE ARE JUSTIFIED BECAUSE THE LORD IS RISEN.

He was “*raised again for our justification.*” (**Rom. iv. 25.**) God judicially “*made Him to be sin for us,*” but having “*died unto sin once,*” (**vi. 10**), having finished the work given Him to do, the Lord could not be holden of death. The righteous God could not allow that He should be held a captive in the grave, and, therefore, “*He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.*” (**vi. 4.**) And those, who believe on the Lord, those for whom He died and rose again, are regarded, judicially, as occupying the same freedom with Christ from the judgment of sin. God has “*justified them from all things.*” (**Acts xiii. 39.**) Who then shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect (**Rom. viii. 33**) since our judicial standing established by God is perfect?

And more: As the life which we receive through Adam is sinful, and the sentence against man as possessor of it is, “*Thou shalt surely die,*” so we have in Christ, life which is holy, and the possessors of this life are justified persons, connected with Him, who lives to die no more. God imparts to those who believe, the new life in the condition of resurrection, for Christ has passed through death and judgment on man's account.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE – CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Before the fall, man's was *innocent life*.

After the fall, man's was *sinful life*.

In Christ, those who believe, have a *holy life*.

II. OUR SECURITY IS BASED UPON THE TOWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

Here we have an immovable foundation for faith, a divine security. Its measure is nothing less than “*the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead.*” (Eph. i. 19, 20.) God put out His divine energy to raise His Son from the grave, and the same character of power is used by Him to give resurrection-life to us “*even when we were dead in sins.*” And now the secure place which Christ has in resurrection is that which His people occupy spiritually before God; and the life of Christ on high is theirs, though they are still in mortal bodies. An illustration amongst others of Christ and His people having one and the same resurrection place before God, is to be found in the ancient ordinance of Jehovah for Israel. When the harvest was ripe, Israel waved before Jehovah a sheaf as first-fruits, and having presented to Him the sample of that which was about to be ingathered, they reaped their fields, and garnered their grain. The sheaf was part of the harvest. The same quickening power which raised from the bare grain the ears of corn in the wave-sheaf, raised also the ears of corn in all the other sheaves of the harvest. Christ is the first-fruits. He has presented Himself to God, the first-born from among the dead. He is our life, and what He is before God that also, as associated with Him, His people are. We are “*risen with Christ.*” (Col. iii. I.)

III. WE ARE UNITED TO CHRIST, NOT IN INCARNATION, BUT TO HIM RISEN.

“*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*” (John xii. 24.) The Lord being risen out of the grave, has brought “*much fruit,*” even His people to God. There was no union of man with Christ till after Christ died for man. Had He gone back

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE – CHAPTER THIRTEEN

to glory without dying, He had ever continued in the solitary holiness of His humanity.

We should have remained sinful, for our fallen humanity could not be joined to His sinless humanity. But His death for us has separated our sins from us, and us from the judgment due to them; it has separated us from our old standing as guilty before God, and from all the consequences due to that standing. There is no union with Him save in the new life and by the Spirit.

From the earliest times, God foreshadowed the truths of death, resurrection, and life. When Jehovah set the first man in the earthly paradise, and there was no help meet for him in the creation over which he was the head, “*the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam,*” and, while he slept, took from him that out of which woman was formed; so that, seeing her, Adam said, “*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.*” (**Gen. ii. 21-23.**) The Lord passed through the deep sleep of death, in order to bring us into life. Life for us arises out of His death. We are risen with Him. “*We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.*” (**Eph. v. 30.**) We are united to Him, and “*This is a great mystery.*” (**v. 32.**)

Thus we are justified by God in the risen Christ; secured by God in the risen Christ; and united to the risen Christ. In the presence of these three blessings, there is one scripture to which we do well to take heed.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above . . . set your affection (or mind) on things above.” (**Col. iii. 1, 2.**)

By these words, God challenges His people to earnest and diligent search after heavenly blessings, and bids them give their minds to these things. A man who seeks after a definite object in life, who makes that one thing his business, is sure to succeed. Such diligence should characterize the Christian in devoting his soul to the things above, where Christ is. “*Seek those things,*” implies no weak or languid action, but eager and intense purpose. If the mind be set upon the things, the whole life will be formed by the things on which the mind is set.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE – CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Colossian believers, to whom the exhortation was originally addressed, were in danger of sinking down into an earthly religiousness. They were upon the brink of the morass of Judaized-Heathenized-Christianity into which so many are now plunged. “*Worshipping of angels,*” being “*subject to ordinances,*” such as “*Touch not, Taste not, Handle not,*” threatened to engulf them. These things have now become so vast a system that the minds of thousands are enveloped in them and by these things the essence of the Christian faith—a risen Christ—is blotted out from the spiritual perceptions of the greater part of Christendom. But, in the same truths, which were given by God to save the Colossians from the threatened loss of Christianity lies its recovery to the soul. Christ is the same to-day as He was in the days of His apostles; Christianity has not changed, and the way back to its blessings will be found by those who “*seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God;*” who set their minds on things above, and not on things on the earth, and who ever remember “*Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*”

THE NEW CREATION – CHAPTER FOURTEEN

IN *the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*” (**Gen. i. 1.**) But when the beginning began God has not told us. We may be certain that some event took place after the beginning, whereby “*the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, “for God is not the author of confusion.*” (**i Cor. xiv. 33.**)

The Creator, then upon refashioning the earth brought light and order into the earth and declared of His finished work that “*it was good,*” and He placed man in it as head over the work of His hands. And now man sees, “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*” (**Ps. xix. 1-4.**)

THE VOICE OF THE WRITTEN WORD.

But God has a creation more wonderful than that of things to human eyes now visible, a creation which expresses the glory of His being and character, and this the heavens above us and the fulness of the earth upon which we tread can never do. The voice of created things declares to all lands and languages His eternal power and divinity (**Rom. i. 20**), but the voice of His word makes manifest “*the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” (**2 Cor. iv. 6.**) Alas! man is deaf to these voices. The highly educated and intellectual heathen, as well as the debased and ignorant, alike worship images of things God put under man's feet—they fall down before fishes, reptiles, and animals. Thus has sin degraded man to cause him to “*serve the creature rather than the Creator,*” and thus, despite the evidence of the heavens above, the foolish heart of the heathen is darkened even to the folly of idols (**Rom i. 22, 23**); while, more grievous still, in Christendom, notwithstanding the witness of the scriptures to the moral perfections of God, “*the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not*” to the knowledge of God's character, and into the rejection of Him and His sacrifice, whereby alone God can be truly known by man.

THE NEW CREATION – CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE NEW.

Using the creation of the world as an illustration, the scriptures declare that “*God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” Our hearts in their darkness of mere mental understanding are like the earth when it was without form and void. The order and the beauty of the creature enjoying God's rule of love are not present. Instead, there exists the rule of sin, hatred of God, the darkness of evil ways and thoughts—a moral chaos. “*God made man upright.*” Such was man's beginning. Then came in the ruin; now, by grace, the new creation. “*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.*” (2 Cor. v. 17.)

The very first act of God in the new creation is what we read of as His first act in the beginning: God brings in light. “*Let there be light*” is His command. The “*Spirit of God,*” who “*moved upon the face of the waters*” (Gen. i. 2), brings home the word of God to conscience and to heart; the light shines in, and, as “*God divided the light from the darkness,*” so also He works within our hearts, dividing between the good and the evil.

THE ENTRANCE OF LIGHT.

In every-day life, when light upon any subject enters the mind, thenceforth, so far as the given subject is concerned, all is changed—a new power, a new perception, and a new outlook has arisen within us. The eyes of our mind are opened. Now the heavenly light, divinely given, has shined into our hearts to give us a special knowledge; even that of God's own glory. We do not mean His creator-glory, which the heavens declare, and which human science can at least in measure unfold and explain, but a far more excellent glory, even that of His own being and character. This knowledge is not shown by the firmament, or uttered by the day and the night, but is written in another book, and explained by a different language. “*In the face of Jesus Christ*” we read it and not merely in His face when He was upon earth, but where He is, in heaven. “*In the Son of His love*” is this knowledge made known to man. We must see Jesus where He now is, if we would understand H is life and H is death upon earth. That life of grace and truth;

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that death of love and holiness, viewed in connection with the character of God, are a mystery until the fact of Christ's present glory is apprehended. His present glory is the divine answer to His past shame; Himself upon the throne, the First-born from among the dead, the Head of the new creation, the answer to His taking the place and responsibility of sinners, dead in trespasses and sins.

The purpose of God respecting His people unfolds before our souls as “*We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.*” (**Heb. ii. 9.**) It was with astonished gaze that His apostles beheld Him leave the appointed mountain, blessing them as He ascended to heaven, the cloud receiving Him out of their sight. (**Acts i. 9.**) Having beheld Him thus, they failed not to preach His resurrection; the full meaning and blessing of which, as bearing upon His people, the Epistles declare to us. By them we know that in due season all who believe in Him, all who accept, by faith, His death and shame as their life and glory, shall be rendered in body, soul, and spirit like him, the Head of the new creation of God. We know also, though our bodies be still mortal, and though sin be in us, and though the circumstances of the world and the rule of its god be against us, yet that we have Christ's life communicated to us in the power of His resurrection. We are a new creation, the “*Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*” (**2 Cor. v. 17.**) This divinely-given knowledge is, by the Spirit's strength, divine power within the soul.

THE BOUNDS OF INFIDELITY.

Infidelity—the popular Christianized infidelity of our day—that boasts of humanity, and denies the fall, shrinks into a contemptible nothingness before the greatness of the fact of a risen Man. The restless sea of human speculation storms on still, but, as in previous centuries, so now, to be baffled and broken against that impassable barrier—death. Thus far, oh, wisdom of man, shalt thou go and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed! The weakness of God is stronger than man. The good news of a crucified One risen from the dead is the power of God unto salvation. The foolishness of the preaching of the crucified Man is God's way of saving them who believe. Out of His death has arisen our life, in the

THE NEW CREATION – CHAPTER FOURTEEN

power of His resurrection we live. The Christian's life is in Christ, who is risen from among the dead, and the Christian knows, by the energy of the Spirit of God within him, the things pertaining to life and incorruptibility which are brought to light through the gospel. God's good news to us brings new life—everlasting life by means of the death of His Son— and incorruptibility, a new creation in the power of the resurrection of His Son. Thus, though the career of human greatness ends with the touch of death's finger, and though death bounds human knowledge, it is not death to the believer, but *“to depart and to be with Christ.”* We know that our inheritance is with the risen Christ, and that, should we die, it is only to wait with Him awhile until the resurrection morning breaks, and the bodies of all who believe awake for glory.

Then will the new creation, of which Christ's own are now a part, be seen in its perfection. Life in a risen Christ is our present portion; incorruptibility and likeness to Him risen, our future portion. In Christ, the First-born from among the dead, we possess the new life, and wait for the full glory of the new creation.

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST –

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I*F our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.)*

Reader, ponder these words— *“the gospel of the glory of Christ,”* for it should not be read *“the glorious gospel of Christ.”* Glorious, indeed, is the good news of Christ, but the Spirit of God, in the text before us, addresses our minds rather to the subject than the quality of the good news.

There is divine good news for man in the fact that the once-crucified Christ is a man in glory.

THE LIGHT OF HIS GLORY ON EARTH.

When our Lord was upon earth He *“was the light of the world.”* Every act and deed of His, grace or truth, gentleness or reproof, was the shining out of the Divine character. He was both *“the image of God”* and *“the light of the world.”* Suppose we take a torch into a cavern; its light reveals the character and contents of the cave, makes manifest that which, before the entrance of the torch, was hidden in darkness. Such was the Lord's shining way through this world; it detected everything. But man *“loved darkness rather than light,”* and understood not His perfections. *“The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” (John i. 5.)* *“The world 'at large' knew Him not; the circle of His ancient people “received Him not.” (v. 10, 11)* The darkness did not mingle with the light; the light did not modify the darkness, By Jesus the Light, the image of the invisible God, is the character of God expressed to man. By knowing the Son we know the Father. *“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” (John i. 18.)* Man learns God in the person of His Son. Therefore, to reject the Son, is to reject the Father who sent Him. Receiving the Son, God gives us the privilege of becoming His children. **(John i. 12, 13.)** From the Person of Christ the glory of God shines out. We understand the cross, we know pardon and peace, we perceive the character of the throne of God in its holiness and justice, and we know, too, that God is love.

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST – CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The effulgence and rays of His character reached man through the Son. Even as the light emanates from and surrounds the sun, so Christ is the brightness of God's glory (**Heb. i. 3**), and as we see not the sun itself, but its effulgence, we see not God save through Him who expresses to us who and what God is.

A GLORIFIED CHRIST IN HEAVEN.

At length the darkness sought to put out the light and drive it from the world. And with what result? The Light is no longer beaming from this earth; Jesus is in heaven; He is in the glory of God as a Man. There, the Man, Christ Jesus, bears upon His Person the marks of man's rejection, while the fact of His presence there attests God's estimate of His work upon earth. The light of His words and works led man, in his darkness, to crucify Him; the light of His Person, now on high, expresses to man the brightness of God's glory and His grace to the chief of sinners.

The Lord revealed Himself to Saul as Jesus of Nazareth, glorified at God's right hand in heaven, and with Him, as He is, every man must have to do. The Christian knows not Christ after the flesh, but in resurrection-glory. Christ is not the Man of sufferings upon earth; He is not the dying One upon the cross; He is not the slain One in the sepulchre where, eighteen hundred years ago, the shining angels said to the women, "*He is not here, He is risen.*" No, He is the Risen Man, the Ascended Man, the One whom the chosen few beheld ascend from Olivet. And whither went He? To heaven! But to what part of heaven? "*The express image of His Person, when He had, by Himself, purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*" It was from that glory He announced Himself to Saul, "*I am Jesus of Nazareth,*" the selfsame Jesus, who had walked in humiliation and in rejection upon this earth. And this is a message distinct from everything previously given by God to man.

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THE GOSPEL OF HIS GLORY.

Prophets had predicted His coming, and the yet future day of His glory upon earth, when, under His sceptre, righteousness should be established and peace should reign. The angelic hosts had praised God, and proclaimed peace on earth and good pleasure concerning man when He was born the Babe in Bethlehem. He Himself, when here, had preached eternal life to all that believe on Him; and His apostles, after His resurrection, had published forgiveness of sins through faith in His Name. But the special good news of the Man rejected and despised on earth, linking His own with Himself in heaven, was reserved to be made known to man, until His own lips announced that gospel from the glory above.

MAN'S DIFFICULTY.

Human eye could gaze upon the lowly Babe of Bethlehem, could look upon the Man of Sorrows, and, even now, man can allow his imagination to paint an ideal—chisel a careworn countenance—carve a crucifix; but His ascension-glory is beyond the perception and grasp of mere humanity. His enemies fell to the ground as dead in the presence of the light of it. The radiance of which was brighter than that of the noonday eastern sun. They “*saw, indeed, the light, and were afraid,*” and Saul was blinded by “*the glory of that light,*” the moral perfection of which, however, by the power of the Holy Ghost, shined into his heart “*to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*”

SATAN'S EFFORT TO HIDE CHRIST FROM MAN.

The enemy, “*the god of this world,*” gained a seeming victory at the cross. His power of darkness allied with man's will cast out of the world the only One who could tell man who and what God is. And now the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, is hidden from the chief part of the earth—darkness is upon the face of humanity. By far the greater portion of the world is heathen or Muhammadan, and only in a very small part of that which is Christendom is the word of God so much as read, and within

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those narrowing limits but very few believe. Save within the hearts of God's hidden people, there exists upon the earth the most vague idea of God. The fact of a risen and glorified Jesus does not enter into the calculation of the popularized Christianity of our day. Thus has “*The god of this world blinded the minds of them that believe not.*”

But the strongholds of Satan become weakness in the presence of Jesus, once crucified, now glorified. Where He has gone Satan's power cannot follow, and when a man believes Christ, and apprehends where He is, he triumphs in the victory of his Lord. Thenceforth to him infidelity and superstition are the creatures of that darkness which the god of this world rules, and by which he sways the minds of those who do not believe. The Christian's faith is beyond the darkness, fixed on Him who is in glory, and from whom glory shines.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST, GOOD NEWS.

By the gospel we have not only the tidings of forgiveness of sins, peace with God, and new life in Christ, but we have also the message of glory for ourselves. The ministry of the law, engraved in stones, which Moses brought with him from the mount, was accompanied with surroundings of glory. The face of Moses shone as he came down from Sinai with the tables of the law in his hands and the reflection of God's glory upon his countenance. Then Moses put a veil upon his face, to hide the glory from a trembling people under the law; for Israel could not read the meaning of the reflections of glory upon Moses' face, because the tables of the law were in his hands. It is impossible to receive grace from a law-giver, and until grace be known by man, the glory of God is terrible to him. It is only as believers in Christ crucified that we can know Christ glorified. The holiest is opened to faith's vision through the rent veil of His flesh. His grace in dying for us has made His glory our joy.

There is no veil before the face of the ascended Jesus. It is all love, grace, glory. Not a cloud upon His face, not a shadow of doubt should remain in the hearts of His own. We know that He would not be the glorified Man on

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high had He not been the crucified Man below. We see Him, but not holding the tables of the law in His hands, and bidding us "*do this and live*;" we see Him with hands once pierced for our sins, and the glory of God shining from His face, telling us that all is done, that our sins are gone, and that God is magnified. We know that He who was forsaken for us is the new measure of our acceptance — "*We are accepted in the Beloved.*" Thus is the glory of Christ good news to His people.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST GIVES HIS PEOPLE THE CHRISTIAN HOPE.

God had a great purpose in making man. He made him in His own image, and set him over the works of His hands. The image is now sorely marred by sin, man is grievously unlike God. But God has not departed from His purpose, and what sin has spoiled upon earth, grace will establish in glory. What has been permitted to fail in the first creation will be built up in perfection in the new. In due time God's people will be made like to the glorified Christ on high. As they have borne sin's stamp and sin's suffering here, so shall they bear His image, who has died for sin, and risen out of death and sorrow there. "*As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*" (I Cor. xv. 49.)

HOW THIS END WILL BE EFFECTED.

Resurrection is the mighty power of God. The lesson which we learn yearly, in the bare grain becoming the fruitful ear of corn, will be fulfilled in the bodies of God's people by the Lord Himself. "*Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body*" (or, body of humiliation), *that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.*" (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

WHEN WILL THIS BE EFFECTED?

The day, the hour, we know not. But when the Lord comes, His own will rise, and those of His who are living will be changed. "*We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;*

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for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) And this is the highest Christian hope! the hope of the redemption of our bodies on that day of glory. **(Rom. viii. 21)** The hope of being conformed to Christ's image and likeness; of being in body, soul, and spirit pure like Himself.

PRACTICAL RESULTS.

This hope is a purifying hope. *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” (1 John ii. 2, 3.)*

HOLINESS PRODUCED.

Moreover, the occupation of the heart with Christ where He is; produces holiness within the Christian. *“We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor. iii. 18.)* We see an unveiled face of the glorified Christ in the presence of God. Faith sees it, and present holiness follows, for we *are* changed. The change is progressive; it is from “*glory to glory*,” there is no standing still— *“not as though I had already attained, or either were already perfect.”* The light of a glorified Christ poured into the soul by God the Spirit produces holiness, even as the fruit is surely, though imperceptibly, ripened by the sun's rays. As it grows, it is changed to sweetness by the light. There is no effort in this work, but a great result. *“Beholding ... we are changed.”* We hinder holiness by looking to the earth, to self, to one another. There is but little holiness where Christ is not all.

ENERGY GIVEN.

Acquaintance with Christ in the glory is the great energizing principle of the Christian faith. Christ in glory beamed like the light of a beacon before His servant, Paul. It guided and drew him on in his troublous course on earth. It led him with unwearied force to *“press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. iii. 14.)*

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He saw before him the brightness of a glorified Jesus, and he longed to be like Him on high. The prize of resurrection-blessings glistened before his soul. He panted for the day when he should be exactly like Christ, and in the power of that prospect he counted what he once so dearly prized, as dung, and was ready, even should it be by the means of martyrdom, to be with Christ, whose image he would shortly bear. Reader! the force of his example appeals to us, while his tears, as he tells of those “*who mind earthly things,*” warn us; for we are either running in the race as was Paul, or we are turning to the world--there is no neutral ground.

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THEY, who, are in Christ Jesus, have a new power within them. Not only new life in Christ and a new standing before God, but a new force within—even the Spirit of God Himself. The law is no longer their ruler, but by the Spirit they are enabled to fulfil the law's requirements, and to live to God.

Let us first observe how God, when teaching us of His Spirit, divides mankind into two vast families. In both of these we cannot be—in one or other we all are. There is no intermediate place, since birth determines entrance into each of them. First is that which is natural; into this family we all entered when we were born into the world; afterwards is that which is spiritual; into this family we were brought by grace, when we were born again.

THE TWO VAST FAMILIES.

<p style="text-align: center;">ORIGIN</p> <p><i>“That which is born of the flesh.”</i> <i>(John iii. 6.)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ORIGIN</p> <p><i>“That which is born of the Spirit.”</i> <i>John iii. 6.)</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">NATURE</p> <p><i>“In flesh.”</i> (John iii. 6.) <i>“After the flesh.”</i> (Rom. viii. 5.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NATURE</p> <p><i>“Is Spirit.”</i> (John iii. 6.) <i>“After the Spirit”</i> (Rom. viii. 5)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STANDING</p> <p><i>“In the flesh”</i> (viii. 9.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STANDING</p> <p><i>“In the Spirit”</i> (viii. 9.)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">INCLINATION</p> <p><i>“Mind the things of the flesh.”</i> (viii. 5)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">INCLINATION</p> <p><i>“Mind the things of the spirit”</i> (viii. 5.)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">RESULT</p> <p><i>“Death”</i> (viii. 6)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RESULT</p> <p><i>“Life and peace.”</i> (viii. 6)</p>

Further, let us take heed to what God says respecting the powerlessness of the flesh to do His will, a word of warning not to be passed by in our day of

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religious boastfulness. A word equally applicable to the sinner in his fallen nature, or to the saint as to his fallen nature-

(1.) "The fleshly mind is enmity against God;

(2.) For it is not subject to the law of God;

(3.) Neither indeed can be.

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (viii. 7, 8.)

When a man believes on Christ, he has everlasting life, and is

BORN OF THE SPIRIT.

This is his birthday in divine things. Thus he enters the family of God's people. And as he receives life by the Spirit, so is the Spirit the power for living out practically the life he has in Christ and from Christ. Towards this end "*The flesh profiteth nothing*" (**John vi. 63**), for the flesh contains in itself no vigour for godly living; no strength for serving God, or for enjoying God; on the contrary, it is opposed to God; and in the believer "*The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.*" (**Gal. v. 17.**)

The children of God are born of God; they receive not divine life by nature's parentage, by their own freewill, or by the will of others. (**John i. 13.**) That which is born of God sinneth not (**1 John iii. 9**); it is holy and of God. But as the believer has still a sinful nature, he may sin (**i. 10**), for though he has the holy life in Christ, sin is still in him (**1 John i. 8**); however, he should not sin (**1 John ii. 1**), and the Holy Spirit, by leading to obedience to God's word, restrains the activities of the sinful nature, and keeps the believer from sinning. The believer is a complex being. Two energies are within him, that of the Spirit of God, and that of his old nature.

Not only is the believer born of the Spirit, he is also

INDWELT BY THE SPIRIT.

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For in every believer, who believes the gospel of salvation, the Holy Spirit dwells. The work of the Lord Jesus in redemption is finished. He has by His own blood bought His people for Himself. But the clay of glory, when the full results of His redemption shall be seen and His people shall be glorified, has not yet dawned, and unto this day of redemption the Holy Spirit seals the believer. He Himself dwelling within the believer is the seal of the perfect work for the believer, which the Lord has accomplished.

The Holy Spirit does not seal us in our unbelief, in our doubts and fears, nor in the unclean Upon our believing God, who gave His Son to be delivered for our offences, and to be raised again for our justification, God justified us, and being justified we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (**Rom. iv. 25, v. 1.**)—peace regarding the *righteousness of God* in dealing with sin, and with our sins—peace with God as the great Judge, for He, the Just One, justified us. Thereupon the Holy Spirit took up His dwelling within our hearts, and shed abroad in our hearts the *love of God*. (**Rom. v. 5.**)

The Spirit of God, by dwelling within the believer, seals the person in whom His own work is effected. Sealing implies completion. Suppose a man make a deed of gift, by which he bestows certain wealth upon the object of his goodness, the document is sealed by the giver. He puts his seal to the completed deed, and thenceforward he cannot alter it. After the Holy Spirit has removed from the believer every hope of salvation in self, and opened his soul to receive Christ as his all—the result of which, as we have just observed, is peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ—*He* seals him, by dwelling within him. So we read, “*after that ye believed ye were sealed.*” (**Eph. 1. 13.**)

There is a distinct work of God in leading the soul on, step by step—an establishing work, whereby doubts and fears are removed, self-confidence is taken away, and Christ becomes the peace of the soul and upon this the Holy Spirit takes up His abode within.

God gives us to rest before Him in the sense of what we are in Christ. He settles us upon the immoveable foundation. He then seals by His Spirit

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those in whom He has wrought. He first establishes the soul in Christ. He next seals the established believer. In olden times the blood of the sacrifice was placed upon the leper who was about to be cleansed, and after the blood the anointing oil (**see Lev. xiv. 28, 29**); and now we read, "*He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us.*" (**2 Cor. i. 21, 22.**)

Thus the Spirit of God takes up His abode within the believer—"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" (**1 Cor. vi. 19**), and thus are fulfilled the Lord's own words to His disciples respecting the Holy Ghost, "*He shall be in you.*" (**John xiv. 16.**) And this being accomplished, **The Holy Spirit never leaves His dwelling-place.**

Our Lord said of the Spirit, "*He shall abide with you forever.*" (**John xiv. i 6.**) True it is that David prayed; "*Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*" (**Ps. li. 11.**) But we are not now speaking of the manifestations of the Spirit to the believer, but of the Spirit personally dwelling within him. The Spirit was not personally sent from the Father and given to dwell within the believer until the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. "*The Spirit was not yet given, for that Jesus was not yet glorified.*" (**John vii. 39.**) In the resurrection and ascension of Christ we find the divine reason why we, in this day of grace, have the Spirit dwelling within our hearts. Our privileges are based upon the finished work of Christ, and are consequent upon our Lord's glory.

The Spirit of God, then, does not forsake the believer, whose body He has deigned to make His temple. But if the believer allow the flesh to act, then the Spirit of God is grieved. He is a Person within the believer, who is *a grieved person*. He witnesseth not with our spirits: instead of gracious communications we experience rebuffs. A father does not leave the house because his child is wilful and disobedient, but until his child be sorry his grieved heart finds it impossible to express its affections to the child. He becomes the reprover of his child. His true love to his child can act in no other way, and the child, instead of beholding the smile, sees grief written upon his father's countenance. And thus it is, too often, that the children of God instead of enjoying the manifestations of the Spirit of God within, are, because of their evil and disobedient ways, subject to the reproofs

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which the Spirit addresses to them. Therefore we are enjoined, “*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*” (**Eph. iv. 30.**)

The Holy Spirit of God, who dwells within His people, takes up His abode in their hearts as the

SPIRIT OF SONSHIP.

“*Ye are all the sons (lit.) of God by faith in Christ Jesus*” (**Gal. iii. 26**), “*and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*” (**Gal. iv. 6.**) He is not within us as the Spirit of bondage, not as a Spirit leading us to fear, but to liberty. He does not lead us to place ourselves under legal terror. We do not go back from the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage (**Gal. v. 1**) at the bidding of the Holy Spirit. We are not by the Spirit led to doubt our Father's love, or to question whether we are His children. We are not led by the Spirit to dread lest, after all, we shall fail of His home in glory.” *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.*” (**Rom. viii. 15.**) “*Thou art no more a servant, but a son.*” (**Gal. iv. 7.**)

Those who are born of God are the children of God, and the indwelling Spirit leads them to know the love of God, and to call Him Father. “*Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*” **Rom. viii. 15.**)

Not Father in the sense of His being the Creator, but as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are connected in our sonship with “*The Son of God's love*” in heaven; we are sons in the power of the ascension of the Lord Jesus,

The love wherewith the Father loves His Son is the nature of the love wherewith He loves us. And the Spirit brings our hearts into the enjoyment of this love. True, our enjoyment of the love is feeble, but in some small degree it is the privilege of all to delight in it. Such is the nearness into which the adoption into the family of God brings us.

Moreover, this relationship is an individual blessing—a private blessing to each of God's people, though possessed by all the family. And we know the

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blessing experimentally. We know it, first, because God has revealed it in His word; but we know it, secondly, because God has made the fact good within our hearts. “*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*”- **(Rom. viii. 16.)** There is a mutual witness of love within the hearts of earthly parent and child, but there is a closer witness within our hearts to God, for the same Spirit who is with the Father is also within our hearts, and He makes God our Father to our hearts what our Father's heart is for us.

The Spirit of God within us, by whom we are enabled to rejoice in our nearness to God, is the Spirit of holiness. His title is emphatically the Holy Spirit. The love is holy. It produces no levity when thinking of God, no tinge of irreverence. Boldness, indeed, the love gives, but boldness in us suitable to God. He is in His action within us a

SANCTIFYING SPIRIT.

It is by His energy within us that we detect the evil of our hearts, and learn to judge ourselves as dead, and as living to God alone by and in Christ. “*If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*” **(Rom. viii. 10.)**

By Him we have the power practically to mortify within ourselves the very passions in which we once indulged. No force of our own can accomplish this end. Self cannot put self to death; nature cannot mortify nature. “*If by the Spirit ye do mortify—put to death—the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*” **(Rom. viii. 13.)** Self-indulgence is sin; God's Spirit gives us power over self, and, instead of indulging self, by Him we put to death the motions after the things in which we once delighted.

He it is who obtains the victory within us over the strength of the flesh in us, for He strive “*Against the flesh. . . so that ye cannot (or, may not) do the things that ye would.*” **(Gal. v. 17.)** The works of the flesh, and the fruit of the Spirit, are placed in contrast **(read Gal. v. 19-23)**, and we are either bringing forth our evil works, or the Spirit within us is producing fruit. The garden of the soul is bringing forth in the energy of its own evil soil the rampant weeds

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which are the growth of the flesh, or, sowing to the Spirit, we are bringing forth from the new life the fruit of the Spirit. Such is the daily outcome of our lives. Either the weeds, or the fruit, are being constantly produced by us. But “*They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections (or passions) and lusts.*” (Gal. v. 24.)

The Spirit of God leads His people into a practical resemblance to Christ. He is within them as a

FORMATIVE SPIRIT.

And thus every believer in whom He dwells becomes, at least, in some small degree like Christ. The Holy Spirit leads the believer into heart occupation with Christ. He is the power by whom we behold Christ where He is in glory, and recall Him where He was on earth, and thus are changed into His image, and though there may be only very slight resemblance, yet there is some resemblance to Christ in all the members of God's family. So that it is said, “*Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.*”

The Spirit of God also in indwelling the hearts of His people succours them in their difficulties and trials: He is

OUR COMFORTER; HELPER AND INTERCESSOR.

(John xiv. 16.) (Rom. viii. 26, 27.)

The Lord Jesus was the Comforter of His own while He was personally with them upon earth; now, in the absence of Jesus, the Spirit of God has come and has taken up His gracious work for the weak and tried children of God. As *Comforter*, the Holy Spirit abides with the believer forever. Unseen and unknown by the world, He dwells in and with His people, and ministers to them Christ and the Father's love. The Lord, in order to make good to us the blessings He came from heaven to bestow, had to die and leave this world, but the Holy Spirit has come to us, being sent from heaven by the ascended Man, Christ Jesus. He has united us to Christ, and the blessings being all ours in Christ, it is His gracious ministry to comfort our

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hearts, by filling us with the realization of the blessings, and the love of the Blessor. The joy which fills the breast of the believer is due to the presence of the Spirit, who is the well of water within him springing up unto everlasting life.

We are weak and ignorant, and He who dwells within us has been graciously pleased to become the *Heber of our infirmities*. By reason of our weakness we cannot grasp the things of God firmly, and the Holy Spirit is a power within the new man to lay hold of these things for us, so that we may receive the fulness of their blessings. Weakness is essential to God's people. Power belongeth unto God. And the Almighty Spirit of God is our Helper in our weakness and infirmity, so that thus our very weakness becomes by grace the occasion of constant and priceless blessing to our souls. Our danger lies in self-sufficiency.

THE SPIRIT IS OUR INTERCESSOR.

“We know not what we should pray for as we ought.” We may have only the true desire, being ignorant of the right way, and then it is that He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit and hears His groanings which cannot be uttered. It is a far deeper thing to have the right desire than to have the right words. Speaking practically, it is the smaller thing to have intelligence respecting the Father's will; the great thing is to have true desires to do that will. There are children of God living in known transgression of their Father's will, whose consciences are becoming seared as with a hot iron, and whose souls are losing their sensitiveness; while on the other hand there are the children of the Father with but small intelligence, whose consciences are tender, and whose souls are true. It is the latter who enjoy the manifestation of the love by the Spirit. The solemn question to be answered, in the presence of the great Searcher of hearts, concerns our practical state, and where this is as God would have it be, then follows the availing intercession of the indwelling Spirit. *“He makes intercession for the saints according to God,”* in entire uniformity with the character and will of God. How much uttered prayer is after all no prayer at all! How vain is eloquence, in the view of these groanings which cannot be expressed! And how frequently we pray out the wishes of our own wills, so

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that numbers of our requests are, after all, not according to God, and therefore, not made in the Spirit, nor helped by His intercession.

Let the sincere soul take courage. Let us be assured that the abundance of God's grace has not yet been fully realized by us. There is more to be practically received. Is our joy yet full?

And if our hearts be full at this moment, there is a divine power which enlarges the heart to receive more. There is no limit to the blessing which the Spirit of God will manifest to us, only let us sow not to the flesh, but to the Spirit.

Distressed as the most downhearted may be, he has an Abiding Comforter; weak as the weakest may be, he has an Almighty Helper; ignorant as the most simple may be, he has an All-wise Intercessor.

The indwelling Spirit is further

OUR POWER FOR *KNOWING* GOD, AND

OUR POWER FOR *TESTIMONY* FOR GOD.

The natural man knows not the things of God. (**1 Cor. ii. 14.**) Science cannot search them out. They are spiritually discerned. A blind man knows not in himself what are the beautiful colours of the flower—he has no sense of sight to perceive this loveliness of God's handiwork. Our power for discerning divine things lies in our having the Spirit of God within us, who is as eyes to our souls. The wisdom of God is foolishness to the natural man. “*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 unto us by His Spirit.*” (**1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.**)

The simplest believer upon earth, having within him the Spirit of God, knows more of God's things than the wisest of men not having the Spirit; just as the unlettered man, blessed with sight, knows better, practically, what colour is, than all the scientific blind men in the world put together. The natural man may sit in judgment upon God's Word and God's character,

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but to the Christian; his pride resembles that of a council of deaf men giving their opinion upon harmony. And thus it is that “*the oppositions of science, falsely so called*” (**1 Tim. vi. 20**), leave the simple believer, who possesses heart knowledge of Christ, unmoved and immovable—he having within him a power for apprehending God.

The believer can truly say, “*we have known and believed the love.*” (**1 John iv. 16.**) The unbeliever knows neither the Son nor the Father who sent him: nor the love. “*And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.*” (**John xvi 3.**) Let us then inquire whether this blessed knowledge be ours. We live in a day that boasts of knowledge, but heart knowledge of God will alone stay us in time, and avail us for eternity. Jesus spoke of His knowledge of His Father in the face of religious pretension, such knowledge was His constant joy in His lonely and misunderstood path below and, by grace, those in whom the Spirit of the Son dwells have, in degree, the same knowledge.

The power of testimony for God is also that of His Spirit. God's servants are simply receptacles for His power; the treasure of the knowledge of God is stored in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (**2 Cor. iv. 7.**) And it is while we practically recognise this fact that power issues from us. It is a truth that calls for earnest prayer, in order to be in any degree lived out. To own the truth theoretically, is not acting upon it. We may acknowledge that it is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit, and yet lean upon fleshly props, or betake ourselves to worldly energies and carnal means, and thus deter the Spirit of God from using us as vessels for God's glory.

So soon as self begins to assert itself, the Spirit is grieved. The Apostle said his speech was “*in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” (**1 Cor. ii. 4**), and that he spoke “*not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.*” (**v. 13.**) And again, “*Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.*” (**1 Thess. i. 5.**) In a day of much independence of God we do well to search our hearts, and to inquire whether we really believe, what we say we believe, respecting the Holy Spirit as our power for testimony for God, and also to test the means adopted,

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and to gauge the principles guiding us in our service of God.

We will only touch upon one more blessing which is ours by the indwelling Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in us the

EARNEST OF OUR FUTURE BLISS.

What we have hitherto seen respecting the Spirit of God, relates to our present portion by Him; but there is the vast future—eternity is before us. Having the Spirit, we can look right into eternity, and the more we look, the more calm and glorious does it appear. The Spirit Himself is “*the earnest of our inheritance*” (**Eph. i. 14**), and, as the Earnest, is present in our hearts. (**2 Cor. i. 22.**)

The blessings which we now possess, and which are ours practically to enjoy through Him, did we but fully enter into them, would evidence to us what the great future will be; and the believer, in whose heart the Spirit is, does receive the sample of the gladness of future bliss. There are moments in his life when the Spirit, being ungrieved and unhindered, gives him such tastes of what is yet to come, that he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. God has promised us glory, and our faith trusts God's righteousness in keeping to His word, in hope of the fulfilment of which we wait for the coming day; “*We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*” (**Gal. v. 5.**) And thus it is that “*we are saved by hope*” (**Rom. viii. 24**); for the anticipation of the glory is a mighty and practical energizing power, amid the disheartening and trying incidents of the way. The believer is as a man who goes bravely on his journey, not occupied with the trials by the way, being stayed by the power of the hope of home's joys and welcome. The believer fears not lest he shall not reach his home, for to him, by grace, all is certain; nor does he doubt the fact of his welcome at the end of his journey. But still, notwithstanding his assurance, he is not yet at home, and hence he hopes to be there, “*for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*” (**Rom. viii. 24.**)

This hope effects within him a sympathy with God's mind in relation to the sorrows of creation. There is a longing in the groaning creation which the

THE POWER OF THE NEW LIFE – CHAPTER SIXTEEN

coming day will satisfy. There is a groaning, too, for that day, within the heart of him who has received the Earnest of the coming glory. The creature, in the captivity of its present sorrow, stretches out its neck, as it were, looking for the deliverance which shall be its portion in the day of the liberty of the glory “*of the children of God.*” (**Rom. viii. 21.**)

The believer longs to be free from his vessel of sin and death, to be quit of its weight, and delivered from its weakness, and he waits for “*the redemption of his body.*” (**v. 23.**) The blood of Jesus has redeemed his soul, but the body of the believer, in common with the rest of this groaning creation, is under the power of weakness and sickness, and is still in the scene where Satan rules. His heart has found its home, but his body is still on earth, and a body of humiliation. But he will be changed. How soon he knows not. He looks forward to be clothed upon with his house which is from heaven, then he shall be fashioned like his glorious Lord, and, holy and without blame before God, his endless portion shall be the liberty of the glory of the children of God, liberty to be enjoyed in company with the companions and friends of his path below, and in the presence of Jesus, the eternal brightness of glory.

BLAMELESS BEFORE GOD – CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

WHEN Jacob fled from his father's tent with a fearful spirit and condemning conscience, he came to a desert place, where night overtook him. His only possession was his staff, and laying his head upon a stony pillow, the solitary wanderer fell asleep. Then God showed him His mercy—opened His heavens above Jacob, and discovered to him a ladder set up from the earth, the top of which reached to heaven. Upon this shining way the angels of God ascended and descended, and “*behold the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of earth be blessed.*” Having promised, God declared that He would perform. He assured Jacob that He would be with him, and keep him, and not leave him until all the word of His grace had been fulfilled.

Thus was Jacob blessed with the promise of earthly blessings in earthly places, and all was secured to him in the Seed—Christ.

Let us turn to a ladder of blessings, another shining way even more excellent than that which Jacob saw and upon which the angelic company communicated between earth and heaven. We, like Jacob, are by nature ready to perish. We are wandering across the desert world possessed in self of not one single good thing. Darkness surrounds us. Sleep wraps us in insensibility; but God is rich in mercy. Of His own great love He loves us, even as we are, dead in our sins. He opens His home above to us, and shines upon us in His own love. He “*bath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ.*” All is God's own doing, all His sovereign grace, and He Himself secures every blessing to us irrevocably in Christ.

The ladder Jacob saw was set up upon earth and reached to heaven; the shining way of spiritual blessings, which God presents to the Christian's eye in the opening verses of the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, is let down from heaven, and reaches us, just as we are, on earth. Its stay is the very heart of God, and from the heart of God it descends to us, and by it we reach to the heart of God.

BLAMELESS BEFORE GOD – CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

CHOSEN in Him before the world's foundation.

H OLY—

BLAMELESS—“*Holy and without blame before Him in love.*”

ADOPTED—“*Predestinated unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the GLORY OF HIS GRACE.*”

ACCEPTED— “*Accepted in the Beloved.*”

REDEEMED— “*In Whom we have redemption through His blood.*”

FORGIVEN—“*Forgiveness of sins according to the RICHES OF HIS GRACE.*”

The reader will not fail to note that it is the *riches* of God's grace which meet him in his helplessness and in his sins. Those stores of grace, which the need of millions cannot exhaust, that wealth of grace, which countless crimes and sins innumerable has not diminished; for God is “*rich in mercy,*” and the treasury wherein the riches of His grace are stored is none other than His own heart, and according to His own heart He abounds in grace towards the sinner.

Forgiveness is our first blessing. The heavenward step upon which we first set foot is “*forgiveness of sins.*” We cannot know one of all the blessings wherewith we are blessed in the heavenly places in Christ until we, by grace, believe and know that God has forgiven us all our sins by virtue of what Christ has done for us.

Redeemed, brought to God, is the next step. Redemption in Christ, through the blood of Christ. Here we discover a sensible nearness to God such as even the knowledge of His pardoning grace does not afford. The forgiven sinner is purchased for God. He is taken out of the prison and brought into liberty; and it is in Christ, where Christ is, that he has the redemption. The redemption is connected with the Person of the Redeemer. It is not simply that a price, even that of His precious blood, has been paid

BLAMELESS BEFORE GOD – CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

for us, but in the Lord Himself “*we have the redemption.*”

Accepted— “*Accepted in the Beloved.*” Mark these wonderful words, and behold how we have mounted upwards! All that the beloved One of God is to God as the Accepted One on high, so is the humblest believer in Him. Christ is personally accepted, and as such He is the object of God's delight—we, too, being in Him, are accepted even as Christ. Christ is the measure of our acceptance before God. We are graced in the Beloved, robed in His beauty, adorned with His perfections.

Forgiven all trespasses—brought to God in Christ—accepted in the beloved One of God— these are indeed blessings whereby we ascend in the power of God's grace towards us to God Himself, the Blessor. God's purpose of grace is to bring His people into perfect nearness to Himself. His will is to have His own before Him, not simply as forgiven sinners, but as dear children. And the fulfilment of this, His purpose, God will display in eternity to the *glory* of His grace. While all the blessing of the **15th of Luke** is without doubt ours now, we may find in the father kissing the prodigal, despite his rags and misery, the riches of grace; and in the father seating the son at his table, the glory of grace. Before his father, at rest in his father's love, the prodigal was the expression of the father's heart to all within the house, a heart which not only forgave him his sins, but brought him into the honours of his house. Here in our sins we prove the riches, there in His presence we shall ourselves be the joyful expression of the glory of His grace. Here, in our need, we receive privately the riches of pardoning mercy, the pardon of our own particular evil, but in the coming day myriads of God's creatures shall behold the glory of God's grace to sinful men in the blessings wherewith we are blessed in Christ.

Adopted into God's family is the common lot of all God's people. God has destined that His people should be His children. Angels are His servants. Sinners saved by grace, forgiven, redeemed, accepted, are nearest to His heart. And thus it is given to us, before it is manifested what we shall be, to rest in the love of God in the affectionate intelligence of His dear children; “*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God!*” We are already made partakers of the divine nature and

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have the spirit of adoption given to us whereby we cry Abba! Father!

With the present blessing of adoption and with the prospect of God having us before Him to the glory of His grace, we find that we have yet again mounted upon our shining way. But let us enquire, “Are we at liberty as we thus think of God? Are there any fears left?” God is holy; we are by nature still sinful. God is light; we are, though believers, often sinning. What a word then is this which next meets us:—

Blameless!—“*Without blame before Him.*” In His presence; under His eye, in whose sight who charges even the angels with folly. And what is man—the sinful worm, man? But “*blameless*” is God's own word. No fault before God is what He declares respecting His children. Such is the result of God's great salvation for us.

Holy!—*is* also His word. The nature holy; the actions blameless. The fountain pure, the waters undefiled. Such is the purpose of God respecting His own.

In love we are to be before Him thus. Not as if He would excuse, or extenuate, or pass over our weakness and wilfulness in love. No, but in love, as in the repose of His own nature, for He is love. God is love, and in the joy of that love we are to be before Him. God is light, and in the holiness of that light, and in the liberty of it, we are to be before Him. Holy as to our inmost being, for God is holy; blameless as to our behaviour, no folly left for God to find fault with; verily conformed to the image of His Son and thus perfect liberty before Him, our everlasting joy.

It is for this, Christian reader, that we are

Chosen, and chosen not in self, not because of what we are, but in Christ, for it is His work and His worth which God regards with ineffable delight, and it is in Him alone that all these blessings are ours. “*Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing (the glory) is God*” (2 Cor. v. 5); but the present reality, “*Ye are of God,*” and, “*Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*” (1 John iv. 4), is in no wise short of the future glory. Let us weigh them together and enquire whether one is more rich in blessing than the

BLAMELESS BEFORE GOD – CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

other—whether the present blessing or the secured blessing is the greater. The secured blessing is but the display of the present. All is ours now in Christ. We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

If there be not complete rest in God there is something lacking in our hearts. If we cannot lay hold of “*Holy and without blame before Him,*” the weakness arises from lack of the sense of sin within our breasts. A deep sense, a thorough sense of what sin is will be the best practical interpreter of our being blameless before God. If we have indeed learned what sin is at the cross, we shall not dread God's holiness, for we shall then be shut up to the love which gave His Son to be made sin for us and to suffer in our stead. God's perfect love casts out fear from its presence. Our sinful nature has been condemned; what is there left to us? The nature of God Himself, Light and Love! Our sins are pardoned; what then is left to us? The holy liberty of children in the presence of Him who gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins! Well may we say, “*What hath God wrought?*”

GOD, OUR GOD – CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

GOD , who is light – God, who hates iniquity and who cannot look upon sin—God, who knows our inmost beings and all our ways, is our God. We find rest of heart, even though our hearts condemn us, in the knowledge, that the Great Searcher of hearts is our God. For He with whom we have to do is love.

More than 1800 years have rolled by since the wonderful message, “*I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God*” (**John xx. 17**), was sent by the risen Lord Himself to His disciples; and, from that day, the portion of all God's people has been to know God in all the fulness of His love. Still, as a matter of experience, it is frequently the case that the heart of the Christian is more at home when occupied with Jesus than in approaching God. Perhaps, there exists in his mind a remnant of that sorrowful misapprehension of God, which portrays Him as an angry Being, with whom His Son intercedes upon behalf of men in order to reconcile Him to them; or it may be that, through not being established in the gospel of our salvation, the infinite holiness of God causes him to tremble. Now God is the source of all our blessing; He is the Author of His gospel, and it is in the confidence of what God is, according to the revelation which He has given of Himself, that our souls find rest.

There is in the **fourth chapter of the first Epistle of John** a jewelled chain of God's love, which we do well to wear about our hearts.

GOD is love. (v. 8.)

GOD'S love manifested in sending His Son to give us life. **(v. 9.)**

GOD'S love in sending His Son a propitiation for our sins, **(v. 10.)**

GOD'S love to us our motive for loving one another. **(v. 11.)**

GOD'S love in giving us of His Spirit. **(v. 13.)**

GOD'S love our testimony to the world. **(v. 14.)**

GOD'S love in dwelling in His people. **(v. 15.)**

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GOD'S *love* giving us boldness in the day of judgment. (v. 17.)

GOD'S *love* casting out our fear. (v. 18.)

GOD'S *love* to us drawing us to love God. (v. 19.)

“*God is love.*” This is an eternal truth and the centre of all blessing and the spring of all joy. Before the world was or the angels were called into being, from everlasting to everlasting, God is love. Had man never been created, the fact of God being love had been the same. The human mind could never have conceived the thought; human nature could not have originated the truth, that God is love. Had God not made known the wonderful reality to us, to this hour man must have been in utter ignorance of the blessed fact. The wisdom of the world possesses not in its treasury these heaven-sent words—“*God is love.*” In its wealth they are not to be found.

The joy of God's creatures originates from, and depends upon, the nature of God. The heart of God is the sun from which all our happiness radiates. The love of God is not like a lake locked within the heights of an inaccessible mountain, but it flows down from heaven to the poor and thirsty upon this earth. And it is our joy to know that God is love, because

GOA'S LOVE HAS BEEN MANIFESTED TO US.

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.” (v. 9.) Without the new life it had been impossible for us to respond to God's love. The sweetest strains of music, the most exquisite display of beauty, the most delicate odours of perfume, excite no desires, awake no pleasure within a corpse. And by nature we are spiritually dead towards God; insensible to Him. But with God's gift of life we have obtained a capacity for the enjoyment of Himself, and our hearts can now enter into His love.

In His own love God *sent* His Son to give us this life. For the gracious activity of love to man issues from God Himself. *“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* (John iii. 16.) God's own love is the reservoir; His Son

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the communicator of the love to us. Through the Son the love flows towards us, and from Him we receive Eternal Life.

But not only has God in love to us sent His Son to be our life, He has removed from us everything that is contrary to Himself, and that hinders us from dwelling in His presence;

GOD'S LOVE HAS FOUND A PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.

“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John i. 5), therefore He could not have us in His presence in our sinfulness, neither could uncleansed sinners abide before God in His righteousness. It is a necessity for God's holiness, as well as for our liberty in that holiness, that if we should be before God it must be according to His thoughts and His perfections. Having the life capable of enjoying God given to us, we need perfect cleansing from the sins which, as possessors of a fallen nature, we commit. The holy life without the cleansing would not give us peace before God. To possess a life capable of enjoying God, without the removing of the evil acts and evil propensities of a fallen nature, would be an eternity of distress. And for want of faith in what God has done in providing the propitiation for their sins, many of God's own people are in sorrow of heart before Him. They have received the Son, by grace—and *“he that hath the Son hath life”*—but they have not believed God's testimony about the blood of Jesus, and they know not that they are cleansed. Cleansing such as God requires could be effected in only one way. There could be only one propitiation suitable to God. Only One Person, by only one way could render satisfaction for our guilt. Jesus' blood is the propitiation, and by Him we are brought into perfect righteousness before God. The propitiation of God's providing has given all, who accredit God, perfect peace, and thus the love of God has established them in confidence before Him, and thus has God's love brought His people into His presence suitably with Himself.

In God is this love. God did not look for it within our hearts. He loved us in our enmity towards Him, and when sinning against Him, and, in the full knowledge of what we are, He sent His Son, the propitiation for our sins. It is our comfort and our strength to search into God's heart for the love,

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while it is only a hopeless effort to look within our own hearts, when without peace, for love to God. “*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*” (1 John iv. 10.)

THE MANNER OF GOD'S LOVE TO US IS OUR MOTIVE FOR LOVING ONE ANOTHER.

God loved us when there was nothing in us to love, and when there was no response in our hearts to His heart. And the manifested love of God to us should bear its fruit in our behaviour towards our fellow believers; “*Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*” (v. 11.) “*No man hath seen God at anytime; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.*” (John i. 18.) The name of Father was manifested to man by Him who dwelt in His Father's bosom; who abode in the love of His Father's heart. And again we read, “*No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.*” (1 John iv. 12.) For the children of God, when loving in a divine way, have God dwelling in them. And thus, God's love toward His children is perfected in them. They become the expressions of it. Filled with it, the heart overflows. The love of God enriches the heart so that there is ability to give out love to others. There is no stint in God's love, but marvellous meagerness in man's love. But as God dwells in us, the naturally selfish heart of man becomes a fountain of kindness towards others, and that of a divine character.

Thus has God brought His people into moral union with Himself. We are partakers of the divine nature. But the greatness of God's love has blessings yet to bestow—

GOD'S LOVE HAS GIVEN US OF HIS SPIRIT.

We cannot enter into God's thoughts or delight in Himself of our own might. Man's finite power, addressed to discover the knowledge of God, merely drives him upon the rocks of infidelity. “*What man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of a man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*” But God has not left His people in the dark about Himself. He has given us of His own Spirit; we have received “*the*

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Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God.”
(1 Cor. ii. 12.)

In His love to us, God would have us know the things of His own heart, and the things which He has bestowed upon us. Giving us of His own Spirit, God has brought us into the apprehension of Himself, and enabled us to hold communion with Himself respecting Himself. Not only to take delight in what He has done for us, but to delight in Himself because of what He is. When the Spirit of God is unhindered in His gracious action within us our hearts then dwell in God. God becomes the home for our affections, and, in His wonderful grace, He pleases to make our hearts His dwelling-place.

“Hereby do we know that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.” **(1 John iv. 13.)**

Eternal life, the Propitiation, and His own Spirit, are the gifts of God's love to us. Hence it is that

GOD'S LOVE TO US IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR TESTIMONY TO THE WORLD.

His love to us is the energy of our feet in carrying abroad the gospel of our salvation. *“We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son, the Saviour of the world.”* **(v. 14.)** The believer has seen and experienced the love of which he himself is the willing witness. He can say even more than that God loved the world. He knows as His Father the God who spared not His Son, therefore he testifies that the Father sent His own Son to be the Saviour! In fellowship with the Father and the Son the believer is enabled to tell of that love, which eternity itself shall have never fully told. And when the heart is practically enjoying the love of God the natural result is testimony to the world. Just as when the empty pitcher has remained a while beneath the flowing spring it begins to overflow itself. The passive vessel becomes an active bestower of bounty. *“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”* Whether it be a golden or an earthen vessel which contains the water, the thirsty ask not; neither gift nor eloquence is necessary; but whoever he may

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be, that has a heart filled with the love of God, becomes a welcome testimony of divine love to the perishing world.

It is a rule with God's gifts that the greatest of Christian blessings are the common property of all the family. Of these blessings none can be higher than

GOD'S LOVE IN INDWELLING HIS PEOPLE.

Yet this great blessing the simplest of saints shares with the apostle John, even as in a family the new-born babe as well as the eldest son are alike the objects and the sharers of their father's love. John said, "*We have known and believed the love that God bath to us;*" adding, "*He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*" Abiding in that love is abiding in God, and then God abides in His people. The apostle spoke from a heart richly stored with the love which is of God. But some might say, God dwelling in us and we in God belongs only to a very few. Not so; for such is the grace of God, that "*whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God.*" Thus does this gracious word "*whosoever,*" which has eased the troubled souls of thousands, emboldened multitudes to come to God, and encouraged countless hosts of lost sinners to claim gospel mercies for themselves, embrace every believer and lift him up into those privileges of nearness to God which the greatest of the apostles enjoyed. God dwells in that one—however simple, however humble—whose heart believes on His Son, and whose lips confess Him.

GOD'S LOVE IN GIVING US BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

God is our God. He has associated our hearts with Himself, and Himself with our purified affections. And He with whom this hallowed fellowship exists is Light. There is no fellow ship with Him and darkness. We could not enjoy communion with Him while the sense of unpardoned sin rested upon our consciences. But the blood of Jesus has cleansed us once and for ever: it never loses its cleansing power. "*If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*" But there are sins frequently committed, for our conduct is

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not always becoming those who are in the light. For these God has made provision; “*If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” **John i. 9**), so that cleansed by Himself we may again have intercourse with Him. The family circle affords an illustration of the moral effect of this truth. The father loves his children, and has the joy of their affections, and they have the joy of his. But suppose a child guilty of disobedience. Thereupon the child's heart is uneasy, and the evil act, like a cloud, rises up between its heart and the father's. Then the father asks why the wonted smile is missing, why the little feet are slow to run to meet him. He perceives the reason. Evil has barred the child's joy in him, and also hinders his expression of love to the child. Then the child owns what it has done, confesses its ways, and is forgiven. Whereupon there is in it the sense of cleansing, and so once more the streams of love mingle. God, who searches us, knows our evil and declension of heart towards Himself, and He, by His Spirit, makes us to own our sins before Him. Also the Lord Himself is occupied for us to bring us into God's presence, and to produce the sensitiveness to evil, which God's holiness requires, and thus arises the confession of evil done, without which the heart would become deadened to God; and the result of the confession is our blessing.

If then, these things be so while we traverse this earth, how shall we enter the presence of His unclouded light in eternity? “*We must all appear (be made manifest) before the judgment seat of Christ*” (**2 Cor. v. 10**), and then everything which we have done will be brought into the light. To the unsaved, this day will be awful beyond thought, but to the saved it will be unutterable blessing. We shall stand there in glorified bodies and in unsullied righteousness. He who will be Judge upon the throne, is Jesus, the lover of our souls, Who was crucified for us upon the cross. He before Whom we shall each be manifested, has already been manifested to put away our sins. That day of light and bringing into the light, will possess no terrors to the believer. Does the child tremble when in its father's arms and bosomed in his love he owns his ways and confesses his guilt? And in that day the perfect triumph of Divine love will be witnessed in God's people.

GOD, OUR GOD – CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

“*Herein is love with us (see margin) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.*” (1 John iv. 17.) God's love *with* us! His love that is not only for us, but with us now, shall, in the day of judgment, be seen in its full perfections, and the weak and failing, and, alas, often sinning, children of God shall have boldness before the throne.

God would remove from us all questionings. He would have His people in perfect rest before Him, therefore He links with the display of judgment our present standing before Himself in Christ, “*for as He is, so are we in this world.*” (v. 17.) As Christ is in resurrection, so are we, though in this world of sin and death. Yes, as He is in glory; as He is, accepted on high in the favour of God; as He is, the enthroned One, even so are we in the world at this moment, weak, helpless, sinning, though we be.

“GOD'S LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR.”

God's love itself, so deep, so wonderful, and His love in taking us up, poor atoms as we are in His great universe, and filling us with Himself, leaves no room for ought else in our hearts but love. As His great love enters, fears flee away. “*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment.*” (v. 18.) Small and insignificant as is man in the mighty creation of God, so wonderfully made is he that none but the infinite God can satisfy His longings, and none but the perfect love of God can cast out his fears.

GOD'S LOVE TO US HAS KNIT OUR HEARTS IN LOVE TO HIM.

God is ours who believe on his son; ours, because he is love, and loves to love us. Let us, then, bind this chain of His love about our hearts, and wear it continually. Here is its clasp, “*We love Him, because He first loved us.*” (v. 19.)

GOD, OUR FATHER – CHAPTER NINETEEN

IN the 22nd psalm, which so deeply expresses the atoning sufferings of the Lord, and which shows the blessings consequent upon those sufferings, the adorable Substitute says, “*Thou hast heard Me from the horns of the unicorns*” —the horns of the altar to which the sacrifice was bound. From the depths of the cross His prayer was heard. The deliverance of His beloved people from the power of the enemy was accomplished. His griefs, His pangs, His blood, have wrought redemption. All has been taken out of the way that was against us. The wrath of God against sin has been poured out upon Him. By Him the bitter cup has been drained. The sword of divine justice has been sheathed in His bosom.

And now, risen from the dead, Jesus announces the Name of His God and Father to His people, and leads their praises.

THE NAME OF FATHER.

God revealed Himself to Abraham as the Almighty God. To Israel He made Himself known as Jehovah. “*I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by My name Jehovah was I not known to them.*” (Ex. vi. 3.) To the Christian God makes Himself known as the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When God gives Himself a name in connection with His people, He associates His people with Himself according to the special relationships the name involves. The Name of Father, with the blessings and relationship it implies, is one of the great pillars of the Christian faith. The words of Jesus lead us to the knowledge of the Name He declared. Jesus, that Eternal life, is the expression and the evidence of who the Father is. The Law-giver did not proclaim the Father, neither did the prophets; but the Incarnate Son explained the Father, so that He said, “*He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.*” (John xiv. 9.)

And here let us observe that the name Universal Father, which is so common in some circles, is utterly at variance with scripture. Apart from the Son, God is not our Father, and unless we are connected with the Son we are not connected with the Father. Rationalism denies the Eternal Son,

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and rejects the holy truth of His atonement, and disbelieves Him, risen and glorified in heaven. It was the disciple, who chiefly shows us the Father's love, that uttered these solemn words, "*Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?*" (1 John ii. 22.) And that which denies the Son has not the name of the Father of the Son in its "Universal Father." To speak of God's goodness and grace apart from the Son, is to falsify God's character; "*He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*" (v. 22.) There is no knowledge of the Father's Name save as there is knowledge of the Person of the Son; "*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same bath not the Father.*" (v. 23.)

Our Lord often declared His Father's Name, but His disciples understood not its fulness, neither could they do so, until the foretold hour had arrived, when, in resurrection, in a peculiar way, He communicated that Name to them and to us. The chosen messenger for this service was the one whose heart was true to His Person. "*Touch Me not,*" He said to Mary; Handle Me not; as it were; Detain Me not on earth. For thenceforth Jesus was to be known in a new way by His disciples. Not simply as the Messiah in connection with promises of blessing to men upon earth, but as the Risen One ascended to His Father, and in connection with heavenly things. Accordingly we read, "*Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore, if any man be in Christ He is a new creature (or there is a new creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*" (2 Cor. v. 16, 17.) It was then, in a peculiar way, that the risen Jesus declared His Father's Name when he said, "*Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.*" (John xx. 17.) Having accomplished redemption, having borne the wrath due to their sins, and being the First-born from among the dead, He linked His people with Himself in the blessings of the Name; and associated them with Himself to learn the Name and the love which He knew so well.

He had separated Himself from the earth, He had gone through death and the grave for their sakes, and was about to go back to glory, and now in the power of His resurrection He could bring His own into heavenly blessings in company with Himself. "*He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy*

GOD, OUR FATHER – CHAPTER NINETEEN

Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee.”
(**Heb. ii. 11, 12; see also Psalm xxii.**)

It is as the One who is victorious over sin and death and Satan, that He is not ashamed to call us His brethren— *“Go to My brethren.”* Let us not call Him our elder Brother, as if, because He was born a babe into this earth, He were our brother, for not only is such language irreverent. but it results from ignorance of His grace in dying for us, and in His separating us to Himself in resurrection. It is as the risen One that He is the First-born of all whom He has redeemed. As the Incarnate Jesus we could have had no part with Him, even as He said, *“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.”* Our link is with Christ, where Christ is; not with. Christ before atonement, but after an accomplished redemption.

Israel received special blessings from God according to the Name by which He was pleased to reveal Himself to their fathers, and we receive the blessings peculiar to Christianity from God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the thanksgiving which heralds the unfolding of the deep things in the epistle to the **Ephesians** is to *“the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”* (**i. 3.**) Also the two prayers of that epistle plead in the one case for spiritual understanding of these blessings, and in the other for heart knowledge of the love which blesses, are addressed, the one to the God (**i. 16-23**), and the other to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (**iii. 14-21.**)

We receive the power practically to enter into the blessings of the Father's Name by the Spirit of God, Who, by indwelling our hearts, forms within us the spiritual affections of children, and He it is who enables us to draw near in love and in liberty to our Father, and to rejoice in His Name of tender relationship—the Name of God which removes all fear. and which satisfies every desire.

GOD, OUR FATHER – CHAPTER NINETEEN

KNOWLEDGE OF THE FATHER IS THE COMMON PORTION OF ALL THE FAMILY.

The apostle John divides believers into three classes, fathers, young men, and babes, and of the last he says, "*babes . . . ye have known the Father.*" (**1 John ii. 13.**) This knowledge should be the joy of all; it is a privilege common to the weakest and the youngest in the family. In natural things—long before a babe can speak, years before it can understand the fulness of its father's love, the babe knows the father himself. This knowledge is the instinct of nature, the father's arms, the father's bosom, the father's voice and smile are the joy of the babe. And so the Father's presence is the joy of those, who are sons of God, by faith which is in Christ Jesus. To know the Father is the throbbing of divine life.

Ignorance may hinder this joy. Unless we know that God is our Father how can we enjoy the relationship? There may be within us yearnings after the enjoyment, when we hear of other believers who are happy in their Father's love, while our hearts lament their deficiency. A lost child might be recovered from the destitution of the streets, and be brought into a family circle, without knowing a father's love, and as it saw the children of the house gather round their father, and enjoy his pleasure, and he theirs, the child would look on and long, that it, too, was not only the object of compassion, but that it had itself a father. But let us suppose this child to discover that his benefactor, who rescued him from starvation and ruin, is also his father, and that he himself, the child longing for a father's love, is the lost one found! Immediately joy springs up within his breast, and the latent feelings of the child gush out. And is it not so, that many of God's children regard God rather as a Benefactor than as a Father? But because we are children, the Spirit of God has put within us the feelings of children, and nothing save our Father's love can satisfy those feelings. And God *is* our Father, and we *are* His children, which blessed assurance opens the fountains of our affections to flow towards Himself with whom the love originates. We that were dead are alive again; we that were lost are found.

GOD, OUR FATHER – CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE FATHER SEEKS THE WORSHIP OF HIS CHILDREN.

The Jews had their divinely planned temple, with its divinely given ritual, and they worshipped Jehovah. The Samaritans had their mountain and their traditions, and they worshipped they knew not what. But the days for sacred localities are gone by. The darkness is passed, the true light now shineth. “*God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.*” (**John iv. 24.**) And such worshippers the Father seeks. His love is such that He seeks hearts true in love to Himself. He seeks for affection formed by His Spirit in His children, which shall respond to His love in the way in which He has pleasure. Now we, with the woman of Samaria, can easily discuss religious questions. How readily her heart argued, even before the Lord of all, upon such subjects as sacred mountains, cities, and wells. But when the conscience was touched by His divine power, her religious pride gave way to a broken spirit, and she owned herself a sinner and Himself the Christ. Alas! There are many hearts too occupied with tradition's sacred things to dwell upon these words of Jesus, “*The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.*” (**John iv. 23.**) God's children are indwelt by His Spirit, and the Father seeks the intelligent and spiritual worship of His children. It is in this that He has pleasure. And what is worship, but the heart filled with the Spirit, overflowing with the love which the Father has generated within His children?

THE FATHER'S LOVE.

This will be the ceaseless spring of our eternal joys. The Father's love was the Lord's constant theme. The record of His words to His people is chiefly given by the disciple whom Jesus loved, who declares those depths of love in words so short and simple, that the simplest may understand them. It was leaning upon the Master's bosom that John learned the love, which Jesus uttered from the bosom of the Father. The Father's love ever filled the Lord with joy, and into this joy the Lord would lead His people. As we read, “*And I will declare it (Thy name), that the love wherewith Thou lovest Me may be in them and I in them.*” (**John xvii. 26.**) It is this joy that the Lord would have fulfilled in us. He would have His people enter into the love of His Father

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to them, which love is measured and characterized by the Father's love to the Son. *“Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.”* (v. 23.)

The Father's love is the great preservative from the world, its influences and entanglements. When that love satisfies the longings of the heart there is no room left for the world. All that is around us is not of the Father, but is of the world; and so long as the love of the world is within the heart, the power of the Father's love is displaced. *“If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”* (1 John ii. 16.)

There is no witness so powerful to the world as moral oneness with the Father in the hearts and minds of His children. In a day of doubt and distrust, these are the evidences of Christianity to be coveted. Unity of desire; fellowship with the Father and the Son; and the practical results of this secret power; are the all-convicting testimony to the world that the Father sent His Son into it. *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”* (John xvii. 20, 2.)

We will now touch upon our Father's love as connected with the circumstances of earth.

OUR FATHER'S CARE.

We shall not require our daily bread in heaven, nor need deliverance from temptation there. But, while upon earth, it is the happy privilege of each child to know that he is verily under the loving care of his Father in heaven. Heavenly Father is a name which implies our being upon earth. How often did the Lord teach that our heavenly Father knows all our need! It is in such assurance of earthly parents that little children rest, for if aware that their father knows what they want, they are satisfied. Their simple hearts are content in the wisdom, the resources, and the love of their father. They do not question; they do not plan; and the fact that our heavenly Father knows that we need the things of life, should quiet our hearts before Him. It would be a strange and an unnatural spectacle to see a child endeavouring to right

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those things which the father's hand was itself arranging. Our Father in heaven has planned out our path. He has numbered the very hairs of our head. Not one single incident, of however, trifling a character, can occur to us without His knowledge. Many would be the anxious hours spared if the child's heart simply accepted and acquiesced in his Father's care—many the disappointments and sorrowful results avoided, if the child of God had waited for his Father's time to act on his behalf. He who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, has, in His wisdom and love, appointed for His children their due of food and raiment, their bodily strength and mental power. *“Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. . . . Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.”* (Luke xii. 29, 30.)

OUR FATHER'S GOVERNMENT.

“We have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” (Heb. xii. 9.)

God oftentimes by the trials of life brings His children to the subject mind. The world is the school for the children of God. Life, the time for experiencing many strange dealings, the reason of which eternity will disclose. Trials are portioned out by perfect wisdom, and their ultimate object we know, though their present pain may be a mystery. Our Father's chastenings are for *“our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.”* (v. 10.) God does not always explain the reason of His governmental dealings with us, but He has fully unfolded His heart to us, and thus it is our privilege to walk by faith.

He who has been educated in the school of affliction, is readily distinguished by a brokenness of spirit, a humbleness of mind, and withal a trust in God. *“No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”* (v. 11.) The exercised spirit, and the peaceable fruits, betoken the good and perfect work of God within the soul.

GOD, OUR FATHER – CHAPTER NINETEEN

As we conclude this chapter, let us remember that the day is near when the care of our heavenly Father for His weak and needy children, and the government of His hand for His, too often, ignorant and wilful children, will not be called for. Life's lesson will soon have been learned. The school time will be over. The circumstances of the scene wherein we are suffered to want, and wherein we are humbled and proved, will be exchanged for the peace and joy of the Father's house. Then 'no good thing shall be lacking, and none shall lack the grace to enjoy the good. Then we shall know the Father's love in its fulness, and shall continually enjoy His presence, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then, in a deeper way than we have ever learned upon earth, shall we apprehend these wonderful words of Jesus— *“Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.”*

WE close these chapters upon the Gospel of our Salvation with the inspired words, *Therefore, we are always confident;*” and may this language be the heart utterance of each of our readers.

“Confident!” Yes, Christian; yet not the confidence of ignorance, which leaves this life for eternity with a leap in the dark, which sleeps in false peace while the house burns below; nor that of self-trust, which boasts of security as the ship settles down to her watery grave. But the confidence of those whose eyes are open to eternal realities, who have looked upon sin—and their own sins; have beheld the righteousness of God; have seen, by faith, into heaven and into hell; and who, in view of all, trust not in self, but calmly, peacefully, rest in God.

Such as believe not the gospel may have unstable reasons for their confidence; but we are those “*who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*” (Phil. iii. 3.)

Neither is the word “*confident*” only, but “*always confident.*” Some of God's people have confidence for an hour and then they lose it; theirs is like the ray of sunshine which pierces the cloud and is gone; they are like the changeful ocean, now calm and again disturbed—one day the reflection of the heavens upon its bosom, the next the agitation of its own troubled waters; this is not being “*always confident.*”

Christian confidence, we say, is built upon a solid base, a rock, which shall never be moved, and because of this we have the *therefore* of the apostle. God Himself was the foundation for his trust. “*He that bath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also bath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore, we are always confident.*” (2 Cor. v. 5, 6.) The rock upon which these men of old trusted was God; and since God was their rock they could look into their hearts and thence up to the throne of glory, where Christ sits at God's right hand; they could look upon themselves as servants; they could look upon the trials of their daily lives; the martyr's end; death; the coming of their Lord and ours—yea, more : they could look upon the judgment-seat of Christ; and, in view of all, they could declare heartily, joyfully, “*We are always confident.*”

CONFIDENCE WHEN LOOKING WITHIN THE HEART AS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

“God path shined in our hearts.” (iv. 6.) Once these hearts were a moral chaos, once they were dark and dead; no light, no love, moved there, and enmity towards God strode across the gloom; sin and evil passions, the activities of moral corruption, teemed within. *“We all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath.” (Eph. ii. 3.)* But God shined in; God said *“Let there be light, and there was light.”* There was a new creation, and it was entirely of God. The Creator brought into these hearts by His sovereign grace, what was not born there; by His own light He showed what sin was, what self was, and proved by His love the excellence of His light. Yes! all believers can say, *“God bath shined in our hearts.”* We have had our guilt, our sinful being, discovered to us by the power of the Divine Spirit, and by no less a brilliancy than that which radiates from the Person of the Son of God enthroned in heaven. Yet more, we have had the heart of God, and His glory in the Person of His Son revealed to us. And further, our hearts have been rejoiced in the light of Life. God knows these hearts; every pulsation of our moral being is bare to His vision; He, and He alone, is acquainted with the density of the darkness which once filled them, and with our folly in seeking to cast the darkness out of our hearts. For we, in vain efforts to change our nature, were like men endeavouring to carry the darkness out of a shuttered room. And the overwhelming evidence of God being for us lies here—God shined in. And the darkness fled before His light.

Where, then, is room for doubt—we will not say despair—since God hath Himself wrought this selfsame thing? The marvel is, His grace; the wonder is, His love.”Therefore, we are always confident.”

CONFIDENCE IN LOOKING UP INTO HEAVEN.

From the darkest spot upon earth these men of old turned their gaze to the brightest place in heaven: from within their own hearts they looked to Christ on the throne in the glory. The eye of faith followed the sunbeam that shone into the dark heart to its glorious source. *“Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.”* *“We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor.”*

Yes! we see the once crucified Man throned in glory, and rejoice, for “*The light which shows our sinfulness Shines from His face who bore our guilt.*”

Those wounds of Jesus in glory tell the glad tidings of debt paid, judgment borne, self disposed of. Head of the New Creation and Firstborn from among the dead He lives in glory the Proof of their security—the Sample of their perfect salvation. And because He who died upon the cross in our stead lives in glory, and because God has made known the glorified One above to us, and shown us, in Him, our present security and what will be the result of our faith, the end of our expectations—even likeness to Christ above—“*therefore,*” as we look up into heaven, “*we are always confident.*”

CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

Gladly would the godless welcome a gospel of no righteousness. Centuries ago the fool said in the desires of his heart, “*No God.*” For the fear of God troubles the sinner, and gives him weary hours; unless, indeed, his conscience has become seared as with a hot iron, and has become thickened with indifference, so as to be callous to the fear of judgment to come. But the *righteousness* of God is the very foundation of the gospel of God. God has built His palaces of love upon the rock of His righteousness, and the believer treads those courts in the liberty of the knowledge that his sins have been removed according to the righteousness of God, and that the cross of Christ, which his sins occasioned, has established the claims of the righteousness of God.

The righteousness of God once against us is now for us. It demands for all who are in Christ the blessings which Christ has secured for His own. The righteousness of God has raised up Christ from among the dead, and given Him glory, and “*As He is, so are we in this world.*” (**John iv. 17.**) Such is our acceptance before God. “*Therefore, we are always confident.*”

CONFIDENCE OCCASIONED BY OUR VERY WEAKNESS.

We are but vessels, and earthen vessels, weak, and easily broken; but from felt weakness never arises lack of confidence in God when in His presence. God has chosen common and fragile vessels wherein to store His glory. In them He places the unutterable treasure of His own Sight; and He has put

the light in, that it may shine forth! And its shining forth from heart and life expresses to the world, in some small way, the reality of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Would that the earthen vessels contained this light in greater brilliancy! Current infidelity out of its own mouth and life testifies to the impotency of the human mind to understand the scriptures. Without the Spirit of God the Word of God remains in man's hand a sealed book; but God has put His Spirit within His people that power may issue from them for His glory upon earth. He does not change the character of the earthen vessel for this end. Did He work in such a way, the vessel might be more valued than its contents. The excellency of the power is of God, not of us.

The weakness of the vessel continues. Circumstances are not changed by conversion. There are Christians who expect to become golden vessels upon being born again; but although the treasure is richer than gold, "*we have this treasure in earthen vessels.*" While maintaining the place of vessels, God effects a shining forth of Christ that evidences the divine treasure within, and since God Himself has wrought us for this end," *Therefore we are always confident.*"

CONFIDENCE IN THE TRIALS OF LIFE.

Sorrow and pain are the inheritance of the children of men. Trials have to be borne, afflictions are appointed; and while the Christian has trials which are common to the human race, he has others also of a different character. He has within him the Spirit of God, and thus has eyes to see sin and sorrow in some way as God beholds it. He has the mind of Christ, and, therefore, has intelligence to know the heart of his Lord, and His desires for His people, and ability to comprehend, at least in measure, the departure of men from Christ. And more, he is called to suffer for Christ in a world which is now, and ever was, against Christ. But shall suffering hush his triumphant song? Listen to these words, from those who suffered, as Christians in our day seldom do: "*Troubled on every side—yet not distressed; perplexed—but not in despair; persecuted—but not forsaken; cast down—but not destroyed.*" Nay, these trials produced a sweet savour from their lives. These men were like the herb which, when beaten small, emits its fragrance, or like the grass which, torn by the bush harrow, fills the spring air with grate-

ful sweetness. As they carried about in their His beauty and His grace, were made manifest in their mortal bodies.

When in heaven, in glorified bodies, there will be the fragrance of Christ issuing from His people, but while on earth, in weak, mortal bodies, there should likewise be the manifestation of the life of Jesus in us. It will be found true that those whose hearts know most of Christ glorified, will, in their lives, practically express most of Christ crucified. The knowledge of a glorified Christ is the sail of the vessel which catches the heavenly breezes, and hastens it to glory; the bearing about in the body of the dying of Jesus is the stability of the soul holding it aright in waves and storms. The heart filled with the Person of the glorified One, is filled with an object which calls out the vigour and energy of divine life, urging on the steps to heaven and Himself; the heart filled with the death of Christ —by which the world is crucified to the heart, and the heart to the world, and by which self is crucified with Christ—is filled with an intense and Christ-like spirit leading the steps to follow the path which the Lord trod when here on earth. It is a practical word, bearing about in the body the dying—the dying on the cross—of the Lord Jesus, that the life—the character—also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal bodies.

Daily growing by sorrow and affliction, becoming continually more like to the Master, exhibiting the life of Jesus in daily things, and suffering and being persecuted, the God-given word again is heard from their lips, **“Therefore we are always confident.”**

CONFIDENCE IN VIEW OF THE MARTYR'S END.

Even this caused no distrust. Hourly conflicts, trials, perplexities, learning of the defection of some hearts from Christ, and of difficulties amongst others of God's people, were the portion of these noble men, and beyond loomed the martyr's end, *“We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus sake.”* But their triumphant cry of faith falters not. The very end would but introduce into His presence who died for them. *“Therefore we are always confident.”*

CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESENCE OF DEATH.

Let us look calmly at death; it may soon touch us. How shall we greet the “*King of Terrors?*” as the world designates that which God, speaking to His people, describes as Sleep! With these words, “*We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?*” “*We know!*” What assurance is here; and, again, the confidence is built upon God. The shifting tent will be exchanged for the building of God. True, God formed our bodies from the dust, and to Him we owe our existence upon this earth, but sin has spoiled the fair beauty of these our tabernacles. Decay has smitten them. Death will take them down. And what then! Laid in the dust, they will be found no more. But a permanent building will arise, a house awaits each ransomed spirit, a house eternal in the heavens. God has a resurrection body in the future, and a home in glory waiting for His people.

And God has wrought this Himself. Yet more, should death come, should we be absent from the body and present with the Lord, Jesus Himself will, in a special way, be with us in the hour of death. For as the weakness of the child calls for the special solicitude of its mother, so the weakness of His people in their hour of death does, in a marked way, call out the tenderness of the Lord for them. It may happen that when the feet of a saint are brought to the brim of Jordan, like its waters, his heart feels cold. He may know forgiveness, and be assured of glory, but still lack the joy of going home. We call to mind such an instance. The pilgrim in question, who had known for years the blessings of Christian life, and had no doubts concerning her salvation, when death drew nigh said, “It seems so dark and friendless.” Then it was that these words, “*I will be with thee,*” changed the gloom to brightness, and the loneliness to joy.” I am not alone now, “she said,” Jesus is with me. His Person, as well as His work, is now filling my soul.” And so she passed over that river, the strength of the waters of which, His death exhausted for His people 1800 years ago.

The apostle, in his deep intimacy with the Person of the Lord Jesus, could say, “*we are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.*” And we, too, as we consider for what God has wrought us, may exclaim, “*Therefore we are always confident.*”

CONFIDENCE IN VIEW OF THE COMING OF THE LORD.

The Lord is near. His coming is more sure than death, for "*we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.*" How shall we meet Him? These men of faith desired not death; "*Not that we would be unclothed.*" Their prospect was the first resurrection, and the Lord's coming when they should be "*Clothed upon.*" Then would mortality be swallowed up of life. For as the sun-rising not only dispels but by its beams swallows up the darkness, so shall our Lord at His coming not only chase away our fears and sorrows but all that which pertains to weakness, to sin, to bodily and spiritual infirmity in us shall be eternally gone.

As we ponder His coming, the break of the resurrection morn, the song of gladness at the awaking light, the purity and the peace of that hastening sunrise, yea, beholding Him Himself as He is, who is the sun, shall we not declare that as God has wrought us for that day, **"Therefore we are always confident."**

CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

Let us look beyond death, beyond the coming of the Lord and resurrection glory, beyond that hour when His people shall be transformed to His image, and so enter the home above. Let us look on to the judgment seat of Christ. There deeds will be made manifest; there the creature will be brought face to face with spotless light. "*We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*" But perfect love casts out fear; the judgment-seat can be viewed in peace. Should the believer lay his "body down before the Lord comes, his spirit will wing its way to the Lord;" *Absent from the body present with the Lord.*" And when the Lord comes, the body will be raised from the dead a glorious body; the corruptible will have put on incorruption, and then the ransomed spirit will be re-united to its glorified body. But should the believer be present upon this earth when the Lord comes, the Lord will change the believer's mortal body, and give him a glorious body; and so shall this mortal put on immortality. And thus, whether raised or changed, all shall in glorified bodies meet the Lord at His coming. Therefore, it will be in already glorified bodies, in bodies made like

to Christ's that we shall "*appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.*" This judgment-seat must not be confounded with the great white throne, of which we read in **Rev. xx. 11-15**, where the judgment which will take place at the end of this world's history and after the earth itself has fled away. For on that judgment day those of the dead will be raised, who were not raised or changed at the coming of the Lord; "*The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished ... Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection.*" We may then look on even to the judgment-seat of Christ, and say, with holy boldness, "*Therefore we are always confident.*"

THE PRACTICAL RESULTS.

There is a strange temerity in unbelief, a presumption which dares to assert that a man is likely to be the holier for want of confidence in God, and that fear of not being saved at the last is a wholesome check upon evil longings; or that assurance leads to loose behaviour. Allowing, for a moment, the false assertion that purity of life and distrust of God's word go together, we are met with a pure life actuated by motives in which God has no pleasure. For, from such seeds as slavish fear of Him, no fruits acceptable to His love can possibly be produced.

Divinely-given confidence is the ground for holy walking before God; this confidence is produced by the knowledge of God, and knowledge of God leads out the heart to Him who first loved us. It is this confidence which draws forth these words of the apostle, "*Therefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of (or acceptable to) Him*" (**ver. 9**). If, by grace, we can trace our way from those days when we dreaded the wrath to come, up to the hour when God gave us peace in believing, we can surely say that we are more anxious now than then, to please God. We can say that the removal of our fears, and the entrance of faith into our souls, by the Spirit's grace, has given rise to a standard of Christian life, and to motives for seeking to walk before God, and for desires after consecration to Himself, which previously were unknown to us; and indeed it cannot be otherwise. Faith works by love, and if faith does not work, then it is not real but dead faith. Not faith divinely given, but merely intellectually received. We have received from God life, and this life is energized by God the Spirit, who dwells within us, Christwards, God-wards.

The exceeding grace of Jesus, in giving Himself for them, and in laying hold of them for Himself, had so won the soul of the apostle, and the souls of those who were associated with him, that their one object was to be acceptable to their Lord; they looked on to the day of His tribunal, and laboured so that on that day they might hear His voice, *“Well done, good and faithful servant.”* There was not one thought that they might be disowned of Christ; but His love had energized their lives to labour to please Him.

Some look on to the coming day of His judgment-seat with thoughts of then gaining rewards. True, not so much as the cup of cold water given in His Name will be then forgotten, for it is not in the heart of Christ to forget the least thing, however simple, done by the humblest- of His disciples out of love to His name, and even if the service be not rendered, He remembers the honest desire to serve and please Him. Love rewards, but working for reward and working for love are entirely distinct. The labourer in the vineyard, who wrought for his penny, gained his penny, but he did not obtain the smile of his master. It is the Christian’s happy privilege to work for love. It will be the joy of the Master to remember every service.

There are no stringent rules for service laid down in the New Testament, but there are numbers of entreaties and appeals for our entire devotion. It is a mistake for a Christian to trammel himself by rules for living, unknown in the word of his Master; and, we may add, usually contrary to the spirit of his Master's word. We do not bind ourselves by rule to please our firmest friends, for love has already bound us. Our Lord says, *“If ye love Me keep My commandments.”* The spirit of love governs the whole of a man's walk and life in a way which the legal spirit, demanding for duty's sake so much time and so much service, is utterly unable to effect.

In the mystery of grace, the God of love gave His Son, and His Son, Himself, for us. In the presence of this unspeakable kindness, happy is he whose heart is for Him, who walks with God, and loving the Lord, keeps His commandments, and who, when before His judgment seat, shall, like Enoch, have this testimony – ***“HE PLEASSED GOD.”***

#316 Little Flock Mary Bowley

1. We are by Christ redeemed:
The cost His precious blood;
Be nothing by our souls esteemed
Like this great good.
Were the vast world our own,
With all its varied store,
And Thou, Lord Jesus, wert unknown,
We still were poor.

2. Our earthen vessels break;
The world itself grows old;
But Christ our precious dust will take
And freshly mould:
He'll give these bodies vile
A fashion like His own;
He'll bid the whole creation smile,
And hush its groan.

3. Thus far by grace preserved,
Each moment speeds us on;
The crown and kingdom are reserved
Where Christ is gone.
When cloudless morning shines,
We shall His glory share;
In pleasant places are the lines;
The home how fair !

4. To Him our weakness clings
Through tribulation sore,
And seeks the covert of His wings
Till all be o'er.
And when we've run the race,
And fought the faithful fight,
We then shall see Him face to face,
With saints in light.

