

Worship and Remembrance, Volume 4

Daniel Smith

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Preface

Meditations on the Lord's Supper

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To my Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and

To the Saints who gather in His Name who have shown me through the Eternal Spirit the delight and duty of true worship of the Father and the abiding values of the great Sacrifice for poor sinners on Calvary's Cross I dedicate this fourth volume of meditations

Preface

For many years Daniel Smith has faithfully exercised his exceptional gift of writing, producing a dozen or so books which have blessed the hearts of many Christians. Perhaps the best known of all his writings is the series (three volumes) on Worship and Remembrance, meditations on the Lord's Supper. This Christ-centered, Christ-exalting ministry has brought saints to a fresh and deeper appreciation of our blessed Lord and Saviour and of His atoning work at Calvary's cross. His insights into the excellencies, the glories, the perfections of our Lord have brought many into the true exercise of worship, both in private and in the assembly. He says that this exercise of worship "is of utmost importance, and it should be the daily duty of all believers to offer their adoring worship and praise to God, our Father,

through the atoning merits of His beloved Son, and the energies of the Holy Spirit.”

The burden from the Lord and the need of the Lord’s people led Dan to write Volume IV in this series on Worship and Remembrance. The supply of the first three volumes was exhausted long ago and people were still requesting them. It was obvious that these books were much in demand and were meeting a real need.

For years I had been concerned about the fact that Dan’s books were never printed in sufficient quantities to meet the demand. No doubt others shared this concern and not a few made it a matter of prayer. In August 1984, while Dan was in Lexington for some meetings, I approached him with what I believed would be the solution to this problem, the formation of a non-profit corporation, made up of godly men who would serve as faithful overseers in publishing his books. After much prayer and deliberation we felt that this was the Lord’s leading and Dan agreed for us to proceed in this direction.

A special word of appreciation goes to Lee Scroggins, a professional management consultant, and member of the Northern Hills Assembly in Cincinnati, Ohio who opened his office for our first meeting, and for giving his professional advice in forming the non-profit corporation. Royal Life Publications, Inc.

This book is the first undertaking of Royal Life Publications. We feel that this book will be greatly used of God for the blessing of the saints and will result in much honor and glory given to our dear Lord as the exercise of worship ascends into heaven, bearing the sweet fragrance of our Saviour’s worth.

Royal Life Publications will print other works, old and new, by Daniel Smith, as the Lord provides. We are grateful to God for those faithful brethren who have given so liberally to make this first printing possible. These books will be sold at a reasonable price and all proceeds will go back into the printing fund. All receipts from sales and gifts, one hundred per cent of the income, will go into the publishing expenses. None of the board members will receive a salary. Those who wish to have fellowship with this work should send their gifts to: Royal Life Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 23227, Lexington, KY 40523. You will receive a tax deductible receipt.

May this first book be a foretaste of publications to follow. Our desire is: "That in all things He might have the preminence" (Colossians 1:18).

HAROLD R. PRESTON, President
Royal Life Publications, Inc.

Foreword

For these past twenty years I owe much, under God, to the assemblies of the Lord's people commonly called "The Brethren," especially for their emphasis on the exercise of worship and the duty of participating each week in the Lord's remembrance feast. The meditations which follow are some of the fruit of this exercise of spirit which has greatly elevated my soul at times in rich communion with the Lord Himself.

The Lord's Supper is for those who are truly born again and have the principle of grace implanted in their souls. Those who would participate are to examine themselves whether or not their soul is alive to God through the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus Christ. For believers themselves, who have such grace implanted, there must be worthy participation. The spirit is often sluggish, the mind dull, and the body lazy. It will help quicken us if we have a lively sense into Whose presence we are come and, for this, there is need of sharp spiritual perceptions.

Let us beware of coming before God with anything akin to a careless or trifling spirit. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me," saith the Lord (Leviticus 10:3). There needs to be "reverence and godly fear" in our approach to God. There is no higher exercise than pure worship and there is no meditation equal to that which focuses upon the sufferings and glories of our precious Saviour. Since the sun withdrew its light, and the heavens mourned in blackness, and the rocks rent in pieces when He died, consider how we should come to the remembrance of these things.

Through sixty years of preaching I have read widely and gleaned in many fields. I am surely indebted to many for spiritual thoughts and helpful suggestions, but would have no record of them to thank them by name for any help afforded. I heartily pray that these meditations, and the rich hymns accompanying, may enlarge your vision to discern the supreme excellency of God's beloved Son and bring a new appreciation of the fact that His sufferings and death upon the cross meet all the needs of all men everywhere. The Lord's Supper is designed to seal to your heart your interest in Christ and to draw you near to Him in holy communion.

I am greatly indebted to all who have helped me, for several in the family who have checked Scriptures, typed the manuscript, corrected any errors, and most of all for the general overhaul and polished work of the editors of Royal Life Publications who have been kind enough to publish this book for me.

Volumes I, II, and III of "Worship and Remembrance" contained 144 meditations. The 59 in Volume IV now brings the total to over 200. May they be blessed to your souls and inspire you to a new desire for the exercise of true worship. That will be my joy as well as yours. "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Daniel Smith

Chapter 1 The Testimony In The Wilderness

Take ye the sum of all the congregation (Numbers 1:2).

Every man...shall pitch by his own standard (Numbers 2:2).

This book has its name from the account it gives of the number of the children of Israel—the number being taken twice particularly. It contains a history of the affairs of God's chosen people and their travels in the wilderness. In those ancient times the Lord God set up the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness and out from this God gave the several laws to Moses as recorded in the previous book of Leviticus. The camp of Israel was the Lord's lightbearer in a darkened world. In a certain locality each tribe had its own special place as a lightbearer. The tribes were, in some senses, figures of New Testament local churches as we see in Revelation chapters two and three. These seven Asian churches are representative of all churches in every age.

The Numbered People

The nation was redeemed—physically so. They had been rescued by God's own hand from the tyranny of Egypt. When redeemed a miracle of God supplied their daily needs. A moving pillar guided them in their movements onward to God's inheritance. The law was given them to teach them how to live. They were fenced around by strict social customs and typical worship. Their contact with the world was broken. They were separated from all other nations. God was their defence. The land of

promise lay before them. All this was a wondrous picture of the Lord's spiritually freed people in Christ. The chains of Satan's captivity are broken. The saved of the Lord are ransomed and freed and are now journeying as strangers through a wilderness world. Thus they daily praise God for their great Deliverer and the rich worth of His benefits.

Before God's people move from Sinai's base, however, God gives command that they are to be numbered. This was for their orderly journeying and encampment. The mixed multitude who went out with them were not to be numbered among them. It is a habit with men to count their possessions. A shepherd counts his sheep. In this numbering we read much of God's love. We are counted because we are loved and prized. Our names are upon His heart. He esteems us amongst His choicest jewels.

But who are to be numbered? Not the young—the weak—the female. This is symbolic. Those only are enrolled who are strong for war. In spiritual application this teaches us that as believers we are to live a warrior life. We are to boldly follow our File-Leader and Captain and be ready to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil. It shows us something of the militant state we ought to have while in this wilderness world, and for which we are provided and prepared and accounted.

What a great army these children of Israel were! Only one family had entered Egypt. In spite of all efforts to annihilate them they had multiplied greatly. So it is with the redeemed in Christ. Who can number the redeemed of the Lord? They are saved from out of every nation—kindred—people—tongue. Their robes are made white in Jesu's blood. Their hands wave palms of victory. By

this numbering we remember how much we are in the thoughts of God.

The Camp

Even the wicked Balaam had to praise the camp of God's people. Its beauty captivated his eye and the order of it charmed his mind: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles. O Israel!" It was a sheer delight to look upon (Numbers 24:5, 6). Their tents were not ornate palaces—not reared as lasting monuments. They could be set up one day—the next taken down—the short-lived home of earthly sojourners. Thus it is with our bodies which are but clay. Should we then pamper or admire them? There is no humbler thing than a tent. And how soon our bodies crumble! Dust they are and to dust they return. These tents must fall. We cannot boast even of tomorrow. The flesh is but a mean abode yet our Lord took upon Him this frail flesh. In Christ incarnate—behind the hidden gray of this humanity—there was hidden the glories of Deity. He took it upon Him that He might suffer—bleed—die—bear the curse. He did His Godlike work in a lowly tent.

Look at the order of the camp. What perfect regularity! The arrangement of it is perfect. God has made His testimony an orderly testimony. There is no confusion where He dwells. Where He sits enthroned, His government prevails. Thus in the life of His assembly there is order—a place for worship in His sacred presence—a gathering for study of His holy Word—a tender care given to each family. All is a well-ordered scheme.

Note the position of the tents. "About the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch." They all focused on

one thing. As planets circle the sun, so these tents were centered round the tabernacle. And thus we learn that the Lord Jesus is the center—the heart—the life—the joy—of His gathered people. The eyes of all His saints are upon Him.

Then we see a standard or banner floating over each side of the camp. Beneath each banner three tribes rest. By its side they march. The banner over us, says the Song of Solomon, “is love.” Upon that banner we read the inmost love of our Lord’s heart. That standard is the pledge of safety. Mighty foes may assail. They must fail. The fight may be fierce but none of Christ’s can perish. Beneath that standard there is sweet repose. The Lord watches over the camp. He does so day and night. “I the Lord do keep it ... lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day” (Isaiah 27:3).

Jesus, still lead on,
Till our rest be won,
And although the way be cheerless,
We will follow calm and fearless;
Guide us by Thy hand
To our Fatherland.
If the way be drear
If the foe be near,
Let not faithless fears o’ertake us,
Let not love and hope forsake us,
For through many a foe,
To our home we go.

Jesus, still lead on,
Till our rest be won;
Heavenly Leader, still direct us,
Still support, console, protect us,
Till we safely stand
In our Fatherland.
-Nikolaus Von Zinzendorf

Chapter 2 The Cities Of Refuge

There shall be six cities for refuge (Numbers 35:6).

Refuge has a sweet sound—especially to a believer. It is as a haven to a storm-tossed ship. The Lord Jesus stands as a believer's refuge and a safe and lasting shelter through endless days. A refuge is an asylum for persons to have recourse unto when their lives are in danger. These six cities were given to men to which they could flee, and to them the apostle alludes when he speaks to those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them in Christ Jesus our Lord (Hebrews 6:18).

The Hunted

The case here presented is that of a man who, without intent, might stain his hands with human blood. These cities were not for those who killed with intent and willful purpose through malice and envy, but for those who did it ignorantly, unawares, and without design. Accidents are always possible. But in these ancient times a kinsman of the slain could rise and claim the slayer's life. He who had slain was open to be slain. Thus with such a man there could be no inward peace, happiness, or security. Every movement could startle him. In any travel an ambush could be laid for him. His life would be a continual terror.

God provided a means of rescue for such men. Six cities were to be set apart at various points in the land and were to be easily accessible. Nothing was to impede a fleeing man—neither a hill—a dale?—or a river. His way was to be made easy (Deuteronomy 19:3). These cities provided sanctuary for a man. In them the manslayer

was secure. Here security enclosed him in its arms. Within these walls there was no alarm to frighten. The one condition was that he abide there while the high priest lived. The death of the high priest dissolved all claims. The slayer was then free from vengeance and could go forth and move from place to place.

The slayer may represent a sinner. We have slain God-given time—duties—talents—even our own souls. Our lifestyle has produced a good deal of guilt and we have often cast away God's means of grace. Just as the manslayer did not plot his deed, so sinners have blindly committed offences against God through ignorance and unwatchful thought. Thus we are pursued by wrath. Vengeance presses hard upon our heels. At any moment we may fall—never to rise.

The Pursuers

First, God's justice pursues the sinner. Justice has very strong claims. It has often been offended. It has a God-given right to execute vengeance. It is swift, strong, and terrible. This foe follows hard after us. It is always close to our heels. Its wrath is righteous, and we have no safeguard against it.

The law, too, pursues us. It demands absolute love to God and our neighbor from the cradle to the grave. There can be no exception—no matter what our station, rank, or talent may be. All who transgress the law are subject to the pursuit and vengeance of the law. And who has ever lived who has not transgressed the law? Thus it follows all men with its curse and condemnation. In the realm of the natural life there is no escape. We cannot hide from this inexorable pursuer.

Satan, too, pursues the sinner. He claims every sinning soul as his own property. His delight is to slaughter sinful men and drag them to his own bed of flames. His eye is keen for all who are sin-marked. He knows his victims. There is no fortress of earth's making which is stronger than the arms of Satan.

The Refuge

But sinners need not die. There is a sure refuge in Christ Jesus our Lord, of whom these cities are a type. God has been pleased to set up for us in His Son a sanctuary of security. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Nothing could give the man-slayer liberty but the death of the high priest. He was to stay in the city until the high priest died. Only then was he free to return to his people, and possessions, and privileges.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the believer's Refuge. He is Jehovah-Jesus so that none can pluck us from His covering hands. His finished work has built up the walls and towers and bulwarks of the city. "Christ died!"—and when justice sees those words it must turn back. It no longer has any claim since Christ our Surety has died for us. The law's stern curse falls harmless to the ground. Our Lord has borne the curse of the law so that all in Him are safe and secure. Nor can Satan enter these gates. Within these walls believers are washed—cleansed—made fair and lovely. They are no longer Satan's property. He cannot touch those whose sins are blotted out. Thus all awakened sinners flee to the Saviour for shelter, and in doing so, from the wrath to come. These cities were of God's appointing. So also is His Son—the Rock and Refuge of all who believe.

As the cities of refuge were readily available, so also is the Lord Jesus as the refuge for sinners. His outstretched arms invite us. The open gates are near at hand. These cities were also gathering places, and thus we are reminded that in salvation we are gathered unto Him, which is another note of God's grace. What a blessed Refuge our Lord Jesus is! And with what confidence we should flee to Him!

Unto the hills around do I lift up

My longing eyes,

O, whence for me shall my salvation come,

From whence arise?

From God the Lord doth come my certain aid,

From God the Lord who heaven and earth hath made.

Jehovah is Himself thy keeper true,

Thy changeless shade;

Jehovah thy defence on thy right hand

Himself hath made,

And thee, no sun by day shall ever smite,

No moon shall harm thee in the silent night.

From every evil shall He keep thy soul,

From every sin;

Jehovah shall preserve thy going out,

Thy coming in,

Above thee watching, He, whom we adore,

Shall keep thee henceforth, yea, forevermore.

-John Douglas Sutherland Campbell

Chapter 3 The Voice of Judah

Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah (Deuteronomy 33:7).

Judah is the cradle of Israel's kings—the royal tribe to which belongs the throne, the sceptre, and the sway. It is from Judah that the Saviour came—"The Lion of the tribe of Judah." It was in Judah's house that the King of kings put on the flesh of our humanity. We therefore look for God's special favor to fall upon this tribe of His choosing for such signal honor.

The Power of Judah's Prayers

Judah's tribe is powerful in prayer. Prayer is the atmosphere in which Judah can breathe most freely. The name Judah means prayer or praise, and the tribe was a praying and praiseful people. This is the staff upon which Judah leans. This is the pillow upon which his head reclines. This is his refuge when trials and temptations assail. Judah, son of Jacob, was loud in prayer and his voice is heard in heaven with pleasure and is answered.

We see this first in his father Jacob wrestling with God at the river Jabbok (Genesis 32:24-26), and saying, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." And such a prayer it is which comes from Judah and from all Judah's sons. Prayer's mightiest stories come from Jacob's tribe. Hear David: "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and He did hear my voice out of His temple, and my cry did enter into His ears" (2 Samuel 22:7). Hear Solomon: "Give me now wisdom and knowledge" (2 Chronicles 1:10). Hear Abijah: "When Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and

behind: and they cried unto the Lord...gave a shout: and it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel, before Abijah and Judah" (2 Chronicles 13:14, 15). Hear when a million Ethiopians threatened them: "Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee" (2 Chronicles 14:11, 12). But the pride of Judah's sons was the Lord Jesus Christ, who was of that tribe after the flesh, and whose prayers on earth were always heard. He said, "I knew that Thou hearest Me always" (John 11:42). And now we see Him on the throne of heaven praying for His needy people—for you and for me. This is the cause of all that has come to us through His wondrous mercy. Our mighty Advocate, who pleads the merits of His own blood, prevails on our behalf and for our eternal good and benefit.

The Safety of Judah's Convoy

"And bring him unto his people." The tribes of Judah often had to leave home to war against their enemies. It was such cheering words as these, which gave them hope of safe return. Here was a promise that they were not to be left un-cared for in some distant land. They were to return home in triumph. Within this promise lies a still greater promise—that Judah's illustrious Son, the Lord Jesus, when He would come into our humanity, conquer all His enemies, rise in triumph over the grave, which we see He did when He appeared to many of His disciples to their great joy—would bring all His loved ones safely home to glory. His people are scattered throughout this wide world—in every clime—on high

mountains—in deep valleys—amidst cold snows—in tropical heat. But Judah’s Son—the Lord of glory—will come and gather His people. He will draw us to our own people—the company who are His by right of redemption. All who are given Him of the Father will come to Him, because He comes to them and for them. He will call; we will go out from this world to meet Him. He will come with open arms; we will fly into them.

The Sufficiency of Judah’s Power

“Let his hands be sufficient for him” —a word which points to Jesus’ hands as a sufficiency of power and strength with which to combat and overcome all His and our enemies;—to work out the salvation of His people;—to supply all their needs. Judah was given a great work to do. It brought tremendous opposition and conflict with enemy forces. But Judah always had a sufficiency of power from on high and therefore could not possibly fail. Look at David from Judah’s line: “He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms... I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them (2 Samuel 22:35, 38). In such words we hear the voice of our conquering Lord. Hell arose with all its hosts against Him. The kings of the earth and the godless multitude are yet to array themselves against Him. He will tread them down under His feet. His hands are braced for that sufficiency. The final triumph is to be His as in Psalm 2.

The Triumph of Judah’s Trust

“Be Thou an help to him from his enemies.” This tribe often experienced God’s help in remarkable acts of trust as you can see from the lives of David, Jehoshaphat, and

others. This was also true in the life of our blessed Lord. In themselves, Judah's people were as nothing, yet they were more than conquerors. They were small in number. Their own weakness was all too apparent. Their enemies were often as the sand of the seashore for multitude. Yet these enemies could never destroy Judah. And why? Because the God of Jacob was their refuge. Judah's Jehovah-Jesus was their shield and sword.

Such was Judah's blessing. The Lord Himself was Judah's pride. Through Judah's line the Saviour came. He was Judah's God, yet Judah's Son—the God-Man—the Lord Jesus. When Judah's God is our God, then Judah's heritage is our rightful blessing.

I bless the Christ of God;
I rest on love divine;
And with unfaltering lip and heart
I call the Saviour mine.
His cross dispels each doubt;
I bury in His tomb
Each thought of unbelief and fear,
Each ling'ring shade of gloom.
I praise the God of grace;
I trust His truth and might;
He calls me His, I call Him mine,
My God, my joy, my light.
'Tis He who saveth me,
And freely pardon gives!

I love because He loveth me,

I live because He lives.

—Horatius Bonar

Chapter 4 The Blessing Of Joseph

Of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord (Deuteronomy 33:13).

Joseph is an amazing type or picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. The brightest jewel in his father's house, we see the sparkle of our Lord's life in Joseph's early grace—his persecuted youth, his rescue from the pit, his firm resistance to suggested evil, his prison sufferings, his exaltation to be a prince and ruler of all Egypt, his call to be the savior of his house—all is a wondrous window into the life of our Lord. Joseph's life, with all its light and shadows, graphically depicts the life of our Lord. He is "separated from his brethren"—cast out because He differs and was different. Joseph would not walk in evil ways. He loathes his brethren's vices; they loathe his grace. He is also a true type of all true believers who are blessed with all heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus.

Joseph's Fullness

The blessing of Joseph exhibits in his day the full measure of earth's fertility. The lands inherited by his sons were extremely fruitful, such as Gilead and Bashan to his son Manasseh, and the fields of Samaria to his son Ephraim. There was no other land in all Palestine so full and fertile as these lands. The fruit of them was rich and ripe under the most genial conditions. The land blossomed under heaven's softening rains. The mountains supplied rich ore. The lower hills were luxuriant in vines and olives. Joseph's sons feasted at nature's overflowing table. All these things were but an image of the far better wealth believers have in Christ

the Lord. Think of some of the rich blessings which come down to us in Him: “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith”—“We...are the children of promise”—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Galatians 3:14; 4:28; Ephesians 1:3). Or this in John 15:5: “He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.” We can only blossom and bud and flower and bear fruit when blessed by the Lord Jesus. How blessed are we as our Heavenly Joseph’s sons in Him—blessed with all spiritual blessings in every good work and word. Then, too, for Joseph there was “dew” —which speaks of refreshment and God’s favor and goodness—and also “the deep that coucheth beneath,” which refers to fountains of waters springing up from beneath and all of which carry great spiritual significance.

Joseph’s Goodwill

There was an assurance given to Joseph of God’s goodwill—“The goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush.” This was the crowning blessing of all. Moses counted that revelation as the moment supreme in history. It was a revelation of Christ to his soul. Our own heaven surely began when we were given evidence of God’s goodwill toward us! How sweet is this assurance! It was surely God’s goodwill that His beloved Son leave Heaven’s glories to undertake our full redemption—to live and die on our behalf. We gaze upon His low estate—His sufferings—His cross—His blood—His death—His grave—and all speak of God’s goodwill. That same goodwill

will present us faultless before the Father's throne in glory. It will joy over the redeemed while endless ages roll. Nothing can separate us from "The goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush." He is the Head of His people—the Head of the righteous ones on whom all the blessings of grace are and from whom they descend to all His spiritual offspring (Psalm 100:3; Ephesians 1:3). Joseph was separated from His brethren when sold into Egypt, but became the shining glory of his brethren when he became ruler over all the land.

Joseph's Triumph

"His horns are like the horns of unicorns." The head of the unicorn is an insignia of royalty and kingly power. As a type of our Lord, Joseph was to crush every foe. His conquering power is thus described: "With them he will push the people together to the ends of the earth." That sets forth in picture form the triumphant life of our Lord and this triumph is communicated to all who believe in Him, so that they, too, experience this triumphant conflict with all opposing force. The Lord's blessing is to implant courage that His people might prevail, wave their palms of victory, and sing their everlasting hallelujahs. Joseph's sons are to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"—strong in Christ who is the horn of our salvation and who by His strength will push our enemies far from us.

We sometimes look upon ourselves as a very small minority—a few here, a few there. But when all the Lord's people are gathered home—when the whole body is complete—how vast will be the assembly of His people! That ransomed multitude is numberless. O blessed be our God for what He bestows upon the head

of our heavenly Joseph. What a bright crown of glory shines upon His brow! What rubbish is this world's tinsel and gifts! What this world has is nought but a fading flower—a fleeting shadow—a tottering reed—a dried-up brook. The real treasure is upon the head of our heavenly Joseph—and upon those who are His through the abundance of His grace.

When all Thy mercies, O my God!

My rising soul surveys,

Transported with the view

I'm lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Ten thousand thousand precious gifts

My daily thanks employ;

Nor is the least a cheerful heart,

That tastes those gifts with joy.

Through every period of my life

Thy goodness I'll pursue;

And in eternal glory bright

The precious theme renew.

Through all eternity, to Thee

A joyful song I'll raise:

But oh! eternity's too short

To utter all Thy praise.

—Joseph Addison

Chapter 5 A Type of Christ in Joshua

On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel (Joshua 4:14).

There are several men in the Old Testament who stand out as eminent types or figures of the Lord Jesus. Joshua is one of them and we see him as a type in his name, in his office, and in his victory.

Joshua's Name

His name was originally Oshea, but Moses changed it by divine inspiration to Jehoshua (Numbers 13:16). This was done, no doubt, to make him a very eminent type of the Redeemer to come. Joshua means “Saviour”—a shortened form of Jehovah the Saviour. Joshua in Old Testament Hebrew is the New Testament English translation from the original Greek—Jesus. This name was given the Lord Jesus before His coming into this world. Said the announcing angel to Joseph, espoused to Mary: “Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Salvation was God’s message of mercy to sinful man. It is salvation which is the object of every prophecy, every precept, every promise, every sacrifice, every ceremonial rite, every inspired song, and every desire of every Old Testament believer. The deepest longings of the human heart are for salvation and the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of the world. He saves. He rescues from hell, because hell is the end of sin and of every person who commits sin. Hell can only be escaped by removing sin and only our heavenly Joshua can remove it. By His sacrifice on Calvary’s cross, on which He laid down His

life as a ransom for us and made atonement for sin, He can wash all stain of sin from human hearts. Satan is also silenced by that substitutionary work and can make no claim against those who trust the Saviour's blood. Jesus also saves by giving title to heaven. He has woven a garment of righteousness which is as pure as God is pure, because it is of God. This robe is given to the believer so that such an one can approach God and His holy throne with perfect freedom and delight and live in God's holy presence without the slightest fear.

Joshua's Office

Joshua was called of God to lead His people out of a waste, howling wilderness and into God's prepared inheritance. Moses, who represented the law of God, had led them through the wilderness but could not bring them into God's land of promise. Why not?—because he himself had sinned and the law made no provision for mercy—not even for Moses. For speaking unadvisedly with his lips he was excluded from that promised land. Because of sin, God was angry with Moses. Israel had provoked Moses, and Moses in turn had provoked God. He had dishonored God before God's people. This was public sin and it must be publicly condemned. God can by no means clear the guilty. Thus Moses' petition to enter the land was dismissed. God would not listen to him, saying: "Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter." It was in this way that Joshua was called to lead God's people—one whose name was Saviour, and so to teach us that we can never enter God's inheritance in heaven on the basis of law, but only through following the Saviour. In all these things Joshua set forth Christ as the Saviour in that blessed office.

Joshua's Victory

None could conquer and overcome Joshua. He went through the flooded waters of the Jordan (Joshua 3:17). The walls of Jericho, which enclosed the concentrated power of enemy force, fell before him (6:20). All enemies fell before him (11:16). The whole accursed race of Canaanites was practically destroyed by him (12:7). It was he who led God's people into the promised land and divided it to the several tribes (11:23; 18:10). In his dying he testified that not one of the promises of God had failed.

All this in this man was but a faint picture of God's chosen Redeemer—His only beloved Son. God has made His enemies the footstool of His feet. He is the mighty Conqueror over all His enemies. We see Him crowned with glory and honor. The power of His enemies was broken at the cross (Colossians 2:15). All hell must fall before him. All wicked men must bite the dust. Like Joshua of old our Lord causes His people to put their feet on the necks of their mightiest foes (Romans 16:20; Joshua 10:24). He leads His people at last through the swellings of Jordan—a symbol of death in some senses. When this wilderness journey is over and they come to the borders of the promised land, in Heaven, He divides to His people their everlasting portion. None are missing. Not one promise of God has fallen to the ground. Not one word of God has failed. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9).

Let us take solemn warning, too, from these things. We could be deceived by subtle enemies as Israel of old fell to the wiles of the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:15). All our

Lord's enemies must perish. Then, like the harlot Rahab,
receive the Lord's messengers and believe in God's
appointed means for our salvation and preservation.

The people of the Lord
Are on their way to heaven;
They there obtain their great reward,
The prize will there be given.
'Tis gloom and darkness here,
'Tis light and joy above;
There all is pure and all is clear,
There all is peace and love.
There rest shall follow toil,
And ease succeed to care;
The victors there divide the spoil,
They sing and triumph there.
Then let us joyful sing,
The conflict is not long;
We know in heaven we'll praise our King
In one eternal song.
—Thomas Kelly

Chapter 6 Worthy To Be Praised

I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies (Psalm 18:1-3).

This is a fervid exclamation of a soul fully acquainted with God. The tongue would praise Him, but human language seems wholly inadequate. The struggling efforts to worthily praise the most High God do but confess there is none like Him. Yet, though it be difficult to express worthy praise, all other human exercises seem mean and empty compared with this. All the discoveries of art and science are low as dust when contrasted with the pearl of praise. Other exercises of the heart and mind vanish with time—and time is but a tiny speck. The praise of God is an endless and eternal exercise. It has an endless life. Love to God and praise of Him from the heart removes all fear, spreads a holy fear over the soul, and fills the heart with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

A Song of Praise

This is a Messianic Psalm and therefore these are the words of the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God who entered our humanity as the divine Servant of Jehovah in order to accomplish the great work of human redemption. Let there be no doubt as to who He is. As the promised Messiah He is spoken of in the Old Testament as “the mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6)—“Jehovah

our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6)—"Immanuel" (God with us) (Isaiah 7:14); and in the New Testament as "God" (John 1:1)—"The great God" (Titus 2:13). "Who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Romans 9:5). He was sent of the Father, voluntarily taking up the office of the divine Servant that He might accomplish all the Father's will. Thus He took upon Him "the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). In this Psalm it is as the Son of man that the Father becomes the object of His adoration and praise. In His praise there is a wonderful variety of expression of all that God the Father is to Him as the Servant.

"My strength"—that is, He found in the Father all the strength He needed for doing His will and promoting His glory.

"My rock"—that is, God the Father was His safe refuge from enemy assault. It is a metaphor which speaks of God's protecting care through all circumstances in His life on earth.

"My fortress"—that is, God was as a walled city to afford absolute security so that there would not be the slightest possibility of defeat.

"My deliverer"—that is, He was assured of perfect safety when He must move out among His enemies. There would be deliverance from all temptations.

"My God"—that is God was the sole object of His praise and adoration. The Father was God to Him in His offices as the divine Servant and Son of man, and the Lord Jesus gave to Him an unreserved submission and obedience.

“My strength”—that is, in a different sense to the first expression, God would exercise His omnipotent power on His behalf in all the distressing circumstances He would encounter here on earth.

“My buckler”—that is, God the Father was His shield against all the fiery darts of the enemy. He was the screen and the shelter of Him and would keep Him in every trial.

“The horn of my salvation”—that is, God would punish and destroy all those who would rise against Him.

“My high tower”—that is, a sure defence from all the perils of the way.

What a confidence the Lord had in the Father as He moved on earth as the Son of man and the divine Servant!

A Song of Love

“I will love Thee, O Lord” (v. 1). Spiritual affections are the chief thing sought by God from the children of men. The first commandment is thus summed up: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength” (Mark 12:30). The Lord Jesus gave that kind of love to the Father and never failed to continue in it. The words express the deepest warmth. It is a door opened into the heart of the Son of God. It is the sweetest and dearest appellation given to the Father by the Son. All that He has described the Father to be heats the fervency of His love. God is His strength, His rock, His fortress, His deliverer, His God, His strength, His buckler, His horn of salvation, His high tower, and, being

all this to Him, the Son pours forth His love and devotion to the Father.

It is also so with the Lord's people. When we realize what the Lord is to us—what He has done for us through His beloved Son—when we see God giving up His Son to the shame and death of the cross—when we see how rich God is in mercy and His desire to relieve us of all wretchedness and unhappiness and to introduce light and peace to our hearts—when we see the majesty of God's unsullied justice in that every debt be fully paid and that He Himself would pay all—when we see God's holiness as the pillar of His government, and that He so abhors evil that only the blood of His Son could cleanse it thoroughly away and change our filth to holiness, our deformity to beauty, our impurity to snow-white lustre—then what can we say but, "I will love Thee, O Lord"—and determine that we shall continue in that love forever.

A Song of Deliverance

"I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (v. 3). God alone is worthy to be praised. There is no more appropriate exercise than that we praise Him who is possessed of all divine attributes—all transcendent excellencies—all perfections of virtue—all possible love to the children of men. In this exercise of praise, our Lord Himself, as the Son of man, was continuously saved from His enemies. In the days of His flesh, the Lord Jesus had many enemies—both wicked men and demons of hell. It was their assaults which brought forth His calls to God in prayer—and prayers with "strong crying and tears." It was His prayers which rendered the enemy force

impotent against Him. Thus His victory was assured in Psalm 2:8-12: “Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

Holy Father, we address Thee,

Loved in Thy beloved Son:

Holy Son of God, we bless Thee—

Boundless grace hath made us one;

May the Spirit aid our songs—

This glad work to Him belongs.

Wondrous was Thy love, our Father!

Wondrous Thine, O Son of God!

Vast Thy love that bruised and wounded!

Vast the love that bore the rod!

May the Spirit still reveal

How those stripes alone could heal.

Gracious Father, Thy good pleasure

Is to love us as Thy Son,

Meting out the self-same measure,

Since Thou seest us as one:

By Thee, Saviour, loved are we,
As the Father loveth Thee.
Hallelujah! we are hasting
To our Father's house above;
By the way our souls are tasting
Rich and everlasting love:
In Jehovah is our boast—
Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
—Mrs. Peters

Chapter 7 The Agonies of Christ

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears (Psalm 18:4-6).

There is no doubt that this is a Messianic Psalm. There is a depth of suffering and a completeness of deliverance which have no parallel in David's personal life—and it was he who wrote the Psalm—nor in the life of any other Old Testament saint. We must refer these verses to our Lord, and the Lord Himself may have made reference to this very Psalm when He said in Luke 24:44: "All things must be fulfilled, which were written ... in the Psalms concerning Me."

The Lord's Agony in His sufferings

The sufferings of our Lord were not caused by any personal physical infirmity or disease. They were not from within His own body but were inflicted from without. He was taken, and by wicked hands was crucified and slain (Acts 2:23). The scourging which He endured was so brutal as to often lift the whole skin from its victims and expose their inner organs. The pummeling He received from wicked men and the pulling out of His beard, which marred His visage more than any man's, must have been excruciating. And who can tell what is meant by such expressions as "the sorrows of death"—"the floods of ungodly men"—"the cords of hell"—"the snares of death"? It was not only

that He was compassed around by the basest of our humanity but also attacked by the whole hierarchy of hell—all wicked angels. “Floods” means torrents, and torrent after torrent of the most fierce and violent assault threw even our Lord Himself into some alarm. Then to be bound by the cords of Sheol from which there could be no escape but by the superior and almighty power of Deity, must have been truly alarming. All this constitutes the agony of the God-Man, our Saviour. He undergoes every pang which would have tortured His redeemed if they had tossed in the hottest flames of hell for ever. The cross of Christ is an awful scene. We can only survey it in the calm of holy reverence. The sufferings which He endured both in physical pain, mental anguish, and spiritual distress, are far beyond our understanding. Those sufferings are our ransom price. They are our escape. They are the means of rescue from eternal ruin. All those terrible sufferings died in our Lord and cannot revive to injure or hurt His people. We do well to “consider Him,” and never to forget what He suffered on our behalf, for He died: “The Just for the unjust”—was “wounded for our transgressions”—“bruised for our iniquities”—“the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” He “bore our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24).

The Lord’s Prayer in His Sufferings

“In My distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto My God” (Psalm 18:6). The Lord was no Stoic, nor did He adopt a stoical attitude to these appointed sufferings. In His distress He sought God. “I cried unto My God,” and, we read, He “was heard in that He feared” (Hebrews 5:7). Wherever the Lord is, a praying

voice is heard. His first and last look is toward heaven. His life on earth as the Son of man and the divine Servant was one flow of prayer. And now, in this hour of supreme sacrifice, His hope—His trust—His strength—must come from God. The Psalms are full of His cries, for He “offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from [out of] death” (Hebrews 5:7). Listen to these heartrending cries: “Be not Thou far from Me, O Lord: O My strength, haste Thee to help Me. Deliver My soul from the sword; My darling from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion’s mouth” (Psalm 22:19-21). “Withhold not Thou Thy tender mercies from Me, O Lord: let Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth continually preserve Me. For innumerable evils have compassed Me about ... Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver Me: O Lord, make haste to help Me” (Psalm 40:11-13). “Deliver Me out of the mire, and let Me not sink: let Me be delivered from them that hate Me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the waterflood overflow Me, neither let the deep swallow Me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon Me” (Psalm 69:14, 15).

Such were some of the deep heart-rending prayers of our Lord given by the Spirit of God to the Psalmist in the spirit of prophecy. When we come to Gethsemane’s garden in the New Testament, we hear the same sorrowful utterances. “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”—“O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done” (Matthew 26:39, 42). We can only tread that ground with reverent step. It is most holy. In His distress our Lord sought relief. He cries and asks with known and felt intent.

The Lord's Comfort in His Sufferings

“He heard My voice out of His temple, and My cry came before Him, even into His ears” (Psalm 18:6). His cries found no response from earth, but they were heard in heaven from within the temple of God the Father. His prayers were heard and answered. The verses which follow—awesome indeed—frightful to the wicked—were the proof God had heard His cries and would both vindicate His Son and recompense His enemies for their cruelties. With the comfort of having been heard, the Lord was enabled to fling off all who assaulted Him upon the cross, triumphing over them (Colossians 2:15). It was no easy work to rescue souls from Satan’s grasp or to lay low the prison house of darkness. The enemy flung all he had into the fight—clad in his fiercest armor—wild in his keenest rage—wily in his deadliest crafts—but, oh, the Lord conquered all! Oh, what an excellent Saviour! Oh, excellent Cross! Oh, what a victory! Glorious is the Lord our God who wrought out such a perfect redemption.

Amazing, holy mystery,

Unfathomed Sacrifice,

Where Incarnate Love on Calv’ry’s tree,

Accursed for sinners, dies!

From His soul, poured out unto death, that cry

Utters sorrow and love unknown,

“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”

O Sufferer, so wounded, so lone!

How couldst Thou—bruised, like crushed worm

Trod down in the dust of death—
O'er that scene of wrathful gloom and storm
Pour love's sweet undying breath?
'Twas that doom that wrung from Thy soul the plea,
Out of depths of the direful cross,
"My God, O why hast Thou forsaken Me?"
Forsaken, blest Saviour, for us!
For us Thy scars Thou wearest still—
Sweet mark of our advocate!
Soon Thy Form of love our souls shall thrill,
Low bowed at Thy nail-pierced feet!
How Thy wounds shall speak! how Thy soul's deep cry
Shall in echo forever fall, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"
Lord Jesus! our Glory, our All!
—Frank Allaben

Chapter 8 Public Worship

How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts, My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God (Psalm 84:1, 2).

How amiable—how lovely—is public worship! There is no sight on earth so soul refreshing as the gathering of true believers for worship of the living God. When Israel came out of Egyptian bondage and were on the march to God’s inheritance in the Promised Land, they were commanded to build a tabernacle for public worship (Exodus 25:8). There were three parts to this tabernacle: “the holy of holies”—“the holy place” adjoining it—and the “outer court.” It was in the outer court that public worship was first instituted and God manifested His living presence among His people.

The Loveliness of Public Worship

“How amiable!”—and why not? It is here where the most excellent of the earth gather, for this is the company of those who are spoken of as the Lord’s redeemed people—His jewels—His treasure—the members of His body—His spouse. There is no age limit among them. There is no distinction of race or of social standing. There are no special conditions which debar any of the Lord’s people from thus gathering. They are a people who have been washed from their sins—pardoned—sanctified—justified—reconciled—adopted into the family of God, and are His dear children. They all have received regeneration or new life in Christ, even His resurrection life conveyed into their spirits by the Holy Spirit, and have hope of

glory in the world to come. They are a people gathered from all nations, kindreds, tribes, and tongues. They are “the prize and travail of His soul”—the fruit of our precious Lord’s passion.

For my part I must profess before the world that no society has been of so much value to my own soul. From the bottom of my heart I bless God for His worshipping people from whom I have learned the values of worship. The Lord Himself is ever found in sensible presence among such a people and a very high esteem has our Lord for them.

The Order of Public Worship

“Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion” and, adds the Psalmist—“I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people in the courts of the Lord’s house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord” (Psalm 116:14, 18, 19).

In this public worship of these New Testament times, as in the Old, there are “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” by which the Lord’s people are found “singing and making melody in [the] heart to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19). This is a great exercise in uplifting the human spirit which is often tumbled down by the cares of the world and the weekly toil. Such joyful song, with its sacred harmony and melody, is a sweet and comfortable cordial.

Then there are the expressions of worship. In the fellowship of “brethren,” as they are called, and with whom I fellowship, brethren who feel liberty rise and, on behalf of the whole congregation, approach “the footstool of God,” and express before the Lord the

tributes of praise. The women may be silent, according to the rule of 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:8-14, and silent, too, are men who feel inadequate in expression, but all are represented by those who do express themselves and these care nought for copious phrases and high rhetoric, which mean nothing to God. Such worship is like a flow of cool, refreshing waters from Heaven above.

There may be, too, a short and appropriate ministry from God's Word— something suitable to the nature of the meeting and which will focus the eyes on the glory of God and the sacrifice of His beloved Son. Rich thoughts from the gifted who can open the veins of gold and silver in Scripture, is most helpful to the soul and makes the remembrance meeting a feast of love. The aim of such ministry is to excite spiritual affections and enlarge the appreciation for our Lord's Calvary sacrifice.

There is, too, in the fellowship to which I belong, an opportunity to present our material gifts to the Lord. Collections are not taken in public gatherings into which outsiders come. We take nothing from them. The Lord's work is supported only by the Lord's people and nothing should be received from those who are not the Lord's. The Lord wants their hearts before their gifts.

The Manner of Public Worship

The Psalm speaks of "the courts of the Lord" and of "the living God." We must not despise the courts, as some do, and gather in the most dingy places. Their emphasis is on meeting with "the living God." Others there are whose whole emphasis is on the courts and so desire high cathedrals or elegant structures. David in the Psalm strikes a balance here. The meeting place was a

desirable place and honoring to God. The place and the people were precious to His soul. But he was there to meet “the living God.” Unless the Lord is in the midst of His worshiping people, there is nothing but a lifeless ritual—an empty form.

“My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.” Such desire is an insatiable yearning for the revealed presence of the Lord in His courts. “Even fainteth”—David could hardly hold out till He had met with God’s people. “My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.” He mentions His soul—his heart—his flesh—and that surely constitutes the whole man. Everything a man is in himself is brought into exercise in worship. What intensity of desire is expressed by the Psalmist! One wonders at what state we have arrived in this declining age when hearts find the exercise so difficult and undesirable. O, if we could but realize the majesty of the most High God, and realize something of the love poured out in sacrifice on Calvary’s cross, we might be the more inclined to come and worship the Lord in “the beauty of holiness” and “in spirit and in truth.”

Everlasting glory be,
God the Father, unto Thee;
’Tis with joy Thy children raise
Hearts and voices in Thy praise.
Hearts and voices in Thy praise.
Thine the light that showed our sin,
Showed how guilty we had been;

Thine the love that freely gave,
Thine own Son our souls to save.
Thine own Son our souls to save.
Called to share the rest of God,
In the Father's blest abode;
God of love and God in light,
In Thy praises we unite.
In Thy praises we unite.
Gladly we Thy grace proclaim,
Knowing now the Father's name:
God and Father, unto Thee
Everlasting glory be!
Everlasting glory be!
—J. Wilson Smith

Chapter 9 Seeing The Lord

Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts (Isaiah 6:5).

When we assemble together as the redeemed of the Lord, what do we see? Those still in their sins do not see anything (John 1:18). There are some believers with only partial vision—a small measure of spiritual sight. They “see men as trees, walking” (Mark 8:24). Nothing is very clear, but everything blurred and indistinct. We have great need for anointed eyes so that the things of God are clearly seen and fully understood.

Men with Spiritual Vision

Isaiah said: “I saw the Lord.” It was a vision of the glory and the majesty of God. It was in the year that king Uzziah died which was the fifty-second year of his reign, and, incidentally, the year that Romulus, the founder of the Roman Empire, was born. Uzziah had been smitten with leprosy because of his impious arrogance in presuming to burn incense in God’s house, which duty was given only God’s appointed priests to do. “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.” The kings of the earth must die. The living God lives forever. Isaiah’s vision was really a vision of Christ—the Lord of all men—even the greatest. That was all, but it was sufficient. The things of God were at once discerned by Isaiah. He could see heavenly realities. True, it humbled the prophet and gave him a sight of his own wretchedness. But it also brought a new sense of cleansing and a new committal to the Lord. Unless our eyes are opened by the Lord, we must daily walk in a

very low marsh—be bound by a very limited horizon—and have no watchtower of hope with which to survey the future.

Then in Galatians 1:15, 16, Paul said: “It pleased God... to reveal His Son in me,” and before king Agrippa to testify—“I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” That vision, as with Isaiah’s, was probably not corporeal, but he saw the Lord with eyes of spiritual understanding. What a sight to see our Lord enthroned in majesty, high and lifted up,—that is, exalted above all creatures. That vision of the risen, ascended, and glorified Jesus Christ changed the whole of Paul’s life and made him the greatest of the apostles. All Isaiah’s rich and fruitful life began where his great ministry began—that is, when he said, “I saw the Lord.” Such men were seers—that is, seeing men—wise men—men of vision.

The Meaning of Spiritual Vision

It means seeing what others do not see. So with Joseph and his dreams. He saw what his brethren could not see (Genesis 41). It was spiritual vision which enabled him to remain steadfast when the “iron entered into his soul.” By him God was able to save Israel and so fulfill His purpose through His people.

“His glory is like the firstling of his bullock” (Deuteronomy 33:17). Joseph stood stately—beauteous—strong—as the prime offspring of the herd. Men who see the Lord reflect His image. They are made strong in the Saviour’s strength—beauteous in the Saviour’s beauty. They are as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It was in such spiritual vision that Moses saw the pattern of the tabernacle God wanted

built, in order to dwell in the midst of His people (Exodus 25:8). The tabernacle testimony was not Moses' idea but something of God which he saw. It is what is seen in spiritual vision which works out into fellowship with God in His purpose. So Paul: "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me"—"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision"—"I labored more than they all."

Spiritual vision is the shining of heavenly light. Seeing involves light. This is the most pleasant light that can ever shine upon the soul of man. When that light shines, all darkness is scattered. It is heavenly and divine light around and within the soul of man. "They looked unto Him and were lightened." It was the saying of a saint of God in Germany upon his deathbed, when his eyesight had gone, being asked how it was within,— "Why," said he, "though all be dark about me, yet (pointing to his breast) here is light enough."

Then again, it is spiritual vision which transforms men. Nothing but such vision could have changed such as Saul of Tarsus—an utter, uncompromising Pharisee of Judaism. If a man never sees, he will never be changed—never enter God's kingdom—never become a true child of God—never become a true worshipper in spirit and in truth—never a faithful servant. We must "see the Lord."

The Issues of Spiritual Vision

What happens when the Lord opens our eyes and we see? In the case of Isaiah there was an experience of cleansing. He was made conscious first of his own corruption: "I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). He felt the wretchedness and miserableness not only of his own sinful being but also of the wickedness around him — "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." He

felt so unworthy to take the holy Name of God upon his polluted lips. And certainly the people around him, the Jews, were wicked, not only in Isaiah's time, but much more so in the Saviour's time. They traduced Him as though He were a vile person. Some said He was a Samaritan—some that He had a devil. But Isaiah was touched with "a live coal... from off the altar," and it was said of Him, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isaiah 6:7).

Then came a call to consecration. Paul said,—“I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but showed first unto them at Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance” (Acts 26:19, 20). And Isaiah said the same thing,— “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

This was followed by a sense of calling. With spiritual vision comes a sense of purpose. This is something more than doing a job. There comes to the man who has seen the Lord a master-purpose in life (Philippians 3:13, 14).

Finally, there is in such men a spirit of cohesion. Spiritual vision draws such men together—making them “a together people”—those who go on in a certain way of life together. The people of vision are like those in Nehemiah's day. They hold together—build together—and do so with a strange variety of temperaments, qualifications and gifts.

Blest are the pure in heart,
For they shall see their God,

The secret of the Lord is theirs,
Their soul is Christ's above.
Still to the lowly soul
He doth Himself impart,
And for His dwelling and His throne
Chooseth the pure in heart.
Lord, we Thy presence seek:
May ours this blessing be;
Give us a pure and lowly heart
A temple meet for Thee.
—John Keble

Chapter 10 Redemption Without Money

Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money (Isaiah 52:3).

One of men's sweetest and most prized possessions is liberty. What is health, or money, or possessions, or high-sounding titles, if one is not free? How a dog enjoys liberty when freed from its chain or a criminal when freed from his captivity! In this portion of Isaiah's prophecy, the prophet sees the nation in exile—slaves of a foreign power—their harps hung on the willow tree. The song had gone out of them. "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" they asked (Psalm 137:4). That was the answer of the Jews to the request of their Babylonian captors. It was the Lord's song the Babylonians required them to sing. But it was so sacred as not to be sung in any place, or at any time, or in any company. That would be casting pearls before swine and giving that which is holy unto the dogs (Matthew 7:6).

What Man Has Done for Himself

"Ye have sold yourselves for nought." As Ahab did to work wickedness, as men do freely, and get nothing by it—for there is no gain in the service of sin, or Satan, or in being vassals to any such masters. There is no profit, but loss; no pleasure, but pain; no honor, but shame; no liberty, but bondage; no riches and plenty, but poverty and want. Such is human folly. It is the sale of one's whole self to the service of another. Sin has been like the venom of a serpent which has drugged man into a

torpor of spiritual slumber, so that he is insensible of his own actions. He has sold himself and is a slave of Satan.

Slavery is our natural state. Our first parents sold themselves to Satan to do acts of sin and rebellion, and we are simply the offspring and progeny of slaves.

Slaves!—bound and branded with a perpetual bondage—bound by fetters stronger than iron chains. And for what price has man sold himself? The answer is “for nought”—not a thing—no return at all. Were a businessman to sell his goods for nought he would soon be bankrupt. And man’s folly spells out his own spiritual bankruptcy.

Also, ye have sold “yourselves,” said the prophet. Every man has sold himself—some to gold—some to lust—some to drunkenness—some to drugs—some to fashion—some to pleasure—but all to Satan, to do his godless works, especially the evil of forgetting God and departing from Him. Satan may not lead all into grosser sins, but he will lead all into unbelief and into the opposite of a heavenly walk.

What the Lord Has Done for Man

“Ye shall be redeemed without money.” Our redemption is not like that within national Israel, when slaves of others within the same nation waited only the passing of time for the year of Jubilee, when all were freed. Time remodels many things—even the face of the earth and the condition of human society. But neither time, nor money, nor merit, can redeem our souls.

“Ye shall be redeemed,” is the Lord’s promise. And this is to teach us that our spiritual and eternal redemption from sin, Satan, the law, the world, death and hell, is

obtained without such corruptible things as silver and gold. There could be no cash transactions sufficient for such a redemption. Yet redemption would not be without a price—albeit, only by the precious blood of the Lamb of God (1 Peter 1:18). That redemption was accomplished without any price paid to Satan. It was paid to the justice of God, for it was against God that man had sinned—whose law we had broken—whose justice must be served. Only the blood of Christ is a sufficient price to answer for all. Hence redemption, though it cost our Saviour so much, is free to us. It is brought about by God alone and wholly undeserved by us. It is not through human merit and not by any ransom price paid to Satan who held us captive.

The Old Testament is full of light and luster and shines with the assurance of God's promises of the Redeemer and His redeeming work. God's wondrous mercy is seen in the plan. He calls His beloved Son to bear the sinner's curse. He lays help upon the only One able and mighty to bear it. He clearly shows by type, symbol, illustration, and word of promise, how He does so. It is a blood-stained record. All types and symbols in that old economy are full of blood and death. From of old, the Redeemer was promised and the plan made clear—not with entreaties only upon His lips—not to melt justice with soft appeals—not to beg for mitigation or reprieve—but by bearing our sins in a human body and absorbing all the punishment due all our sins in that body. He claims the right to save by substitution on behalf of His people. The sinful seed of man is one of flesh and blood. The Son of God would take upon Him a truly human nature, sin apart, and become a Fellow-kinsman of our race. His people's sins would be laid

upon Him. He Himself would mount the steps of the altar of God. He would bear their penalty. He would drink the cup of woe until it was drained. He would allow the sword of divine justice to be sheathed in His own heart. He Himself would sustain the hell of torment which should have passed upon us.

This is the one fact upon which the redemption of man hinges. But until man sees that his soul is drifting toward an eternal lostness, he will not cry for deliverance. When that day comes, and with it a sense of helplessness to deliver ourselves, what a wondrous thing it is to know that our deserved death has taken place—our sufferings borne—our agonies endured—the worm slain—vengeance satisfied—sins washed away—all debts paid. Believing this with the whole heart, our heaven is begun. Hell's portals close—all claims are shivered—all fires made extinct. Redemption! Redemption by the blood of Christ! It is this alone which opens the passage to heaven—to eternal and blessed rest—to rule and reign with our Lord for ever and ever.

Never further than the cross,
Never higher than Thy feet;
Here—earth's precious things seem dross,
Here earth's bitter things grow sweet.
Gazing thus our sin we see,
Learn Thy love while gazing thus;
Sin which laid the cross on Thee,
Love which bore the cross for us.
Pressing onwards as we can,

Still to this our hearts must tend;
Where our earliest hopes began,
There our last aspirings end.
Till amid the hosts of light,
We, in Thee, redeemed complete,
Through Thy cross made pure and white,
Cast our crowns before Thy feet.
—Elizabeth R. Charles

Chapter 11 Vicarious Expiation

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).

When Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch and heard him read from Isaiah fifty-three and was invited into the man's chariot to guide him in the exposition of it, we read that "Philip opened his mouth ... and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:27-39). This was a demonstration of the fact that the Gospel was "promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures" (Romans 1:2), and that "the righteousness of God without the law is... witnessed by the law and the prophets" (Romans 3:21). And no prophet is clearer in the expiatory sufferings of our Lord, as the ground of our salvation, than is Isaiah.

The Nature of Our Lord's Sufferings

The conjunction "but" refers us back to previous verses in which it is said that it was thought by the Jews He was "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." They thought Him an imposter and that His death on the cross was a just punishment for wicked blasphemy. But there was always a remnant in Jewry who were enlightened to see that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah. Furthermore, some day, when Israel passes through the tribulation, they will come forth with this chapter as an expression of national repentance. "We thought that!" they will say, "but we were wrong!" They will come to the place where all of us must come if we are to be saved—the place where we recognize that "He

was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”

There are here three words to describe our Lord’s sufferings: “wounded,”—which means His body was transfixed to the cross by nails, and this would also include the piercing of His side with a spear by the Roman soldier; “bruised,”—which means pummeled or battered or whatever caused His face to be “marred more than any man’s”; “chastisement,” —which means the enduring of all that sin deserved. It would include also the scourging which often lifted the skin from the back and exposed the inner organs.

The Scripture tells us His soul was poured out like water, and all His bones were out of joint: that his heart was like wax and melted in the midst of His bowels (Psalm 22:14). We must then add to these awful physical sufferings, the mental anguish which seemed to be so great as to bring Him into sore amazement. Added to this distress was the deepest suffering of all—the abandonment and forsaking of the Father when He cried, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). This was none other than the ultimate agony of the human soul—the second death.

The Cause of Our Lord’s Sufferings

These sufferings had no cause in Himself. He thought no sin; did no sin; knew no sin; could do no sin. He was God’s Righteous Servant. They were sufferings indeed for sin—but for our sins. The sound of the word “sin” is brief, but what a dark abyss it is! Before the worlds were made it began in heavenly places and dragged down an untold number of angels into devildom. It then entered

Eden's garden and slew the innocence of the first man. From thence it has rolled on into an enormous mountain. It is man's ruin. It drove man from sweet and peaceful fellowship with God. It changed a loving child into a hardened rebel. It darkened man's mind. It made His heart a nest of unclean birds—a spring of impure waters—a whirlpool of tumultuous passions—a hotbed of ungodly lusts—a den of defiant schemes. It has not only caused all human misery and spawned death, but has built the prison walls of hell—kindled quenchless fires there—forged eternal chains there.

All of this sin had to be borne and all its merited woe poured out on the head of the holy Lord Jesus as a Sin-bearer. If He was wounded for transgressions, they were ours. If He was bruised for iniquities, they were ours. Our sins were the procuring cause of all His sufferings. They were endured by Him on behalf of those He came to save. He stood in our place and suffered what we should have suffered. He is our complete Sin-offering. He paid in anguish and in blood our every due. Wrath was endured by Him. Penalties were paid by Him. Sufferings were suffered by Him. An infinity of woe was borne by Him. Only a God-Man could have endured and absorbed it all.

The Design of Our Lord's Sufferings

When He came into the world, it was as the Lamb of God to take away "the sin of the world" (John 1:29)—"to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins" (Daniel 9:24)—"to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26). Thus the whole purpose of His sufferings was expiatory. Is not this the truth of truths? It is this truth which is the light—the feast—the joy—the

strength—the rapture of every saved soul. Our sins slew the Son of God. They cannot now slay us. His death is ours. Therefore we live. God’s smile is upon us, not because our sins are none, but because each of us has died in Christ. God gives us every pledge that He approved—attested—received—delighted in—His offering of Himself. Release from every woe—admission to God’s Home in Heaven—are ours.

What then? Through these expiatory sufferings of our Lord we are reconciled to God through the body of His flesh by death. We who were afar off are brought nigh. We who were rebels in His universe have had the hostility taken out of us. “O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation” (Isaiah 12:1, 2)—“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19) —“Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

“With His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). So concludes our text. It means we are healed of all our soul’s infirmities by His sufferings on the cross. Those wounds alone are our refuge. He has settled all our accounts. He has finished all our transgressions. He has made an end of all our sins. He has made peace for us through the blood of His cross.

Thy sorrows, Saviour, we retrace,
And tears of praise Thy griefs compel,

What love and grace illumine
Thy face As Jesus, our Immanuel.
Amid Thy loneliness below,
What scorn and outrage Thee befell:
Deep shame and woe, rude blow on blow,
Endured for us, Immanuel.
But oh, what grief, what agony,
When wrathful judgment's awful spell
Burst over Thee, on Calv'ry's tree,
God's Lamb for Us, Immanuel.
And when Thy glorious face we see,
How shall the bursting paeon swell!
Our souls shall be outpoured for Thee—
Outpoured for Thee, Immanuel.
—F. Allaben

Chapter 12 The Prophetic Lamb Of God

He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7).

Our Lord as the Lamb of God is the central theme of all Scripture. It is the one theme which makes the Scriptures a consistent whole. The heart of its message is that "Christ died for our sins." In verse seven of this chapter there is set forth those penal substitutionary and expiatory sufferings arising out of the sinfulness of man, and the disposition in which our Lord suffered them. The saving of men could only be accomplished by His bearing, in our room and stead, "the iniquity of us all." That exposed Him to the extremest suffering and in the greatest extensity. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted." He made no resistance: He showed no reluctance. This was the cause for which He came.

The Lamb As the Central Theme

Until the Lord Jesus is seen as God's appointed sacrifice to purchase our redemption, the soul of man drifts hopelessly toward the shores of eternal woe. But this chapter is blazoned with the fact of Christ as the substitutionary Lamb. There are seven statements which view His sacrifice from the point of view of our human needs. (1) "He hath borne our griefs"; (2) He "carried our sorrows"; (3) "He was wounded for our transgressions"; (4) "He was bruised for our iniquities"; (5) "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him"; (6) "With His stripes we are healed"; (7) "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." He fully paid our debt—life for life. He submitted Himself to all the exactions

demanding of us. He readily took man's place and readily met man's responsibilities. He approved the law which man had broken.

There are also seven statements which view our Lord's sacrificial death from the viewpoint of God's justice. (1) "For the transgression of My people was He stricken"; (2) "Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin"; (3) "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many"; (4) "He shall bear their iniquities"; (5) "He was numbered with the transgressors"; (6) "He bare the sin of many"; (7) He "made intercession for the transgressors."

Between these two sevenfold differing points of view, we read in verse seven that "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." That is central. The Lamb of God is in the midst where all can see Him. We must ever remember this about ourselves—that "all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." We are in disgrace by our folly—rebellion—ingratitude—disobedience. "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head," said Ezra in 9:6 of his book. But here is a sacrifice in a depth we can never probe—a height we can never reach—but only wonder and adore. The sacrifice of the Lamb of God is our salvation's price.

The Lamb As the Strength of God

He is "the arm of the Lord"—which means the omnipotent strength of God. When Moses wrought a certain miracle in Egypt, the magicians acknowledged that "this is the finger of God." What is set forth here in Christ is "the arm of God." In His eternal Son, God has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of the nations. "The

arm of the Lord” is that in which He displays and exerts His strength. Christ suffering is the most wonderful display of Divine power ever known. It was the arm of God in Christ which was to pull down all the strongholds of the enemy and bring down every high thing that had exalted itself. But it did take the full strength and power of God to destroy the strongholds of Satan and rescue man from sin’s tremendous woe. God could not leave man in such condition as he was and simply abandon him to Satan and so allow His own original intention in creating man to be defeated. Oh no! God would now exert all His strength, and that strength is put forth in the cross when His beloved Son bore all the weight and endured all the punishment which were due to us. Our only problem in life is our transgression—our sin—our iniquity—all of which are mentioned in this chapter. It took the whole strength of God to bear that crushing burden. Alas, the great majority are deaf to His report and blind to the arm of God.

The sacrifice of the cross is never a difficulty to a truly penitent sinner. It is the power of God unto salvation. The strength of God’s arm is in its saving power. There are many who stumble at the Cross and, until they learn by the Spirit’s aid the strength of its power—receive its message—prove its power in themselves—they must remain lost. The one deep, stark reality behind the cross is that there is a real Gehenna—a real hell of torment. It is where souls are lost and lost forever. The cross is God’s method of removing the whole thing which is called sin, and restoring man again into His own image and likeness.

The Lamb As the Start of a New Creation

“He shall see His seed” (verse 10). In chapter six the prophet sees the Lord “sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up”—Christ in His exaltation. There then follows almost thirty chapters of judgments upon the nations, for, as Daniel said, “the heavens do rule.” But what staggers and baffles the prophet, and which also does our own mind and heart, is to see this high and lofty One “brought as a lamb to the slaughter.” Whoever heard of a king dying for his subjects? - but these are the things of God and not the things of men.

The prophet then moves past the cross into the triumph of His resurrection. “He shall see His seed”—“He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied” (v. 11). It means a new generation shall arise. This is the consequence of our Lord’s sacrifice. After being “cut off out of the land of the living” and “His soul made an offering for sin”—“He shall see His seed.” He shall have a spiritual posterity. Those who are born again of His Spirit are “His seed”—His children—the product of His life-giving energy and who therefore bear His image and likeness. They are “the many” whose sins He bore. “He shall see of the travail of His soul”—that is, the product —“and shall be satisfied.” Because of the travail of His soul, He shall see the effect and produce of it—and “be satisfied.”

My Lord, my Master, at Thy feet adoring,
I see Thee bowed beneath Thy load of woe;
For me, a sinner, in Thy life-blood pouring:
For Thee, my Saviour, scarce my tears will flow.

With taunts and scoffs they mock what seems Thy
weakness, With blows and outrage adding pain to pain;
Thou art unmoved and steadfast in Thy meekness;
When I am wronged how quickly I complain.
My Lord, my Saviour, when I see Thee wearing
Upon Thy bleeding brow the crown of thorn,
Shall I for pleasure live, or shrink from bearing
Whate'er my lot may be of pain or scorn?
O Victim of Thy love! O pangs most healing!
O saving death! O wounds that I adore!
O shame most glorious! Christ, before Thee kneeling,
I pray Thee keep me Thine for evermore.
—J. Bridaine

Chapter 13 The Fruit of Travail

He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied (Isaiah 53:11).

This chapter in Isaiah is the most wonderful chapter in all Holy Writ. It is the Spirit of God testifying through the prophet of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory which was to follow. There was a divine necessity in those sufferings, as the Lord explained to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. They seemed puzzled and perplexed about His Messiahship because of His death on the cross. But, says our Lord, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (Luke 24:26, 27). There should have been no doubt in their minds as to the necessity of those sufferings. And surely, in our Lord's exposition of Scripture concerning those sufferings He must have made reference to this wondrous chapter in Isaiah—a most remarkable oracle.

The Product of Our Lord's Travail

"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied," has reference to what was to be the result of His sufferings. He Himself would be fully satisfied. As He reviews His agonizing sufferings and contemplates what the fruit of His passion was to be, He deems those sufferings worth it all.

Travail speaks of long, severe pain. It is not like the travail of a woman in delivering a child, which is painful enough, but of short duration. The travail of our Lord

would include the whole of His life on earth—all of which was a sore and painful exertion. His travail was caused by God's determination to save men. His justice, truth, and holiness proposed tremendous issues. Each sin of man had to bear its merited load of woe. Each curse must be endured. Each violation of law must drink the dregs of condemnation. Because the Son of God came forth to save, then He who was guiltless must take the guilty place. He must stand as the sinner's complete Sin-offering and pay in anguish and blood their every due. So wrath is endured—penalties are paid—sufferings are suffered—agonies are agonized. The work of human redemption required an infinity of woe. It was thus that sin was fully punished in Him. It is thus that believers are fully saved.

It was on account of His whole life and death of suffering that it was made possible for Him to have "a seed,"—"He shall see His seed." The harvest of His travail was to be a vast multitude of saved men and women in whom He would find satisfaction for all His pains—"He shall be satisfied." Most of His physical sufferings came to Him in Gethsemane's garden and on Calvary's cross, but His offering for sin was more than physical labor. It was "His soul" which was made an offering for sin, and that included all His toilsome labor as the Son of man. "Now is My soul troubled," He cried. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" is in the same realm of soul trouble. The same soul anguish lies behind the request: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me."

His tremendous sufferings were not in vain. "He shall see His seed." By that wondrous work He removed all hindrances to man's salvation—secured for believers the

inward presence and abiding of the Holy Spirit—made possible His own exaltation to the throne of heaven—and established the glory of God in His own universe. All this He was to see as the product of His sufferings.

The Justification of Many

“By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities” (v. 11). The only righteous person is the Lord Jesus, the Son of the living God become Son of man,—the only Person righteous in Himself and who could fulfill all righteousness on behalf of men, in that He fully answered all demands of law made upon them. Because He was utter righteousness, and because He brought in everlasting righteousness by dying “the Just for the unjust,” He is able to “justify many.” All who believe are made “the righteousness of God in Him”—being united to Him. Believers are thus brought into a state of God’s acceptance and favor, as though they themselves had fully answered all the demands of the law upon them.

The word “many” does not mean there is any limit to the number of those who may be justified through His atoning work. There is merit enough for all men to be made righteous, but not all avail themselves of the Saviour’s work. Nevertheless, while “many” may not mean all, it also does not mean few. The number of the redeemed is to be “as the stars of heaven”—“a great multitude, which no man can number” (Revelation 7:9). God justifies all who come to believe in His Son.

The Exaltation of the Redeemer

“Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because

He hath poured out His soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (v. 12). Thus we see the Lord is given multitudes as His portion, and He takes the strong or mighty as His own—those with overcoming faith in Him. He chooses out of the total body of mankind those who are useful to Him—those who would be loyal to Him—those who would glorify Him and be devoted to Him. And those are many. All others will be sent away to perdition. What other fate could Christ-rejecters expect when they refuse Him who "poured out His soul unto death" on their behalf? The whole chapter is very clear, full, rich, precious and divine. It speaks in emphatic terms of our sinnership—that trespass stains our souls, our minds, our hearts, our every day and every hour. It is this which strengthens Satan's claims against us. But there is perfect redemption in our Lord Jesus Christ. His dying pays our sin and trespass offering. He puts to the lips of every believer a cup of overflowing merit. All our sins are buried in His wounds. All our nakedness is covered with the robe of His own glorious righteousness. Here is our full beauty! Here is our all-sufficient expiation! Here is our everlasting blessedness!

Lord Jesus! we remember

The travail of Thy soul,

When through Thy love's deep pity,

The waves did o'er Thee roll;

Baptized in death's dark waters,

For us Thy blood was shed;

For us, Thou, Lord of Glory,

Wast numbered with the dead.
O Lord, Thou now art risen,
Thy travail all is o'er;
For sin Thou once hast suffered—
Thou liv'st to die no more;
Sin, death and hell are vanquished
By Thee, the Church's Head;
And lo! we share Thy triumphs,
Thou First-born from the dead.
Unto Thy death baptized
We own with Thee we died:
With Thee, our Life, we're risen,
And shall be glorified.
From sin, the world, and Satan,
We're ransomed by Thy blood,
And here would walk as strangers,
Alive with Thee to God.
—James Deck

Chapter 14 God-Amen

The God of Truth [God-Amen] (Isaiah 65:16).

“Amen” is here a title given to God. He stands in opposition to the idols of the heathen, which were not gods by nature and to whom the God of truth is ever opposed. The mention of the God of truth here is a reference to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is one of His titles in the New Testament, as you see in Revelation 3:14.

We use the word “Amen” to emphasize some profound truth or when we identify ourselves with what has been uttered in prayer. We mean—“So be it!” or “Let it be like that!” The description of the living God as the Amen is summed up in James 1:17: “The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” God is always positive, definitive, sure. He is never in a quandary—wondering whether this or that is the right course.

God As the God of the Amen

In Isaiah, chapter 65, there is a record of God’s judgments upon the nations which includes chastisement of His own people. That chastisement was seventy years of captivity in Babylon. The flowing stream of the river Euphrates, by which they sat, since it ran through the city, was swelled with their tears. They wept when they called to mind what privileges they had enjoyed—sacrifices offered—feasts kept—songs of Zion sung. But in 40:1 there is a new note: “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people.” In 52:1 there is a call to awake, “Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion.” Then in

60:1, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Finally, there is promise of full restoration, "My servants shall sing for joy of heart" (65:14). In their seventy years of captivity, they had often cried, "Our hope is lost!" Their own land was utterly devastated. There seemed no hope, no prospect, no future. Many feel the same way about present-day Israel. But God is the God of truth—the God of the Amen. Because He is that, and thus faithful to His covenants and promises, there is hope for Israel. These things are written for our learning. There are many who feel life is hopeless and that there is no future. But because of who God is, and what He is, there is hope and the possibility of singing again with joy of heart. "The promises of God in Him [Christ] are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God" (2 Corinthians 1:20). But God demands reality and firm conviction. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness," says the Lord Jesus as He addresses Himself to the church of Laodicea (Revelation 3:14). We must put off all uncertainty, indefiniteness, and all luke-warmness—all indistinctiveness in character—all indecisiveness in testimony—all uncertainty of hope—and believe that the Lord is the God of truth—the God-Amen!

The Lord Jesus As the God of Truth

"These things saith the Amen." In the days of His flesh our Lord often used the words, "Verily, verily," which mean "Amen, amen."

The Lord Jesus is the Amen in His death. In Deuteronomy 27 we read of the curses which were to come upon Israel if they disobeyed. At the recital of these curses the people replied, "Amen"—that is, "Let it

be like that” if we do disobey. Let us be cursed of God. In His great work of redemption, the Lord Jesus was accepting that Amen on behalf of His people. His sufferings and death on the cross were a mighty amen to all of God’s wrath which was poured out upon His head on behalf of a disobedient people. In effect, the Lord Jesus was saying, “This is how it ought to be! This is what man’s sin deserves!” He was giving His amen to the curse of God upon sin. In those expiatory and substitutionary sufferings He swallowed up the whole curse, just as Moses’ serpent swallowed up the serpents of the Egyptian magicians. It was our Lord’s own attestation to the holy, just, and righteous character of God. The inflexible justice of God demanded punishment for sin. It made exaction for the iniquity of us all.

Then, too, He is the Amen in His resurrection. This is the other side of the cross. “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore” (Revelation 1:18). Says Paul, “[He] was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25), that is, we are justified by His risen life. This is the Amen of our justification. This is how it ought to be for all who have believed on Him. In His death we affirm God is right in punishing sin, and we believe the Lord Jesus graciously bore our sins in His own body on the tree. We are saying, in effect, “That is what I deserve!” We can never get through to the ground of salvation until we see that and affirm that! But when we come to the resurrection side we affirm what God says—that we are justified by our Lord’s rising from the dead. He is the Amen of our justification by His risen life. By that rising from the dead we know everything against us has been put away. God is committed to that!

O bless the Lord, my soul;
Let all within me join,
And aid my tongue to bless His name
Whose favors are divine.
'Tis He forgives my sins;
'Tis He relieves my pain;
'Tis He that heals my sicknesses,
And makes me young again.
He crowns my life with love,
When ransomed from the grave:
He that redeemed my soul from hell
Hath sovereign power to save.
His wondrous works and ways
He made by Moses known;
But sent the world His truth and grace
By His beloved Son.

—Isaac Watts

Chapter 15 The Lord Our Righteousness

This is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jeremiah 23:6).

The Old Testament prophets spoke of Christ no less than did the apostles of the New Testament. Jeremiah speaks of Him in this verse as Jehovah-Tsidkenu—THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. We people of Adam's race have no righteousness of our own. By reason of sin, man lost all legal righteousness and is no longer innocent of transgression. His original character suffered ruin and wreck. It is because of this loss that the Son of God came from heaven into our humanity and died the accursed death of the cross. Sin has been removed by His precious blood. By the sacrifice of Himself our Lord bore the full penalty of sin in His own body on the tree. It is not enough, however, to be pardoned. Man must be clothed in a garment of righteousness to stand in the presence of God who is most holy. Where then is such a righteousness to be found with which man might be covered? It cannot be woven by himself. Each day we are faulty. The lusts of the flesh are still present and, at times, prevail. There is no alternative to this—that we must be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. While His blood cleanses us, it is His perfect life which clothes us.

The Personal Dignity of Our Lord

When the word "LORD" is printed in large letters it means, in the original Hebrew, Jehovah. This is God's incommunicable name. No creature dare use that name.

Yet it is here assigned to Messiah—the Christ—the Lord Jesus. This is confirmed by many Old Testament Scriptures which are expounded in the New Testament. We may, for instance compare Isaiah 6:5, with John 12:41; Isaiah 45:22, 23, with Romans 14:10, 11; or Malachi 3:1, with Luke 1:76. The Lord Jesus is Jehovah God. The Messiah of the Jews is the Saviour of the Gentiles, and only God can save either. Our Lord bears the incommunicable title of the Most High God. It is a monstrous evil to deny the Lord's Deity. It is He who made all things, for "Without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3); "By Him were all things created" (Colossians 1:16). Who but God could create the heavens and the earth? As He made them, so He upholds them. But this text speaks of His righteousness. In His life on earth there was never the breath of sin nor the taint of iniquity—no defect—no error—no guile—no flaw—no omission. He magnified the law and made it honorable. Thus, in personal dignity our Lord is the righteous One. Let Roman Catholics read the text aright. It is not "she" but "He"—He who is the eternal Son of God. When we trust Him as our Lord and Saviour, God not only uses the precious blood of Christ to cleanse us but imputes to us His righteousness, which, as the hymnwriter says, "My beauty is, my glorious dress."

The Official Dignity of Our Lord

The title Jehovah belongs equally to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—One in divine essence and nature. But the added words "Our Righteousness" is a peculiar title to the Son of God alone, since it belongs to Him as the Son of man. He is, therefore, One with the Father and the

Holy Spirit—in glory equal, in majesty co-eternal. But there is no salvation except by the work wrought out here on earth by the Son of God as the Son of man. Every saved soul in heaven ascribes his salvation to the blood and righteousness of our incarnate God.

This doctrine of THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS is the very foundation of all our hope and peace. Adam's sin was imputed to us when he sinned because we were seed in him. Therefore, when he sinned his seed was also defiled. In the same way the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us when we believe, since He was our Representative and, as we proved to be, seed in Him. It is by Adam we fell; it is by Christ that we rise. The angels fell but never rise since Christ was never their Representative. Imputed righteousness is the granite rock on which we stand as saved of the Lord. We are justified by faith in Christ who died and rose again as our Representative. We stand before God, as believers, robed in the Saviour's garments—a divinely woven garment and of better material than Adam's original human righteousness. This covering is compared in Scripture to white linen—that is, spotless. It is spoken of as "wrought gold"—that is, dignified and beautiful. It is the "best robe" given the prodigal on his return to his father. The covering is everlasting. It will not wear out. Its threads will never give way. Nothing can ever mar its intrinsic beauty.

The Private Duty of Each Person

Our duty is to ascribe to the Lord the honor due to His name. We are not saved by works. If that was possible then why did God send His beloved Son from heaven to earth and to the cross of shame? We are not saved by

faith and works, for if we contribute anything we rob the Lord of His official dignity and steal some of His honor. No! We are saved by faith alone and that without works. How can we stand before God in a garment part woven by Christ and part woven by ourselves? We must stand before God in Christ alone—"Not having our own righteousness" but His—and His alone. We are not to mock our Lord by giving Him titles which are not due to Him. That would be the same kind of mockery as the Jews who cried, "Hail, King of the Jews!" He is God; we must believe that! He is Righteousness; we must believe that! Let us be utterly sincere when we call Him "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Rejoice in Him as a Friend all-glorious and as a Saviour all-prevailing. Oh, let us be grateful indeed that He is that to us!

Come all ye saints of God!

Publish through earth abroad

Jesus' great fame:

Tell what His love has done;

Trust in His name alone;

Shout to His lofty throne,

Worthy the Lamb.

Hence! gloomy doubts and fears;

Dry up your mournful tears;

Swell the glad throng:

To Christ, the heavenly King,

Strike each melodious string,

Worthy's the Lamb.

Hark how the choirs above,
Filled with the Saviour's love,
Dwell on His name!
There, too, shall we be found,
With light and glory crowned,
While all the heavens resound
Worthy's the Lamb.
—James Boden

Chapter 16 A Door Of Hope

I will give...the valley of Achor for a door of hope (Hosea 2:15).

The prophets of old were raised up to speak God's message in the nation's darkest hour. Thus was Hosea called to plead most intently and urgently to his nation which had departed from the living God into idolatry, worldliness, and unbelief. There was to be in his pleading a Divine threat to reduce the prosperous nation to economic disaster (2:1-3). But a new note appears in 2:6 and 2:14, 15—"I will give ... the valley of Achor for a door of hope"—and "she shall sing there."

The Story of Hosea

Hosea had married a woman by the name of Gomer. In her youth she may have been beautiful in outward appearance, but perhaps of a light and frivolous nature which Hosea might have thought marriage would correct and elevate. Verse 2 of chapter 1 is probably prophetic of what she would become rather than what she was at the time of her marriage. But, alas, Gomer was to bring trouble, pain, and anguish of heart to Hosea. She played false 'to him by constant infidelities until at last she departed from him. Leaving him, she sank lower and lower in moral degradation until she was sold on the open market for the half price of a slave. But Hosea was commanded by God to seek her out, buy her back, that she might be restored to Hosea again as the wife of his love.

That is an amazing story. The first part of it is common enough but not the second. Hosea went after Gomer at

God's command and for him it became an exercise in divine love. In this very personal and domestic tragedy, Hosea learned the suffering that was in the heart of God and that God yearns for the restoration of His fallen people. Thus while God in His holiness must punish sin and all human infidelity, yet the supreme revelation of this book is one of bleeding love—"God so loved."

The Valley of Achor

The valley of Achor took its name from the incident recorded in Joshua 7. Israel had moved into God's inheritance—the land of Palestine and promise. There they met the concentrated force of enemy power at Jericho. But there is a divine order of things. Jericho was to be compassed around till its walls fell flat. Before going into battle Israel was warned not to put hands on any spoil and to bring all gold and silver into the Lord's treasury—these precious metals being His by right of creation. One man by name of Achan (meaning "trouble") stole a goodly Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, and hid them in his tent.

When Israel's men were defeated by the people at the small village of Ai, Joshua trembled for the future existence of his people. Unknown to him, there was sin in the camp and God could no longer be with them while it remained. By the divinely ordained method of casting lots in those days, Achan was found to be the culprit. Confession was forced from him and he and his family, having connived together, were taken down to the valley of Achor (meaning "troubling"), stoned to death, and buried. Thus sin was dealt with by death and burial. When the sin was expiated then Israel was returned to

God's favor and never again lost a battle until the whole land of promise was in their possession.

Hosea then goes on to say that through an effectual dealing with sin, God swung open a door of hope in the valley of Achor and Isaiah says that it became a place of rest and contentment.

The Door of Hope

Sin has no door of hope. No sinner can make for himself a door of hope. The question is: how can God, who is most holy and must punish sin, make for sinners a door of hope? To answer that we will have to go to John 12:27. Our Lord was on His way from being glorified on the mount of Transfiguration to the cross. On the way He said, "Now is My soul troubled." Why should His holy soul be troubled? He did no sin. But He was moving to the cross as our Sin-bearer and Substitute. Our iniquities were to be laid upon Him. He was therefore troubled with an infinite troubling—as if a whole universe was being shaken. The punishment of every sin was to be endured by Him. He was being taken, as it were, to the valley of Achor that our sin be punished and taken into His death and burial. Thus through the cross of shame and reproach a door of hope was to swing open for every man.

If, however, a door of hope is opened, there is also a human responsibility—the responsibility being to go through that door. As we do so, we find that the valley of Achor, which we dreaded, does indeed through the sacrifice of our dear Saviour, lead into sweet rest and contentment of heart.

Art thou weary? heavy laden?

Art thou sore distressed?

“Come to Me,” saith One, “and coming,

Be at rest!”

Hath He marks to lead me to Him,

If He be my Guide?

“In His feet and hands are wound-prints,

And His side.”

Is there diadem as Monarch

That His brow adorns?|

“Yes, a crown of very surety,

But of thorns.”

Finding, following, keeping, struggling,

Is He sure to bless?

“Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs,

Answer—Yes!”

—John Mason Neale

Chapter 17 The Glory of Christ

How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!
(Zechariah 9:17)

The Scriptures are written to set forth the glory of God's beloved Son. So it is said in Acts 10:43: "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins"; in Luke 24:27: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself; and again in John 5:39: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." In the Old Testament His glory was somewhat veiled, but in the New Testament it shines forth with meridian splendor. Yet there are clear beams of real glory shining out of this verse from Zechariah. The prophet himself is almost ecstatic in his utterance: "How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!"

The Goodness of the Lord

In the context He is set forth as God—and in the first place as the God of providence. He rules over all—sovereign and supreme as God. The whole creation is in His hands. All creatures were created by Him and all things—rational and irrational—animate and inanimate—angels, devils, men, winds and seas—are subject to Him and must obey Him. It is because of His supreme authority that He can make all things work together for good and benefit His people. He governs all. Ezekiel in 1:26 views Him with prophetic insight as a Man upon the throne of heaven and governing all things. It is

because of His governmental rule that His people have been preserved through centuries of time when as sheep in the midst of wolves (Luke 10:3). The bush burns but is not consumed (Exodus 3:2).

This is a vast matter. You will see this when you remember that He upholds the universe which He has created, for “by Him all things consist” or hold together (Colossians 1:17). He also restrains the wicked by the bridle of His providence and reins them in, as in Psalm 76:10: “The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.” Thus He limits creatures in their actings—permits them only to go so far, which wrath He uses for the accomplishment of His ends and the rest He restrains. He also protects His people in a world of enemies and their manifest hate. In His providential government He often, even in this life, punishes evildoers such as He did with Pharaoh, Sennacherib, and some of the Caesars of Rome. Then, too, He rewards those who serve Him and does so a hundred times over (Matthew 19:28, 29).

Oh how great is His goodness, too, in the realm of grace! It is all of His infinite grace that we are saved by Him and, after being saved, to have His care and concern all along our earthly journey. Everything we have in Him, and from Him, is all an outflow of His essential goodness.

The Beauty of the Lord

The world does not see that! To them with sin-blinded eyes “there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” So they say in Isaiah 53:2. But those whom He saved in the days of His flesh “beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). What other could you expect when

you remember He is God, possessing all divine attributes of wisdom, holiness, power, and love, and all. In coming into our humanity, He took up a perfect human nature and thus was found without the defilement common to ours. As the God-Man He is the most wondrous Person in the universe. He is in Himself “altogether lovely.” He is the full expression of all that is in the character of God. It is strange, indeed, that the Jewish rulers worked up such hatred toward Him when their doctors of learning so admired Him while still a child (Luke 2:46, 47).

His life on earth was a lovely manifestation of everything essentially good. What love to the unlovely! With what compassion He viewed poor humanity and healed so much of it. In the Old Testament the sacrifices were to be unblemished males (Leviticus 1:3). That which spoke of Him, even in typal form, was to have the fullest vigor and beauty. Strength and perfection belonged to our Lord’s life on earth. Strong as God could be, He was here able to achieve the greatest victories and bear away the weightiest of burdens. His every aspect is one of infinite beauty and He was able to present Himself for sacrifice as a spotless life—a spotless soul. From the manger to the cross He was the perfection of every moral beauty.

Again, He is beautiful in His mediatorial office. In this He became a Surety for sinful men. What an astonishing love that would cause Him to leave heaven and the warm bosom of the Father’s love for such a world as ours and such sinful wretches as we are. And how lovely He was in His death upon the cross—never so beautiful in the display of the whole of His character as when He

went forth on our behalf to die in our room and stead.
Yet only the eye of faith can discern that beauty!

Finally, how beautiful He now is in His exaltation. He is seated in the place of highest honor and since He ascended in our human nature what an advancement it is to our human nature! Oh, away with all light and low thoughts of the Saviour! Away with all formal, irreverent, and careless attitudes in praying, hearing, or conversing about Him. Remember—"He is altogether lovely!"—How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty."

O Lord, Thou King most wonderful,

With heavenly glories crowned,

Thou sweetness most ineffable,

In whom all joys are found.

When once Thou visitest the heart,

Then truth begins to shine,

Then earthly vanities depart,

Then kindles love divine.

O Lord, Thou Light of all below,

Thou Fount of life and love,

Surpassing all the joys we know,

Or shall know when above.

Thee may our tongues forever bless!

Thee may we love alone! And ever in our lives express

The image of Thine own.

—Bernard of Clairvaux

Chapter 18 The Name of Jesus

Thou shalt call His name Jesus (Matthew 1:21).

“The name of Jesus is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, and joy in the heart,” said Bernard of Clairvaux. It is a sweet and mighty name—sweet because it is as “ointment poured forth” (Song of Solomon 1:3), and mighty because it is “above every name.” This name of our Lord’s is mentioned more than one thousand times in the New Testament. There is only one Lord Jesus Christ who is unique, Lord of all. No other could ever execute what He has accomplished in human redemption. For this work an infinite righteousness was needed, and expiation was needed for an infinite number of sins. For this the Son of God was needed. He alone could atone. Considering these things one can easily see that there is a sublime uniqueness in His Person.

His Divine Person

No man dare declare Himself to be what our Lord claimed to be. The claims He made about Himself are entirely free from self-esteem, self-assertion, or self-presumption. He does not speak with egotism or bigotry. He is unique and sublime. When other men say, “I am,” we become very suspicious of such a boast. But when the Lord Jesus says, “I am,” then we must pay attention. There are seven great “I am’s” of His in the Gospel of John and in them the Lord made the highest possible claims.

“I am the bread of life” (6:35). He did not originate on earth. “I am the living bread which came down from heaven”—the only One who can feed and satisfy the

hunger of men's souls. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness" (8:12). He alone can light our way and lead us through this waste howling wilderness and the dark valley of death to heaven above. "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved" (10:9). He alone can lead us into the salvation of God and into acceptance with Him, so that we can live with Him without fear. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (10:11). Unless He did so there could be no expiating blood and no justifying righteousness. "I am the resurrection, and the life" (11:25). He only, has broken the prison bars of death and come forth from the tomb with the power of an endless life. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (14:6). He alone is the way to the Father, the truth about the Father, and the life of the Father. "I am the true vine" (15:1). "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." He alone is the source of all fruitfulness and usefulness in heavenly things.

His Divine Lordship

When any other man says, "But I say," we esteem his dogmatism to be offensive—that he is a self-opinionated person. But when the Lord Jesus uses those words they are sublime and unique. This is the Son of God speaking, and when we listen to Him we are listening to eternal truth. There is a divine authority in His voice. When our Lord speaks it is never a mere view or opinion about things. It is not some conclusion drawn from helps received from books. His word is final and authoritative.

Nothing He said can be questioned. No appeal can be made to a higher court. There is no higher court.

In the Gospels you will notice our Lord never argued—never reasoned by weighing the “pros and cons”—never used words such as “perhaps” or “maybe.” What He said was an expression of the mind of God and therefore His words were all-conclusive. “I say unto you,” was the last word on any matter.

When we listen to His words we hear the words of God because He is God. Nothing He said can be challenged. Whatever He said about God, man, creation, redemption, death, resurrection, heaven or hell, is absolute truth. No word He ever spoke has ever been seriously challenged since He spoke it. Every man knows that. He may deny the truth, but in his heart man knows what Jesus said is the truth.

His Divine Kingship

Whatever He did or said was with divine majesty and sovereignty. King Canute once tried to command the sea from coming in but had to move his throne back in a hurry. But when our Lord said, “I will,” even the winds and waves obeyed His voice. His word to the leper was, “I will; be thou clean,” (Matthew 8:3), and immediately every leprous germ died out in the man and disappeared. The leper was made wholly clean. His word also promises rest, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). His word also speaks of the future: “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me” (John 21:22). His “I will” determines each man’s future. Then finally His word speaks about glory, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me,

be with Me where I am” (John 17:24). This is the only time He used this authoritative word before the Father. He wills to put every believer safely and securely by His side.

O Saviour, precious Saviour,
Whom yet unseen we love,
O name of might and favor,
All other names above!
We worship Thee, we bless Thee,
To Thee alone we sing;
We praise Thee and confess Thee
Our holy Lord and King.
O Bringer of salvation,
Who wondrously hath wrought,
Thyself the revelation
Of love beyond our thought;
We worship Thee, we bless Thee,
To Thee alone we sing;
We praise Thee and confess Thee
Our gracious Lord and King.
In Thee all fullness dwelleth,
All glory and power divine;
The glory that excelleth,
O Son of God is Thine;
We worship Thee, we bless Thee,

To Thee alone we sing;
We praise Thee and confess Thee
Our glorious Lord and King.
—Frances R. Havergal

Chapter 19 Our Lord's Transfiguration

Jesus ... was transfigured before them (Matthew 17:1, 2).

In ancient times messages were flashed by smoke signal from mountaintops. Some of our Lord's greatest messages, too, have come to us from mountaintops. It is not certain on which mount He was transfigured—but most likely it was Tabor.

The Setting of the Transfiguration

There was a background of revelation to this event. In the previous chapter there are four cardinal truths attested by our Lord. (1) The revelation that He was "The Christ, the Son of the living God"—spoken by Peter but confirmed by our Lord (Matthew 16:16). (2) The revelation of the church—"I will build My church" (16:18). (3) The revelation of His impending cross—"He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things... and be killed" (16:21). (4) The revelation of His coming again—"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels" (16:27). After such revealings then came His transfiguration which crowned, capped, and authenticated those four cardinal truths.

There was also a background of persecution. When our Lord went up the mountain it was at a critical point in His ministry. On the human level, things were becoming increasingly difficult—not out of His control but the hostility of the unbelieving Jews was increasing. An evil force was rolling like a tide and the rulers of Israel were taking council how to put Him to death. So the shadows

of the cross were beginning to fall and the Lord had spoken to His disciples about His approaching death. The atmosphere was charged with impending crisis. It was at this time that the Lord took His disciples up the mount and was transfigured before them. Peter wrote about this some years later when persecution was upon the church—which he called “the trial of your faith” and “a fiery trial.” He sends them a message, as it were, from a mountaintop, recalling what he had seen of the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The Significance of the Transfiguration

This transfiguration marked the turning point in our Lord’s ministry. He had gone as far north as He was ever to go. Now He was to turn south to Jerusalem and to the cross on which He would die. A very resolute and purposeful decision was made by the Lord to do that. “He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). The significance of that transfiguration lies in these three things: (1) It was the Father’s testimony to the perfect humanity of our Lord’s life on earth. He was the only Person who was ever so transfigured. Moses’ face shone after being forty days with God in receiving the law. Enoch and Elijah were two men highly favored, and who went to heaven without seeing death. But no man was ever transfigured as was our Lord. It was the Father putting glory on His Son. It was, as it were, the Father’s attestation of His perfect life in these years of testing. Everything in earth and hell had tried to cause a breach in His obedience. But there could be no such thing, and there was no such thing. Thus the Father was able to put glory on His Son as The One Perfect Man.

(2) It was a foretaste of our Lord's future glorification as King over all the earth. In John 17 He spoke of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. He was fully conscious of the glory which He had veiled in order to come into our humanity. It was glory which was His inherent right. But every visible manifestation of that glory was laid aside. The glory now bestowed upon Him on the mount was an earned glory as the Son of man. It was a glory which was a preview of what would be His on His return, when He would be crowned King over all the earth.

(3) It was the Holy Spirit's encouragement for His disciples. The Spirit of God was conveying to their hearts a new kind of strength and courage with which to meet the future. The future would take them through many fiery trials and deep waters. When the Lord first spoke to His disciples about going to Jerusalem to suffer and die, Peter was vehement in his opposition. Death to him spelled failure. But later, when he wrote his epistle, he had the cross in the right focus. He had it round the right way: "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11). And this is how it was to be for all who would believe. There would be a measure of sufferings for His name's sake they were to make up. But at the end they, too, would be glorified.

The Lord is King! lift up your voice,
O earth, and all ye heavens rejoice!
From world to world the joy shall ring,
"The Lord omnipotent is King."
The Lord is King! who then shall dare
Resist His will, distrust His care,

Or murmur at His wise decrees,
Or doubt His royal promises?
He reigns! ye saints, exalt your strains;
Your God is King, your Father reigns;
And He is at the Father's side,
The Man of love, the crucified.
One Lord, one empire, all secures;
He reigns, and life and death are yours;
Through earth and heaven one song shall ring,
"The Lord omnipotent is King."
—Josiah Conder

Chapter 20 Our Lord's Agony In The Garden

My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death
(Matthew 26:38).

The sufferings of our Lord are a great mystery and far beyond human understanding. We would all be more humble and more godly if we had more understanding of those sufferings. Before the garden scene the Lord had met with His disciples in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem. In that upper room He had, with His disciples, eaten the Passover feast. After, or during, the partaking of that feast, the Lord instituted His own feast of remembrance. Judas had already left the room before the Lord's own feast was instituted. He never had a place there—never once having called Jesus, "Lord." When Judas was gone, the Lord then gave the ministry which is recorded in John chapters 14 through 17. The seventeenth chapter is the Lord's intercessory prayer, prayed in the hearing of His disciples. All then went forward to the Garden of Gethsemane, but most were left at the gate, so to speak, and only Peter, James and John were taken further and so to witness the beginning of our Lord's agony.

The Sorrows of Our Lord

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful." The Lord never magnified His sorrows. It is common with ourselves to do that and so arise complaints about God's providences. Deep waters run quiet and the deeper the sorrows the quieter we become. So with our Lord: "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not

His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). Mark, in his Gospel, says the Lord was "sore amazed" (Mark 14:33), which means utterly bewildered. Luke says, "Being in an agony ... His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." Matthew says, He was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Who can explore such agonies when you remember who He was?

This was the beginning of His sacrificial pains on our behalf. He was standing in our room and in our stead. The vials of divine wrath were beginning to pour upon His blessed Head. He now was the target of God's wrath against all the sins of mankind—a vast mountain indeed! It was as though He alone had sinned all the sins which multitudes of sinners had sinned against God and His holy laws. We must remember that He was the object of His Father's delight and love from eternity past. Now, for us men and our salvation, He is taking the sinner's place. These are the deep and mysterious things of God. Who can fathom this scene—this awful scene—of the Son of God become Son of man and falling on His face, suffering until sweat oozed out blood from His brow, crying "with strong crying and tears"? We have to learn much more than we know about "the exceeding sinfulness of sin." The Lord Jesus was being made the Scapegoat and that in the eternal councils of love. How fearful is the sight of the Son of God in Gethsemane's garden in such agony! Yet it is all precious comfort to our souls, for He whom God sent is the only One who could bear such infinite sorrows. It is the record of transmitted guilt. It tells out the fearful catalog of human sins. Our great Divine Substitute received the vast mass of it. What a laden Victim!

The Reason for Our Lord's Sorrows

There are primary and secondary reasons. The primary reasons are three. (1) He suffered the withdrawal of the Father's presence. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" was the central and bitterest cry from the cross (Mark 15:34). It all seemed so utterly strange to Him—that the Father's face, so close to Him through eternal ages, should now be hidden from Him. This was real desertion. This was the core of all His agonies. (2) The wrath of God was falling upon Him. The wrath must fall where the guilt was, and the guilt of all human sin was now being transferred to the Head of our Blessed Surety. Well may we tremble at the awful character of sin! (3) He was enduring the total assault of the marshalled powers and forces of hell. All that comprised the inmates of hell were flinging themselves upon Him—hoping to overcome Him in the hour of His physical weakness when nailed to the cross.

The secondary reasons are also three. (1) The refinement of His mind made Him the more sensitive to grief. Even the sins which He saw through life troubled His holy mind. Indeed, from his very birth He was the Sin-bearer, but as He drew nearer the crisis of the cross, sin was seen as never before. The contrast between the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and the murk of human sin must have been infinitely revolting to such a sensitive mind. (2) His infinite purity must have beheld the inner nature of all evil, so that His holy soul shrank from it. All this was to come upon Him "Who knew no sin," and this added poignancy to His sufferings. (3) The abuse He suffered was at the hands of creatures made originally by Him. He was wounded in the house of His friends. He suffered

at the hands of wicked men for whose salvation He had come so far and stooped so low.

We can only stand afar off before such agonies of our Saviour. But let us never forget that He drank that cup and the curse that was in it, so that there would be nothing for us to drink—not a drop! Let all who believe come this day to the remembrance feast with hearts filled with the deepest gratitude and, as a mark of that gratitude, learn in some measure “to bear one another’s burdens.”

O holy Lamb of God,

Thou earnest our sins to bear—

To give Thy life, to shed Thy blood,

That we might glory share.

Love brought Thee from Thy throne

To here endure our doom:

Thy travail o’er, Thy work now done,

Soon Thou wilt take us home.

On this the sinner stands—

“He gave Himself for us!”

What grace in Thee, to burst our bands!

What love, to suffer thus!

To One so dear may we

By Thee be e’er kept near—

Thy blood, Thy name, our only plea,

Till Thou Thyself appear!

—W. Burgmiller

Chapter 21 The Ministering Servant

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

The whole purpose of our Lord in coming into this world and assuming our human nature was to atone for our sins and thus reconcile us to God. This is our Lord's own interpretation of His sufferings and death on Calvary's cross.

The Central Importance of It

The primary reason why the Lord came from heaven to earth was not to live a life in the flesh and demonstrate what a perfect life was, but to give His life for a ransom. When He said He came to minister and give His life for a ransom, He is not describing two purposes—not to live a life of service and then give His life as a climax to that service. His one and particular purpose was to give His life for a ransom. This is what He came to do and He repeatedly spoke of that hour for which He had come. The Cross was His supreme and only service. It was the “must” of His coming.

The Scriptural Anticipation of It

There is an Old Testament allusion to the cross in this very verse. It is first in the description of Himself as the Son of man—His favorite title. He is spoken of so prophetically in Daniel 7:13. This title our Lord fulfills in Himself. He was that Son of man. He was not inferior to the Father in essential Being but only in the office which He assumed. Then again, the giving of His life as a

ransom is contemplated in Isaiah 52:13, as He is set forth as the Divine Servant, after which His sufferings and death are uniquely described in chapter 53. In His first coming His sufferings were to be His service to the nations, and after His second coming all nations would serve Him. Both of these aspects are combined in Luke 24:26—"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

The Voluntary Character of It

The Lord referred to His death as a Divine necessity. He must suffer and be killed. The Old Testament revealed that most clearly in all types and predictions. "Thus it must be," said He. It is important to realize the voluntary character of His role as a Divine Servant in Old Testament predictions. There was no compulsion—no reluctance in submitting to it—no sense of fatalistic inevitability. The Lord Jesus embraced His sufferings most gladly and willingly as the Father's will. There was no antagonism between the Father and the Son. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). The love of God was commended, not commanded, in the cross. The love of God was manifested, not procured, by our Lord's death. At any time the Lord Jesus could have escaped the cross, but never for a moment did He deviate from the intention upon which our redemption was dependent.

The Motive Power of It

His motive was to serve and to give. His self-giving was motivated by His desire to minister to man's needs and that service was the activity of divine love. In the context of the verse, James and John came seeking

places of prominence in His kingdom. This, of course, brought internal strife among the band of disciples. The ambition of these two was the leadership and authority which Gentiles love to grasp. But our Lord insisted that the ideal of Christian life is service—not to wield power over others but to serve them. “For the Son of man is come”...to do that!

The Saving Purpose of It

Look at the word “ransom.” What does it mean? It is the price paid for another’s release. It is a common expression in our own day. Evil men will take rich men as hostages, then hold them for ransom. This was the Old Testament concept—a man could be ransomed at a price (Exodus 21:30). Slaves could be set free by another’s payment of ransom for him. Our Lord thus explains His death in terms of a ransom. But to whom was the ransom paid? Certainly not to the devil, for the devil had no claim on man of God’s creation. I would judge it was a ransom paid to God’s justice. It was paid by the love of God to the justice of God to satisfy the claims of God’s holy law. Our business is to lay claim to that which the ransom has purchased—our liberty and freedom, that we might evermore love and serve Him who thus purchased us.

How affecting is this view of the Saviour’s sufferings! How beautiful His disposition in undergoing all this to ransom us! Like a meek lamb He made no resistance. He knew from eternity all that would be involved—the agonies of Gethsemane—the traitor’s kiss—the disciples’ desertion—the impious taunts of Jewish rulers—the brutality of the Jewish populace and Roman soldiery—the cross—the sepulchre—but all was willingly endured

that sin might be expiated—Satan dethroned—death
abolished—and God glorified to the uttermost through
such redeeming grace. How well we do when we come
to offer our thanks and praise and worship before Him!

Son of the Lord most high

Who gave the worlds their birth,

He came to live and die,

The Son of man on earth.

In Bethlehem's stable born was He,

And humbly bred in Galilee.

Toiling by night and day,

Himself off burdened sore,

Where hearts in bondage lay,

Himself their burden bore:

Till, scorned by those He died to save,

Himself in death, in life, He gave.

O lowly majesty,

Lofty in lowliness!

Blest Saviour, who am I

To share Thy blessedness?

Yet Thou hast called me, even me,

Servant Divine, to follow Thee.

—George W. Briggs

Chapter 22 The Challenge Of The Lord's Return

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is (Mark 13:33).

The truth of God always has a practical effect upon our lives. No truth of God is given us for mere intellectual satisfaction. The root must produce fruit. The foundation is for a superstructure. No truth is mere abstract truth. Everything out from God moves in the realm of life. The Lord's return is no mere matter of academic interest—no more than His dying on Calvary's cross is. It is spiritual and ethical—experiential and practical—in its effect.

Thus we have some very practical exhortations. He bids us work—He gave to “every man his work” (v. 34). He bids us watch—“Watch ye therefore” (v. 35). Working is no substitute for watching and four times over He says, “Watch.” He also bids us pray—“Watch and pray” (v. 33). It is through prayer we are given power and patience to work and to watch. We can do neither without prayer.

The Effect of the Lord's Return upon Believers

1. It inspires purity of life. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3). This is the only place in this epistle where John speaks of the Lord's return. In Exodus 19:10, 11, Moses commands Israel to cleanse themselves because the Lord would meet with them on the third day. In 2 Corinthians 7:1, Paul exhorts believers to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.”

Purification is not accomplished in one day. It is a progressive and constant work.

2. It makes for steadfastness of faith. "Stand fast in the Lord" (Philippians 4:1). His coming will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (3:21). This has His return in view. While we wait for Him we are to "stand fast in the Lord," and the change to take place is accounted as sufficient reason for doing so. Unless we do, there is no real faith in His return.

3. It issues in compassion for souls. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20). If our spiritual affections are warm and tender toward the Lord, we will try to share the truth and speak the truth into the hearts and lives of others.

4. It eases all pain and trouble. "Time is short." Nothing refreshes the soul when in a tedious course of trouble—when sighs are many and loud—when the spirit is grieved and pained—as the thought of the Lord's return. Then afflictions are seen to be "light afflictions" compared to the "weight of glory" to be revealed, and "only for a moment" compared to the endless ages of eternity in heavenly bliss (2 Corinthians 4:17).

5. It oils the wheels of obedience. How cheerfully do our souls go in the ways of the Lord when we realize that at His coming He will bring rewards. "My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12). "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice

together" (John 4:36). Even a cup of cold water served in His name shall not go without its reward. Thus by our labor in His interests do we lay up spiritual treasure, the revenues of which are far, far better than perishing silver and gold.

6. It guards against temptation. "Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:33). Ephesians 6:16 speaks of "the fiery darts of the wicked," and nothing should so inspire us to lift up the shield of faith against them than a due sense that we are soon to meet the Lord. It is our shield and safety to remember that we are soon to stand before "the judgment seat of Christ" for a full review of our work here below.

7. It fills the soul with blessed hope. "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). The hope of glory makes all disquietudes to fade away. The Lord Jesus has entered heaven as our Forerunner. He holds possession in His people's name. The keys are in His hands. He beckons us forward to gloryland. The Spirit of God delights to meet us with enlightening aid so that we catch glimpses in this present of the heavenly Land. Bright indeed is our prospect. True, what that blessed hope is in all its blessedness cannot be known by flesh and blood. Its blessedness exceeds our present thought. Still, it fills the soul with anticipated joy, for we shall see the Altogether Lovely who is fairer than the children of men, and that without any intervening cloud. "We shall see Him as He is!" That will be the eternal vision and it will call forth our eternal adoration.

Lord Jesus, are we one with Thee?

Oh height, oh depth of love!

Thou one with us at Calvary,
We one with Thee above.
Our sins, our guilt, in love Divine
Confessed and borne by Thee;
The gall, the curse, the wrath were Thine,
To set Thy members free.
Ascended now in glory bright,
Head of the Church Thou art;
Nor life, nor death, nor depth, nor height,
Thy saints and Thee can part.
Soon, soon shall come that glorious day
When, seated on Thy throne,
Thou shalt to wondering worlds display
That Thou with us are one.

—J. G. Deck

Chapter 23 The Desire Of Simeon

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace ...
for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation (Luke 2:29, 30).

There is a growing sense of helplessness in the world and maybe something of perplexity among believers. We are doubtless in the end days, but there is a special witness to bear at the close of the age. Everything outside of Christ is disjointed, disrupted, and distempered. Believers live in the midst of a disintegrating society and our witness must be one of harmony, order, love, and of heaven's authority. We are to exhibit, amidst the chaos of earth, the life of the heavens.

The Man Called Simeon

Simeon was an old man. He, first of all, represented the Old Testament priestly system—its final expression. That system was one of symbols and spectacular drama, which demonstrated spiritual truth in dramatic form. In old Simeon we see that system ready to pass away. The reality of those symbols had come in the Person of Christ and so the symbols were to pass.

Simeon, being old and worn, represented also the end of the age—the age of man's rule over the earth. We are told that the heavens and the earth, in their present form, are to wax old and pass away and do so—as Simeon was about to do—at the sight of the face of Christ—"From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away" (Revelation 20:11).

Simeon also represented believers who are ready to die. Simeon had no fear in doing so but was girded with peace. Said he: "For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." His eyes had beheld the Saviour and he had seen God's salvation in the face of Jesus Christ. That gave him peace in departing.

The Significance of Simeon

Simeon now held Christ in his personal possession. He did not mind the passing of all external ritualism and ceremonialism. What are shadows to the substance? What are images to the reality? Simeon had lived his life in a ceaseless round of religious performances, but now he was beholding the living Son of God in arms of love and admiration—"Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God" (v. 28).

Simeon also now stood in God's eternal purpose. He was holding Christ in the midst, and before, "the face of all people." This was God's intention that His Son be set forth at the center of the Church—the center of human history—the center of all things—the center of a believer's life—the center of the universe. In holding Christ in His arms Simeon was saying, in effect, "I am with God in His goings—in His irresistible onward march to finally sum up all things in Christ.

Simeon also touched human history and that in a very vital way. No one can touch that history for good unless they touch it with the Lord's Christ, the Saviour of men. When un-regenerate men touch it there is chaos and destruction, and "sorrow on the sea" of nations. The world is always so much worse for man's touch. Simeon touched it in a very vital way by holding forth Christ,

and that touch ended one era and began another, which was to be one of infinite grace.

The Ministry of Simeon

Simeon set forth a living Christ. It is a natural law that “the less is blessed of the better” (Hebrews 7:7). That verse tells us that such is “without all contradiction”—that is, there is no argument about it. Please notice that Simeon blessed, not the Child, but Joseph and Mary. Now that he had the Lord’s Christ in his arms as a living reality, he is able to bless other souls. And so it was that “Simeon blessed them.” We who live in these end times are doubtless living when “the end of all things is at hand” (1 Peter 4:7). Simeon’s ministry is what our ministry ought to be.

Simeon also testified that he himself was but a servant of God. “Thy servant,” he says in verse 29. He was standing in a new world of spiritual delight. Hitherto he had been but a servant of a religious system, but now God had given him, so to speak, His Son. He now could rapturously sing, “I am Thy servant,” as did the apostle Paul of later times who loved to designate himself, “a servant of Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:1).

Simeon could also declare the destiny of nations. “Behold, this Child,” said he, “is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against” (v. 34). Israel would stumble and fall over Him, but would rise again—and rise to be the head, and not the tail of the nations and the administrators of Messiah’s Millennial Kingdom. But He would be much spoken against. The day would come, when the nations would gather themselves against the Lord, and against His anointed (Psalm 2). The destiny of all men in the

nations would be determined by their response to this Child whom Simeon was holding in his arms. O what is the height of happiness to which men are transported when they hold Christ in possession! What must be the depth of misery from which nothing can save men who despise Him! O how we should be glad and rejoice in the never-ending honors and enjoyments of having Him in possession and exult in Him as Simeon did!

Let earth and heaven combine,

Angels and men agree,

To praise in songs divine

The Incarnate Deity;

Our God contracted to a span,

Incomprehensibly made man.

Unsearchable the love

That hath the Saviour brought;

The grace is far above

Mankind's or angel's thought:

Suffice for us that God, we know,

Our God, is manifest below.

Made perfect first in love,

And sanctified by grace,

We shall from earth remove,

And see His glorious face:

Then shall His love be fully showed,

And man shall then be lost in God.

—Charles Wesley

Chapter 24 The Lord's Baptism Of Fire

I am come to send fire on the earth... But I have a baptism to be baptized with (Luke 12:49, 50).

Our Lord, we read in Matthew 26:27, "took the cup, and gave thanks." That cup represented His sufferings and blood-shedding. That was suffering and sorrow beyond human comprehension. Yet at the same time there was thanksgiving. It is something akin to Hebrews 12:2, "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross." Sorrow and joy are mingled together. The cold north wind and the balmy south wind blow together. Thus the apostle says, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Corinthians 6:10). There is no contradiction, but something ineffably divine. The Lord's cup has both these elements. The cup is not an eternal sadness. There is that in the cup for which He could give thanks.

The cup of our Lord is central to the life of the assembly of His people. There is an aspect of that cup which is entirely our Lord's. It is His alone. That is the atoning and redemptive element. In that, we have no part. The drinking of that cup had to do with the absorption of God's judgment and wrath against sin. His drinking all of it made possible "the remission of sins." Our justification springs from the shedding of Jesus's blood. That is a theme which endless ages of praise must leave untold. It is the ransom price of our souls.

There is a believer's side to that same cup. We are called to share, not the atoning aspect of it, but the exemplary side of it. There is that evil face in the spirit world which hates the character and work of God's beloved Son. Evil

cannot bear His presence. It is that hostility and reproach which involves all true believers. We have taken sides with Him against that enemy of God. So we drink the cup—the cup of His reproach. And we, too, must take that cup and give thanks. Unless we are utterly with Him that cup will drive us out, as it did Judas, into the blackness and darkness of the night.

The Separating Power of the Cross

“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils” (1 Corinthians 10:21). All that is of Christ is utterly apart from all that is of the devil. These two realms can never be brought together. This is the reason why the apostle wrote this letter to the Corinthians. They were doing this very thing. The children of light cannot sit down with the children of darkness. There must be a discrimination exercised and a difference recognized. The believer’s partaking of that cup also means that we are to be very different from those who are not the Lord’s. There must be a life that is different. The drinking of the cup demands that!

The Unifying Power of the Cross

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 10:16). It is the blood of Christ which removes the sin which separates from God so that restoration and reconciliation are made possible. There is a new relationship established with God. But further, it unifies all who are the Lord’s people. We are on common ground when we participate. We eat and drink together. There is no authority for partaking of the cup in the privacy of our homes. It is a corporate participation. “I

hear that there be divisions among you" (1 Corinthians 11:18). That is a violation of all that the cup represents. It is a mockery to come to the Lord's table and be at enmity one with another. This is a table of love.

The Evangelizing Power of the Cross

"I am come to send fire on the earth ... I have a baptism to be baptized with" (Luke 12:49, 50). The fire could not be scattered until His baptism of suffering was accomplished. The evangelization of the world lay in suspense until man's redemption was fully wrought out and completed. If we take the scattering of fire to mean the evangelization of the world—the salvation of souls—the expansion of our Lord's spiritual kingdom—that the whole world would feel the heat and fire of Gospel truth against which it cannot stand—then everything of that nature was dependent upon the baptism of suffering by our Lord—upon the drinking of that cup.

That ministry is also one of suffering for His people. That is the second reason why we drink the cup. The first reason is to remember the Lord in His sufferings and death. The second is our participation in the work of spreading the Gospel and that may involve us in a fiery baptism. We must be separated from all that is devilish to do that! We must be unified as a believing people to do that! We cannot be effective without both. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" asked our Lord. "We are able," replied James and John (Matthew 20:22). And the Lord answered, "Ye shall indeed" (Mark 10:39), and one of these two, James, was not long after slain by Herod.

And couldst Thou, Lord, Thy thanks express,

In prospect of Thy deep distress?
And at Thy table spread to show
The symbols of Thy coming woe?
And couldst Thou bless Thy God on high,
That He had sent Thee thus to die?
And for our sins to give Thee up,
To drink wrath's overwhelming cup?
O! What a love must Thine have been!
To praise in view of such a scene!
When broken bread, and poured-out wine,
Portrayed those bitter woes of Thine.
—Author Unknown

Chapter 25 The Necessity Of The Atonement

Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46, 47).

In these words our Lord was alleviating the fears of His disciples, showing them that nothing had taken place but what was foretold in the Scriptures, and decreed by God in eternal counsels. Behind all the on-going of evil men and the powers of darkness was “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” This must have been a very great comfort and consolation to these men at this time. Everything had moved, and henceforth would move, according to God’s plan. There is an absence in these words of any mention of His ascension and future glory. He was merely clearing in their minds the necessity for His death and resurrection and so not complicating their minds with too many issues.

The Necessity of the Cross

What the Lord said here was the essence and substance of what was written in the Old Testament Scriptures rather than a quotation of specific verses. The Cross was necessary because it was decreed in the eternal counsels of the Godhead as the only means of man’s redemption, and also because of prophecies and predictions of the Old Testament (vv. 25, 26). He was to suffer unto death and there was a Divine necessity for this. It was something more than dying for a cause as a

martyr might do. In one sense He did that, but it was far more than that! He did suffer because He bore witness to the truth (John 18:37). But there was something deeper than that! The vital necessity rose out of the fact of sin and to make possible a redemption based on righteousness. The principal cause, therefore, was to die for our sins—a Substitute for all who would afterward believe, but a Sacrifice whose meritorious virtue could cover the sins of the whole world. He died for all to make salvation possible for all. The hardest and most agonizing part of those sufferings was not what evil men did to Him, dreadful though that was, but what He suffered by the withdrawal of His Father's presence. He bore God's displeasure and wrath against all man's sins—the ultimate of which was banishment from the presence of the Lord. None can fully understand what it meant for the holy Son of God to become a curse that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law. When He spoke these words of the text He was already risen and was opening their eyes and understanding to understand the Scriptures which spoke of His death and resurrection.

The Message of the Cross

The substance of its message is salvation. This salvation is based on two things. First, repentance. A sinner must become a penitent sinner. We must understand, too, that repentance is not a human effort or else it would take us along the road to justification by the works of the law which is folly to suppose possible. Repentance is preached "in His name" and therefore is a gift of God as part of the Gospel of His grace. Nor is repentance an independent exercise. It is joined to the remission of sins

and the two are one act. As soon as a person repents, so soon is remission granted. It does not read, “repentance for the remission of sins,” but “repentance and the remission of sins.” Repentance itself makes no satisfaction for sins. It is not our “tears, or repentance, or prayers” which procures redemption, but the death and resurrection of our Saviour. It is the shedding of His precious blood which cleanses all sin away. The moment a person repents that same moment the merits of the Saviour’s sacrifice are applied to the soul.

The Propriety of the Cross

There were sound reasons why our Lord must suffer and die and be raised again. First, because, “It is written.” The Old Testament Scriptures declared it so and the Scriptures cannot be broken. We see it in all three parts. In the part called The Law it is clear in The Seed of the Woman in Genesis 3:15 and in Abraham’s lamb of sacrifice, Genesis 22. It is clear in the part called The Prophets as in Isaiah 53. It is clear in the part called The Psalms as in Psalms 22 and 69. As His death was foretold, so also was His resurrection in the same Scriptures.

He also said, “it behooved Him to suffer.” This means there was no other way to accomplish man’s redemption. This does not mean He was obligated to do so. It would have been a righteous thing for God to have swept the whole race into hell. But having agreed, as it were, to redeem us, then the eternal Son was obligated to become incarnate, suffer, die, and rise again. God could not spare His Son if this was to be done. And as it behooved Him to suffer so also it behooved Him to rise again from the dead. For “if Christ be not raised ... ye

are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). He must be raised for our justification (Romans 4:25).

Both the truths of repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in His name. Since He is the Saviour of the world it is right and proper that this Gospel should be preached among all nations and that this witness should begin at Jerusalem as Paul said—"to the Jew first."

I once was a stranger to grace and to God;

I knew not my danger, I felt not my load;

Tho' friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree,

"Jehovah Tsidkenu" was nothing to me.

When free grace awoke me by light from on high,

Then legal fears shook me,—I trembled to die;

No refuge, no safety, in self could I see:

"Jehovah Tsidkenu" my Saviour must be.

My terrors all vanished before the sweet name;

My guilty fears banished, with boldness I came

To drink at the fountain, life-giving and free:

"Jehovah Tsidkenu" is all things to me.

"Jehovah Tsidkenu!" My treasure and boast;

"Jehovah Tsidkenu!" I ne'er can be lost;

In Thee I shall conquer by flood and by field,

My cable, my anchor, my breastplate and shield!

—Robert M. Mc Cheyne

P.S. “Jehovah Tsidkenu” means “The Lord our Righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6).

Chapter 26 Christ As The Lamb Of God

Behold the Lamb of God (John 1:29).

The Lamb of God is the central theme of the holy Scriptures. All who wrote, inspired by the Spirit of God, pointed to Christ. That is what the whole Bible does. The Cross of Christ is the key to every epoch of human history. Jesus was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world and He reigns today, and will reign throughout endless ages, as the enthroned Lamb in heaven. There are ten principal and chosen servants who set forth Christ in this touching title.

1. Abel. "Abel... brought of the firstlings of his flock" (Genesis 4:4). He, no doubt, had been taught by his parents, the necessity of a blood sacrifice for sin. Cain, his elder brother, brought the fruit of his own toil, rejecting God's method, and was himself rejected. Abel followed divine directions—knew that he was a sinful man—a child of wrath—an heir of a corrupt nature—and brought what must have been a lamb and spoken of as "a more excellent sacrifice" (Hebrews 11:4). This spoke of acceptance.

2. Abraham. To bring Abraham into fellowship with all that was in His heart, God called Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Here is the first mention of the actual word "lamb." As father and son went up mount Moriah, the place of sacrifice, Isaac asked: "My father... behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" After going through the test of faith to the uttermost point, God called Abraham: "Lay not thine

hand upon the lad,” and then, “behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up ... in the stead of his son” (Genesis 22:7-13). This spoke of substitution.

3. Israel. Exodus 12 is Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. “They shall take to them every man a lamb” (vv. 3, 7). The blood of the lamb was to be sprinkled on the doorposts and on the lintel of their houses, and God said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” Under the blood there was protection from the destroying angel. This spoke of security.

4. The Levites. These were ministers of the sanctuary and offered what became known as the Levitical offerings. The offerings of sheep were to be “perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein” (Leviticus 22:21). Only a perfect offering could make a perfect sacrifice, so that it could meet all the challenges of sin. This spoke of absolution.

5. Isaiah. “He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” (53:4, 5). The masculine pronoun shows that He was to be a true Man, and in that manhood, God’s Lamb was to bear our sins in His own body. This spoke of sin-bearing.

6. John the Baptist. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). This is the first mention of Christ as the Lamb in the New Testament and an answer to Isaac’s inquiry: “Where is the lamb?” (Genesis 22:7). In the fullness of time—the exact time—the Son of God was manifested and

introduced to the world by John as God's appointed Lamb of sacrifice. This spoke of the removal of sin.

7. Philip. An Ethiopian eunuch had come all the way to Jerusalem. He was a high government official, as we might call Secretary of the Treasury. He was manifestly an earnest seeker after the true manner of worship. But he found nothing in Jerusalem but a dead religious system, all the symbols of which had been done away with the coming of Christ Himself. Philip was directed to meet this man on his way home, and running alongside his chariot and hearing him read from Isaiah 53, asked: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" On being invited up into the chariot Philip "began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus." The Ethiopian was saved and baptized and went on his way rejoicing. This spoke of individual salvation.

8. Peter. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18, 19). That was the price paid for our redemption, but it was not a cash transaction. It was "blood of God" (Acts 20:28). This spoke of purchase.

9. John. This is John the apostle exiled by the Emperor Domitian to the Gentile island of Patmos. This place of limitation became the place of revelation and in a vision of a heavenly scene John sees "In the midst of the throne ... stood a Lamb as it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6). The Lamb who had been slain on earth was indeed risen from the dead and now enthroned in heaven. The Victim had become the Victor. This spoke of government.

10. The Angel. "And ... one of the seven angels ... showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem,

descending out of heaven from God ... And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof (Revelation 21:9, 10, 23). The Lamb was the Conveyor of all the glory of God. The glory of God shone through the Lamb so that there was no need for any created light (the sun), or transmitted light (the moon), or manufactured light (the candle). This spoke of His glory.

Behold the amazing sight!

The Saviour lifted high;

The Son of God, His soul's delight,

Expires in agony.

For whom, for whom, my heart,

Were all these sorrows borne?

Why did He feel that piercing smart,

And wear the crown of thorn?

For us in love He bled,

For us in anguish died;

'Twas love that bowed His sacred head,

And pierced His precious side.

Behold the amazing sight!

Nor trace His griefs alone,

But from the cross pursue our flight

To His triumphant throne.

—Philip Doddridge

Chapter 27 The Desire To See Jesus

Sir, we would see Jesus (John 12:21).

This was the inquiry of certain Greeks, and few things stirred the heart of our Lord like the coming of these men. Maybe He saw in them a token of what would be the fruit of His sufferings from among the Gentiles. Whatever their motive, and some seem to question that, though I myself do not, the inquiry seems to embody the deep, elemental cry of our humanity. We need to see Jesus—for the idols of this world speak vanity—its gold and silver do not satisfy—its sophistries and philosophies do not answer the deep cry of man's soul. Unless men see Jesus they can never find rest and happiness. But how are we to see Him?

See Him As God

Isaiah chapter 40 tells us that a forerunner would come and prepare the way of the Lord and that his cry would be:

“Behold your God!” So the apostle John in the New Testament says—“The Word was God.” The prophets of old declared the coming Messiah to be “the Mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6). The New Testament apostles testified by the Spirit of God that “by Him were all things created” (Colossians 1:16)—that “without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3)—that He—the Lord Jesus Christ—was “God ... manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16). Unless Jesus was God He could not remove one stain of sin from our sin-soiled souls—nor could He save us—nor could His righteousness justify us—nor could He open the gates of heaven to us. But He is

God—God the eternal Son. “They shall call His name Emmanuel ... God with us” (Matthew 1:23). Only because He is God—“Jehovah our Righteousness”—can He save us.

See Him As Man

Pilate set Him forth before the people and cried, “Behold the man!” (John 19:5). “The Word was made flesh” (John 1:14), and Paul says that He “was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man ...” (Philippians 2:7, 8). It is of the utmost importance to see Him as true Man, or else He would have no blood to atone for our sins—no righteousness with which to justify us—no kinsman feeling—no standing as Mediator between God and men. He entered into our humanity as Man that He might have a link with manhood—born of woman that He might have a link with womanhood—born a Child that He might have a link with childhood. He came with a real but a new humanity—sinless, spotless, and wholly impeccable—an ideal, perfect Man upon whom alone God could put glory declaring, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 17:5).

See Him As the Lamb

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The Scripture assigns no other reason for which the eternal Son of God became incarnate than that He might lay down His life for His sheep—to give His life a ransom for us—to die in our room and stead—to shed His precious blood that we might be cleansed from all sin. This is a verse which should be engraved in letters of gold upon our hearts.

His Godhead was not enough to redeem us—His incarnation was not enough—His power was not enough—His holiness was not enough. His sacrificial death alone was sufficient to atone for our sins. Anything which stops short of that effects nothing. Anything other than that simply mocks our need. Speaking by the prophet of old, Messiah says, “I restored that which I took not away.” He did no sin, thought no sin, could not sin, but God “made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

See Him As King

“Behold your King,” said Pilate (John 19:14), and he said more than he knew. Though he said it in cynical scorn of the Jews, Pilate never said a truer word. The Lord Jesus is the Father’s appointed King. He was sent to be King of Israel (Zechariah 9:9), but Israel rejected their King. In this age, when Israel is temporarily laid aside, He reigns in the hearts of all who believe, and so establishes His kingdom within. But He is to return to earth and that to be King over all the earth—to wind up all Gentile world rule—to deliver creation from bondage—to bring in His own kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, over all the earth. Glorious will the day be when “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:14).

O teach me what it meaneth—

That cross uplifted high,

With One—the Man of sorrows—

Condemned to bleed and die!

O teach me what it cost Thee
To make a sinner whole;
And teach me, Saviour, teach me
The value of a soul.

O teach me what it meaneth—
Thy love beyond compare,
The love that reacheth deeper
Than depths of self-despair!
Yes, teach me, till there gloweth
In this cold heart of mine
Some feeble, pale reflection
Of that pure love of Thine.

O Infinite Redeemer!
I bring no other plea,
Because Thou dost invite me
I cast myself on Thee.
Because Thou dost accept me
I love and I adore;
Because Thy love constraineth,
I'll praise Thee evermore.

—Lucy A. Bennett

Chapter 28 No King But Caesar

We have no king but Caesar (John 19:15).

The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His sufferings and death upon it, is the one event which secures our redemption. His final rejection by the nation of Israel is written in the words of the text—"We have no king but Caesar." This was a strange admission from a people who were once God-chosen and God-governed. The whole and complete variety of unbelievers was represented at the cross. The two chief divisions of mankind—Jews and Gentiles—were represented by Caiaphas, the high priest of Jewry, and Pilate, the Gentile governor. The generations of such men—the one whose image reflected the unbelief of the whole nation and the other who washed his hands of Christ—still continue.

There was no more horrible death than the death of the cross. Cicero said it was "the most cruel and horrifying death possible." Tacitus said it was "a most despicable death." It was a Roman means of death but never imposed upon a Roman criminal but only employed for foreign captives whom the Romans regarded as slaves. It was as such our Lord died—nailed to a rough piece of wood and suspended naked and bruised after flogging before the gaze of multitudes, and looked upon as a spectacle of disgraced and degraded humanity. Such was "the shame of the cross."

There is no better way of showing the Bible to be the Word of God than in the fulfillment of the minute detail of prophecy. Here in chapter 19 is the record of our Lord's crucifixion—what men did to Him. But John

writes only from God's viewpoint and we see everything took place as God ordained it to be.

Look at verse 16. "Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified." This means Pilate delivered Jesus to the Jews to be crucified. So in the background there is this weak, beaten, shadowy, panicky governor, afraid of offending his master, Caesar, or of losing his job. But in Romans 8:32 we read that "He [God] ... delivered Him up for us all." Who, then, delivered up Jesus? Not Pilate, but God! The Old Testament is replete with numerous types and figures which teach such truth. Pilate was but a pawn in the plan. The Governor of the universe was governing in this supreme event.

Look at verse 16 again. "They took Jesus, and led Him away." Often after scourging, men were carried away, so brutal was the scourging. But our Lord was "led away." Why does John mention that? Because it was the fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." Lambs are led: cattle are driven—and Jesus was the Lamb of God.

Look at verse 17. "And He bearing His cross." Simon would bear it partway but in the beginning it was laid on the Lord's own shoulders. Why this? Back in Genesis 22 God called Abraham into a fellowship which was to give him an understanding of God's own commitment to offer up His own beloved Son. Thus Abraham was asked to offer in sacrifice his only son. Abraham's response was immediate and as he prepared to go to the place of sacrifice "Abraham took the wood ... and laid it upon Isaac" (Genesis 22:6). This was indeed a pointer to the cross of wood which was laid on the Lord Jesus.

Look at verse 17 again. "And He ... went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha." This was outside the city. Why not within the city? Because in Exodus 29:14 the sin offering was to be burned "without the camp." God's beloved Son was that Sin-offering! "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12).

Look at verse 18. "Where they crucified Him." To bring Jesus to the cross involved a tremendous change in the political life of Jewry. Crucifixion was a Roman Gentile death: stoning was Jewish. To make our Lord's crucifixion possible then, the Jews had to lose their right of judiciary. No one could decree death but the Roman governor. But Moses spoke of our Lord's crucifixion nearly two thousand years before there was a Roman empire. Paul quotes him in Galatians 3:13: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Paul says our Lord was made that curse! David also prophesied the Messiah as saying, "They pierced My hands and My feet" (Psalm 22:16). In Numbers 21 there is the record of Israel's murmuring against God so that He "sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people." The Lord in mercy then commanded Moses, saying, "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." The Lord Jesus took this up when He said to Nicodemus: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14). Crucifixion is the only form of death which lifts up a person, and thus was our blessed Saviour to be.

Look at verse 23. "Then the soldiers...took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also His coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout." The outer garment of our Lord had four parts and these four parts the soldiers divided among themselves. His inner garment, however, was of one piece and for this they gambled. This in order to fulfill Psalm 22:18: "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture."

It has been calculated that there are more than three hundred prophecies relating to our Lord's sufferings and death. The chances of all these being fulfilled are one in eighteen followed by a hundred zeroes. All were fulfilled to the very last! Thus we see God governing, and in the face of such fulfillment how, pray tell, dare unbelief raise its head?

The Son of God is come to save:

From highest heaven the Light has shone:

O Life, that overcomes the grave!

O Love, that bids our fears begone.

The ransom of our souls is paid;

'Tis finished, conflict stern and sore!

The reign of sin and death is stayed,

And Christ is King forevermore.

None other hope or help have we,

Behold, we come with all our sin;

O Christ, from darkening skies we flee,

Thy wounded hand will take us in.

O Love, that bids our fears begone!
O Life, that overcomes the grave!
Within our hearts the Light has shone;
The Son of God is come to save.
—W. T. Govan

Chapter 29 The Lord's Last Moments On The Cross

He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30).

The Gospel according to John is written for the Church—primarily so. John writes from a different viewpoint from other Gospel writers. He shows that everything to do with the Cross of our Lord was God-governed and according to foreordained determination. He presents the Lord Jesus as God. "The Word was God" (John 1:1). Everything is done for the glory of God and that transcends all local matters. That is the reason why John omits seven great events in the earthly life of our Lord: His birth, His baptism, His temptation, His transfiguration, His last Supper, His agony in the garden, and His ascension. There is a great cleavage between John and the other writers. For instance, in Matthew, Mark and Luke, our Lord is in an agony in Gethsemane: "He ... fell on His face" (Matthew 26:39); He "fell on the ground" (Mark 14:35); "He kneeled down, and prayed" (Luke 22:41). In John, Jesus stands, and His enemies fall to the ground before the revelation of His Deity when He said, "I AM!" (18:6). Gethsemane is a place of agony with the three others but in John it is a "garden." There are three matters mentioned in this chapter which manifest His Godhood.

The Superscription

"And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross ... Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" (John 19:19). At this point of time the Jews were putting tremendous

pressure on Pilate—threatening to report him to Caesar. The words are Pilate’s retaliatory and bitter scorn of the Jews. The scorn was that Jesus was not only their king but “Jesus of Nazareth,” because the Jews had a proverb —“Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). In effect, Pilate was pointing to the One hanging on the Cross, bruised beyond recognition, a condemned criminal, and tauntingly saying, “This is your King, you Jews.”

“Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am King of the Jews.” They wanted to set Him forth as an imposter. But Pilate in his utter contempt for them answered, “What I have written, I have written.” It was devastating to Jewish pride but Pilate would not be moved. The superscription must stand for all to see and read. But why was Pilate so unmoved? Because God was governing. The Lord Jesus was God’s appointed King and they will yet see, in His return, that title written on His vesture, “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” (Revelation 19:16).

The Selfless Love

“Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother!” (John 19:26, 27). The cross is not all bitterness. Here is a sweet and loving incident while our Saviour hung upon that cruel tree. His mother, with other women, was standing there and the sword was piercing her heart. In the midst of all His inconceivable sufferings in bearing and absorbing the punishment for all ours sins, the Lord could even think of others. Seeing John standing there with Mary and remembering her own sons by Joseph were not yet believers, (John 7:5),

and that Mary could receive no spiritual comfort from such, He said to Mary, “Woman, behold thy son!” Then He gave John the responsibility of caring for Mary: “Behold thy mother!”

This is utterly incomprehensible. The Lord is here wrestling with the most extreme pangs of pain. His body weeps blood from the savagery of the scourging. His hair is plucked out of His cheeks. The crown of thorns pierces His brow. The wrath of God for our sins is being poured out on His holy head. Yet at such a time He can think of others. Had He been only a man He could never have done so. In any extremity of pain, man can only think of himself. But here is Deity. In the midst of overwhelming sorrows He could think of others and make provision for true comfort and care.

The Supernatural Control

“Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished”—but how did He know? Because He was the omniscient God! Everything was running to a divine schedule. Every detail of pre-determination was being fulfilled. There remained now but one prophetic utterance to complete all. So now this last is fulfilled as the Lord cried, “I thirst.” It was written in Psalm 69:21: “They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.” The Lord refused the gall—a drug to mitigate pain, but received the vinegar and drank it for His thirst.

With all prophecies fulfilled the Lord Jesus now cried: “It is finished.” All typical institutions and all verbal predictions were complete. All penalties of the law had been endured. All the work of redemption was finished.

All the ground was cleared to give God the right to
pardon penitent sinners.

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He
said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up
the ghost”—that is, He pillowed His head in perfect rest
upon His breast, and dismissed His own spirit. O
wondrous Cross!—great interpreter of God’s heart to
man—scene of God’s supreme revelation to man—
wondrous Cross! Let it pour light into your soul. Let it
break all your bands. Let it heal all your wounds. Let it
dry all your tears.

Oh, holy Jesu, how hast Thou offended,
That man to judge Thee hath in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by Thine own rejected,
O most afflicted.

So the good Shepherd for the sheep is offered;
The slave hath sinned, and the Son hath suffered;
For man’s atonement, while he nothing heedeth,
God intercedeth.

For me, kind Jesu, was Thine incarnation,
Thy mortal sorrow, and Thy Life’s oblation;
Thy death of anguish and Thy bitter passion,
For my salvation. Therefore, kind Jesu, since I cannot
pay Thee, I do adore Thee, and will ever pray Thee,
Think on Thy pity and Thy love unswerving Not my
deserving.

—Johann Hermann

Tr. By R. S. Bridges

Chapter 30 The Burial Of Our Lord

A new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus (John 19:41,42).

There is not much written or spoken about the interment of the Lord Jesus. His burial is emphasized as part of the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4. "He was buried." The Lord Himself in several Scriptures made direct reference to His burial, as, for instance, in John 12:24, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone"; also in Matthew 12:40, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"; also in Matthew 26:12, "For in that she hath poured this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial."

Remarkable Arrangements for Interment

His own disciples had fled and left Him with the approach of danger. Yet it was at such a time that two remarkable men were emboldened to come forward and do in His death what they had not dared to do in His life.

First, there was Joseph. His name and birthplace are given. He was named Joseph and his birthplace was Arimathaea, which some believe to be the new name for Ramah, the birthplace of Samuel. His condition and rank are also given. Matthew 27:57 tells us he was "a rich man" and Luke 23:50 that he was "a counsellor." His character and conduct are also given by Luke, "He was a good man, and a just," and that he had not consented, presumably in the Jewish Sanhedrin, to put Jesus to death. We are also told concerning his faith that he was

a secret disciple, “For fear of the Jews” he had not made any open profession of his faith. It was this man who begged the body of Jesus from Pilate, wrapped it in linen, the whiteness of which would speak of our Lord’s innocence and purity, and laid it in his own tomb. This was a very courageous thing to do as the Jews afterwards concocted a story that His disciples had stolen the body of Jesus and Joseph could have been implicated in that supposed plot.

Secondly, there was Nicodemus. This was the same man who came to Jesus by night (John 3), and was taught that he needed to be born again. It is said that he was the third richest man in Israel and was also a member of the Sanhedrin and had rebuked the council for condemning Jesus without having heard Him. He was a very learned man, some Jewish writers think he was a brother to the great historian Josephus—and, strangely enough, had a Greek name though altogether Jewish. It was Nicodemus who brought the hundred pound’s weight of costly spices to anoint the body of Jesus. This was not to embalm the body. There was no time for that, and also Nicodemus may well have believed the word of the Lord Jesus that He would rise the third day. His offering did fill the tomb with fragrance and this was testimony to the love and respect that Nicodemus had for the Lord.

It was these two men, therefore, who took charge of our Lord’s funeral arrangements, otherwise the Romans would have dug a pit at the foot of the cross and thrown His precious body into it.

Reasons for the Interment

1. It proved the Lord had actually died. He had died when “He bowed His head and gave up the ghost,” or, as it means, He dismissed his own spirit. Had He not been dead the Jews would not have allowed His body to be taken down from the cross. Had He not been dead His friends would not have buried Him. Everything was being governed by God to meet and forestall every deceit which Satan could think of. Pilate was made to put the matter beyond all doubt when he called the centurion and was assured that Jesus was dead. A soldier had also thrust a spear through His heart.

2. It fulfilled all prophecy. The chiefest of the prophecies concerning the Lord’s burial is Matthew 12:40, “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” This could only be fulfilled by His interment in burial. Another important prophecy was written in Isaiah 53:9, “He made His grave ... with the rich in His death.” How could this be when the Lord “was made poor” and lived poor? This came by the intervention of the rich man Joseph who provided his own rich tomb hewn out of stone in a beautiful garden.

3. It testified to His resurrection. You will notice an emphasis on the fact that it was “a new tomb” and that “wherein was never man yet laid.” Why this, pray tell? In the Old Testament there is the story of the death of Elisha. Because of the invading Moabites a body was cast into Elisha’s tomb. When the body touched the bones of Elisha, it came to life (2 Kings 13:21). Had our Lord been put where another had been laid the Jews

would certainly have said it was the other man who arose. We again see God governing to countercheck every device of Satan.

Reflections on the Interment

1. There was no elaborate ceremony. Some of our kings and great men have the most magnificent pageantry—but not our Lord! Even His loved disciples had fled and there seemed none but Joseph and Nicodemus and a handful of women.

2. There is an example for us. The Lord was buried. Personally, I do not think we have the right to burn up what has been a temple of the Holy Spirit. Abraham buried Sarah. Our Lord was buried. And so should we be!

3. We should not fear either to die or to be buried. Remember what was said to Jacob—“Fear not to go down into Egypt... and I will also surely bring thee up again” (Genesis 46:3, 4).

The strife is o’er, the battle done;

The victory of life is won;

The song of triumph has begun.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

The powers of death have done their worst,

But Christ their legions hath dispersed:

Let shouts of holy joy out-burst.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

The three sad days have quickly sped;

He rises glorious from the dead:

All glory to our risen Head!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

He closed the yawning gates of hell;

The bars from heaven's high portals fell:

Let hymns of praise His triumph tell.

Alleluia! Alleluia.

—Latin, Pub. Cologne, C. 1695

Trans. By Francis Pott

Chapter 31 Between The Resurrection And The Ascension

To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days (Acts 1:3).

The Lord's death and resurrection, when viewed in connection with the Old Testament dispensation, summed it up and brought it to an end. The Lord remained on earth for forty days after His resurrection to prepare His disciples for the new age of grace. During these days there were appearances and disappearances. The appearances were necessary in order to prove again and again that He was indeed risen from the dead. The disappearances were necessary in order to school His disciples to live by faith and not by sight since His bodily presence was soon to be taken away. In this period there were seven important openings.

The Opening of the Tomb

We are told in Mark 16:1 that certain women brought sweet spices to anoint the body of the Lord and found the huge stone already rolled away from the door of the tomb. There had been an earthquake (Matthew 28:2), and an angel from heaven had removed it. The guards who were on duty became "as dead men." No one saw Jesus come out of the tomb. The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out—He was already out—but to let the disciples in that they might see the evidence that He had risen. The Lord did not have to struggle out of clothes to rise. In quiet and calm He rose without disturbing the

grave clothes. The Lord opened the door of death and rose triumphant over it.

The Opening of the Heavens

Mark 16:19 tells us, “He was received up into heaven.” “Thou hast ascended on high” (Psalm 68:18) means that He did so by His own inherent power, and was given a royal welcome. The language of the Psalm is that of a military triumph—the Lord having defeated all the hierarchy of hell and fully accomplished man’s redemption. Thus in Psalm 24 we see heaven opening its gates to receive Him. “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall Come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.” He opened those gates, and open they remain until the last of His believing people pass through to sit with Him in everlasting glory.

The Opening of the Eyes

“And their eyes were opened” (Luke 24:31), so that “they knew Him.” The prophets had declared that He would do this (Isaiah 35:5). The first reference of this Scripture may have been to physical eyes. Few of such eyes were opened but millions of spiritual eyes have been opened and all such now know the Lord. All His followers need this touch of His risen life. We read of the two going to Emmaus that “their eyes were holden that they should not know Him” (Luke 24:16)—that Mary in the garden was actually standing near Him yet “knew not that it was Jesus,” that the disciples who had gone back fishing “knew not that it was Jesus” standing on

the seashore. All needed their eyes opened that they might know Him in resurrection life.

The Opening of the Future

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee [said the Lord to Peter], When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God” (John 21:18, 19). The Lord in these words told Peter two things—first, he would live to be an old man and, secondly, by which exit door he would depart out of this world. And when Peter turned and saw John following he asked the Lord, “What shall this man do?” The Lord answered, in effect, that that was not Peter’s business. John’s future, too, was in the hands of the Lord. So are all our futures.

The Opening of the Scriptures

“Did not our heart burn within us...while He opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:32). The two on the way to Emmaus were in the depths of despondency. The cross had blasted their hopes of an immediate earthly kingdom. But the Lord appeared to them, and though they knew Him not yet He walked with them. In that walk He opened up a new ministry of finding Christ in all the Scriptures. “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” As He did so, their hearts burned within them. They were lifted out of their despondency. The opening of the Scriptures set their hearts aflame.

The Opening of Their Understanding

“Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45). Education is not the key to such understanding, though no one would despise it. Many of the best teachers of the Word of God have had little in the way of formal education. Worldly philosophers have no clue to such understanding. But humble believers with very little education have often gone down into the depths of the Word and come up with hands laden with jewels of divine truth.

The Opening of the World

“And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them” (Mark 16:20). These disciples had been hid behind closed doors, eating and drinking. When the risen Lord came into their midst, He upbraided them, then sent them out into all the world. “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” The whole world was their parish. Oiled wheels run freely. And how prompt and ready should we all be to witness for the Lord to all men everywhere, especially when endued with power from on high. “Here am I, send me” (Isaiah 6:8), was Isaiah’s prompt reply.

I know that my Redeemer lives:

What comfort this sweet sentence gives!

He lives, He lives, who once was dead;

He lives my everlasting Head.

He lives, triumphant from the grave;

He lives, eternally to save;

He lives, all glorious in the sky;

He lives, exalted there on high.
He lives, my mansion to prepare;
And He will bring me safely there;
He lives, all glory to His Name!
Jesus, unchangeably the same!
—Samuel Medley

Chapter 32 The Consummation Of All Things

This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven (Acts 1:11).

This is the first message from heaven to earth after our Lord's ascension. He and His disciples had been standing on mount Olivet when He was taken up from them—"and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (1:9). Then came heaven's first message spoken by two angels who seemed to know these men well since they addressed them as "men of Galilee." The cloud is important for had there been no cloud the Lord in ascending would have grown smaller and smaller in their eyes, and God never intends His Beloved to become small in our eyes.

What the Lord Said About His Coming Again

Our Lord said nothing about His coming again until after Peter made the great confession at Caesarea Philippi, six months before His death on the cross—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Then He unveiled three more secrets—of the Church (v. 18)—of the cross (v. 21)—of His coming again (v. 27). He said He would come as "the Son of man"—a term full of significance and comfort for us who are of human stock. It was as the Son of man that He lived and toiled on earth—as the Son of man that He suffered and died on the cross—as the Son of man that He ascended into heaven. He took our humanity back with Him to glory—a humanity He did not have when He came out of that

glory. He is a Man in glory now, and as the Son of man will come again, and to show that He is the Son of God He will come in “the glory of His Father.”

What the Apostles Said About His Coming Again

Every New Testament writer refers to our Lord’s coming again. It was this blessed hope which inspired their faith and witness—their unworldly character—their moral intensity—their command of the future. Peter says:

“When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:4).

“Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13). John

says: “When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2). Jude says:

“Building up yourselves on your most holy faith...looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vv. 20, 21).

Hebrews 9:28 says: “Christ...shall...appear the second time.”

Paul in Romans describes two features of His coming. First, to reveal the sons of God (8:19). Many of them have been hidden in quiet places. He will display all who are His and will be admired for His wondrous work in them. Secondly, He will deliver the whole creation from its bondage (Romans 8:20, 21). The earth must be redeemed—delivered from its groaning and from all its frustration and impediments which are at present in it. Our bodies are in that material creation and will be resurrected at the time of the earth’s renewal. “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain ... but ourselves also ... even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for ... the redemption of our body” (8:22, 23).

What the Angels Said About His Coming Again

I will emphasize just one thing. It is, they said, to be “this same Jesus” (Acts 1:11). They used His human name—Jesus. They, too, spoke of Him in His coming as “the Son of man.” There are mighty and great things bound up in that title. It denotes His relation to—and work for—the redeemed sons of men. And He came to destroy all the works of the devil in us so that we should be made like Him.

All of this must have its application in our lives. We should not emphasize signs of His coming. They have their place. We must not dismiss the “signs of the times.” There are such signs, but we are on much safer ground when we stand in the realm of spiritual realities. Signs may be very fascinating to the flesh but it is far more important for us to advance in Godlikeness in view of His coming again. The Cross is the basis for that blessed hope. I am sure we please the Lord more by gathering around His table to remember Him and what He did to give us such a hope. “Thou art coming! At Thy table we are witnesses of this,” says the hymn writer. When Abraham’s servant went to seek a bride for Isaac and found Rebekah, you will notice that while he had a long way to come for her, she also had a long journey to meet Isaac—six hundred miles through desert land. It was no sudden jump from Mesopotamia to Canaan. It was a long, exacting, and weary journey—all of which involved a great exercise of faith. There was much to leave behind to undertake that journey. In the same way, we are to move toward our Lord as He moves toward us. We must leave behind all that is fleshly and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, be occupied with the blessed hope of meeting our Heavenly Bridegroom.

Christ is coming! let creation
From her groans and travail cease;
Let the glorious proclamation
Hope restore and faith increase:
Christ is coming!
Christ is coming!
Come, Thou blessed Prince of peace.
Long time exiles have been pining,
Far from rest, and home, and Thee:
But, in heavenly vestures shining,
They their loving Lord shall see:
Christ is coming!
Christ is coming!
Haste the joyous jubilee.
With that blessed hope before us,
Let our joyful songs be sung;
Let the mighty advent chorus
Onward roll from tongue to tongue:
Christ is coming!
Christ is coming!
Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come.
—John Ross Mac Duff

Chapter 33 The Prince Of Life

Ye ... killed the Prince of life (Acts 3:14, 15).

The Bible is God's book and the Holy Spirit is the Teacher of it. The One about whom He teaches is the eternal Son—the Source and Sustenance—The Beginning and the End—of the eternal life given to those who come to believe on Him. The Lord Jesus is the Holy Spirit's criteria—His standard—His pattern—the One whom He would make us like unto. His work is not to speak of Himself, nor that we should glory in the gifts which He bestows, but to mold and fashion us into the image of the Saviour. Everything is ordered to that!

In the background of the text there is the story of the healing of a crippled man. The man could do nothing for himself, hence he was reduced to beggary and utter destitution. But the word spoken by Peter and John was with power to heal, and healing brought a complete change to his lifestyle. When a crowd gathered they would have made much of the apostles, but Peter at once directed their eyes away from themselves to the Lord who alone should receive glory.

The Title Given Our Lord

“The Prince of life.” One of the ways in which the Holy Spirit glorifies God's beloved Son is in the names and titles He has given Him. There may be at least three hundred of such, and it takes a very great person to carry so many names and titles, especially when such reflect a person's life and character. These names and titles are the highest in the universe of God and are all reflections of what God is.

In this particular instance, Peter describes the Lord Jesus as “The Prince of life.” Such a title is not to be thought of as, for instance, “the prince of Wales.” The word “Prince” here is also translated Author or Captain. The best translation is Pioneer. What a revelation it must have been to the Jewish mind when Peter flung down the challenge and devastating indictment—“Ye ... killed the Prince (Pioneer) of life.” It meant they had killed the only One who could lead them into the realm of eternal life. That is why Jewry has lost its way since the day they crucified Him. How can anyone find their way through a trackless desert—which this world is—if they kill the only One who knows the way and can lead them through it?

The Issue Facing Us

The Lord Jesus is the Pioneer of life—that is, the life of the ages. Our whole eternal well-being both here and beyond the grave is determined by whether or not we have this life of His. Our own human life is corrupt because of sin. The very act of God in driving the first sinful man from any approach to the tree of life, which was a symbol of Christ, shows that we cannot attain to that life on the ground of what we are by nature. A flaming sword is set against us (Genesis 3:24).

It was for this reason that God, in matchless and astonishing love, sent forth His beloved Son that we might have that life communicated to us through faith in Him. “I am come that they might have life” He said (John 10:10). He came to give it because we did not have it. But “in Him is life” (John 1:4). “This life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath (the) life” (1 John 5:11, 12). “These [things] are written, that ye might believe that

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name” (John 20:31).

The Hope of Recovery

The Lord Jesus is ever the Pioneer of life. He ever was that, but His resurrection from the dead and His triumph over all the hierarchy of hell has made Him the Pioneer of Life in a new way to us. He has now pioneered the way, not through life only, but through death also. As the Pioneer He is now leading many sons to glory, and all who are following are those who have been saved by His wonderful grace.

Think of the crippled man in the story here given. Through faith in the name of the Lord Jesus He was put on his feet again—a miracle of recovery. He stood on his feet praising and blessing God. That is a parabolic picture of the new life in Christ which is given to heal our crippled souls. And “whosoever believeth” is given that life (John 3:15, 16). Any person who believes—the rich or poor man—the young or the old—the learned or unlearned—all who believe of whatsoever race or condition, have communicated to their souls the eternal life which is in the Son of God. At the Table of the Lord we who believe gather to remember what it cost our great Pioneer to make that possible, and to praise and thank Him for making a way for us through life and death to the Land of light and glory above.

Sweet the moments rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend,
Life and health, and peace possessing
From the sinner’s dying Friend.

Here I rest in wonder viewing,
All my sins on Jesus laid,
And a full redemption flowing
From the sacrifice He made.
Here I find my hope of heaven,
While upon the Lamb I gaze;
Loving much, and much forgiven,
Let my heart o'erflow with praise.
Lord, in ceaseless contemplation
Fix my thankful heart on Thee!
Till I taste Thy full salvation,
And Thine unveiled glory see.
—William W. Shirley

Chapter 34 Lord Of All

He is Lord of all (Acts 10:36).

We need a very clear understanding of who the Lord Jesus really is, where He is, and what He is doing in this present time—that is, the position He now occupies and the ministry He now fulfills. “God also hath highly exalted Him” (Philippians 2:9). When the world last saw Him He was hanging on a cross of shame—a cross of man’s making. To natural eyes His mission to men seemed to have failed. He was taken down from the cruel cross and buried. That seemed the end. But far from it! God raised Him from the dead, and “highly exalted Him,” and gave Him “a name which is above every name.” As Peter said in the house of Cornelius: “He is Lord of all.”

The Demonstration of His Lordship

We will never understand the value of our Lord’s ministry in heaven until we see that “He is Lord of all.” He is supreme. He is the only One in all the universe who matters to God. He was Lord in eternity past. Before His glorious countenance angels veiled their faces and flew to do His bidding. Abraham rejoiced to see His day. Isaiah saw His glory and worshipped prostrate at His feet. Prophets poured out their hearts and psalmists sung His praises. In His incarnate life here He proved Himself Lord over disease, demons, and death.

Lordship was demonstrated in His resurrection. “God hath made Him both Lord and Christ.” He was already Lord in His divine nature and was now made Lord in His

human nature by His rising from the dead. “Thou hast put all things under His feet” (Psalm 8:6). “We see Jesus...crowned with glory and honor” (Hebrews 2:9).

His Lordship was also demonstrated in His ascension. He passed through the visible heavens unchallenged by Satan—already a defeated foe—and ascended “far above all.” As He entered Heaven He was given a Conqueror’s welcome of honor as we see in Psalm 24. None dare challenge Him. He was the Lord of all and of glory.

The Glory of His Lordship

This was the glory of His enthronement—that “[He] is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Hebrews 8:1). He was made a co-occupant with the Father on the throne of heaven, being acclaimed Lord of all by the Father before all heavenly beings, and given “all [authority] ... in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). We see Him in Revelation 5, “in the midst of the throne” and with all heavenly beings prostrate before Him in profound adoration and exultant praise, crying, “Worthy is the Lamb.”

Think of Hebrews 2:9, “crowned with glory and honor.” Here on earth, facing the Cross, our Lord breathed out the prayer: “Father... I have glorified Thee on the earth ... and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (John 17:4, 5). The glory which was never abandoned but laid aside was now taken up as the Son of man. “God ... raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory”—“angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him” (1 Peter 1:21; 3:22).

The Re-appearing of His Lordship

This will be seen in His return to earth. “The creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21). In this present age the whole creation is “subject to vanity.” It is in the pangs of pain with the spoilage of thorns and thistles. There is pestilence and violent disruptions of earth’s surface, and in the whole animal kingdom there are base and carnivorous instincts. But our Lord is to re-appear as Lord of creation to put an end to its travail. In that regeneration of all the material universe there will be included the resurrection of our dead natural bodies, that they may be “fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Philippians 3:21).

His Lordship also will be fully manifest in His final victory. Think of Revelation 19:11-16 in His appearing on the white horse as “Faithful and True!” “He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” He is to come as Lord of all—with all authority in heaven and in earth. He is to come to make war with the godless nations in their final expression of rebellion. This is their cup of iniquity made full—the zenith of man’s infamy. The Lord is to loose the seals of God’s terrible judgments and wind up the government of the Gentile nations. He is come as the Almighty Despot from on high - the Mighty God—and “He shall reign for ever and ever.”

The head that once was crowned with thorns

Is crowned with glory now;

A royal diadem adorns

The mighty Victor's brow.
The highest place that heaven affords
Is His by sovereign right,
The King of kings, the Lord of lords,
And heaven's eternal light.
The joy of all who dwell above,
The joy of all below,
To whom He manifests His love,
And grants His name to know.
—Thomas Kelly

Chapter 35 The Greatness Of Christ

He is Lord of all (Acts 10:36).

The most immense thing that ever took place in the universe is that the Son of God became the Son of man. The immensity of a believer's life is that we are brought into living union with One who is so great—so pure—and so holy. The immensity of this union is the more realized when we contemplate the greatness of Him to whom we are united.

His Greatness As the Son of God

“Who is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). Thus the invisible became visible—the incomprehensible became comprehensible—the far-off became near. Being the express image of Godhood He could therefore say, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). The greatness of His Person makes for a humbling attitude in our souls. Thus Abraham considered His greatness and the sight of it reduced him, as it were, to dust and ashes: “Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27). When we remember who He is—the Creator of the worlds—the Sovereign Lord of all—we can but be astonished that He should set His love upon such a vile thing as sinful man.

His Greatness As Heir of All Things

God has spoken to us by His Son “whom He hath appointed heir of all things” (Hebrews 1:2). He was that before the worlds were made. All things were made “for Him” to exhibit His glory. Now they are redeemed for

that same purpose so that “He might fill all things.” All things are to revert to His control. Thus those who are joined to Him are made “heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17). “Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?” (James 2:5, 6). O blessed state!

His Greatness As the Hope of the Ages

“For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:20, 21). Men cry out in hope. They are “prisoners of hope” (Zechariah 9:12). The whole universe cries out in hope. There is an enigma—a puzzle—a quandary—a contradiction—something wrong with the whole universe, and it cries out in hope. Nothing is left hopeless. But that hope is only in the Lord. “Thou art my hope, O Lord” (Psalm 71:5). In Christ alone is hope and, in Him, hope for the whole universe—hope for the nations—hope for Israel—hope for the Gentiles—hope for all the earth.

His Greatness in the Eyes of the Father

“Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again” (John 10:17). “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). The Old Testament is full of figures of that love which the Father has for the

Son, such as in Adam when God walked and talked with him in Eden—in Abraham and his love for Isaac—in Jacob’s special love for Joseph—in God’s love for Israel—all of which are faint reflections of God’s love for His beloved Son.

His Greatness in His Own Nature

“Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26). “Holy”—having absolute purity; “harmless”—having no ill-feeling toward any; “undefiled”—having no stain of dishonor upon His obedience or imperfection in His love toward God and man; “separate from sinners”—not of the same sinful stock. That He was all this was acknowledged even by demons who called Him “the Holy One of God” (Mark 1:24). He was never touched by the curse of sin. Heaven knows it. Earth knows it. Hell knows it. No one ever pointed to a flaw in His character.

His Greatness in the Work of Redemption

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). And how many sins has even one person? Since each sin has its own measure of punishment who can measure the degree of punishment for all the sins for all people? It is said that He should “taste death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9), which means our Lord died millions of deaths in His one death. Since hell was the punishment deserved, then He suffered millions of hells in that one cry—“The pains of hell gat hold upon Me” (Psalm 116:3). Through His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross He has obtained for His people “the remission of sins.” Through that finished work of redemption He has made it possible for

God to give eternal life to as many as should believe on His name.

His Greatness in the Bestowment of Grace

Personal unworthiness is no obstacle to His “so great salvation.” None can find Him unwilling or unable to save. “Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters... without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1). “Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink” (John 7:37). No unworthiness can bar the way to Him. His mercy and grace are incomparably great and sweet!

O Lord, enlarge our scanty thought
To know the wonders Thou hast wrought;
Unloose our stammering tongues to tell
Thy love immense, unsearchable.
How can it be, Thou heavenly King,
That Thou shouldst us to glory bring;
Make slaves the partners of Thy throne,
Decked with a never-fading crown?
Our hearts then melt, our eyes o’erflow,
Our words are lost; nor will we know,
Nor will we think of all beside,
My Lord, my Love is crucified.
Firstborn of many brethren Thou;
To Thee, lo! all our souls we bow;
To Thee our hands and hearts we give:

Thine may we die, Thine may we live.

—Nikolaus Von Zinzendorf

Tr. By John Wesley

Chapter 36 The Glad Tidings Of Resurrection

The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled ... in that He hath raised up Jesus again (Acts 13:32, 33).

The resurrection of our Lord was the foundation upon which the Gospel of redeeming grace was built. To that our Lord Himself directed the disciples as the evidence of His Messiahship. There are ten recorded appearances of our Lord in His resurrection so that the disciples could testify with full assurance of it. And because Paul was not a disciple at that time and did not have that advantage, he was given ocular vision and demonstration so that he, too, as an apostle, might be its supreme witness.

The Resurrection As an Accomplishment of Prophecy

The promise quoted by the apostle is from Psalm 2. It declares the triumph of our Lord over all His enemies and demonstrates His consequent exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high. It was said that on that day He was “begotten”—because He was then formed anew, as it were, from the earth. The Old Testament prophets predicted this. The classic figure was that of Jonah who was delivered from the belly of the whale after three days and three nights. The living bird of Leviticus 14:51, 53 after having been dipped in blood was set free. It rose into the heavens having been slain, as it were, representing the Lord as ascending into the heavens with His own blood.

The Resurrection As Glad Tidings for Our Souls

To the disconsolate disciples the glad tidings of our Lord's resurrection were exceedingly joyous. That event first ascertains the virtue of His sacrifice. Had He not risen from the dead then His death would have been in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14, 17, 18). We would have had no evidence our debt was discharged if our Surety had not been liberated from the prison of the grave. But His resurrection clearly proved that the Lord had satisfied all the demands of law and justice and this gives believers ground of an assured hope and fills them with triumphant exultation (Romans 4:25).

In the second place, it denotes His sufficiency for our help. If He were still dead it would be in vain to look to Him for help. But when He had raised up Himself, which He did according to His own word in John 10.17, 18, and had been exalted that He might be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and the remission of sins (Acts 5:31), what may we not expect at His hands? Surely He is declared thereby to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:4)! O that we knew Him better, and O that we should strive the more to know Him in the power of His resurrection (Philippians 3:10), then nothing should be impossible to us (Mark 9:23).

The Resurrection As the Hope of Our Own Resurrection

Our hope of resurrection depends entirely upon His. If He had not risen neither could we. Because He was raised we shall rise also. Christ is the firstfruits which, sanctified and set apart, brought assurance that the whole harvest, yet in the fields, would also be taken up

(1 Corinthians 15:20). He is our Forerunner who is gone into the heavens to prepare a place for us and will come again to raise us up to gain possession of it (John 14:2, 3). We therefore may consider death and the grave as vanquished, and look forward with confidence to the complete triumph we shall have over them. He lives and we shall live also (John 14:19). The promises of the Old Testament show how inspired they were. The Word of God is not of any private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20), as though it belonged to this or that nation, or this or that individual. Many Old Testament Scriptures doubtless had a peculiar reference to those to whom they were spoken at that time, but no promise of God has an exclusive reference. All the promises are “yea and Amen in Christ.” We can embrace the promises of God given in ancient times as you see by comparing Joshua 1:5 with Hebrews 13:5, 6. We may expect the fulfillment of all the promises of God to our own souls.

It is sad indeed that men are enemies to themselves by despising the glad tidings of the Gospel. Indeed, there are many who are ready with the demons to say, “[We] beseech Thee, torment [us] not” (Luke 8:28). They look upon faithful servants of God as Ahab did the prophets—troublers of Israel—(1 Kings 18:17). But the ministry given us is to declare good tidings—to proclaim a crucified, risen and exalted Saviour. Think of such an excellent sacrifice! Think of such a triumphant resurrection! See whether these great events do not afford us matter for eternal praise and rejoicing.

A near relation, too, subsists between believers of all ages. We are to sit down with the patriarchs and prophets of old in the kingdom of our God. While it appears that the Church of the New Testament is in a

privileged position and a special relationship to the Lord Jesus as His Spouse, yet we can still look upon the saints of old as, in some precious way, united to the Lord Jesus Christ and realize that they will share the same eternal glory (Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:29).

Jesus lives, and so shall I.

Death! thy sting is gone—for ever!

He who deigned for me to die,

Lives, the bonds of death to sever.

He shall raise me with the just:

Jesus is my Hope and Trust.

Jesus lives and reigns supreme;

And, His kingdom still remaining,

I shall also be with Him,

Ever living, ever reigning.

God has promised: be it must;

Jesus is my Hope and Trust.

Jesus lives, and death is now

But my entrance into glory.

Courage, then, my soul, for thou

Hast a crown of life before thee;

Thou shalt find thy hopes were just;

Jesus is the Christian's Trust.

—Christian F. Gellert

Tr. By Philip Schaff

Chapter 37 Judge Of All

He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained ... in that He hath raised Him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

This is yet another ministry of our Lord in heaven. He is raised up not only to be a present Lord and Saviour—Forerunner—Advocate—Mediator—but all rights of judgeships have been given Him. God has given the office and the right to judge all peoples to His Son, that all men might honor the Son as they are to honor the Father. He has been given this authority as the Son of man—as One who knows all men and what is in men, and thus can judge with righteous judgment.

His Judgment of Believers

“We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Romans 14:10). This will take place immediately after His coming to rapture them (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). This judgment is not a legal one for crimes committed. We are not to appear before Him as sinners and vagabonds, but as His own redeemed people. This judgment is a review of service. The judgment upon the sins of His people was borne by Him on Calvary’s cross, and those sins cannot be judged a second time. This is more like an adjudication—a judgment on how well we have run the race, or used our talents, or built up a godly character, and so be given appropriate rewards (Revelation 22:12). It has to do with our manner of living as believers. In that day “everyone of us shall give an

account of himself to God”—not to any other (Romans 14:12).

It has also to do with labor, especially, perhaps in relation to the local church (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). There is but one foundation—Jesus Christ. But what have we built on that foundation in the way of Christian life? There are works of gold, silver, and precious stones, all of which can stand the test of fire. But there are inferior and fleshly works indicated by wood, hay, and stubble, all of which are burned and destroyed by fire—works unacceptable to God.

Then, too, it has to do with our loyalty. “It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2). Stewardship is what the Lord has entrusted to His people. He has put into our hands His own intrinsic jewels. We are not to be concerned about what other people think. We must seek only to be faithful to Him who has made us His stewards.

His Judgment of the Nations

This will be at the close of this present age of grace and before the beginning of His millennial reign here on earth; and at the close of that thousand-year period will be the judgment of all unbelievers. This judgment of the nations is to fall upon those nations which are represented as a ferocious beast with seven heads and ten horns, and which is the final expression of Gentile world dominion. But the Lamb overcomes them and brings to a final conclusion all rule and authority here on earth by these kingdoms of darkness. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are all destined for the lake of fire. So here we see the blessed Lamb of God, once nailed to a cross on this earth by men of the nations,

now on a throne of judgment, separating nations with, perhaps, some from each passing into the millennial era. This is called the judgment of the sheep and goats as in Matthew 25:33—“And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left,” and it seems to be a judgment based on the attitude of nations to the Lord’s earthly people, Israel.

The Judgment of Unbelievers

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away” (Revelation 20:11-15). This is the Great Assize Court. It comes at the end of human history as we now know it today and at the close of our Lord’s millennial reign. It is another part of our Lord’s ministry in heaven and the consummation of all things. The judgment is a heavenly scene and conducted from the throne of God in heaven. It is the grand finale of human history in relation to the earth. The Lord Jesus is to come to that throne with great splendor and glory. This is the judgment of the impenitent. So great will be the manifestation of His glory that the present earth and heaven shall flee away at the sight of His face because of their pollution. How solemn! What a final vindication of the Lamb of God that was slain, when “every knee [shall] bow ... and ... every tongue ... confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10, 11). The knees of believers bow to Him now in adoration and praise: in that day the knees of unbelievers will bow in enforced submission and fear.

Lo! He comes with clouds descending,

Once for favored sinners slain;

Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of His train:
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Christ appears on earth to reign.
Every eye shall now behold Him
Robed in glorious majesty;
Those who set at nought and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree.
Deeply wailing! Deeply wailing!
Deeply wailing! Shall their true Messiah see.
Yea, Amen, let all adore Thee,
High on Thy eternal throne;
Saviour, take Thy power and glory,
Claim the kingdoms for Thine own.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Come, Lord, come!
—Charles Wesley
And John Cennick

Chapter 38 The God Of Hope

The God of hope fill you ... that ye may abound in hope (Romans 15:13).

The apostle has traced human history from the first man's sin and rebellion through many generations, and then comes to Christ. The long history of failure finds its terminal at the cross and from that terminal rises a new beginning. Hope springs up at the cross. Sin brought in despair and death, and the only way God could bring any hope to a fallen race was through the cross and death of His beloved Son. That cross is not a cross of despair but of hope. That is God's way of bringing in hope. God's answer to our desperate state is the cross.

The Answer to Ruined Nature

Man is not what God made him. Sin came in and man became a corrupt and guilty creature. It came in because man trod the one and only command of prohibition under his feet. Born as we are with a corrupt nature from that first man, it is vain to think we can live a spotless and holy life. Wicked nature draws us from the straight and narrow path. There is not a single hour when we have stood blameless before God. That is a condition God never intended for man.

Thus, what is of human nature cannot please God. It can never purify itself. A clean thing can never come out of an unclean. So there is a certain hopelessness attached to this unclean state. It can never be other. But what God requires, and what He demands, is a life clear as crystal. Only the cross—that is, the blood of the cross, can wipe the pollution out of us and give hope of a pure

life. Only the cross can subdue sin—quiet boisterous passions—becalm fiery lusts—make miry places clean.

The Answer to Human Wisdom

Human wisdom is corrupt. It is placarded before our eyes in the scribes and wise men of Israel. Their interpretation of Divine things was grossly wrong. What they devised as a form of religion did nothing for man except impose upon him an intolerable burden. It brought man into bondage to rules and regulations which the scribes themselves could not keep. With all their religious schooling in the Word of God they could not get beyond their own traditions and settled interpretations which never did rightly or fully interpret God's mind and thought. Self-will is at the root of human wisdom in devising means of redemption. Men imagine that their devised means is best suited to the dignity of man. Thus man places his puny reason above the counsels of God. He turns from God's revealed will to grope in the darkness of his own conceits.

All this so-called wisdom must be set aside, and only the cross of Christ can do that! It took the wisdom of God to devise a means whereby God could pardon and receive sinful men on the basis of righteousness. How can any man pay his debt to justice when he has nothing of his own but sin? But Jesus pays—pays in a death which no mind can ever reckon. Justice then rejoices. The truth of God denounces every sin and so bars heaven's gate to every sinner. But Jesus drinks the cup of vengeance and the truth of God requires no more. The holiness of God recoils from every approach of sin. But Jesus dies, and a stream of blood flows which washes out the crimson dye.

This is the wisdom of God. "Christ crucified ... the wisdom of God."

The Answer to Enforced Legalism

The Law can only bring sinners into bondage. It is a terror to sinful men. Darkness envelops it and out of the thick darkness it has an angry roar. The hand of the law shakes terror over a transgressing world. The hands of man cannot erect a tower of safety against the law. Can a poor cripple run?—the withered tree bear fruit?—the sentenced criminal break his chains?—the dead rise and walk? How then can corrupt man keep a perfect law of God? Israel had the law but could not keep it, so it could not derive life and power from it. The law can never bestow life. It can only condemn those who breach it in any one point.

The cross is the answer to all legalism and stands over against it. The things of God are not the tyranny of the law but the manifestation of grace. And that is liberty, not bondage. We are released by the cross from all ceremonial forms which never can change the condition of man. The cross opens a door to the fullness of life, and in that fullness there is freedom. To try by religious forms and ceremonies to gain that life is simply to gender human bondage. The cross is God's reaction against that! It makes a way for the bestowment of eternal life, and in that life is the delight to do and the power to keep God's holy law.

A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing;
Nor fear, with Thy righteousness on,
My person and offering to bring.

The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do;
My Saviour's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.
My name on the palms of His hands
Eternity will not erase;
Impressed on His heart, it remains
In marks of indelible grace.
Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure
The souls of the blessed in heaven.
—Augustus H. Toplady

Chapter 39 Discerning The Lord's Body

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body (1 Corinthians 11:29).

The text means that some bring ruin upon themselves because they do not have a proper sense of the Lord's body. There is a wide divergence both of thought and practice in regard to the remembrance feast. Apart from the Roman mass, which is idolatrous, there is the excessive practice of it by the Church of England by using it for varied occasions. There is the Presbyterian practice of observing it but four times a year. There is the Baptist practice of once a month. But the evidence of Scripture is that the saints gather for worship—the central feature of which is the breaking of bread—every Lord's Day (Acts 20:7).

Perhaps a greater danger than irregularity is turning the feast into a religious ritual and observing it without spiritual affections or any heart exercise of worship. In Scripture, this feast is nowhere called a sacrifice. The sacrifice for sins was once made on Calvary's cross and is never to be repeated. But its memory is preserved in the weekly observance of the memorial feast. The gathering place for this feast is round a table, not an altar.

The blessing of the feast is given to the participant who comes with a proper spirit of worship, praise, and thanksgiving. There is no priest presiding. The Lord Himself presides. Blessing is given as the participant

discerns by the Spirit's enlightenment the spiritual realities of the ordinance. The one thing to be supremely discerned is the Lord's body, and He possesses both a personal and mystical body.

The Personal Body of Our Lord

This personal body of His was crucified. The world may look upon the Lord as a great moral teacher with ideals to embrace, or of a martyr dying for a cause. But true believers discern that He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). The heart of the Gospel message is not example but expiation—that He purges our sins—that in His body He "suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

We also discern the same crucified body risen and glorified. The church is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but the Lord Jesus lives in His glorified body before the Father's face, acting as Advocate on behalf of His people. He is not in the loaf of bread on the table as a kind of imprisoned Deity. That is pagan idolatry, and for no other supposing than to advance the power of witchcraft.

Then, too, we discern His body in that in which He will come again. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). God has purpose concerning the material creation in our Lord's coming. He is to reclaim the earth for the "earth is the Lord's" both by creative and redemptive rights. In its regeneration our material bodies will be resurrected.

The Mystical Body of Our Lord

If we come to the feast with a discerning and anointed spirit we shall recognize His mystical body in the one loaf. “We being many are one bread, and one body” (1 Corinthians 10:17). The Church is His mystical body.

1. It is a body called out of this world. Believers are a called-out people. Just as Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldees and Israel was called out of Egypt, so the church is called out of a condemned world. It is distinct from the world by the experience of redemption. Believers are separated from the world and unto Christ. If we by grace are brought into the most intimate union with our Lord, how can we be joined to, and intimate with, the world which crucified Him? Fellowship at the Lord’s memorial feast demands separation from the world.

2. It is a body called into togetherness. “We being many are ... one body” (1 Corinthians 10:17). We must discern the vital bond which binds together all the redeemed. The Church is a living organism and the basis of fellowship is a common life in Christ—the life of His Spirit. We should never come to this feast while at variance with another or else our testimony ceases to be vital. All antagonisms, grievances and despisings, must be laid aside before partaking.

3. It is a body called unto glory. There are pessimists and skeptics who harp on the Church being a spent force and in dying decline. This memorial feast is to remind us every week that the company of the Lord’s people is to be a most “glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27). This elect company, called

out of “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,” will be together around the throne of God and of the Lamb, singing unto Him who “was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood” —yes, singing unto Him “that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 5:9; 1:5). We are called unto His “eternal glory.”

O Love, how deep, how broad, how high!

It fills the heart with ecstasy,

That God, the Son of God, should take

Our mortal form, for mortals’ sake.

For us He was baptized and bore

His holy fast, and hungered sore;

For us temptation sharp He knew,

For us the tempter overthrew.

For us to wicked men betrayed,

Scourged, mocked, in purple robe arrayed,

He bore the shameful cross and death,

For us at length gave up His breath.

For us He rose from death again;

For us He went on high to reign;

For us He sent the Spirit here

To guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.

Anonymous From 15th Century,

Tr. By Benjamin Webb

Chapter 40 The Implications Of Our Lord's Resurrection

I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ... rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3,4).

This is a classic Scripture on the matter and fact of our Lord's resurrection. It is full and complete as we see in four great truths.

The Resurrection in Relation to the Gospel

The apostle's first word is a declaration of the Gospel—salvation because “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures”—and that “He was buried,” which proved that He had died. But His resurrection is the crown of His whole redeeming work. This, too, was “according to the Scriptures.” His resurrection ratifies and confirms the fact that He died for our sins. It is proof that redemption was accomplished by our Lord's death. The apostle lists all who saw Him in resurrection life—in ten instances and in many kinds of places. If there was no resurrection then, says the apostle, “Christ [is] not risen”—“our preaching [is] vain”—“your faith is also vain”—“we are found false witnesses”—“ye are yet in your sins”—“they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (15:13-18)! “But now is Christ risen from the dead” (v. 20)—“Christ the firstfruits”—the reality of the feast of firstfruits in Leviticus 23:10, 11, at which feast only one sheaf was cut and taken into the temple of God and, be it remembered, not on the Jewish seventh day, but the eighth. Only one sheaf—and that sheaf was Christ!

The Resurrection in Relation to the Kingdom

“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father” (v. 24). This is great prophetic insight. It speaks of the end of the present order—the consummation of this present age. That will accomplish the finality of our Lord’s redeeming work when He “shall have put down all rule and all authority and power,” and when all His enemies shall be put under His feet, and death itself destroyed. All things will be restored to the rule of God and this will be for the Father’s glory. This explains our Lord’s title of “The everlasting Father” in Isaiah 9:6. that is, not the Father of the redeemed, but the Father of the ages. This also makes foolish the Mormon doctrine of baptizing for the dead as though by such an invention they can save those who died in their sins. Baptism is not a ticket for heaven. Baptism has nothing to do with our right to enter heaven. It is a testimony here on earth to our having entered the Lord’s kingdom through faith in Him. The apostle is saying, “Why baptize for the dead if there is no resurrection?”—which some were denying. Why be baptized as an identification with Christ in His death if you are to remain in death?

The Resurrection in Relation to Natural Law

In verses 35 through 49 the apostle answers those who ask, “How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” He begins his answer with, “Thou fool”—that is, it is a foolish thing to so inquire, for one only has to look at the everyday operation in nature. A person sows grain that it might die. Without that death there could be no harvest. What springs out of that which dies is a new body. It comes forth in a new form

and fashion. The essential life principle was not lost when the exterior shell died away. So with the resurrection of our bodies. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." The body which we derived from Adam was simply made "of the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7). That is the natural body. But "afterward that which is spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:46). It is something far, far better, something suitable for the heavenly realm, and is of more enduring substance.

The Resurrection in Relation to Immortality

In verses 50 through 57 of this wondrous chapter, we read, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (v. 51). There are some who will be alive in the day when the Lord comes for His own. These will undergo a change as those whose bodies are to rise from death. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The sound of a trumpet is a military term. It is a call to march forward. We are to move to another abode and have need of our resurrection bodies. This is the final triumph over death. "Death is swallowed up in victory." Having declared that "the sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law," the apostle cries in glad triumphant praise—"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 57).

What a deliverance! The result of such contemplation is that we are to turn to the work of the Lord with new

purpose of heart and energy. Every shadow has been dispelled. Every enemy has been overcome.

Jesus lives! thy terrors now

Can, O death, no more appall us;

Jesus lives! by this we know

Thou, O grave, canst not enthrall us.

Hallelujah!

Jesus lives! henceforth is death

But the gate of life immortal;

This shall calm our trembling breath

When we pass its gloomy portal.

Hallelujah!

Jesus lives! to Him the throne

Over all the world is given;

May we go where He has gone,

Rest and reign with Him in heaven.

Hallelujah!

—Christian L. Gellert

Tr. By Frances E. Cox

Chapter 41 The Face Of Jesus

God...hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

By “face” is meant that which is visible—that by which a person is known. God has made Himself known to us in the face of Jesus Christ, who has shined into our hearts. But a face changes its form and feature in differing circumstances, and thus we have different views of our Lord’s face according to the particular occasion.

A Kingly Face

“Art Thou a king?” asked Pilate of our Lord, and the Lord answered, “To this end was I born” (John 18:37). He came into this world with royal office and character, the Father’s chosen, approved and appointed King. Scripture refers to Him as “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords” (Revelation 19:16) and as “The Prince of the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:5). Psalm 2 tells us of earth’s final confederacy against the Lord and His anointed (Christ). But God, we read, looks upon His enemies with holy derision—laughs at their folly—and treats their impotency with holy sarcasm, because, said He, “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.”

The Lord Jesus is King over His enemies. That is why thirty Roman emperors and chief men of the realm died miserable deaths in a very short period of time, among them Julian the apostate who died screaming, “O Thou Galilean, Thou hast conquered!” Jesus is also King of saints—ruling in their hearts by beneficent grace and guarding them from the powers of darkness. He is now

“crowned with glory and honor” in heaven above and when we see Him at His return He will be seen with a most majestic face—the Father’s appointed King.

A Stem Face

“Thou hast...hated iniquity,” says Hebrews 1:9. We see the sternness of His face in His confrontation with those who had defiled the temple and when He drove out all: men and cattle and sheep with a whip, saying, “Make not My Father’s house an house of merchandise” (John 2:16). It is part of the glory of God to hate iniquity and to drive it from His holy presence. His face was surely stern when He drove out Satan from the heaven of heavens, when that once anointed cherub grasped at Godhood. His face was stern, too, when He drove Adam and Eve from Eden’s paradise after they had disobeyed His one prohibition and avowed the principle of independence.

A Marred Face

The glory of God is most clearly displayed at the Cross. It is said in Luke 22:64 that “they struck Him on the face”—that is, they kept on striking Him. In the Spirit of prophecy, Isaiah puts these words on our Lord’s lips, “I gave...My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair” (Isaiah 50:6). How painful that must have been and with all His beard plucked out He must have looked a pathetic sight. Matthew 26:67 tells us that “They spit in His face”—that is, they did the most despicable of all acts when they covered His infinitely lovely face with human spittle. Then they crowned His sacred head with thorns—the mark of the curse—the thorns being three inches long and which pierced His brow.

Look well at that marred visage. The more you see, the more you will love; and the more you love, the more you will praise; and the more you praise, the more will your heart expand and be filled with gratitude.

A Sympathetic Face

“And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it” (Luke 19:41). The Saviour here was looking over Jerusalem and His sorrow was profoundly and infinitely deep as He mourned their rejection of Him. “If thou hadst known ... at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.” What sorrow! His eyes were watered with tears as He sorrowed over man’s ruined state and the impending destruction of the city which had been God’s chosen place for His Self-manifestation.

Our Lord has passed through all human trials. Some of His people may have strayed away from Him—some ceased to watch and pray—some disquieted as the heavens seem as brass—some dispirited because their pilgrimage is long or their adversaries many—or their strength totters—troubles multiply—afflictions break upon them - health fails like a fading flower—earthly possessions crumble and decay. But Jesus’ face is full of sympathy. No one of His redeemed has ever been absent from His heart—His care— His concern. All that He is, and all that He has, and all that He has done, and all that He is doing, and all that He will do, is yours. He loves you dearly and His face shows that love and sympathy for you.

A Glorious Face

“His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” (Revelation 1:16). This was the vision of the exalted Lord given to John on the isle of Patmos. How important it is to see something of His glorious face, even though, as yet, it be through a glass darkly. We have seen Him in His life and walk on earth as the Lamb of God—in His varied ministries of grace which flowed from Him—in His service of love when He stooped even to wash His disciples’ feet—in the intimacies with which He loved His own. Oh! but to see Him in vision as here—highly exalted and glorified. What beatific vision! And some day we shall “see Him as He is” —the Altogether Lovely—exceedingly desirable to all believers—wondrous in majesty—transcendent in excellence—infinite in perfections—radiant in His grace and virtues. Oh, bless the Lord! Bless ye the Lord!

Give me a sight, O Saviour,
Of Thy wondrous love to me,
Of the love that brought Thee down to earth,
To die on Calvary.
O make me understand it,
Help me to take it in,
What it meant for Thee, the Holy One,
To bear away my sin.
Was it the nails, O Saviour,
That bound Thee to the tree?
Nay, ’twas Thine everlasting love,
Thy love for me, for me.

Then melt my heart, O Saviour,
Bend me, yea, break me down,
Until I own Thee Conqueror,
And Lord and Sovereign crown.
—Katherine A. M. Kelly

Chapter 42 The Placarding Of Christ

Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you (Galatians 3:1).

Bishop Lightfoot has a good word in place of the phrase “evidently set forth.” It is the word placarded. The Lord and His atoning work on the cross had been placarded before these Galatians. The message of His Person and work had been clearly demonstrated before them. But now they were falling back to the legalism of the old covenant. “O foolish Galatians”—what stupid folly is this to leave Christ for Moses—the Gospel for the law—justification by the righteousness of Christ which brings such solid comfort, for justification by the works of the law which could only bring their souls into bondage. The apostle was so astonished as to call them foolish or senseless.

The Emphasis on the Cross

Paul had placarded the cross before their eyes. We have often seen men carrying a large placard over their shoulders, hanging down front and back as a means of advertising. Paul had made “Christ crucified” as vivid and arresting as that to them.

The old covenant could never convey souls to heaven. It was too weak to open those bright gates. It was too feeble to ascend the hill of the Lord. If we seek acceptance of God by Sinai’s code we must surely fail and it is folly to try it. It cannot prosper. It will surely fail.

It is only the Lord Jesus and His atoning sacrifice on the cross which can make a way for us to heaven. On that cross He met every need. His finished work alone satisfies divine justice. He has given His life for mine. In Him—by Him—we clear the law's uttermost demand. Such is the value of the Saviour's cross, and its value was made clear by the apostle to these Galatians.

The Scope of the Cross

The cross of our Lord Jesus embraces and affects the whole universe of God.

1. The cross is the center of a believer's life. Believers stand fearless on the rock of a completed sacrifice—"It is finished!" Human redemption is secured. Redemption is an accomplished fact. Every payment has been paid down. Every penalty has been endured. The curse has been drained. Satan has been vanquished. Believers are free. So to the Galatians the apostle could write, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," and, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 6:14; 2:20).

2. The cross is the center of the corporate assembly. The Lord has formed His church by sovereign grace. He has planted it with His virtues, gifts and graces. He waters it every moment. He has fenced it round with His almighty power. It is nourished with the refreshing doctrines of the Gospel which are seasonably applied. It is impregnable against the forces of evil. Its faith, piety, and courage have spread to the ends of the earth. Because the cross is the center of the church, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

3. The cross is the center of world history. Everything beforehand moved toward the cross; everything since flows from that cross. The whole world was sunk in ruin and misery, given over to idolatry and superstition. No distinction is made for any person of any race—"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "They are all gone out of the way...there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12). But at the center of this ruined race God has set forth a means whereby sin can be forgiven and guilt removed. That means is the cross of Christ which God has made a Mercy-seat.

4. The cross is the center of the universe. There is a state of disorder in the whole universe. But the regeneration of the whole is promised so that there is to be a new heaven and a new earth. Through the blood of the cross God will "reconcile all things unto Himself... whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Colossians 1:20).

The Reach of the Cross

It gives assent to His holiness. The one grand purport of the scheme of grace is to guard and secure God's holiness which is the very ground of His nature. Holiness was therefore manifest in our Lord's life on earth. His walk in our soiled path was as clean as when He moved on celestial pavement. His every act—every word—have but one feature, and that is one of absolute holiness. The cross reaches up to heaven and secures that holiness. It thus gives God righteous ground on which to forgive sinful men.

It also reaches down to the bottom of human degeneracy. Some may ask, "Can holiness revive the

wasteland of nature upon which the blight and curse of God rests?" Only by means of the cross! The Lord Jesus alone can make a wretched sinner holy and fit for the presence of the holy God. The Saviour welcomed is holiness begun. The Saviour cherished is holiness advancing. The Saviour never absent is holiness complete. Holiness complete is fitness for heaven. Only through the cross can man rise to that heaven of heavens where God is, and enter and live in God's holy presence without fear for ever. O wondrous cross! Wondrous cross that can do that for us and do it for ever!

O perfect life of love!

All, all is finished now;

All that He left His throne above

To do—for us below.

And in His thorn-crowned head,

And in His sinless soul,

Our sins in all their guilt were laid,

That He might make us whole.

In perfect love He dies—

For me, He dies for me;

O all-atoning Sacrifice,

I cling by faith to Thee.

Yet work, O Lord, in me,

As Thou for me hast wrought;

And let my love the answer be

To grace Thy love has brought.

—Henry Williams Baker

Chapter 43 The Curse Of God

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13).

The ultimate of all evil is the curse of God. When God blesses, one in sorrow finds joy—one in pain finds ease—one who is burdened finds their burdens bearable—death becomes most welcome. But who can tell what horrors may be wrapped up in His wrath? Better not to have been born than to have to experience that!

We must remember at the outset that man's act of crucifying another may not be the curse of God. The Romans crucified many victims who were innocent of heinous crime. That is what they did to those who resisted Rome's iron rule of law. Many saints of God have been crucified simply to show man's hatred of Him whom they loved. This verse is not a general statement of all who have hung upon a cross. It is a prophetic word relating to God's beloved Son who, for us men and our salvation, bore our sins—the guilt and punishment of His people's sins. Every sin of theirs was transferred to Him and put to His account, as though He had committed these innumerable sins. Their curse was borne by Him. He came to be a Substitute for His people, that they may be pardoned and set free.

The Essence of the Curse

The curse of God is the very essence of salvation's scheme. In it the vastness of God's grace is demonstrated in the Redeemer's love. We have already seen a picture of the cross in the uplifted serpent (Numbers 21:8). Here we have that truth made plain.

Hanging is named. "He that is hanged is accursed of God." This foretells the cross of our Saviour. When He was to appear in the fullness of time He was to expire on a cross. No man can invent such foretelling. So the Saviour must be crucified or else the curse is not taken away.

As we of these after days know, the cross of Christ is recognized history. The Lord Jesus has suffered in that way—lifted up as an accursed spectacle to God, to angels, and to men. To bring this about Israel must needs lose their supremacy of power and, with that, the right to put anyone to death. Their judicial power must needs be taken away, for this inhumane death was not a Jewish death. Had they retained their right to rule themselves in their own country then our Lord would have been stoned to death. Thus the scepter of rule had to pass into Gentile hands and Roman law prevail. It was Pilate, the Roman governor, who delivered our Lord to this Roman death, for Rome had conquered and subdued Israel so that the prophetic word could be fulfilled. It was God's scheme—His means for our complete redemption which would answer His justice and righteousness.

The Reason for the Curse

Why such an awful fact as the curse of God? Since "God is love," what kindles such a fierce flame as this? If man had loved and obeyed God who made Him—if His inward law had governed him—then there could have been no such thing as the curse of God. But man, by Satan's wiles, became a rebel against God. The fountain-head of the human race was poisoned. Let us hold up God's Word before our own eyes and examine ourselves in the

light of it. We are a sinful, polluted, and rebellious people and it is written clear and plain—"Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians3:10).

That is clear and plain. It is as solemn as it is plain. The whole law of God was summed up by our Lord in two commandments—love God and love man. This exercise of love was to be in every movement of the heart. All our thoughts were to be in love to God and man. All our words were to sound out in love to God and man. All our works were to be done in love to God and man. It was one law for all. But one single failure and the law is broken and the curse falls. The hand of the curse of God falls on every sinful man. And who can escape? The curse of God is what all deserve. There can be no excuse as to why we transgressed. The solemn fact is that all have done so, so that all are accursed of God. No human penitence can change that! We have all failed to love God and man. That failure has linked us to the curse.

The Escape from the Curse

The Lord Jesus is the substituted curse for His people. His redemption is sufficient to save all men and all men may come to Him. His invitation is open to all. But He is only a Substitute for those who believe that for them He became the curse of God on Calvary's cross. God's righteous vengeance upon all sin fell upon Him. He bore all the anguish which would have been His people's doom. He absorbed all their deserved penalties and punishments. There was no pity—no mitigation because of who He was. It was the total curse—the dreadful curse of God. We who believe point to Him and the plea

is valid and prevailing. We cannot suffer what our Surety has borne for us. Thus we cling to Jesus. We clasp the meaning of the cross. We drink from the fountain of peace which flows from that accursed tree. Unless He had come and done this then the curse of God would have been upon us for ever.

My song is love unknown,

My Saviour's love to me;

Love to the loveless shown,

That they might lovely be.

O who am I,

That for my sake

My Lord should take

Frail flesh and die?

He came from His blest throne

Salvation to bestow;

But men made strange, and none

The longed-for Christ would know:

But O! my Friend,

My Friend indeed,

Who at my need

His life did spend?

Here might I stay and sing,

No story so divine;

Never was love, dear King!

Never was grief like Thine.

This is my Friend,
In whose sweet praise
I all my days
Could gladly spend.
—Samuel Crossman

Chapter 44 The Cross Of Christ

The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14).

The Lord God, in sending forth His beloved Son into our humanity, has set down a new kind of man. This new man is not just better than other men but altogether different from other men. It is as though God has said —“This is the Man I had in view from all eternity and every man must conform to His image.”

Satan is against that kind of man. So when our Lord was manifested as the prototype of the man who alone could please God, Satan put forth all his skill and power to destroy that pattern Man. That alone explains the terrific drive of evil powers to hound Him to death. It was a tidal wave of evil and all its billows were to sweep over the head of God’s Beloved.

But behind this seeming on-drive of evil there was “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). The cross was God’s plan. It was designed to provide a foreseen fallen man with the means of conformity to His Son, and so a man in whom He could find satisfaction and delight. Only the cross could make that possible.

The Cross Dealt with Rebellious Sin

Sin is the trouble—not sins as such. Sins are the fruit which spring from the root of sin. Sin is something far deeper than our wrongdoings whether of omission or commission. Our sins are only the crop or harvest from the seed of sin. Sin is lawlessness or rebellion against God, and that rebellion was in the universe before man

appeared. It began in the heart of one who afterwards became known as Satan, and it took place in the realm where God is. It probably arose from Lucifer's jealousy over the purposes of God concerning His Son whom He had appointed "Heir of all things."

Man, by yielding to Satan, identified himself with the same spirit of rebellion and lawlessness. Man became lawless by yielding to the lawless Satan. So this whole matter of rebellion began in Satan as Lucifer and then spread to a host of angels who entered into complicity with him. It then came into our humanity through the wiles of Satan and one man's disobedience to God's single command of prohibition. Thus the once perfect and innocent man became a tottering reed. When sin entered, innocence expired. It followed that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

The meaning of the cross is that God, in the sufferings and death of His Beloved, dealt with that rebellion. All sin is really the activity of Satan—not simply our weakness or failing or fault. It is a Satanic working in us. There is a whole system of evil behind all human sin which is rebellion against God. It was for this that our Lord was led as a "lamb to the slaughter," which is the very opposite of a rebellious spirit. These two elements came in combat at the cross, and the Lamb of God overcame and sin was dealt with.

The Cross Offered a Righteous Sacrifice

Righteousness is the very nature of God. That is something utterly pure and transparent. There is no mixture in it—nothing which needs to be skimmed off—nothing which contains dregs which have to be rejected.

From top to bottom God's nature is clear as crystal and absolute in its purity. God abhors mixtures as you see in the prohibitions under the law. "Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together"—"Thou shalt not plough with an ox and ass together." These prohibitions illustrate how God hates the mixture of righteousness and unrighteousness. The cross answers God's demand for righteousness. Thus it was that the Lord Jesus "offered Himself without spot to God" (Hebrews 9:14). There is no blemish in our Lord. The offering of Himself was absolute in its purity, and altogether satisfied the holy nature of God. Here was righteousness and God attested to it.

The Cross Bore a Necessary Judgment

Judgment is more than mere penalty. The best definition is found in Daniel's interpretation of what God said in the case of Belshazzar when at his drunken feast he saw the handwriting on the wall. First—"thou art weighed in the balances"; secondly—"and art found wanting"; thirdly—"thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:27, 28).

It is this judgment which our Lord bore for us on Calvary's cross. God dealt fully with all human sin in that cross. Our Lord was put in the place which we deserved and to which we belonged. He was made "sin for us ... that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

O Love divine! what hast Thou done?

The immortal God hath died for me!

The Father's co-eternal Son

Bore all my sins upon the tree;

The immortal God for us hath died!
My Lord, my Love, is crucified.
Behold Him, all ye that pass by,
The bleeding Prince of life and peace!
Come, sinners, see your Maker die,
And say, Was ever grief like His?
Come, feel with me His blood applied:
My Lord, my Love is crucified.
Is crucified for me and you,
To bring us rebels back to God:
Believe, believe the record true,
Ye all are bought with Jesu's blood,
Pardon for all flows from His side:
My Lord, my Love, is crucified.
—Charles Wesley

Chapter 45 The Exaltation Of Christ

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him (Philippians 2:9).

There is no alternative to the Cross of Christ. Its basic necessity lies in the fact and issues of sin. With the entrance of sin into human life all original innocence expired. "The Lord planted a garden" in Eden, we read, but the garden of the human heart became a wilderness of hateful weeds. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). All human woe came hand in hand with sin. The whole human race was wrapped up in the casket of the first man, Adam. All nations were in the seed of that federal head. The act of sin by that one man, as taint of poison in a well-head, effected every issuing drop of life. The ruin was serious and complete.

An Instrument of Healing

The only remedy for this enormous malady is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is not pleasant for corrupt flesh to hear. Man feels neither sin nor his need of pardon. He wants not to hear of nature's pollution. His very corruption forbids him looking to Jesus. It closes his hand so that he will not put forth his hand into the hand of Jesus. It closes his mouth so that he will not cry to Jesus. It closes his heart so that he will not receive Jesus.

There is no alternative to the cross of Christ for our healing. There is no prospect along any other line. The cross is the only answer to human error, transgression, iniquity, and rebellion—call sin what you will. The only

remedy lies in the fact that the Lord Jesus “bore the sin of many”—“The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all”—“For the transgression of My people was He stricken” (Isaiah 53). Only the cross can clean up the wounds of human life and there was no exaltation of the Son of God as our Saviour until that was done. There could be no seed—no church—until that was done!

An Instrument of Recovery

The cross of Christ is never a negative thing. Through the cross God works to a positive purpose. Peter’s mistake in Matthew 16:22, when he objected to the death of the Saviour, was that the cross could be nothing but an instrument of defeat and death. It was a destructive thing—a wholly negative thing. This led Peter to a violent reaction—“Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee” (Matthew 16:22). It is so easy for us, too, as believers, even in this late day, to view the cross in the same way. It did involve our Lord in death—“the death of the cross.” But there was something very positive in God’s view. That something was the recovery and restoration of our manhood. The cross was a positive instrument for securing a restored manhood that would abide forever in its completeness. We have the same tendency to think like Peter in negative terms. For instance, when we are in severe trial—when things are taken away from us—when we see nothing but an end to everything—we think negatively. But God’s purpose in allowing these providential dispensations and happenings is never negative. The Lord intends to see the “travail of His soul” and to be satisfied.

An Instrument of Safety

We must realize, if we are to come to a true understanding, the innate corruption of our fleshly life. The flesh is high-minded. We crave credit. That is why all human religions and worldly philosophies have in them a doctrine of human works. Were God to save us without setting aside this fleshly life we would very soon inflate ourselves with pride. There must be an end of fleshly activity for the things of God can never be accomplished by the activity of corrupt flesh. Only the cross can deal with that! God must make the ground secure for Himself. There must be no cause for the flesh to boast, else that would undermine and collapse the whole edifice. God will never put forth His strength where human assertiveness or self-confidence is. Isaiah describes that strength of God as “the arm of the Lord,” and this strength is manifest in His beloved Son in whom is no corruption whatsoever. There was nothing in His Son which would rob God of His glory. The cross is something like a bulldozer which clears the ground of some old, dilapidated and condemned building. Every last bit of rubbish must be cleared away so that a new building may arise.

An Instrument of Building

It is the cross which lays the foundation upon which the Lord can build His church. You will remember, perhaps, a broad outline of the book of Isaiah’s prophecy. There is a first section of thirty-nine chapters in which are pronounced judgments upon the nations. The second section of twenty-seven chapters, beginning at chapter forty, have to do with recovery and rebuilding. Midway in that section is the wonderful chapter fifty-three which

expounds the sufferings and death of Messiah. It is the same pattern in the New Testament as, for instance, in the epistle to the Romans. The first chapters are full of sweeping judgments on both Jew and Gentile—the whole human race issuing from Adam. But it moves through the cross in chapter six to chapter eight which is full of something entirely new “in Christ Jesus.” The foundation of the church can never be laid in corrupt human nature, thus we have “Christ crucified.” It is only on that foundation that God can deal with human sin and corrupt flesh. The Lord builds His church and He builds it so that it will never fall.

The golden gates are lifted up,
The doors are open wide;
The King of glory is gone in
Unto His Father’s side.
Thou art gone up before us, Lord,
To make for us a place,
That we might be where now Thou art,
And look upon God’s face.
Lift up our hearts, lift up our minds:
Let Thy dear grace be given,
That while we journey here below,
Our treasure be in heaven.
That where Thou art at God’s right hand,
Our hope, our love may be.
Dwell Thou in us, that we may dwell

For evermore in Thee.

—Cecil Frances Alexander

Chapter 46 Knowing The Lord

That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death (Philippians 3:10).

There is a profound relationship between the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and the manifestation of His risen life in the believer. The new life which we have in Him is not a whitewash of our natural life, but a different and distinct life altogether—the gift of a divine, spiritual, heavenly life, which is called eternal life. This life comes to us through living faith in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus and what He accomplished on our behalf and for our benefit upon Calvary's cross.

The Deeper Meaning of the Cross

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). But how does the second part come? The first part—the gift of life—is the fruit of believing that Christ died for our sins. The second part—the abundance of that life—surely means that what the Lord Jesus did for us is made good in us. The first part comes with an objective view of the cross. "There is life for a look at the crucified One," we sing. That is Scripturally true (Numbers 21:9). The second seems to be a subjective experience by which the power of the cross is made to work within us to remove all that hinders that new life in Christ coming into full manifestation. Everything which belongs to our natural life obstructs the course, the growth, and the development of that new life which has been communicated to us through believing. The cross, as a

principle, is the cutting power which severs that which is of the flesh.

The Destructive Power of the Cross

“That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). The devil is deeply associated with all the ruin and disorder in the natural creation. We look around and we see thorns and briars springing from the ground.

Earthquakes, tornadoes, drought, flood, pestilence and other destructive agencies are operative in nature. We look within, and we find our hearts are full of the same sad curse. It is the devil alone who is responsible for the ruin and we are part of that disordered creation. We come into this world with his chains around our necks and his throne erected within our hearts.

Though the devil is great, there is One gloriously greater. And the eternal Son of God came into this world and descended into the mystery of death in order to destroy “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” “To destroy” does not mean to annihilate but to bring to nought—to render powerless—to make incapable of success. The Lord so thoroughly put Satan to flight that he never dared come near our Lord again—whether during the forty days He was on earth after His resurrection or when He ascended up into heaven through territory occupied by Satan.

What the Lord did in relation to the devil, He did for us so that we, who “through fear of death were all [our] lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:15), could be delivered from such fear. We are meant to experience and enjoy the Lord’s victory over all that is of the devil. In Christ, that victory is actual and accomplished; in us,

it is potential but may become actual upon the exercise of faith. The Lord has put into our hands the instrument for overcoming the devil.

The Conforming Power of the Cross

“Being made conformable to His death.” I have a friend who often put this verse at the close of his letters, then added “the other way round.” The other way round is impossible. The Holy Spirit made no mistake in the order of this verse. We know the initial power of the Cross when we savingly believe what our Lord accomplished on our behalf on it. We thereby pass from death to life. It is in the power of His resurrection life alone that we may go on to know the fellowship of His sufferings, and through such fellowship be conformed to His death. This means that the power of the cross must work in us to set aside all the disorder of the natural man so that the eternal life, already deposited within us, may be released for its own increase.

So much of our lives is an expression of the natural man. But nothing of the natural man can accomplish spiritual ends or bring forth spiritual fruit—no matter how well-intentioned such efforts may be. The natural man cannot serve God nor work for the glory of God. The only way we can serve God is through the new life given us in Christ and which proceeds from the Holy Spirit who comes to indwell us. We can do all things in and through the Spirit and must do them so if we are to accomplish God’s ends. Thus the Holy Spirit is all the time bringing us back to the cross where all that is of the natural man has been nailed to the cross in the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the constant exercise of our life-union with Him. It is only this conformity to His death

which makes way for a full manifestation of the gift of eternal life.

Thee will I love, my strength, my tower,
Thee will I love, my joy, my crown,
Thee will I love with all my power,
In all Thy works, and Thee alone;
Thee will I love, till the pure fire
Fill my whole soul with chaste desire.
I thank thee, uncreated Son,
That Thy bright beams on me have shined;
I thank Thee, who hast overthrown
My foes, and healed my wounded mind;
I thank Thee, Whose enlivening voice
Bids my free heart in Thee rejoice.
Thee will I love, my joy, my crown,
Thee will I love, my Lord, my God;
Thee will I love, beneath Thy frown
Or smile, Thy sceptre or Thy rod;
What though my flesh and heart decay;
Thee shall I love in endless day!

—Johann Scheffler

Tr. By John Wesley

Chapter 47 The One And Only Mediator

There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

The idea and need of a mediator goes back to the beginning of human history. Job cried out for a daysman—one who could lay his hands on both God and man and bring them together (Job 9:33). In effect he was saying, “I cannot argue with God. We are not on equal terms. I need someone who is both God and man to come between us and put a hand on both.” Job’s cry was fulfilled in God’s beloved Son. We have such a Mediator for whom Job cried. He alone can bridge the gulf between God and men.

The Guarantor of the New Covenant

This is the first meaning of a mediator. There was an old covenant, ratified at Mount Sinai, referred to as the law. Even that covenant had a mediator in the person of Moses. That covenant was between God and Israel and could it have been honored there would have been no need for a second. But the law afforded no help to obedience but only demanded it. Israel, representative of our total humanity, was therefore left to its own resources to obey the terms of the covenant. This Israel could not do with an imperfect and fallen nature. That covenant was broken by one of the contracting parties—Israel. Thus the old covenant had to vanish away.

The new covenant was set up, not between God and fallen man but between the Father and the Son to be

wrought out by the power of the Holy Spirit. It was founded upon our Lord's sacrificial death which provides an eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:13-15). This was "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises," as the blood of Christ actually and effectually cleanses from sin, which the blood of bulls and goats under the old covenant could not do, and which new covenant secured our acceptance with God. This new covenant is ministered to us through our Lord's present priesthood in heaven (Hebrews 8:6). This is a more excellent ministry than that of Jewish priests because Jesus is a Mediator of a better covenant founded upon better promises. He is our High Priest in the true tabernacle since He has entered into heaven itself and ministers from there to make good to us that inheritance so that we may now live in the enjoyment of it.

The Minister of the New Covenant

The Lord Jesus first has a ministry to penitent sinners. It is as Mediator that we must come to Him, because He is the only One who can bring us to God. The fact that He is Himself Man makes it easy for man to come to Him. Our coming is not to some awesome Being. We come to One who Himself is Man. We have a Man to plead our cause—One who gave Himself a ransom for us. He thus takes penitent sinners by the hand and brings them to God because He is the Saviour of sinners. He pleads our case and pleads successfully for the forgiveness of our sins on the basis of the merits of His own precious blood.

His ministry is also to believers. Believers have their own peculiar needs and each has his own. It is not that believers need to be saved again but they do need to be

strengthened, enlarged and enriched. For this cause “He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). That is His ministry on behalf of His own redeemed ones who find no easy path through this world. But in Christ Jesus our Lord we have a Mediator who can meet every need since “He continueth ever,” and has “an unchanging priesthood.” He makes intercession for us all the way. That is His Mediatorship on our behalf (Romans 8:33, 38, 39).

His ministry is also to intercessors. God’s people are a praying people. In the upper room our Lord was looking forward to His present mediatorial ministry when He said to His disciples, “In that day ye shall ask Me nothing... Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you” (John 16:23). He stands between God the Father and us when we ask. He takes our requests and presents them to the Father and perfumes them all with His own adorable merits.

His ministry is also to worshippers. “Ye ... are ... an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). We serve God with our worship, praise, and adoration. Worship is the highest exercise of the human spirit. It is the pouring out of our souls in a priestly sacrifice of adoring recognition of God’s worthship. But often there is weakness in the flesh. “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). We often feel, too, that we cannot frame our words aright. Everything we utter seems so mean and meagre. Often our praises are marred with stains of imperfections as they rise from a heart engrained by sin. Ah—but our feeble worship—our poor and meagre expressions—are made to rise to God through the mediatorial ministry of our great High

Priest on high, and all are made to rise as a sweet savor,
acceptable to God.

Our life is hid with Christ,
With Christ with God above;
Upward our hearts would go to Him,
Whom seeing not, we love.

He liveth, and we live;
His life for us prevails;
His fullness fills our emptiness,
His strength for us avails.

When He who is our life
In glory shall appear,
We too shall be revealed with Him,
And His bright raiment wear.

In Him we then shall be
Transformed and glorified,
For we shall see Him as He is,
And in His light abide.

—Horatius Bonar

Chapter 48 The Great God Our Saviour

The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Together with the Epistle to the Romans, the Epistle to the Hebrews is one of the great theological and doctrinal treatises of the Word of God. The first part speaks of our Lord as being a new and better Deliverer; the second part as having a new and better Sacrifice; the third part as having a new and better principle by which we can be saved—that of faith, not works.

Who He Is

The first chapter sets forth our Lord's absolute and certified Deity.

1. He is the "Heir of all things" (1:2). No created being could ever be heir to this vast and illimitable universe.
2. He is the Maker of the worlds (1:2). Worlds here means ages. The Son of God framed and designed the different dispensations and brought the whole into existence "by the word of His mouth."
3. He is the Brightness of the Father's glory (1:3). He is the outshining of all that God is. He embodies in Himself every divine attribute and perfection.
4. He is "the Express Image of His Person" (1:3). This means that He is the exact impress of all that God is. As wax returns the exact impress or image of a seal, so does the Lord Jesus the exact image of all that God is.
5. He upholds all things by the word of His power (1:3). All things move in their own orbits and are held there

and move there to exact moments of time—all by the power of the eternal Son of God.

Such is the exalted dignity of the Lord Jesus as the eternal Son of God. This Sonship belongs to essential Deity, not something acquired when He came to earth. He possesses divine attributes, exercises divine prerogatives, and is the emanation of all divine excellence and beauty.

Chapter two then shows us His true and proper Manhood.

1. He was made “a little lower than the angels” (2:9).

This is a quotation from Psalm 8 in which Messiah’s incarnation is prophesied. He was to take upon Him the nature of a creature lower than the angels “for the suffering of death.”

2. He was partaker of our flesh and blood (2:14). All that needed to be done for human redemption could only be done by our Lord assuming our nature, or else He would have had no blood with which to atone for our sins.

3. “He took on Him the seed of Abraham” (2:16). He must needs come by way of a particular segment of the human race. It was most fitting to come through Abraham as the nation issuing from him was to be God’s chosen vehicle for His Self-revelation and for the accomplishment of His eternal purposes.

4. He “suffered being tempted” (2:18). He was made open to temptation—to feel the force of it—the malignant nature of it—the subtilty of it.

What He Did

1. By Himself [He] purged our sins (1:3). Only because He was the infinite God could He absorb the infinite punishment of sin. He did this “by Himself and no man could lay a hand to help Him do it.

2. He destroyed the devil (2:14). The word “destroy” does not mean to annihilate but to render powerless—to disarm—to make idle. This Goliath of hell fell before the strong Son of God and would never again dare confront Him.

3. He delivered His people from “the fear of death” (2:15). We all fear death. Death is the king of terrors to sinful men, but when we come to Christ, death even becomes a friend to transport us into the presence of His glory.

Where He Is

He...“sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (1:3). This signals a completed work. Here is acceptance by the Father. Here is authority at the Father’s right hand where He sat—the place of highest power and authority.

Let us look well to Him when we come to worship. Let us see Who He Is—What He is—Where He is. The Lord Jesus is God without to save us—God within to cheer us—God above to bless us—God who came into our humanity to atone for our sins—God who reigns on high as our Mediator, so that we may present our worship, praise and adoration to God our Father and with His smile of approval.

To the name of our salvation,

Laud and honor let us pay,
Which for many a generation
Hid in God's foreknowledge lay.
But with holy exultation
We may sing aloud today.
Jesus is the name we treasure,
Name beyond what words can tell;
Name of gladness, name of pleasure,
Ear and heart delighting well;
Name of sweetness, passing measure,
Saving us from sin and hell.
Jesus is the name exalted
Over every other name;
In this name where'er assaulted
We can put our foes to shame:
Strength to them who else had halted,
Eyes too blind, and feet too lame.
Therefore we, in love adoring
This most blessed name revere,
Holy Jesus, Thee imploring
So we write it in us here
That, hereafter heavenward soaring,
We may sing with angels there.
—Anonymous (15th Century)

Tr. By John Mason Neale

Chapter 49 Seeing Jesus

But we see Jesus (Hebrews 2:9).

The epistle to the Hebrews sets forth the Lord Jesus as the eternal Son of God. He is the appointed Heir of all things—the Maker of the worlds—the Brightness of the Father’s glory—the Upholder of all things—the Purger of our sins. He is now set down “on the right hand of the Majesty on high,” and the Father addresses Him as God (1:8). His true Manhood is set forth in chapter two.

We See Him in Relation to Creation

“For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come” ...“but we see Jesus”—the One to whom all creation is to be subject. All that was lost in the first man, Adam, is recovered to the fullest extent in Christ, so that there is “left nothing that is not put under Him” (vv. 5-9). Adam’s dominion was also a limited one: our Lord’s knows no limit. Adam’s dominion was over “all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas” (Psalm 8:7, 8). But the dominion of the Lord Jesus is over all God’s universe. For us men and for our salvation He was made “a little lower than the angels”—not in His Person, but in His office as the Son of man. But He is now exalted “far above all” and God “hath put all things under His feet” (Ephesians 1:21, 22). All creation is subject to Jesus in His office as Son of man, so that “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth ... and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,” are to say, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him

that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Revelation 5:13).

We See Him in Relation to His Own

There is a threefold designation of His redeemed people in this chapter—sons, brethren, and children.

"Sons" is a designation connected with the future (v. 10). He is "bringing many sons unto glory"—that is, as those who are fit for glory and who bear the image of the heavenly. They are brought to glory through the Saviour's redemptive grace, and they are led there by Him as the Captain or File-leader of a very long line. Because of the "suffering of death" He has gathered them as spoil out of the enemy's hands.

"Brethren" is a designation connected with the past. It was in the morning of the resurrection when He first used the term. He said to Mary— "Go to My brethren" (John 20:17). There are prophetic words in the Old Testament which testified He would use that word of intimate relationship with His own. "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee" (Psalm 22:22). So He declared them to be after the resurrection, wherefore "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11).

"Children" is a designation connected with the present. "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me" (Hebrews 2:13). The Lord Jesus is never spoken of as our Father. We are children born of God the Father and given unto Him (John 17:6). Isaiah was given two sons to show forth these two important truths—first, that God had hidden His face from the house of Jacob;

secondly, that the prophet was comforted by other children given him of God. Thus while the people of Israel have for the present rejected the Lord they will afterwards be saved. Meanwhile the Lord is comforted by other children from the Gentiles which God has given Him.

We See Him in Relation to His Incarnation

1. He was made “a little lower than the angels” (2:7). This was necessary because angels are spirit beings. Had our Lord taken upon Him the nature of angels He would have had no blood with which to atone for our sins—no righteousness as Man with which to justify us—no fellow-feeling with which to sympathize with us. He was made lower than angels not in terms of degree but of time—for a little while, in order to accomplish human redemption.

2. He partook of flesh and blood (2:14). We have no choice in the matter of our entry into the world. With Him, it was not so. He did not belong to it. But since we, who were the objects of His saving purpose, were partakers of flesh and blood, “He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” He became a true Man. He did so without ceasing to be God or without the loss of any divine attribute. He was not a phantom, as the early Docetists supposed, but a real Man.

3. He was “made like unto His brethren” (2:17). He had a man’s spirit and “groaned in spirit”—was “troubled in spirit.” He had a man’s soul and thus could say, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful” (Matthew 26:37, 38), and “He... poured out His soul unto death” (Isaiah 53:12). He had a man’s body and thus we read that “[He] bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24).

The incarnation of our Lord was to accomplish three purposes.

1. To deal with our enemy—the devil—“that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). By this believers are made free from the fear of death.

2. He came “to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” The word reconciliation here means propitiation. God does not reconcile sin to Himself. He reconciles fallen man to Himself because sin has been propitiated or put away by the Saviour’s sacrifice.

3. He came that He might “succour them that are tempted” (v. 18)—that is, to support and aid us in our earthly pilgrimage. He looks upon us with a pitying eye and renders help in time of need.

O Christ, our hope, our heart’s desire,

Redemption’s only spring;

Creator of the world art Thou,

Its Saviour and its King.

How vast the mercy and the love

Which laid our sins on Thee,

And led Thee to a cruel death

To set Thy people free.

O Christ, be Thou our present joy,

Our future great reward;

Our only glory may it be

To glory in the Lord.

All praise to Thee, ascended Lord;
All glory ever be
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Through all eternity.

C. 8th Century

Tr. By John Chandler

Chapter 50 Our Lord's Power To Succour

In that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

There was, in many ways, a necessity for our Lord's humiliation. It was necessary on our part, that an atonement being made by Him on our behalf, we might be made acceptable to God. It was necessary, too, on God's part, in order that His justice might be satisfied and His law magnified. It was necessary, too, on the behalf of the Lord Himself, so that, through the process of humiliation He might be qualified to take up and discharge a mediatorial office on our behalf, for without the presentation of His own blood in the heavens, and the sprinkling of the mercy seat with that blood, and the exercise of His intercessory prayers, we could never receive the benefits of His atoning sacrifice.

The Temptations of Our Lord

Great and manifold were these temptations.

1. From man. In his infancy our Lord grew up "in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Yet from the beginning of His Messianic ministry He became the object of universal contempt and abhorrence (Isaiah 49:7). He endured every kind of contradiction from sinners of all sorts, and from all ranks and conditions of men. They found fault with His words. They misrepresented His actions. They reviled Him as an imposter. They said He was confederate with the devil. And at last, they

apprehended, condemned, and crucified Him. What a catalog of trials!

2. From devils. These assaulted Him with all their fiery darts at their disposal, urging Him to distrust, presumption, and even idolatry. They attacked Him, after their wilderness temptations with fresh and tremendous vigor in the Garden of Gethsemane. Here was marshalled all the forces of darkness against Him. Then they made their last supreme effort when He hung on the cross. But He triumphed over them (Colossians 2:15)—though they did succeed in bruising His heel and in bringing Him to the chambers of death.

3. From God. When our Lord stood as a Surety for sinners, God exacted of Him the utmost farthing of our debt. It was the Father who put the bitter cup in His hands—the Father who laid on Him the awful load of our transgressions and “bruised Him,” so that the fragrance of His offering might ascend up with sweet acceptance before Him (Isaiah 53:10).

The Ability to Succour His People

All His people, like Himself, live in a hostile world and suffer like manner of trials if not in the same degree. But the Lord Jesus is able to succour them and has an all-sufficiency to do that!

1. He has a sufficiency of strength. All power is committed to Him and all the fullness of God dwells in Him. He can bind the strong man armed and take from him captives from his wretched bondage. There is nothing impossible to our Lord. The weaker we are the more His strength is perfected on our behalf.

2. A sufficiency of wisdom, for He is “the wisdom of God.” With this wisdom He can deliver the godly out of all temptations, defeat all the plots and schemes of their adversaries, and take Satan himself in his own devices. He sees every weapon formed against His people and knows the day and the hour when the enemy chooses to use them against His people. He thus knows the best time and manner in which to come to their aid and to proportion it to their necessities and so secure their victory and himself obtain the glory.

3. A sufficiency of compassion. He wept in the days of His flesh on account of the afflictions of His friends, nor does He forget to pity them now that He is in heaven. The very apple of His eye is wounded whenever any of His people are touched with hurt. “In all their afflictions He was afflicted.” So now, being “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” He is sympathetic in all the trials of His people.

The Connection Between His Temptations and His Succour

As God, He is of necessity possessed of every Divine attribute and perfection, but as Man He learned much from His experience.

1. He learned our need of succour. He Himself, under His own grievous sufferings, prayed to God with strong crying and tears, and was heard. Thus He was strengthened from above (Hebrews 5:7). He therefore knows how much we need assistance in our trials, and how certainly we poor, weak ones must fail, if we are not supported by His almighty power.

2. He acquired the right to succour us. We were bought by Him at the inestimable price of His own precious blood. It was agreed in the covenant of redemption that if He would make His soul an offering for sin then He should see His seed and the pleasure of the Lord would prosper in His hands. Having paid the price, therefore, He has a right to His purchased possession, and the right to convey to us whatever may be needful for the salvation of our souls.

And how perfectly He learned these things. As in the case of Saul of Tarsus when persecuting the church, the Lord said, "Why persecutest thou Me?" that is, the hurt to His disciples was a hurt to the Lord Himself. Why? His having been tempted in all points like as we are, qualified Him and disposed Him to feel for all who would be hurt. Indeed, there was a necessity to be made like unto His brethren in order that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, which office He could not have executed if He had not, by His own sufferings, been able to sympathize with us (Hebrews 2:17).

With joy we meditate the grace

Of our High Priest above:

His heart is filled with tenderness—

His very Name is Love!

Touched with a sympathy within,

He knows our feeble frame—

He knows what sorest trials mean,

For He has felt the same.

He, in the days of feeble flesh,

Poured out His cries and tears,
And now, ascended, feels afresh
What every member bears.
Then boldly let our faith address
The throne of grace and power:
We shall obtain delivering grace
In every needed hour.
—Isaac Watts

Chapter 51 Benefits Derived From His Sufferings

Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered (Hebrews 5:7, 8).

We must enter here with reverent step. These prayers and supplications of our Lord's were directed to Him who was able to deliver Him out from death, and it was this in which He was heard. The mercy of resurrection was promised Him and this was the object of His tearful prayers.

His Conduct Under His Sufferings

There could never be sufferings comparable with our Lord's. The terribleness of them was not so much in the body but in His holy soul. If we would be more intimately knowledgeable of those sufferings then we must go to the Redeemer's prayer-book—the Psalms. The Psalms lead us into an inner closet where the heart of our Lord is laid bare. Who can tell what the Saviour endured? How fearful are the words of Moses—"He that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deuteronomy 21:23). Moreover the prince of evil had power to slay our Lord's body, for, said He, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53). We do well to read Psalms 6:1-6; 22:21; 30:7-10; 88:1-7—all of which are the lamentations of the Messiah.

But in all these infinite sufferings our Lord was obedient. Indeed, we are told, He “learned obedience.” Obedience was something which in times eternal He knew not, Himself being the supreme and sovereign God. It seems a difficulty with some that the Lord should have to learn anything. It would seem to be dishonoring to His Godhead to suggest it. But this is not a reference to knowledge or information concerning suffering or obedience. It refers to what is experiential—the having to obey Another. It was fellow-feeling which was to make Him a fit High Priest on behalf of His people.

This was an indispensable and solemn lesson (John 6:38). To do the will of the Father who had sent Him was at times very grievous to flesh and blood. It was the path of ignominy, pain and sorrow, leaving Him exposed to the assaults of Satan and to the violence of wicked men. A cross and a bloody grave, the curse of God and the malediction of men were to be His lot, but His conduct under these sufferings was one of spotless obedience and unexampled love. Though nature bled at every pore, as it were, yet our Lord turned not aside till the whole will of God was accomplished in Him.

The Benefits Derived from His Sufferings

First, there was personal benefit. To become a faithful and merciful High Priest, full of sympathy and understanding, it was necessary for our Lord to experience everything which His people are called upon to endure in their conflicts with sin and Satan (Hebrews 2:17). The difficulty of abiding faithful in arduous circumstances is very great as we all do know. Though our Lord knew everything from a speculative manner yet He was to know trial experientially and He could not

know this but by being reduced to a suffering condition. This therefore was a benefit which our Lord derived. He learned by such sufferings to be tenderly sympathetic with His afflicted people and so to the more speedily succour them when imploring His help with strong crying and tears. If we are to bear reproach, suffering, and persecution for His name's sake and by the Father's appointed will we are not to suppose God to be a hard Master. God forbid! Our Lord Himself has passed through all human circumstances of trial and it is what these have made Him which brings us so much comfort in sorrow—cheer in despondency—strength when we are ready to faint in the path of obedience.

Secondly, there was official benefit. The priests of the Old Testament economy were consecrated to their office by the blood of their sacrifices, but our Lord, by His own precious blood. This gave Him the right to impart salvation to believing hearts. Such believers are “those who obey Him.” The Lord in saving us transforms us into His own image and so makes believers like Himself —“obedient unto death” (Philippians 2:8). He was “made perfect” (exalted to glory) to do this, and so to become “the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.”

This office of High Priest is a conferred and official dignity. It was indeed a meet reward for all He had suffered on our behalf. It was most fit that He who had died for man should be the Author of man's salvation. This is something which our Lord appreciates in that it is said of Him—“For the joy that was set before Him [He] endured the cross” (Hebrews 12:2). Love esteemed it “all joy” to be enabled to save and to bless.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.
It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.
Dear Name! the Rock on which we build;
Our Shield and Hiding-place!
Our never failing Treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace!
Jesus, our Saviour, Shepherd, Friend!
Prophet, and Priest, and King!
Our Lord, our Life, our Way, our End!
Accept the praise we bring.
—John Newton

Chapter 52 Our Great High Priest

Thou art a Priest forever (Hebrews 7:17).

Five times over—so that we will not miss the point—it is said of our Lord that He is a Priest forever. This was, in the first instance, the prophetic voice of the Psalmist, referring to the promised Messiah. It is most instructive to see how this great office was fulfilled in Him.

His Introduction to This Office

The high priest of old had to be chosen from among the people (Hebrews 5:1). No angel was fitted to fulfill such an office on behalf of men for no angel has human experience, for instance, of temptation. In order that the Son of God experience all human trials it was necessary for Him to become the Son of man (Hebrews 2:18).

To become our High Priest He had to be chosen of God. “No man taketh this honor unto himself, but He that is called of God” (Hebrews 5:4). No man could grasp at the high priesthood in Jewry, nor have friends to vote him into it, nor could he bribe his way to acquire it. The high priest was chosen of God. Thus in Old Testament times, Aaron and his family were chosen for this office. In the same way our Lord did not grasp for this office of eternal High Priest of the Church but was appointed by God. This office was then confirmed to the Lord Jesus by His resurrection. “Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee,” that is, He could only enter such an office after the total completion of redemption, and His High Priestly office was to be in a heavenly realm and not, as was the case in the Aaronic priesthood, in a mere earthly realm.

His Preparation for This Office

The Lord Jesus was prepared through sufferings and prayer to be the High Priest of His redeemed people.

“For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Psalm 22 describes minutely those infinite sufferings, and in Hebrews 5:7 we read of the offering up of prayers “with strong crying and tears.”

Through the utmost exercise of prayer He was raised from the dead so that He might become the High Priest of His people. His prayer was that God would “save Him from death” (v. 7), that is, not that God would save Him from going into death but deliver Him out of it by resurrection. And “He was heard in that He feared.” Being thus raised, He became “the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (v. 9). By the power of an endless life He would be able to guard—to lead—to care for—His people throughout eternal ages.

The Uniqueness of This Office

The uniqueness of our Lord’s High Priesthood lies in the fact that it was not after the Levitical order but “after the order of Melchisedek” (Hebrews 5:6). Of Melchisedek it was said, “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life” (7:3). This was spoken of Melchisedek, not because he was a Christophany, having the appearance but not the substance of a man, for the high priest was to be taken from “among men”—nor did those words indicate that these things were actually so, but rather that such facts were not recorded in Israel’s records of genealogy to which Melchisedek did not

belong. It was thus that Melchisedek was made, in figure, “like unto the Son of God” (7:3) in Whom they were facts.

The Perfection of His Office

There were imperfections in the priests of Aaron. “If therefore perfection was by the Levitical priesthood ... what further need was there that another Priest should arise after the order of Melchisedek?” (7:11). The Aaronic priests themselves were sinners so could not help the people keep a law which they themselves had broken. Two of Aaron’s sons even offered strange fire and died before the Lord for their impertinence (Numbers 3:4). Aaron himself sinned when he made a golden calf the object of worship (Exodus 32:1-6). Those priests operated under a mere symbolic system which offered but the blood of bulls and goats—sacrifices which come from a fallen creation and could never take away sins. Thus the law of Moses could not bestow eternal life on any man.

Our Lord was not of that order. This even David, in Psalm 110, recognized and spoke of a different priesthood. Our Lord had no sin of His own to atone for. He made no sacrifice for Himself as did the Levitical priests. We who believe in the Lord Jesus are not now under the law of Moses but under law to Christ. His offering on our behalf is not that of the blood of animals but of His own precious blood which cleanses from all sin (7:11-19).

The Perpetuity of This Office

Our Lord’s High Priesthood is eternal. “The Lord swore and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the

order of Melchisedek." When the Scripture says, "The Lord swear," it means He will never change His mind. There is to be no cessation of our Lord's office as High Priest. There can never be another to take His place. This oath of God indicates the valuableness and unchanging character of our Lord's priesthood. There is no other. We need no other.

Then again, the sons of God become priests. It was God's original thought that all of Israel be a kingdom of priests. But Israel failed. Now in Christ all the redeemed are made a kingdom of priests. As such we are to reign with Him and function with Him as priests through the eternal ages which are to come.

Where high the heavenly temple stands,
The house of God not made with hands,
A great High Priest our nature wears,
The Guardian of mankind appears.
He who for men their Surety stood
And poured on earth His precious blood,
Pursues in heaven His mighty plan,
The Saviour and the Friend of man.
In every pang that rends the heart
The Man of Sorrows has a part;
He sympathizes with our grief,
And to the sufferer sends relief.
With boldness, therefore, at the throne
Let us make all our sorrows known;

And ask the aid of heavenly power
To help us in the evil hour.

—Scottish Paraphrases

Chapter 53 Our Advocate

We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1).

Being an Advocate for believers is another aspect of our Lord's High Priestly ministry in heaven.

The Meaning of Advocate

The Greek word is Paraclete. It means one who comes alongside to plead on another's behalf. The Holy Spirit is the Advocate of the Lord Jesus. He presents the Lord's claims to us. He interprets the excellencies of the Lord Jesus to our hearts. He is in charge of all matters concerning the Lord's church. And just as the Holy Spirit is the Advocate of Christ to us, so the Lord Jesus is our Advocate in heaven before the Father. He is the Pleader on our behalf for God's favor—the Supporter of our case—the Advocate of our defence—our Friend at all times. This ministry is part of His function as our High Priest. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). Since our Lord lives by the power of an endless life, at no point of time throughout the ages of eternity can His ministry for us fail. His is an eternal advocacy. The devil always has accusations against us while here on earth. He no doubt speaks the truth about us when He accuses us before God, but speaks lies to us when he speaks about God. But when we trust in the Lord Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, He pleads, not our innocence or righteousness which we do not possess, but His sacrifice on our behalf. Having for our benefit met all the demands of law, the law can no longer point an accusing finger, and His having

absorbed in His own body all the punishment due to us, Satan also is silenced and rebuked, having no ground of accusation.

The Ministry Involved As Advocate

He appears before God on our behalf in the text, that is, not viewing us as sinners but as believers. His appearance is “before the Father” on behalf of His own dear children. It is a family affair. Our fellowship is with the Father (1 John 1:3). We have access to Him. We live in His holy presence without fear.

John reminds us it is possible for the children of God to sin—as it is in any human family. When we grieve our Father in heaven we are made very much aware of it. As in a human family, children often bring disgrace and dishonor to their father’s house and his good name. The Holy Spirit makes us very conscious of such things done to God. What if we do sin? Does the Father now disregard us and disown us? No! Never! “We have an Advocate with the Father.” He who was once the propitiation for our sins and a divine Substitute to bear them all away, is now our Advocate with the Father. The believer comes to his Father as an erring child. He does not have to go back and have another new birth and another repentance for sins committed in order to become a child of God again. He may have come a long way on his heavenward way when he stumbles, but the ground covered is not lost. “If any man sin” has the thought of an accident. It is not that a believer lives in willful and continuous sin. He has been caught off guard, but now through the Lord’s intercession on the ground of His sacrifice, sin is cleansed and the believer restored to fellowship with the Father. Our Lord is

presented here, not as the Saviour of sinners but as an Advocate of the Father's own dear children.

The Method of His Plea As Advocate

He presents Himself on our behalf, not with His divine titles such as the everlasting Son but with those names associated with His human nature—"Jesus," the name that is precious to sinners—and "Christ," the Sent or Anointed One as the Father's Prophet, Priest, and King—"the righteous," the only one who can stand before the Father with a perfect, sinless life lived here on earth. No earthly priest can do that because he himself is faulty. The Lord did not save us by His righteous life but by His substitutionary sacrifice on our behalf. But because of His righteous life He is qualified to be an Advocate. We would not want an advocate who had committed the same sins as ourselves. The Lord does not overlook any one sin, but His experience in every human circumstance of testing, in which He felt the force and malignity of evil, has made Him a very sympathetic Advocate. The presentation of His blood is not a continuous sacrifice, that is, He is not crucified again and again, but there is an eternal efficacy in His sacrifice and thus it avails forever. His is an eternal and ever-prevailing advocacy and we may well thank God for that!

On heavenly heights an Angel stands,
He takes our prayer in heavenly hands,
And with celestial incense rare
He mingles every heartfelt prayer
Of those who trust His precious blood

To reconcile their souls to God.
Then from that glorious heavenly place
Descend the lightnings of His grace;
To heal, to strengthen, and provide
For those who trust in Him who died,
“Who died,” I say? Yea, He who rose
Triumphant, Conqueror of His foes.
Who is that priestly Angel bright
Who thus dispels the darkest night?
’Tis He who sets the captive free,
Jesus, who died on Calvary’s tree;
Who is, Who was, and is to come—
The glory of His Father’s home.
—Author Unknown

Chapter 54 The Second Advent

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints (Jude 14).

Kepler, the great astronomer, resolved to discover the laws of planetary motion. Toiling for eight years and after twenty experiments, he finally discovered that the stellar worlds moved not in a circle but in an elliptical arch round two foci. Then he flung up his hands and cried, "O mighty God, I am thinking Thy thoughts after Thee." In much the same way God's plan in human history revolves round the two advents of the Son of God to this earth. The rapture of the Church is something different and which takes place before the Lord's return to earth. In the rapture the Lord only comes into midair. He comes to snatch away His elect Bride, the Church, which is a message of sweet comfort for His believing people. It comes before the day of His wrath in His second advent.

Three Remarkable Prophecies of the Second Advent

1. That of Enoch in Jude 14 through 17. Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam yet knew of the Lord's second advent to earth. He spoke of His coming with ten thousands of His saints which He did not do in His first coming and also that His coming would be to execute judgment upon the ungodly.

2. That of Job in 19:25-27. Job no doubt lived before Abraham and his book is generally regarded as the first written book of Holy Scripture. He speaks of the Lord as

His Kinsman-Redeemer. He declares he shall see Him “stand at the latter day upon the earth” and that he himself, in his flesh, “shall see God.”

3. That of Zechariah in 14:4. Zechariah says that “His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives”—a specific point on the earth. It is the place from which He ascended (Acts 1:11). As He went, so shall He come.

Three Celestial Signs of the Second Advent

1. Heavenly bodies are to be in distress. “The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth” (Revelation 6:12, 13). This is part of the sixth seal judgment during the tribulation period. Joel also mentions this (2:10, 30), “The heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining ... And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.”

2. A special sign in heaven. “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven” (Matthew 24:30). Augustine, Jerome, Erastus, and Luther believed it would be the sign of the cross. The Scripture does not say so, but apparently there is to be a special sign.

3. The casting into the earth of demonic presences. “In that day ... the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high” (Isaiah 24:21). “That old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:9).

Three Terrestrial Signs

1. The appearance of two beasts (Revelation 13). The first is “out of the sea,” which means from among the Gentile nations—the head of the revived Roman empire: the second, “out of the earth,” which points to Israel—and this one will be the false prophet. It is said “having two horns like a lamb”—a counterfeit of Christ—but “he spake as a dragon.”

2. The great tribulation (Luke 21:25)—the “distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.” “Then shall be great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21). This is to bring to an end Gentile rule by God’s destroying judgments and it will also be for the chastisement of Israel to bring them to the recognition of Christ as their Messiah and thus to their final salvation.

3. The destruction of the apostate church. “Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters ... And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire” (Revelation 17:1, 16).

Three Spiritual Portents

1. The “Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world” (Matthew 24:14). This is it in Revelation 7 which is the fruit of the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel, who were sealed with the mark of God so that AntiChrist could not destroy them. The resultant ingathering was “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.”

2. The filling up of the cup of iniquity. In the Old Testament days, judgment was suspended because “the iniquity of the Amorites [was] not yet full” (Genesis 15:16). In the last days that cup will be full to overflowing so that “iniquity shall abound” and anarchy and moral turpitude prevail.

3. A spiritual remnant shall enter the millennial kingdom. “I will bring the third part (Israel) through the fire, and ... I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God” (Zechariah 13:9). Israel will be “the head and not the tail.” The administrators of our Lord’s earthly kingdom shall be Israel and they shall be the instructors of all who are to enter into His kingdom (Isaiah 2:3).

Three Ends to Be Accomplished

1. The bringing to an end of Gentile world dominion. “Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them” (Daniel 2:35).

2. The salvation of Israel. “All Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Romans 11:26).

3. The establishment of the millennial kingdom. “There were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15).

Thy kingdom come, O God,

Thy rule, O Christ, begin!
Break with Thine iron rod
The tyrannies of sin.
When comes the promised time
That war should be no more—
Oppression, lust, and crime
Shall flee Thy face before?
We pray Thee, Lord, arise,
And come in Thy great might;
Revive our longing eyes,
Which languish for Thy sight.
O'er heathen lands afar
Thick darkness broodeth yet:
Arise, O Morning Star.
Arise, and never set.
—Lewis Hensley

Chapter 55 Five Things The Lord Became

I am He that liveth, and was dead (Revelation 1:18).

The good tidings of great joy which constitute the Gospel are summed up in five things which our Lord became in order to redeem us.

He Became Flesh

“The Word was made (or became) flesh” (John 1:14). “The Word” is our Lord’s eternal name. As such He is the Revealer of God—the Exponent of the Godhead. He is so now, He was so in the days of His flesh. He has been so from all eternity. John 1:1 tells of His eternal existence and 1:14 that He became flesh. This is the mystery of godliness. There is no argument about it. It is “without controversy” (1 Timothy 3:16). The Word is the divine or upper portion of the mystery, His becoming flesh the lower portion. By His doing so the incomprehensible became comprehensible; the inaccessible became accessible; the far off became near. He who was God entered or took up our humanity and entered the world as a little Child, suckled at a woman’s breast, dandled upon a woman’s knee. Without ceasing to be God, and without the surrender of any divine attribute, He became man—his holiness not making Him less human; His flesh not making Him less holy.

He Became Poor

“Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor” (2 Corinthians 8:9). This I believe to be the first meaning of Ephesians 4:9—He “descended ... into the

lower parts of the earth," that is, into the poorest existence possible to human kind. He went through every existence of human circumstance for "in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Hebrews 2:17), and thus was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (4:15). He was rich—rich in glory—rich in the love of the Father—rich in possessions, but for us men and our salvation He became poor—stooping in self-abasement to take upon Him our human nature—being born in a cattle stall—working in a carpenter's shop—living much of His life in a ghetto called Nazareth—spending His youth in a home in which the family did not believe on Him—and in His Messianic ministry knowing betrayal and denial by His own—and then exiting by death. How poor!

He Became Obedient

"He ... became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). The Lord's way was not to make a show in the flesh. He invented no way of making Himself ridiculous, as some do. He dressed in no special garb by which to attract attention to Himself. He simply did what the Father wanted Him to do. He came into this world in the office of a Divine Servant, not to do His own will but the will of His Father in heaven. There is no humility like obedience. "To obey is better than sacrifice," said Samuel. "Lo, I come," said our Lord, ... "to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). This was an altogether new experience for Him. As God, there was none higher to obey. In becoming a Servant He became subject to the Father as God, and so "learned obedience by the things which He suffered."

He Became Sin

“He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21). It almost seems that our blessed Lord was turned into a body of sin as He assumed the role of Sin-Bearer. All our sins were laid upon Him by an act of transference. He was the Scapegoat of the Old Testament with all the sins of His people placed upon Him that He might carry them away out of sight for ever (Leviticus 16:8-10). Enlightened souls could say even in that day, “My burden leaves me. The scapegoat takes it away and I am relieved.” Sins were borne by the scapegoat beyond the camp—beyond all sight—beyond the track of man—to the far borders of a wild desert. There is a depth in these words which we cannot fathom. It is probably the profoundest word in Scripture, but our Lord became that in order that we might become “the righteousness of God in Him.”

He Became Dead

“I am He that liveth, and was (became) dead” (Revelation 1:18). All those things which our Lord became were entirely voluntary and of His own will. You and I have to die. Death has a claim upon us. We have no choice. But death had no claim on the Son of God. He died, I believe, not the first death first, but the second death first, which is the ultimate of death—banishment from the presence of God. That was the meaning of the central cry from the cross, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). He became dead for us, that is, He entered into death that He might destroy the power of it and “deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:15).

The Lord was never a dying man. Death had no claim upon Him. It could not put forth a clammy hand on His blessed brow. He laid down His life. He voluntarily surrendered to death that He might blast to bits the power of it and set us free.

I know that my Redeemer lives:

What comfort this sweet sentence gives!

He lives, He lives, Who once was dead;

He lives my everlasting Head.

He lives to bless me with His love,

And still He pleads for me above;

He lives to raise me from the grave,

And me eternally to save.

He lives my mansion to prepare;

And He will bring me safely there;

He lives, all glory to His Name!

Jesus, unchangeably the same!

—Samuel Medley

Chapter 56 The Lamb Enthroned In Glory

I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne...stood a Lamb” (Revelation 5:6).

In the book of the prophet Isaiah, we have seen our Lord in His humiliation—in the agony of His sufferings. Here we see Him on the throne of glory. It is the same Lamb. His humiliation is now past—His sufferings forever over. His exaltation is not something of the future. He is exalted now and was so immediately upon His ascension into heaven after His glorious resurrection. This chapter is a scene of unsurpassing magnificence. For an exhibition of majesty and authority there is nothing to equal it in the whole of scriptural or secular writing.

The Enthronement of the Lamb

John, as representative of the church, has been caught up into heaven. “A door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard ... said, Come up hither” (Revelation 4:1). Then followed a vision of Him who sat on the throne and who held in His right hand a book... “sealed with seven seals”—no doubt the title deeds to the earth (5:1). A strong angel then issues a challenge for someone to come forward and open the book. John seems to look over the whole of human history—forms of human government—mighty monarchs—great warriors—intelligent statesmen—but there was none who could open the sealed book. While weeping much over man’s inability to reclaim the earth for the government of God by opening the seals, John was told there was One who could do this, “The Lion of the tribe

of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book.” And when John turned to see the Lion, lo, he saw “a Lamb as it had been slain.” It means that, while as a roaring lion the Lord will finally fall upon His enemies, yet it was as a Lamb of sacrifice that He had overcome them and was now mounted to the throne of heaven. He had flung off the great assault by the whole hierarchy of hell even “while crucified in weakness” and overcome them (Colossians 2:15). This is not something future. The devil is already a defeated foe and was thoroughly vanquished by Christ while crucified on the cross as the Lamb of God. There are prospects in this book which are future. The judgments to be unleashed by the opening of the seals spell out the Tribulation period of seven years, but the enthronement of the Lamb is already present.

The Characteristics of the Lamb

First, as to His Person He has these four titles.

1. The Lion of Judah. His lineage after the flesh sprang from the royal tribe of Judah. He was the Son of David after the flesh. As David conquered Goliath, so our Lord was to conquer the devil in the battleground of the cross.
2. The Root of David. He is David’s Lord after the spirit—the Shepherd King—the great Shepherd of the sheep to lead His people by green pastures and still waters.
3. The Lamb slain. He ascended the throne after His great sacrifice was finished and fully accomplished. He was the Lamb slain to purchase by His own blood our redemption. He is set forth as a Lamb to show the innocence and purity of His nature—His harmless and inoffensive life—His meek and humble deportment—His

patience in suffering and death—His usefulness for food and clothing for His people.

4. The worthy One. He alone is worthy of all praise.

Here He is spoken of, a. As having seven horns. Seven is the symbol of completion; horns the symbol of strength, power, and authority in heaven and in earth.

b. As having seven eyes. Eyes speak of perception of vision. He can penetrate any disguise or mask. He knows what is in every man.

c. As having seven spirits. This speaks of His omniscience and His omnipresence. He is present with all people in all the earth, being as livingly present to the saints in China or New Zealand as to those in these western countries.

The Praise of the Lamb

1. The four and twenty elders. These represent the total church. With them are the four living creatures, which represent the total creation. These are all redeemed and sing the song of the redeemed. Revelation 5:9—“Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” He has made His redeemed people “kings and priests” unto God, and all such are to reign with Him over the earth in those days when He is to be crowned King over all the earth (5:10).

2. The angels round about the throne. There are billions of them. These all say with a loud voice—“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing” (5:11, 12). This is a sevenfold ascription of praise or a complete ascription. Notice what miseries

are inflicted upon millions of mankind when sinful men grasp these things! Sinful men cannot handle these things without inflicting multiplied sorrows to the sons of men. Only the Lord is worthy to receive them, because He is the only one who can handle them.

3. 3. The whole creation. "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (5:13). This is complete, universal praise on behalf of all things created.

Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark, how the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing
Of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King,
Through all eternity.
Crown Him the Lord of love;
Behold His hands and side,
Those wounds yet visible above
In beauty glorified:
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye

On mysteries so bright.
Crown Him the Lord of years,
The Potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres
Ineffably sublime!
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
For Thou hast died for me;
Thy praise shall never, never fail
Throughout eternity.
—Matthew Bridges And
Godfrey Thring

Chapter 57 The Wrath Of The Lamb

The great day of His wrath is come (Revelation 6:17).

There is no wrath like the wrath of the Lamb. Before that wrath breaks forth upon the world we must remember how long-suffering God has been. The works of God in nature are largely silent works. The sun rises without noise; so do the stars move in their courses. The grass grows and the harvests of the earth come to ripeness in perfect stillness. So it is in the moral world. God has given to man the power of choice and he has left man, in a certain sense, with his choices. Yet when things have gone to extreme forms of wickedness God has intervened and made His voice to be heard. There are times when He has shown the indignation of His anger and the glory of His majesty as Supreme Ruler in His own created universe.

The Day of His Humiliation

“The Word was made flesh” we read in John 1:14. That was a tremendous humiliation for the eternal Son of God. But it was necessary for our redemption. If He were solely God, then His mission to men must be death, not life. Humanity must perish at His sight. If He stooped only to angelic order, then how could He mix with men on earth? How could we hang upon His lips? But the Lord became a true man. He dwelt on earth as one of our family. He hid His glories in our tent of clay. He trod life’s walk—our very brother.

Moreover, He came into our human life in its poorest condition—born in a cattle shed and laid in a manger—entered as a dependent to suck at a woman’s breast and

be dandled on a woman's knee—brought up in poverty and made to toil in a home where the family of Joseph and Mary did not believe on Him. He was rejected—denied—betrayed—ridiculed—reviled—spat upon—and crucified on a cross which was the lowest, meanest, and most despised of all forms of death. It was “the shame of the cross.” But God's hand was upon all the events of His life.

All this constituted His day of humiliation. It tells that He has done so much that no more could be done. Here is love—high above height—broad beyond breadth—deep below deep—immeasurable—unspeakable—inconceivable. It is the God-Man's Godlike love. It is the mystery which Abel sealed with blood—which Abraham gladly saw—of which David and the prophets sang—which the Lord Himself verified—and the apostles boldly preached. He only is the blessed man who sees Jesus as the God-Man living as a Kinsman to redeem.

But what if He is refused—rejected—cast out? Crowds upon crowds do that! The Saviour's charms charm not. His messages are scattered to the winds. Then God's love must turn at last to anger and that anger drive the wicked into hell's deepest woe.

The Day of His Wrath

Let us read and ponder these solemn words: “Why do the heathen rage? ... Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure” (Psalm 2:1, 5). “Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth ... The Lord also thundered in the heavens ... Yea, He sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and He shot out lightnings, and discomfited

them" (Psalm 18:7, 13, 14). "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies" ... "For the Lord shall rise up ... that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act" (Isaiah 28:17, 21). "Behold, the name of the Lord com-eth from far, burning with His anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue as a devouring fire" (Isaiah 30:27). "The day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand: a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness ... all faces shall gather blackness ... for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" (Joel 2:1, 2, 6, 11). "The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light: as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him" (Amos 5:18, 19). "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations" (Haggai 2:6, 7). "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi 4:1). "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ... the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:25, 26). "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven" (Hebrews 12:26). "And I beheld ... and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth ... for the great

day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:12, 13, 17). "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God" (Revelation 15:1). "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great" (Revelation 16:18).

"The wrath of the Lamb." There is surely no wrath like His wrath! It is the indignation of His anger when the wickedness of men has come to a full cup or as fruit to full ripeness. Here is the agitation of all nature—God's wrath against His enemies, for all the wicked are to be punished. The Lord has to come forth as the Supreme Ruler of all nature, and He will speak His indignation in the most dreadful physical phenomena. The storm of His anger will rage in all its fury. His enemies will lick the dust and be turned into hell. All that which opposes the Lord and His righteous reign will end their days in disappointment, ruin and eternal shame. They resemble their father the devil in their character, therefore they must resemble him in their destiny. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. No wonder the Psalmist pleads thus with men—"Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12).

Lo, He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train.

Hallelujah!

Jesus comes, and comes to reign.

Every eye shall now behold Him,

Robed in glorious majesty:

Those who set at nought and sold Him,

Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,

Deeply wailing,

Shall the true Messiah see.

Lo, the tokens of His passion

Still His glorious body bears;

Cause of endless exultation

To His ransomed worshippers:

Hallelujah!

Now the day of Christ appears.

Yea, Amen! let all adore Thee,

High on Thine eternal throne.

Saviour, take Thy power and glory,

Claim the kingdom for Thine own:

Oh, come quickly!

Hallelujah! come, Lord, come!

—Charles Wesley

Chapter 58 Overcoming By The Blood

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony (Revelation 12:11).

The first testimony of the Lord Jesus is that He would bruise the serpent's head—that is, the head of Satan. He was the promised Redeemer and the bruising of Satan was to be His work. The meaning of Satan's head is his government, dominion and sovereignty. The cross is introduced in the same promise (Genesis 3:15) in the words—"thou (the serpent) shall bruise His heel"—that is, the lower portion of His person, His body, which Satan would do through wicked men in crucifying Him on the cross.

The Application of the Blood

The shedding of our Lord's precious blood is the chief and central part of our Lord's redeeming work. That blood-shedding is first directed against "that old serpent, Satan, the devil." He is the cause and root of all human ruin. He is spoken of as "the prince of this world," and as having "the power of death" or the power to hold human life in death. Through the work of the cross the Lord Jesus was to deal with Satan in this capacity and loosen his grip on human life.

The shedding of His blood is also directed against sin. It introduces Jesus bleeding that souls may live through His death. It is the full symbol of redemption's price. It is the clear emblem of the one atoning Lamb. The blood of the Lord Jesus meets sin in all its aspects, and does so to destroy its defiling power and ultimately cleanse it from the whole universe.

The blood is also directed against what Scripture calls the flesh—what sin has made man. Because of sin man now belongs to a fallen race and has become darkened in his mind, polluted in his affections, and disagreeable to God in his will. “He also is flesh,” (Genesis 6:3), or “become flesh.” The blood of the Saviour has not only to cleanse the universe of sin’s pollution but also to remove all that is of the flesh, so as to make way for a new humanity after the pattern and likeness of the Lord Jesus.

The blood of Jesus is also directed against the consequences of sin. That is death. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). That is death in all its extent—covering spirit, soul, and body. The blood of Christ is shed to release us from that enthrallment.

The Issue of the Application

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.” Death is the ultimate of sin—death which is the grip or hold of Satan upon our souls. This is the main point of our Lord’s thrust. It is because He overcame the central and main issue of death—breaking the power of it—nullifying the effects of it—loosing Satan’s grip upon it—that He has gained for us who believe an overcoming life over Satan.

All who overcome Satan do so because of the precious blood of Jesus. But believers who take up the blood of Jesus to overcome Satan must be prepared to die at the hands of the one who has been overcome and who is “a

murderer from the beginning.” “They loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:11). Thus it was with Abel the first martyr. This is the key to all the murderous attempts upon the saints in every age. But the final issue is victory. There is no contradiction in the words, “they loved not their lives unto the death.” Abel was killed. But Abel lives. Paul was executed. But Paul is “present with the Lord.” All the saints live in the power of our Lord’s resurrection life. The devil can only touch our material body but not our inner life. By His cross and by His blood, the Lord Jesus conquered Satan and He Himself lives by the power of an endless life. So do believers—in Him.

The great company which no man can number and who have overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb are our Lord’s spiritual progeny—the fruit of His travail—the prize of His great work. They triumph in His triumph. They overcome because of His energy and power and sacrifice. They bear His image, having been washed from all their sins. This is an appropriate reward indeed for our Lord. He gave His soul as a sacrifice for His own and receives the whole multitude of believers as His hire. By giving His own Self as a ransom price, He has purchased an innumerable company. And all these overcome their great adversary and march in victory to Immanuel’s Land.

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Though my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.
Be Thou my battle-shield, sword for the fight;

Be Thou my dignity, Thou my delight,
Thou my soul's shelter, Thou my high tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.
High King of heaven, after victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

—Ancient Irish

Tr. By Mary E. Byrne And Eleanor H. Hull

Chapter 59 The Lamb In The Eternal City

The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof (Revelation 21:23).

God's plan for a perfect society is to be fully realized. This society is called "The new Jerusalem," or "The holy Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:2, 10). It is seen by John as "coming down from God out of heaven," which means that all residents are children of God and have a heavenly citizenship.

The City of God

Since the city is perfect in holiness there can enter in nothing "that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Revelation 21:27). It is a place of supreme happiness, having no more curse, or death, or sorrow, or crying, or pain. In it, John was to see a flood of glory upon glory. Sin is without. Temptations have no place. Tears no more flow. Sighs are no longer heaved. Satan and his hosts are locked up in outer darkness. The world has passed away. There is no longer any fear of grieving God or bringing reproach to the Lord's all-glorious name. Righteousness are the streets and highways. Eternal safety forms the battlements. Eternal praises sound from all the inmates. Eternal glory sparkles from every brow. Eternal pleasures breathe around. Each saint drinks a cup—so full, that it can hold no more—so pure, that it cannot be purer—so deep, that everlasting ages cannot exhaust it.

Such is the eternal city. All former things have passed away and all things have been made new. There will be no remembrance of anything of our sad history on earth, and all earthly relationships will have been dissolved. The chiefest joy of the city will be that God dwells in the midst of it—Jesus ever near—and seen without intervening cloud. Here below, oftentimes the Lord is hidden from our eyes because sin interposes, or distrust brings mist, or other scenes attract, or indolence deadens the soul. But in the city of God there shall be eternal vision and everlasting adoration, and our God will be intensely loved and adored.

The Centrality of the Lamb

I recall seeing the Taj Mahal in India by moonlight—the only building which ever brought tears to my eyes—so beautiful was it. It seemed a replica of the eternal city. What magnificence! What a spectacle! Oh, that the Spirit of God would clear our sight that we might have a delightful gaze at the new, holy Jerusalem. Oh, that the city of God would attract all pilgrims to where it can be shown us by the Spirit of God. There are seven things said about the city in the two chapters of Revelation 21 and 22.

In 21:9, it is spoken of as the bridal city—the residence of the Lamb's wife. In 21:14, it mentions the apostles of the Lamb, whose names are upon the foundation stones of the city. In 21:22, we are told that there is no temple in it, but the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. In 21:23, we see the Lamb as the light or lampstand through which the glory of God shines to illuminate the city. In 21:27, we read of the Lamb's book of life. In 22:1, the throne of God and the Lamb govern

it. And in 22:3, the throne of God and the Lamb excludes every curse and all its happy residents serve Him.

In this city there is no need of any created light—"no need of the sun." There is no need of transmitted light—"of the moon to shine in it." There is also no need of any manufactured light—"they need no candle." The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's Land. He is central, not only to the prophecies of the past and to all the course of human history but to all there is in the eternal future of the saints.

The Closing Appeal of the Lamb

"Behold, I come quickly" (Revelation 22:7). The Lord Jesus invites all to this holy city—the new Jerusalem. He describes Himself as the Alpha and Omega—the Beginning and the End—the First and the Last—the Root and Offspring of David—the Bright and Morning Star. Surely we should seek to release our minds from the grovellings of earthly things and seek elevation for our heart's affections in this chart of the coming of the Lord. Before His coming, He issues one last plea and appeal for all to come. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come ... And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). The Lord Jesus meets all our needs. Leaning on His arm, we may pass safely over Jordan's waves. Safe by His side, we shall gain all of heaven's joy. Pure in His righteousness, we shall stand welcome before God into His eternal city. It is the recompense of Jesu's blood. We estimate homes by their price. The price of this eternal home for the saints is infinite. It must be a place and a treasure beyond all thought. May the Lord give us all an

abundant entrance, and if we cling to Jesus we will have it.

O Jesus, King most wonderful,
Thou Conqueror renowned;
Thou sweetness most ineffable,
In whom all joys are found.
When once Thou visitest the heart,
Then truth begins to shine;
Then earthly vanities depart,
Then kindles love divine.
Thee may our tongues forever bless;
Thee may we love alone:
And ever in our lives express
The image of Thine own.
Grant us, while here on earth we stay,
Thy love to feel and know;
And when from hence we pass away,
To us Thy glory show.

—Latin Of 11th Century

Tr. By Edward Caswall