

God's Way — of Peace; of Rest, Power & Consecration; of Holiness.

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God's Way of Peace

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Have you peace with God?

This, beloved reader, is the question of all questions, needing to be considered by all, without distinction, whether old or young, rich or poor; and hence it is that we desire to press it upon you with affectionate earnestness, beseeching you to give yourself no rest until you can answer it truly and clearly in the sight of God. Everything depends upon it in the prospect of death and eternity. If you can say, Thank God, I have peace with Him, then you may be happy now, you can contemplate death without alarm, should you be called upon to die before the Lord's return, and you are able to rejoice in the prospect before you beyond the grave, knowing that, absent from the body, you will be present with the Lord.

If, on the other hand, you are compelled to confess, that you have not peace with God, you are even now under His wrath (John 3: 36), and when death comes, should you remain as you are, it will introduce you to an eternity of misery and woe under the just judgment of a holy God.

But what is peace with God? you may inquire.

It will be enough at present to say, that it springs from the knowledge that all our sins have been put away by the substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that God has shown, by raising Him from the dead, that He is eternally satisfied with the finished work of Christ on the cross, and that He now has not only pardoned, but has also justified, counted righteous, every one who believes the testimony which He has given to His beloved Son. Every one who has peace with God knows that his sins are gone for ever, that he is standing in God's eternal favour, and that the glory of God awaits him in the future. Happy is the soul that lives in the enjoyment of this blessed knowledge!

How then may this knowledge be obtained?

This is the question, dear reader, to which we now invite your attention. But, first of all, it will be necessary to explain why it is that all do not possess it. God made man upright; and Adam, when in the garden of Eden, before he listened to the voice of the tempter, enjoyed the visits and the presence of God. The moment he sinned, he was afraid, and sought to hide himself among the trees of the garden. (Gen. 3.) Up till that time he was innocent, now he was a sinner; and the scripture says, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." There could therefore, be no peace between a holy God and sinners in their sins; for the will of the sinner is opposed to the will of God. Hence we read that the carnal mind (the mind of the flesh) is enmity against God (Rom. 8); and again of those who were alienated, and enemies in mind by wicked works. (Col. 1: 21.) This is the reason why all have not peace with God; because, in a word, they are sinners; and, it may be added, until this is acknowledged, it is impossible to discover God's way of peace.

Do you then, my reader, take the place of being a sinner before God?

"All men are sinners." Very true; but even to confess that you are a sinner before God, even though the confession springs really from the heart, is not enough; for while the words were on your lips, you might cherish the hope of reformation, of so changing the character of your life as to commend yourself to God, to merit His approval. Hence I must ask you another question.

Do you know that you are a lost sinner? By this I mean, are you aware that you are in a hopeless condition, that, if you are left to yourself, there is not only no possibility of recovery, but also that you must certainly perish for ever?

Perhaps you will explain more fully what you mean by being a lost sinner?

Willingly. When Adam was placed in the garden of Eden, he was set under responsibility; that is, his continuance in the blessings by which he was surrounded was made dependent upon his obedience to the command he had received not to touch the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2: 16, 17.) He transgressed, and so forfeited everything, and was, in consequence, driven out of the garden. (Gen. 3.) After this, God still went on proving man, to see if He could find any response to His claims. Noah failed, even as Adam had done (Gen. 9: 20, 21); Israel broke the covenant of the law; the priesthood fell from their estate; under the kingdom, God's people renounced His authority and became idolaters; and, last of all, on the presentation of Christ to His ancient people, they rejected and crucified Him who was God's beloved Son. This

was the end of God's trial of man, for at the cross judgment was passed on the whole world, for the death of Christ was the demonstration of man's hopeless enmity against God. Up to the cross, man was under probation; but from that time man is declared to be lost.

When, therefore, we say that you are a lost sinner we mean that you are not now under probation, that God is not now waiting upon you to see whether you will serve Him or not; for He has settled that question once and for ever in the cross of Christ. On this account, His dealings with man from that time have assumed a new character. Instead of expecting anything from man, He declares that man is lost and undone before Him, that by works of law no flesh shall be justified in His sight; and thereon He brings His own righteousness to the sinner, and proclaims, that He justifies "freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood . . . to declare his righteousness; that he might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3: 20-26.) In other words, when God had shown, by His long patience in His ways with man, that man could produce no fruit for Him, could bring nothing to God, He stepped in, gave His only-begotten Son to die on the cross that He might lay a righteous foundation for the salvation of sinners through faith in Christ. Salvation, therefore, is now through faith, and not by works of any kind; for God has shown, that the sinner is not only incapable of doing anything, but also that he is already lost and under condemnation on account of his sins.

Does my reader comprehend? And is he prepared to admit concerning himself that he is nothing but a poor, guilty, lost sinner?

It may still further help, for the point is of paramount importance, if we ask the reader to test himself by four words used by the apostle Paul of the past condition of those who had become believers; words therefore which describe the condition of all unconverted souls. Turn, then, to Romans 5: 6, there he says, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Here are two words, "without strength," and "ungodly." We may take the latter first, and we ask you, reader, if you accept the term "ungodly" as true of you? Do you say, I am not so bad as that? Let us then inquire into the meaning of the word. Because the word has come to be applied to outward conduct, its real significance has been lost. As used in the scriptures it applies to the state of heart as well as to actions, and it means "godless," that is, to be without God — to feel and to act apart from God, without reference to Him or to His will. Suppose, now, I follow you into your house, and I see you taking your seat at the table without thanking God for His mercies; or if I accompany you to your chamber, and see you lay yourself down to rest at night without commending yourself to God, or seeking His protecting care, I should at once say, That is an ungodly man: he does not acknowledge God, he is truly godless.

Will you bow to the truth of this indictment?

The next word is "without strength," that is, helpless. Do you own not only that you are ungodly, but also that you are powerless to extricate yourself from your evil condition? It is precisely at this point that many stumble, because it reduces them to impotence before God; but the reader will at once see, if he consider for a moment, that he could not say he was a lost sinner as long as he thought he had any strength in himself. To see, therefore, that he is absolutely

strengthless as well as ungodly is of the last importance; for not till then will he begin to look outside of himself for the means of salvation.

Passing down to verse 8, we find the term "sinners," but as we have already considered this, we may at once take the fourth which is in verse 10. If, says the apostle, when we were "enemies," &c. Thus every unsaved soul is an enemy to God. Is this too strong a word? Nay, the apostle says in another Place, as we have already seen, that the carnal mind, the mind of the flesh — that is, the mind of the natural man, man as born into this world — is enmity against God. (Rom. 8: 7.) It is a terrible thing, but it is nevertheless true, that the sinner's mind, his will, is always opposed to God. This was proved when our Lord was down here, and He thus said of those amongst whom He had moved, "They have both seen and hated both Me and my Father;" and again, "They hated me without a cause." (John 15: 18-25.) And this hatred found its full expression at the cross when they nailed Him, their Messiah, who was also the Son of God, to the cross. (Acts 2: 23.)

Let me, then, beseech my reader to test himself by these divine descriptions. That they are true is certain, for they have been written with an unerring pen; but the question is, are they accepted as true? No real progress can be made until they are; for the character of grace as revealed in the gospel can never be apprehended until the truth of man's condition before God is first perceived.

Are there, then, no differences between man and man? Must we subscribe to these statements as affecting all alike, the upright and moral equally with the felon and the criminal?

The scriptures have anticipated the question. It is written explicitly: "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Again, "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3: 19, 22, 23.) It is quite true that some go farther in sin outwardly than others; but the ground of judgment, as to man's condition before God, is his state of heart, his will, his feelings, his thoughts as well as his deeds.

Once more let me ask the reader if he accepts the testimony of God as to himself? The moment this is done, the way of peace can be announced. For why does God take such pains to set forth the state of the sinner? It is only that He might convince him that he is hopelessly guilty and undone, so that He might then attract his gaze to Himself, and to the provision which He in His grace has made for his salvation. For if, on the one hand, man is convicted of being a poor, lost sinner, God is proclaimed, on the other, as a mighty Saviour through the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is to this second part of our subject that we now invite the reader's attention.

First of all, we will refer to two scriptures, in order to show the simplicity of GOD'S WAY OF PEACE. In Colossians 1: 20 we read, "Having made peace through the blood of his cross," &c. This, it should be carefully noted, is not peace with man, or even with believers; but it is an expression signifying that the blood of Christ has met all the claims of God upon man on account of his sin, inasmuch as in His death Christ took upon Himself all our responsibility, and settled every question before God concerning our sin and sins, concerning what we were and what we had done, and so settled it that God was infinitely glorified by the work which was accomplished

on the cross; so that the blood of Christ becomes the righteous foundation on which God is now free to go forth and bring back poor, guilty sinners to Himself. The peace spoken of is thus Godward; it is the peace of God's throne, and was set forth in type by the blood that was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, on the great day of atonement. (Lev. 16.) Until the blood of Christ was offered in propitiation, the throne of God was against the sinner; now, on account of what that blood has been for God, His throne is favourable to every one that believes in Jesus; and, moreover, He assumes an attitude of grace to all, beseeching sinners, through the gospel, to be reconciled to Him. The blood of Christ enables God to receive, and righteously to receive, the vilest and the worst of sinners who come to Him in the name of Christ. The peace which has been made by the blood of Christ is, in other words, God's own foundation for the gospel; that is, the ground on which, all His righteous claims having been met, His whole nature glorified, He can gratify His own heart by sending forth the message of His grace: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3: 16.)

If now we take the next scripture, this will be abundantly clear. In Ephesians 2: 17 we read: "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off [the Gentiles], and to them that were nigh [Jews]." That is, peace having been made by the blood of Christ, He can now, through His servants, proclaim peace to all who will receive the glad tidings of His finished work of atonement. And let the reader mark the words, "preaching peace," that is, peace is offered, without money, and without price, to those who hear the message; it is offered as God's own gift of grace to guilty sinners. This is illustrated by an action of the Lord Himself. On the first day of the week, His resurrection day, when His disciples were gathered together, He appeared in their midst, and His first words were, "Peace be unto you." (John 20.) Having made peace by the blood of His cross, He can now come and bestow peace — peace with God — upon His disciples, as the fruit of His atoning work.

Is there nothing, then, for us to do?

Let the reader recall what has been written. The work which made peace was the work of Christ alone. It was a transaction between Him and God, and a transaction to the efficacy of which God has abundantly testified by the resurrection, by raising Christ from the dead, and by setting Him at His own right hand in heaven. In this work no one else could have part, for it was a work wrought out for those who were already lost sinners. Moreover, the work done, He came, as we have seen, and preached peace, first to His disciples, and now, through the gospel, to every one who will hear. God's way of peace is giving — giving in grace, through the finished work of Christ. Peace with God cannot therefore be purchased, nor can it be obtained by any human effort whatsoever; but it may be received as a free gift, for it is still preached in the gospel throughout the wide world.

"Proclaimer of that peace to all,

He tells of full, unmingled grace

To high and low — who hear the call;

To old and young of Adam's race

He preaches peace,

And love divine shines in His face."

Does the reader comprehend the above statements? Does he understand first, that Christ has made peace towards God; that by His precious blood He has satisfied — and forever satisfied all God's holy claims upon sinners; and, secondly, that because He has done so, God offers peace to guilty sinners; that to every one who receives His testimony concerning the death of His beloved Son, He presents peace with Himself — and presents this peace, because the sinner's sins, if he believes in Christ, have been removed out of His sight for ever?

Is there a possible difficulty left?

Lest there should be we will ask the reader to turn to yet another scripture. We find in the Epistle to the Romans these words, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5: 1.) A glance at this scripture shows two things: that God's way of justification is by faith: and that those who are justified have peace with God, &c. We will, therefore, touch upon each of these two points, only asking that the reader will kindly follow us with his Bible open in his hands.

First, then, justification is by faith. This is in contrast with justification by works. Under law it was written, "The man which doeth these things shall live by them." (See Rom. 10: 5.) But the apostle had shown, in the very outset of the epistle, that both Jew and Gentile were sinners, that the whole world had become guilty before God. "Therefore," he added, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." (Rom. 3: 19, 20.) The way of works is therefore closed up for ever, and it is consequently in vain that any soul, in any condition whatever, should seek the favour of God by its own doings. The way of works is not only closed, but it is also the way of sure and certain destruction. Understand it well, dear reader, that eternal perdition must be the consequence of seeking salvation by works, doing, or feelings. Hence we read, "To him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. 4: 5. See also Gal. 3: 10.)

Another observation may help the reader to understand this. God does not now require righteousness from man; because, in fact, as before pointed out, man is already shown, to be a lost sinner, and as such he cannot produce any righteousness for God. No sooner, therefore, has the apostle declared that no flesh should be justified by the deeds of the law than he proceeds to tell us that the righteousness of God is manifested, and that this is by *faith* of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe. Righteousness cannot be obtained by works; but, in the grace of God, His righteousness is seen in counting righteous all who believe in Christ. God acts, that is, in harmony with all that He is, on the foundation of the work of Christ, in justifying the believer. The way of righteousness, therefore, now is faith and not works.

It may, however, be inquired what is to be believed in order to justification or to being counted righteous.

This is fully set before us in the end of Romans 4. The apostle points out that the faith of Abraham was reckoned to him for righteousness. (Vers. 20-22.) He then proceeds: "It was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, *if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead*; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Vers. 23-25.) How blessedly simple! God, as we read in Romans 3, set forth Christ Jesus a propitiation through faith in His blood, and now God Himself is seen coming forth to raise from the dead the One who was, as believers can say, "delivered for our offences"; showing, by the very act of raising Him from the dead, that our sins have been put away for ever; and in so doing He presents Himself as the God of grace, as the one who gave His beloved Son, and therefore as the Object for our faith. Believing thus in God, receiving the testimony He gives to His beloved Son, we are justified; that is to say, faith is reckoned for righteousness, God not only clearing away our sins, but also estimating every believer as a righteous person; and this is justification. Abraham was justified when he believed that God would accomplish what He had promised; we are justified when we believe what God has accomplished in raising Jesus our Lord from the dead.

The second point is, that all who are justified possess peace with God. That is to say, peace with God is the result of justification; for "we believe in a God who has intervened in power to raise Him (Christ) from the dead who had borne our offences, and who, being raised, is the eternal witness that our sins are put away, and that the only true God is He who has done it in love. We have then peace with Him; all our sins are blotted out by the work of Christ; and our unburdened heart knows the Saviour God." Let the reader pause and reflect upon these significant statements, for, once understanding their import, he will perceive that God Himself has removed everything out of the way between Himself and the believer, that it is He Himself who testifies, by the resurrection of Jesus our Lord, that the sins of the believer are for ever gone from before His face, and that therefore it is He Himself who has laid for every one who is justified by faith the immovable foundation of peace with Himself.

Perhaps, however some trembling soul may say, I do not enjoy this peace.

What, then, let us inquire, are the conditions of its enjoyment? Are we to wait for happy feelings before we are assured that peace with God is our possession? This were to reverse the divine order, and even to contradict our experience in human things. Until we know the blessing is ours, it is impossible for us to enter upon its enjoyment. Suppose, for example, tidings were brought you that you had become the heir to a large estate. Would you reply, I do not think the estate can be mine because I do not feel happy? You know full well that the effect upon your heart would depend entirely upon your believing or otherwise the news you had received. So in regard to peace with God: if you accept the testimony of God as to the work of Christ, that He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification; if you credit His word, that He counts you righteous, justifies you through faith, you will also believe that peace with God is made, is assured to you, and thus knowing it, but not until you thus know it, you will enter upon the blessed enjoyment of the fact, that God Himself has settled every question between Himself and you, and made a peace which, as it is founded upon the work of the cross, is both unchangeable and inalienable.

Can this peace, then, never be lost?

The enjoyment of it may undoubtedly be lost; for if a believer become a backslider, if he fall daily into sin, and do not judge himself before God, and if he were to walk as the children of this world — nay, as Peter teaches, if a Christian does not go forward, he may even forget "that he was purged from his old sins." (2 Peter 1: 9.) All this is true, and should ever be insisted upon, for nothing is more dishonouring to Christ, or more certain to ensure the chastening hand of God, than for a believer to walk carelessly and to live in sin; but, on the other hand, the eternal value of the work of Christ must never be ignored. We have therefore no hesitation in saying, on the foundation of many scriptures, (see, in addition to Rom. 5, Heb. 10: 1-18) that peace with God is an everlasting possession, and can never be lost; for a justified person, whatever his practical state, abides for ever as such before God, inasmuch as his justification depends wholly on faith in God. In this, indeed, lies the eternal safety of the believer, that it is God who justifies, and that the ground on which He justifies is the death and resurrection of Christ. It is indeed through faith that He justifies; but the work is all His own, and the peace with Himself which is ours when we are justified is *through our Lord Jesus Christ*.

There are other blessings linked up with peace with God, as following upon justification, concerning which a few sentences, in the words of another, will suffice. "Through Christ, entered into His presence, I am even now in the enjoyment of the favour of God in *present* grace. All the fruits of the old man were cancelled before God by the death of Christ. There cannot be a question as to my sins between me and God. He has nothing to impute to me, *that* has all been settled in Christ's death and resurrection. As to the present time, I am brought into His presence in the enjoyment of His favour. Grace characterizes my present relationship with God. Further, all my sins having been put away according to the requirements of God's glory, and Christ being risen from the dead, having met all that glory, I rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. It is a well-grounded hope of being in it, not a coming short of it. All is connected with God Himself, with and according to His perfections, the favour of God, and His glory for our hope. All is connected with His power in resurrection — peace with God already settled, the present favour of God, and the hope of glory."

In conclusion, allow me, dear reader, to ask affectionately, have you peace with God?

If you have, you can praise Him now as you will praise Him through all eternity, in that His grace has visited your heart. If you have not, then let me beseech you to read again and again this little book, with the prayer that God may open your eyes to see, and your heart to receive, the truth therein presented; and we also entreat you to give yourself no rest, until, in the mercy of God, you are able to say as in His sight, Therefore being justified by faith I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

God's Way of Rest, Power and Consecration

It is a mournful fact that the majority of Christians are not happy, and that they, if they would frankly confess it, have been sadly disappointed in their Christian life. When they were converted, the prospect was full of promise: it seemed to them like the dawn of a cloudless day of peace and joy. Scarcely, however, had they started on their journey, when clouds of every kind darkened the sky; and, with perhaps a few fitful gleams of sunshine, these have more or less

continued. In many cases it has been worse still. Conflict was expected, but the conflict has generally issued, not in victory, but in defeat. The evil within and the enemy without have again and again triumphed; so that a spirit of dejection and hopelessness has supplanted that of confidence and joyous expectation.

The sorrow, too, has been deepened by the discovery that such an experience by no means corresponds with that given in the Word of God. True it is that we are in a hostile scene, that Satan is unceasingly endeavouring to entangle us with his wiles, that we are pilgrims and strangers, that we cannot therefore expect rest and comfort in the scene through which we are passing. Therefore, our bodies are exposed to sufferings of many kinds, but not one of these things, nor all combined, ought to cloud our souls with gloom and darkness. Take the apostle Paul, for example. Having shown us that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" and that through Him "we have access by faith into present favour, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," he proceeds to say, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5: 1-5). If, moreover, you would learn the possible experience of the Christian, read the epistle to the Philippians. In this book, we find that a believer can be perfectly happy though in prison, with daily possibility of being put to death, — that Christ can be his sole motive, object, and aim, — that his only desire may be to be with Him and to be like Him; and that therefore he may be entirely superior to his circumstances; and that it is possible to learn, in whatsoever state he is, to be content, and able to do all things through Him who gives him inward strength.

Could any contrast be greater between this experience and that of most believers?

You may reply, This was the experience of an apostle, and we can scarcely expect to reach his standard.

We admit that the standard is high, but not even Paul, whatever his attainments, is our perfect model, — only Christ. Bear also in mind that the apostle had not a single blessing (except his special gift) which does not equally pertain to the humblest believer. Was he a child of God? So are we. Had he the forgiveness of sins? So have we. Did he possess the priceless possession of the indwelling Spirit — the Spirit of adoption? So do we. Was he a member of the body of Christ? So are we. We might thus enumerate all the blessings of redemption, and we should find that Paul was in no way a privileged exception; for we with him are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

If, then, this be so, how can we account for the fact that so few have a like experience — that abiding rest and happiness are so little known?

It is to the answer to this question that we invite the earnest attention of the reader.

The fundamental cause of the difficulty alluded to is the unwillingness or neglect of God's people to go on to learn what has been secured for them in Christ. Many rest content with being born again; others, with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins; so that their own salvation is

the aim and goal of their desires. The consequence is, that the first days of their Christian life are often their best days; and hence the spectacle is seen on every hand, of believers once bright and fervent, now careless and indifferent, if not worldly.

Let it be said, then, with all plainness, yet with all tenderness, that if a Christian desires nothing beyond the forgiveness of sins, he will soon discover that he has no power to resist either the solicitations of the flesh or the temptations of Satan. It is *indispensably requisite for a happy Christian life, that the truth of death with Christ should be practically known*. Stopping short of this, the characteristic experience will be unrest and hopeless conflict.

Permit me, then, to explain the reason of this in a few simple words. There are two things that need to be dealt with for our redemption: our sins, and the nature that produced the sins, — the bad fruit, and the tree whence the fruit had sprung. Our need in respect of the first thing has been met by the precious blood of Christ. There is no other method of cleansing from our guilt (See Heb. 10; 1 John 1: 7). But though we have been made whiter than snow through the precious blood of Christ, and notwithstanding we have been born again, and have thus a new nature and a new life, the evil nature remains; and remains in all its corruption, and can neither be purified nor improved. It was the sense of this, and the realized powerlessness of the new nature in and by itself, in its struggles with the flesh, that led to the cry in Rom. 7: — "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The same bitter cry still ascends from multitudes of the saints of God.

How, then, has God met this need of His people?

The answer is found in Romans 6. There we read, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed [annulled], that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed [or justified] from sin" (vs. 6, 7). The term "old man" is used to express what we were in Adam. "The flesh," or the "old nature," is the evil principle within us; and the "body of sin" is just sin in its totality and completeness. We gather, therefore, from this Scripture (see also Rom. 8: 3), that God has already dealt with our old man in the death of Christ, that therein He condemned sin in the flesh. The apostle says, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2). It is not only that the Lord Jesus, in His infinite grace, bore our sins in His own body on the tree; but God, in His unspeakable mercy, associated us with the death of Christ: so that He has already passed judgment upon what we *are* — that is, upon our flesh, root and branch. He has thus made a twofold provision in the death of Christ, namely, for our sins, and for our old man; and both alike are gone judicially from before His face.

Such is God's testimony to us in His Word; and if I set to my seal, through His grace, that His testimony is true as to the efficacy of the blood of Christ, why not also when He bears witness to me that He has associated me with the death of His beloved Son? It is on this very ground that the apostle exhorts, in Romans 6, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vs. 11). That is, God's declaration to me is received by faith, and acted upon, so that I refuse the incitements of the flesh, on the ground that I am dead to it, having part in the death of Christ. In other words, I accept my death with Christ as the truth before God, and henceforward take the place in this world of a dead man.

Let us now look a little further into the consequence of accepting such a position. The first of these is that we are freed, or justified (see margin), from sin (Rom. 6: 7). It is important to note that it is sin, not sins — that is, the flesh, "sin in the flesh," the evil principle of our corrupt nature, "the old man," has no further claim upon us. It is still within, and will be to the end of our pilgrimage; but as long as I reckon myself to be dead, accept death upon what I am as born of the flesh, it will have no power over me. Having been in bondage to it, I am now delivered from it — and how? By means of death — my death with Christ. My old master, therefore, has no further claims upon me; I have passed, by means of death, out from under his yoke. For example, suppose you had, while reading this paper, a dead man lying in the room; and suppose, further, you were to seek to bring him into captivity to sin, by presenting to him every kind of fascination or allurements, would you not at once perceive the folly of the attempt? No, you would say, whatever he was while alive, sin will have no dominion over him now. Satan himself could not tempt a *dead* man. And thus it will be with ourselves if, by grace, we go on from minute to minute and from hour to hour reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord.

And this is the only way of victory. Many seek to overcome by a resolute effort of will, others by seeking to die to sin; but God's method is that which we have shown. It is because we *are* dead that we are told to mortify our members (Col. 3) — that is, to apply death to ourselves — to bear about in our body the putting to death of Jesus, so that every movement of sin, of the flesh, may be arrested and judged. Man's way leads to asceticism, and, in the end, to a worse bondage; but the divine way issues in deliverance and happy liberty.

The second consequence is deliverance from law. Thus Paul writes, "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." Again, "Now we are delivered from the law, having died to that wherein we were held" (Rom. 7: 4-6, etc.; see also Gal. 2: 19). As the apostle explains, the law has dominion over a man only as long as he liveth. Having, then, died with Christ, we are emancipated also from the power of the law; and blessed for us that it is so, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (Gal. 3: 10). This indeed ought to be an evangel of good tidings to every believer. By nature, we are all legal, and our tendency to legality remains with us after we become the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. It is interwoven, we may say, into the very texture of our being, so that it crops up continually in our words and actions. The effect is that many know little of the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and are groaning daily under their self-imposed bondage.

But, you reply, we are not under law. The Jews were, but can this be said of Gentile believers?

Certainly not in the same sense; but the principle of law is as native to us as to the Jew. For example, if after I am converted I feel that I ought to love the Lord Jesus more, and try to do so, or that I ought to pray better, and am cast down or depressed because I have not discharged this duty, as I think, more perfectly, I am *in principle* as much under law as were the Jews. The essence of the law lies in its "*Thou shalt*," and hence, if I turn even the precepts of our blessed Lord into, Thou shalt do this or that, I put my neck under the yoke of the law. And the moment I do so, I am on the sure road to failure, distress, and a bad conscience.

What, then, we have all to learn is, that through association, in the grace of God, with the death of Christ, we are delivered both from law and from the principle of law. We are married to Another, even to Him that is raised from the dead that we should bring forth fruit (not works, but fruit,) unto God. Christianity has no "thou shalt," but it substitutes for the works of the law and the works of the flesh, the blessed fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5); and these are produced, not as the works are, by human effort, but by divine power.

The difference between these two things is as great as possible. Knowing now that fruit for God cannot be obtained by any effort or labour of our own, we are delivered from all expectation from self; and learning, at the same time, that the power which can bring forth fruit is in another (who works, indeed, by the Spirit that dwells in His people), our eye is upward to Him, in the confidence that He will use us for His glory according to His own will. Instead, therefore, of working, we trust; instead of seeking fruit within, we desire that Christ may work in us according to the energy of His own divine power.

Another consequence is, that we are delivered from the world. The apostle, in opposition to certain legalists, who desired to escape persecution and to glory in the flesh, says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom (or whereby) the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." As we read in the gospel of John, the world was judged in the death of Christ. His crucifixion was the utter and entire condemnation of the world that rejected Him. God thus morally judged it in the cross; and Paul, in communion with the mind of God, held it therefore as crucified to him through the cross, as also himself, in the same way, as crucified to it. He was thereby completely delivered from it; for if both were crucified the one to the other, there could be no attraction between the two. The world with all its charms and fascinations could not allure one who held it as morally judged in the death of Christ; neither indeed had one who held himself as crucified through the cross any attractions for the world. Thus regarded, the cross is an insurmountable barrier between the Christian and the world; and not only a barrier, but also the means by which the true character of the world is detected and exposed. Thereby he learns that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, inasmuch as he ever views it in relation to the cross of Christ.

There is yet another consequence, and that is, deliverance from man. "If," says the apostle, "ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living (or rather, alive) in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (such as, for example,) 'Touch not; taste not; handle not,' etc?" It is religious man who is in question, whose object is the improvement of the flesh; but instead of amending, he only gratifies it. Now this important Scripture teaches that the believer, as dead with Christ, is entirely freed from man and his religious claims. If he owned them, he would take the place of being alive in the world, and deny the fact of his association with the death of Christ. He thus loses sight of (indeed refuses) man altogether, denies his assumed authority, because he is subject only to Christ. Hence, even in all the relationships of life, he obeys, whether it be magistrates, masters, or parents, because he is put in the position of subjection by Christ Himself. Thus a poor slave — a Christian — in obeying his master, obeys the Lord Christ (Col. 3: 22-25).

There is, therefore, complete deliverance for the believer who holds himself as dead with Christ — deliverance from sin, law, the world, and man. It might be said, in language applied to

Israel, of the believer, that he takes them captive whose captive he had been. Every enemy is conquered, and Christ alone is acknowledged as Lord.

If this is true, how is it, do you ask, that so few enter upon this path of deliverance and holy liberty?

The answer to this question leads us to the next part of our subject. It may be thus stated, and we entreat special attention to it, *That while these truths may be doctrinally apprehended, they must, if the power of them is to be enjoyed, be experimentally learned.* There are four things which must be acquired through experience, in order to enter upon their blessed enjoyment.

First Lesson

First and foremost, the character of the flesh must be practically known. God has declared this to us even in the Old Testament (Gen. 6), and in the New has set it forth again and again; and we may receive His testimony, unhesitatingly assent to it, but, we repeat, unless we have learned the nature of the flesh by experience, we shall always, more or less, be expecting something good from it. Thus how often does the saint think, "I shall do better next time," or, "If I had my time over again, I would avoid this mistake or that failure"! Now such reflections as these could only be made in the entire forgetfulness of the real and incurable nature of the flesh; for if our evil nature is wholly corrupt, how could it act differently in the future from what it did in the past? No; we may indeed look to the Lord to keep us, by His grace, from former sins; but if we have really detected what the flesh is, we know at once that we shall continue to do in the future as we have done in the past, unless guarded by divine power.

Now in Rom. 7 we have the case of one who, having life, but ignorant of the full grace of God in redemption, is trying under law to produce some fruit for God. What is the conclusion he comes to? It is this, that what he would do, he does not, and that what he hates, he does. He then proceeds to say, "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." That is, he has now discovered that the flesh will (in such a case as his) have its own way, and that having its own way, it is always sin. Hence he tells us, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." He has learnt his lesson, and will therefore cease henceforward to expect any thing from the flesh but evil. And surely this is a blessed conclusion at which to arrive for the soul.

Now there are two ways in which we may learn the same thing; either in the presence of God, and in communion with God, or in the presence of Satan through failure and sin. Paul himself would seem to have been an example of the former. As a Jew, he was so moral and upright, that, led of the Spirit of God, he could afterward say of himself, that "touching the righteousness which is in the law," he was "blameless." He had every temptation therefore to think there was something good in himself. As he said, "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." But when a glorified Christ was revealed to him, an entire revolution was wrought in his soul. He saw every thing now in the true light — the light of the glory of God which shone from the face of Christ and he instantly perceived the worthlessness of the flesh and its fairest works. Now he could say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I (do) count all things loss for the

excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ (or, have Christ as my gain)." His first estimate was the abiding one of his life, and he consequently refused the flesh in every shape and form as utterly evil — knowing that, like the fig tree in the gospel, however it might be cultured and educated, it could never bear any fruit for God.

Peter is an example of one who learns the character of the flesh through sin. A warm-hearted, impetuous man, he loved his Master with an ardent affection. When, therefore, the Lord warned His disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, 'I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered'," Peter replied, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I" (Mark 14). He was ready, he said, to lay down his life for his Master's sake (John 13). And what produced this unwavering trust in his own fidelity? Confidence in the flesh — in his affection; but what was the result? Ah! what a commentary upon this evil nature of ours! — step by step, Peter went down into the deep abyss of utter denial of his Lord. He had been forewarned and admonished, but the flesh asserted its own corruption, and dragged Peter through the mire of sin and iniquity. His fall was overruled for the Lord's glory, and for the blessing of Peter; but in his fall and humiliation there is left for our instruction the plainest revelation of the fact that in the flesh, the flesh even of a true and devoted disciple, there dwelleth no good thing.

Now in one of these two ways every one who would know what the grace of God in our redemption is must also learn the same lesson. If we do not, we shall always be expecting something from ourselves, though we shall be always disappointed. A bad tree must always bear bad fruit; and when we have practically bowed to this truth, we shall have done with ourselves altogether, and shall expect nothing — except from the Lord. Through unwatchfulness, the flesh may still assert itself and betray us into sin; but we are not deceived. We have learnt our lesson; and while we judge ourselves in the presence of God for our failure, we seek grace, at the same time, to be kept more watchful in days to come. Beloved reader, we press this point upon you most earnestly; for until you have gone through this experience, you can never have solid peace. Turn away from it, and you expose yourselves, like the children of Israel in the desert, to trials, chastenings, and failures of every kind; whereas, if you accept God's testimony as to the flesh, and so learn its truth in your own soul that you habitually take His part against yourself, you would enter upon the dawn of another day — a day characterized, whatever your trials and sorrows, by the sunshine of grace and joy, and one that will be spent with God.

Second Lesson

The second lesson to be learned is, that we have no strength — that we are utterly powerless in conflict with the flesh; that while, as the apostle says, "to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. 7: 18, 19). And is not this, beloved reader, the exact description of the experience of thousands, and perhaps of your own? And the effect has been, that they have sunk into a state of listless indifference, if not of despondency, so that, ceasing even to attempt to stem any longer the rapid current setting against them on every side, they conclude that nothing now remains for them but to float down the stream against which they cannot contend. Ah! if souls would be honest, many would confess that this has been their

condition for years, — a condition which brings no glory to God, and no happiness to themselves. What, then, is the cause? Simply the mistake of thinking that all depends upon our own efforts, instead of accepting the truth that they are utterly without strength, and that therefore every thing depends upon God. Even the sinner has to learn, not only that he is guilty, ungodly, but also that he is helpless (Rom. 5); and the believer must likewise understand, not only that in his flesh there dwelleth no good thing, but also that he cannot of himself do a single good thing. And when the eyes are opened by the Spirit of God, the discovery is made that this is the lesson God has been teaching by the past long series of unbroken defeats. You have fought with your foes again and again, with undaunted courage, but you have never gained the victory. Still you have again entered upon the conflict, resolved, if possible, to overcome; but, alas! you have again been conquered. Pause, then, for a moment, and ask this simple question, What am I to learn by this sorrowful experience? The answer is clear as the noonday. It is that the enemy is too strong for you, that you cannot cope with his power. Still you may say, May we not grow stronger? Shall we not grow in grace? And when we have found out the character of the enemy a little more fully, is it not possible that we may succeed?

No! we hesitate not to answer; for if you continue upon the present line of *effort*, it is only to court defeat in the future as in the past. Your case is, as far as your own strength is concerned, hopeless.

If, on the other hand, you receive the truth of your own perfect impotence, and come thus to the end of your own strength, it will bring rest to your soul, because, together with that, you will understand, that your help, strength, and succour come from without, and not from within, — from Christ, in a word, and not from yourselves. Oh, the unspeakable blessedness of such a discovery! Ceasing henceforward to struggle, you will know what it is to rest in Another, and be able to take up the song of David, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? *The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*" For if, on the one side, you have come to know that you are without strength, you will rejoice, on the other, to learn that His strength is made perfect in weakness.

Third Lesson

The "third thing to be known is the fact that the believer has two natures: one which he has received through Adam, called in Scripture the flesh, or sin, etc.; and the other which he has received through the new birth from God. These two are utterly antagonistic. Thus John says, speaking of the latter, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3: 9). And Paul, speaking of the former, writes, as we have seen, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." It is impossible to conceive of two more directly opposite statements; and now we find that the soul who is passing through the experience detailed in Romans 7 learns to distinguish between these two contrasted natures. We thus read, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (v. 20). That is, he has learned to identify himself with the new nature: hence he says, "No more I" (cp. Gal. 2: 20, where Christ becomes the "I" of the apostle); and at the same time he regards the flesh, his old nature, as nothing but sin; and he traces back to it, all the evil from which he has been suffering. This nature, though within (and will always remain there as long as the believer is upon earth), he now treats as an enemy, as one

who always seeks to hinder his doing the good, and to compel him to do the evil. He thus proceeds: "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man [and hence he *desired* to do good]; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (vv. 21-23).

Not only, therefore, is he helpless in the struggle against the enemy — indwelling sin, but he is worsted in the conflict, and overmastered; he is completely in the grasp and power of his foe. Still he has now learned that "sin," the flesh, is his foe, and that he delights in the law of God after the inward man. And this, beloved reader, is a happy discovery; for the want of which, many godly souls in all ages have been kept groaning in bondage, and writing bitter things against themselves, deeming that such was a necessary experience all the days of their lives. If you read, for example, the published diaries of some of the most devoted servants of the Lord, you will find that they are mainly made up of self-analysis and self-condemnation, springing from occupation with self instead of with Christ, in the vain effort to eradicate the evil found within their own hearts; and often leading to the question, If we are children of God why is it thus with us? Ah! they had misread, as many continue to misread, Romans 7; and hence, while they had their seasons of enjoyment of the presence and favour of God., they only alternate with times of darkest gloom and depression.

It is a blessed gain, therefore, when we know we have the two natures, and when we learn to distinguish between them; and it is still more blessed when we are brought, through our conflicts and struggles, as far as we ourselves are concerned, into hopeless captivity to the law of sin which is in our members. It is a painful but necessary experience, because thereby we are taught to have done with ourselves. The end of all flesh, so to speak, is come before us, as it had long before with God; and we know now, that vain is the help of man (self), that we are completely without resource, and, alas! at the mercy of our inward foe.

Fourth Lesson

This prepares the way for the fourth lesson. Flesh has gained the victory — has its foot, if we may speak figuratively, upon the neck of the struggling and helpless soul; but its victory ends in defeat, and in the emancipation of its victim. Until this moment, the soul has been battling in its own strength; but now, in the sorrow of its defeat and helpless bondage, it looks, not within, but without, and cries in its agony, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" *And the deliverance is reached.* The moment the eye is upward, and not within upon itself, the victory is assured; for the answer comes immediately, "I thank God," I am delivered "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Deliverance is found, just as salvation is found, not through self, and the labours of self, but through Christ. It will consequently be noticed, that whereas we have nothing but "I" in the preceding verses, "I" now disappears, and it is all "Christ" instead. Blessed deliverance! Self is now done with and refused, Christ is accepted in its place; and, as we shall yet see, we find that we have in Him the answer to our every need: for of God are we, "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1: 30).

But before the Spirit of God proceeds to unfold the blessed portion of the delivered soul, one word is added: "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." This is added both as instruction and warning. It teaches us that we shall always possess, whatever our attainments, these two natures, and, giving their character, admonishes us that they will never alter, — that the flesh, though we are now delivered from its mastery, will always remain flesh, and can never be changed or improved. The enemy cannot be dislodged, or be converted to a friend; but we now know his character, and the sources of our strength, and we keep watch accordingly.

We proceed now to point out the wondrous results in grace which may be the enjoyed portion of the emancipated soul. We may at once name them; they are REST, POWER, and CONSECRATION. Let us look at these separately.

Rest

(1.) REST. — This is not only the rest that follows upon the cessation of the struggle with

indwelling sin, but also the positive rest which flows from the knowledge now enjoyed by the soul, of deliverance. Hence the first words of Romans 8 are, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." This is not simply the assertion that the believer is freed from all condemnation, but rather the discovery that *those who are in Christ Jesus* are delivered from all possibility of it. Such is the blessed goal which the soul has now reached. Let us, then, examine a little into what is thus involved. There is now, then, the knowledge that the believer has been brought out of his old standing and condition, and set down in a new place before God in Christ, — in Christ who is risen from the dead, and has passed into a new sphere beyond and on the other side of death, into which neither death nor condemnation can enter. Through death with Christ, as has been already shown, the believer is dissociated from the first man — from Adam; so that now, reckoning himself to be dead unto sin, he also counts himself as alive unto God in Christ Jesus. In the death of Christ God has judged, once for all, sin in the flesh — judged its root and branch; and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus as risen out of death has made the believer free from the law of sin and death. Sin and death have to do only with those who are in the flesh; and since the believer is not in the flesh (v. 9), but is in the Spirit, he has his standing where the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus prevails. Yes, -

"The Lord is risen: the Red Sea's judgment flood

Is passed, in Him who bought us with His blood.

The Lord is risen: we stand beyond the doom

Of all our sin, through Jesus' empty tomb."

We stand, we repeat, in a new place — a place, because in Christ Jesus as risen, to which the flesh, and therefore condemnation, cannot have any thing to say. As the blood of Christ cleansed us from our guilt, so in the death of Christ (for we were, in the grace of God, associated

with Him in that death,) the flesh — sin — met its judgment and doom, and we now in Christ are therefore completely delivered, and as such, freed from all condemnation. We can now rest — rest in Him in whom we stand before God.

Together with this, the soul discovers another thing. What had been the cause of all its dissatisfaction and sorrow? Its own state and condition — the condition springing from the presence of sin within. Now, it learns that the question is, *not what we are, but what Christ is*. Is God satisfied with what Christ is? Then we may be satisfied too, for we, remember, are *in* Him, and what He is, and not what we are, marks our standing before God. In Christ, therefore, we answer to even God's own thoughts, so that He can rest in us with the same complacency as He rests in Christ. We are indeed accepted in the Beloved. Inasmuch, then, as every desire of God's heart is met, we have nothing left to desire; we are as perfect, as to our new standing, as God Himself can make us, and we have perfect rest. As to the flesh, we have learned that it could not be worse, and that it could not be better; as to our being in Christ, we have been taught that God Himself is satisfied with us, inasmuch as we are before Him, in all the perfection of what Christ is, as the glorified Man. It is not possible to desire more, and thus we enter upon the enjoyment of perfect rest — perfect rest in Christ; for just as we were enabled, through grace, to accept Christ as our substitute on the cross, we now rejoice to accept Him before God instead of ourselves. God's eye rests on Him, and ours rests on Him too, and thus in communion with the heart of God we find our true and unshaken rest.

Another blessed consequence at once follows. Ceasing from self-occupation (for, having trodden that weary path to our bitter sorrow and found out its vanity) we rejoice to be occupied alone with Christ. Since it is what He is that determines what I am before God, I delight to trace out His perfections and moral glories — to meditate upon every ray of the glory of God that shines out from His glorified face (2 Cor. 4); and in this blessed employment I am gradually transformed, even while here in this world, by the Spirit's power, into His likeness (2 Cor. 3: 18). Lost in admiration of the One whose face, unlike that of Moses, is unveiled. I grow like Him grow daily, while waiting for His return, until finally I shall be like Him, for I shall see Him as He is.

It is therefore Christ as the measure of my standing, Christ as the object of 'My heart, and Christ as the One to whom I am to be conformed. What else can the soul need? Nay, I am abundantly satisfied, and I have perfect rest.

"Lord, 'tis enough — we ask no more;

Thy grace around us pours

Its rich and unexhausted store,

And all this grace is ours."

Power

(2.) We have also POWER. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Each one who is in Christ is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and He it is who is the source of power for walk, conflict, service, and worship. Were it not for this blessed provision, we might be tempted to exclaim, Granted that we are in Christ Jesus, but how shall we be able to meet the insidious movements of the flesh which still remains in us? The answer is found in verse 13: "If ye *through the Spirit* do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Power is thus bestowed equal to all emergencies, and to enable us to enjoy the privileges of the place into which we have been brought, as well as to refuse every thing which would seek to rob us of our blessings.

It must not be forgotten (neither could a child of God desire it should,) that this power does not act independently of our own spiritual condition. The Holy Spirit dwells *within*, so that our bodies are His temples. If, therefore, we are careless, unwatchful, indifferent, — if we seek our pleasure in the world rather than in Christ, — if, in a word, we in any way, whether by word, look, or act of the flesh, grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption, let us not for one moment suppose that He will condescend to use us as vessels of His power. No! that were impossible. Take Samson as an instructive example of this important point. As long as he maintained his separation — his Nazariteship, his enemies were powerless before him. They were trodden, so to speak, beneath his feet; but the moment, seduced by the arts of Delilah, he betrayed the secret of his strength, he became as weak as other men, and fell at once into the hands of his merciless enemies. *The action of the Holy Spirit in power, in and through the believer can only be maintained while walking in communion with God.* Neglect self-judgment, and a walk that is according to the light in which we are set, even as God is in the light, and, though the Holy Spirit will not depart from us, we shall in vain expect the demonstration of His mighty power. But, on the other hand, if the eye be single, and a single eye sees nothing but Christ, — if He is the object of our lives, the Holy Spirit, then ungrieved, will sustain us in every position in which we are placed, and bring us victoriously out of every conflict through which we may pass. If the flesh seeks to reassert its dominion, He will enable us to refuse it, to treat it as a foe already judged by God's judgment; if the world would charm us by its siren voices, He will remind us of its true character in the light of the cross of Christ, and its charms will disappear; if Satan assail us, He will embolden us to resist the devil, and he will flee from us.

Bear in mind, however, that we must not expect consciousness of power. It is on this point that so many stumble. They want to *feel* the power, and failing to do so, they conclude that they are in the wrong condition of soul for its exercise. No mistake could be greater. On the other hand, the Lord, as in the case of Paul, as given in 2 Corinthians 12, has to break down His servants, send them thorns in the flesh, bring death in upon them in every shape and form (see, 2 Cor. 4), in order to reduce them to the sense of their own utter impotence, that they may learn the lesson that His strength is made *perfect in weakness*. Hence, it is that when we are weak we are strong, because realized weakness leads to and is the condition of dependence, and it is only as we are dependent that we are strong with the strength of Him on whom we rest.

Nor shall we (and we desire to press this point,) be always conscious of the power even though we are dependent. Thus Paul writes to the Corinthians, "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2: 3). Yet it is evident from the epistle, as well as from the historical account of his sojourn in Corinth (Acts 18), that he was at this time, in a very special manner, the channel of extraordinary power in his ministry of the Word. So now it will often be the same with the Lord's servants. How often have they been permitted to know, after some season of felt weakness and incompetency in preaching the Word, that this was the very time when the Lord used them most largely in the blessing of souls! The same principle applies to every department of the Christian life, illustrations of which might easily be collected all down the line of Scripture-history. Take Gideon. "Oh, my Lord," he says, "wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Was this a disqualification for the mission to which he was called? Mark the Lord's response: "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man" (Judges 6: 15, 16). Gideon was in truth nothing, but the Lord was everything, and He can work where this nothingness is felt. In like manner, if the Lord is to show forth His power in and through us, there must be the refusal of every form of self-dependence, — of every thing even which naturally would help us in our work or conflict, that our dependence may be wholly and solely upon the divine power of the Holy Spirit.

It is also a mistake to suppose that we can be *endowed*, so to speak, with spiritual power. God never gives a fund of strength to any of His servants on which they can draw from time to time until the whole is used. The power is always in Himself, and not in them, and therefore only supplied moment by moment, according to the need, to those who are walking with and in dependence on Him. The one, therefore, who may be today a mighty man of valour, may be tomorrow weak and timid. Such was the case with Elijah. In 1 Kings 18, confronted by a whole host of the worshippers of Baal, together with their priests, who were emboldened, too, by the knowledge that they were under royal protection and favour, Elijah, single-handed and alone, lifted up out of and beyond himself, challenges them to the conflict, and casting himself upon God for the vindication of the glory of His Name, he is borne onward by divine power, and, daring Satan in his own stronghold, he gains a splendid victory. But what do we find in the next chapter? This same Elijah flees before the threat of wicked Jezebel! Ah, yes, he had forgotten, for the moment, the source of his strength, and, as a consequence, the valiant man of yesterday is today weaker than a babe. The maintenance of constant dependence is thus a necessary condition of continued spiritual power. If this is forgotten, Satan will often succeed in worsting the Lord's servants.

There are, then, as all true souls will at once admit, conditions for the exercise of the power which God has provided for His people in His indwelling Spirit. This acknowledged, it can be pressed that the power is all-sufficient in every circumstance and in every need. Thus in this chapter alone (Romans 8) we read of those who walk after the Spirit — who are led of the Spirit; who through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body; those whom the Spirit helps in their infirmities, and in whom He makes intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered. And in many other Scriptures it is shown that He enables us to overcome alike, as pointed out before, the flesh, the world, and the devil (see Gal. 5: 16-25; Eph. 6: 17, 18; 1 John 2: 14-27, etc.), — that through Him we can understand and communicate the Word (1 Cor. 2), — that it is in His power we enjoy access to God the Father (Eph. 2: 18), that, in a word, whether for walk, conflict,

testimony (Acts 4), or worship (Eph. 5: 18, 19; Phil. 3: 3), our only and all-sufficient power is the Holy Ghost.

Now, beloved reader, admitting this as doctrine, is there no danger of forgetting it in practice? There are many of the Lord's people who have learnt in a measure their weakness, but who know almost nothing of the source of power as provided in the Holy Spirit; there are others who believe in the provision, but who have scarcely any skill in drawing upon it for use; and there are others, again, who act, even in the Christian life, as if every thing depended upon themselves. Let us, then, look the question in the face, and ask ourselves if these things which have been set forth are true, and if they are true, let us not rest until we know practically something of being channels for the manifestation of divine power even in this world. And if it is our desire to bring glory in this way to the Lord's Name, we shall soon discover that God will condescend to use us just in proportion as we are walking in dependence upon Himself, and in obedience to His Word.

Consecration

(3.) We now come to the third thing spoken of, namely CONSECRATION. That there is a wide-spread desire for fuller consecration to the Lord, the religious history of the last few years abundantly shows. And who can doubt that, spite of the large admixture of error with truth in the various "holiness" movements that have been witnessed, thousands of souls have found partially what they sought, and thereby entered upon largely increased spiritual blessing? It should indeed be always remembered that God meets the soul, not according to its intelligence, but according to its felt need. Wherever, therefore, saints have congregated, with yearning hearts, to wait on the Lord, they have found an ample response to their cries; and many have, from that moment, entered upon a life of peace and liberty with God. They may still use terms that are not exactly scriptural, and may mistake the exact relationship in which the Lord stands to them; they may still be ignorant of the full grace of God in redemption, and of the blessed hope of the Lord's return; but the Lord has now a place in their hearts which He never had before, and He thus becomes both the Object before their souls, as well as the Centre to which they gravitate, and the consequence is unspeakable blessing. All this we gladly admit — and admit it to the full. The only thing we contend for is the importance, in order to even fuller blessing, of understanding God's own thoughts concerning the consecration of His people.

This, then, is the question now to be considered: What is consecration? The prevalent idea is that it consists in the giving up of ourselves wholly to the service of God in an act of self-surrender. Sometimes, indeed, it is said that this may be accomplished by an act of the will, that by a fixed and constant resolution we may offer ourselves — head, heart, hand, and soul — to the Lord for His disposal; and meetings are often held at which those who are assembled are exhorted, there and then, to dedicate themselves in this way to the Lord.

It is quite possible that when a soul is consciously in the presence of God (and this may often be the case at such meetings), some hindrance, some besetting sin, or some evil habit or association may be brought into the light, and there and then confessed and judged; and there will undoubtedly be in such a case larger blessing. But *this is not consecration*; and the question

remains, whether this kind of setting one's self apart, or self-surrender, to which some are exhorted, is found in the Scriptures?

The first thing to be remarked is, that all such exhortations suppose power on our part — that we are looked upon as competent to attain the end proposed, whereas one of the things we have to learn, as we have seen in Romans 7, is that the good we desire to do, we do not, — that, in a word, we are utterly helpless to achieve, in and by ourselves, any thing for God.

It will, however, certainly be asked if we are not called upon to yield ourselves up to God, and to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service.

Most certainly; but neither of these Scriptures favours the above thought of consecration. In order to see this, let us examine a little into their significance. The first is found in Romans 6. Now the truth of this chapter is our death with Christ, and that, as dead with Christ, we are justified from sin (vv. 1-7). The apostle then proceeds: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6: 8-14). Not only, therefore, are we viewed as dead with Christ, and justified from sin, but also we are to reckon ourselves alive to God (inasmuch as Christ has died unto sin once, and in that He liveth, He liveth unto God,) in Christ Jesus our Lord. Freed, therefore, from sin, the body is no longer to be under its dominion; and we are consequently told not to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but to yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead — that is, as those who are dead with Christ, but who have a new life in Him as risen out of death.

In what power, then, is this to be accomplished? In the power of the will? Nay, we are to reckon ourselves dead, etc.; and hence it is through the Holy Ghost, in the power of the new life we have in a risen Christ. And it should be noticed that the apostle expressly says, that, in using the figure of a servant, whether in respect of sin or of righteousness, he is speaking after the manner of men because of the infirmity of our flesh. In fact, the question here concerns our bodies — or our members. Now through having part in the death of Christ, we are no longer the servants of sin — we are freed from it. What, then, shall be done with our members? The answer is found in the exhortation considered. Let them now become instruments of righteousness unto God; for if, on the one hand, we are to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, we are, on the other, to count ourselves as alive unto God through Christ Jesus; and the truth of this chapter flows from this verse 11.

The exhortation in Romans 12: 1 links itself with the doctrine of chapter 6, though the appeal is based upon the truth developed up to the close of chapter 8. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren," says the apostle, "by the mercies of God." The mercies are those unfolded in redemption, and which have been detailed in this epistle. Reminding us thus of what God is for

us in Christ, and what He has done, the apostle, on this ground, beseeches us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, our reasonable service. Again, the exhortation, as in chapter 6, concerns our bodies — bodies, it must be remembered, which have been emancipated from bondage to sin, and which, according to the teaching of chapter 8, are now indwelt by the Holy Ghost. This will explain the apostle's meaning. Not now, as with the priests of old, are we to bring a dead sacrifice and lay it on God's altar, but in the power of the Holy Spirit we are to offer up a living sacrifice — a perpetual sacrifice therefore, — one that is ever to be presented to God as long as we are here upon the earth. But how is this, we ask again, to be accomplished? Is it by an act of will? Nay, this is impossible. It is by the application of death — it is, in fact, the truth of Romans 8: 10 — "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin:" it is Christ controlling our bodies instead of ourselves, as we hope to explain more fully afterward; and this is both a sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and our reasonable service — the recognition of what is due to God on the ground of redemption. Our bodies, in other words, belong to Him who has redeemed us; but the acceptance of this truth will involve their presentation to God moment by moment, as a living sacrifice; so that He may use them now for His own glory in testimony to His beloved Son.

The consideration of these Scriptures will prepare us to enter upon the consideration of what consecration really is. For this purpose we propose to turn to two passages — one in the Old Testament, and the other in Rom. 8. We take first, that wherein is recorded the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood (Ex. 29). Without going into detail, we may point out the meaning of the rites that accomplished this service. They were, first of all, *washed with water* (v. 4), — a figure of the *new birth* - of being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3: 5), that is, of the application of the Word to the soul through the Holy Ghost. Next, they are brought under the efficacy of the *sin offering*; their sins having been, in type, transferred to the bullock through the laying of their hands upon the bullock's head. Judgment thereon is visited on the bullock; the blood having been put on the horns of the altar, etc., and the flesh of the bullock, etc., is burnt with fire without the camp (vv. 10-14). *Their sins are thus taken away*. Then they are brought before God in all the acceptance of the burnt-offering (vv. 15-18).

All this was *to qualify them for consecration*; and in what follows, we have the consecration itself. First, the blood was put upon the tip of their right ears, on their right thumbs, and on their right great toes; the rest of the blood was to be sprinkled on the altar round about. That is, God, in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, claims, according to the value of His precious blood, the complete devotion of His servants and priests, who, because they had been brought under the value of that precious blood, must henceforward hearken, act, and walk only for God. Bought with a price, they must glorify Him with their bodies which are His. Then, with the blood, the anointing oil was to be sprinkled upon them and upon their garments, significant of the power in which their service was to be accomplished — not in fleshly energy or by the effort of their will, but solely in and through the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

It is in the ceremony that follows we have the actual truth of consecration. All our readers will know that these sacrifices are types of Christ; and in the light of this knowledge, let them read what was done with the ram of consecration. Different parts of it, together with oiled bread, and a wafer of unleavened bread, were put in the hands of Aaron and his sons, and waved for a wave-offering before the Lord. *Their hands were filled with Christ* — Christ in the devotedness

of His life, as shown by the unleavened bread (the meat-offering); and Christ in His devotedness unto death, as testified in the burnt-offering. The meaning, indeed, of "*to consecrate*" is to "*fill the hand*" (see marg. to v. 9); and thus Aaron and his sons were consecrated by having, in figure, *their hands filled with Christ*: and with Him, as the only acceptable offering they could present before Jehovah. We learn, moreover, that the food of these consecrated ones was to be the affections (the breast) of Christ, and the strength (the shoulder) of Christ; for only in this way could their consecration be maintained and manifested.

Passing now to Romans 8, we shall find that consecration there exactly corresponds, though with a deeper meaning, with the truth of Exodus 29. "Ye are not in the flesh," says the apostle, "but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (vv. 9, 10). In verse 9, we have the full Christian position — characterized by the possession and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The word is very emphatic. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," — that is, the Spirit in whose power Christ Himself walked and wrought down here, — "he is not of Him," he is not yet marked out as belonging to Christ. Whatever he may be, a man cannot be said to be a Christian, in the true sense of the word, if he has not the Holy Ghost. Here, therefore, we arrive at the same point (only with a larger significance) as that where the priests were anointed with oil, previous and preparatory to their actual consecration. Hence we read in the next verse, "If Christ be in you" — which also is a characteristic of Christianity (See Col. 1: 27). In other words, the believer is not only indwelt by the Spirit of God, but Christ also is in him. The Lord Jesus, speaking of the time when the Holy Ghost should have come, says, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, ye in Me, and I in you." In verse 1 (Rom. 8) we are said to be in Christ Jesus, and now in verse 10 Christ is said to be in us, according to these words of our blessed Lord, to be understood only when the Holy Spirit had come; and the truth of Christ in us is the source of our consecration, or it may be stated in another way — that *our consecration flows from the fact that Christ is in us*. We have explained that through deliverance we enter upon rest and power, and now we shall see that the third blessing is consecration.

We call attention, in the first place, to the language of the apostle. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." This (properly understood) is consecration, and it is this which we hope, with divine help, to be able to explain. Before our conversion, as all know, we governed our own bodies. They served us according to our own wills, whether in regard to duty, desires, or pleasure. The will in each one of us was the directing force, and this is what the apostle means when he says that formerly we were servants of sin (Rom. 6: 16, 17). Our own wills (acted on and enslaved, it is true, by Satan through the flesh) were the supreme authority. Not that we were freemen, for "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8: 34), and alas! we did nothing but sin; for sin is just independence of God — "lawlessness," as the Spirit of God terms it (1 John 3: 4; see Gk.), — that is, having no law apart from self and the desires of self.

This is what we were; but now we read, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin," which means, if we may venture to paraphrase it, Knowing that if the will comes into activity, the consequence is sin; now that Christ is in us, we hold the body as dead, that it may no longer be used by us according to OUR will, but that Christ may take it up as a vessel for the

expression of HIS will. We hold the body as dead, because of the certainty of sin if controlled by ourselves; and thus it is also added, "The Spirit is life because of righteousness." Holding the body as dead, since Christ is in us, we now desire that He, and not sin, should be the Master of it, and count the activity of the Spirit, who dwells within, as the only life which a Christian should know, if we would be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (See Phil. 1: 11). That is, practical righteousness can only be produced in our lives when the body is held as a vessel for Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost.

We may now state distinctly a few points which will enable the reader to understand in a simple way the truth of consecration. We say, then, at once, that *consecration lies in Christ having full control over the bodies of His people, so that they may be organs for the expression of nothing but Himself.* Two scriptures will make our meaning clear. — "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20). The same apostle writes, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4: 10). In both of these passages we have the same thing — that Christ only is to be manifested through the bodies of His people. The difference is, that in the first, self is altogether displaced — it is "not I, but Christ liveth in me;" whereas in the second, the means are given by which the manifestation of "the life of Jesus" is secured. This, then, is consecration — Christ instead of self, Christ reigning supreme within, and using us as the vehicle for the display of Himself amid the darkness of this world.

It may now be helpful if we inquire how this consecration — the desire of every true-hearted believer — is reached. We have pointed out the fact that we gladly accepted, through the grace of God, Christ as our substitute on the cross; that when we are led into the truth of deliverance, we as gladly accept Him instead of ourselves before God; and now we must proceed a step further, and accept Him instead of self as our life in this world. Like the apostle, we must say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." This will lead to the refusal of self in every shape and form, because we have learnt that self is only evil. Christ then will become the motive, object, and end of all we say and do. He Himself, though ever the perfect One, blessed be His Name, has shown us the pathway to this end. He never spake His own words, and never wrought for Himself; He did not speak for or act *from* Himself, — that is, He did not originate His own words or actions (John 5: 19; John 14: 10). Both alike were from the Father; or, as He Himself said, "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." On the same principle, He within us should, in the power of His Spirit, produce our words and actions, that both alike might be a testimony to Him and to His glory.

We have hindrances, — He had none. He was a perfect vessel, and could thus say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." We have the flesh still within us, and the flesh ever lusteth against the Spirit, and seeks to hinder His blessed power in the soul. We thus read in one of the Scriptures cited, "Always bearing about in the body the dying [or rather, the putting to death] of Jesus;" and in Romans 8, "If we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body," etc. That is, there needs to be the constant application of death to all that we are, if there is to be the unhindered expression, in any measure, of Christ; and the power for this lies in our possession of the Holy Ghost. For example, suppose, under temptation, I am on the verge of giving way to temper, or of falling into sin of any kind, looking away from myself to Christ, and remembering

that I through grace have been associated with Him in His death, I am enabled through the Spirit to refuse the flesh, to reckon myself dead to sin; and in this way Christ retains His sway, and He lives in me, and speaks through me, instead of myself. Hence, too, the exhortation not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. 4: 30); for if by any allowance of the flesh He is grieved, I not only obscure the expression of Christ through me, but I also lose the power, by grieving the Spirit into silence, to mortify the deeds of the body.

Even though therefore I start with the acceptance of Christ for my life here instead of myself, consecration can only be maintained by the constant, daily, hourly, habit of self-judgment in the presence of God. That which maketh every thing manifest is light; and in the light as God is in the light, if I am consciously there, I instantly detect every thing which is not according to it; and then, if I judge myself, confessing my failure, my communion is restored, my consecration is maintained (See 1 John 1). So far, then, from the common thought that consecration is reached by one resolute act of self-surrender, we see that it commences rather with the acceptance of Christ instead of ourselves, — with giving Him His true place of pre-eminence within us, and that it is maintained by the unceasing refusal of self in the power of the Holy Ghost. And such is the consecration to which God, in His infinite mercy, leads the delivered soul.

It should, however, be added that our consecration in this world will never be complete. The Lord Jesus Himself is the only perfectly consecrated One; and He is the model to which we are to be conformed. Our consecration now is in proportion to our conformity to Him — no more or less. It is therefore a misconception of Scripture to speak of our being entirely consecrated, and a greater mistake still, as before noticed, to speak of this as attained in a moment by a single act of surrender. The Lord, in His prayer to the Father, on the even of His crucifixion, said, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17: 19). He was ever the true Nazarite, entirely separated unto God; but now He was about to sanctify Himself, to set Himself apart, to God in a new way, even as the glorified Man, and as such He would become the standard of our sanctification, — that is, of our practical sanctification. He therefore says, "That they also might be sanctified through the truth" — through the truth of what He is as sanctified, set apart in glory. This sanctification, consequently, will be for us progressive — progressive in proportion to the power of "the truth" on our souls.

How this is accomplished is explained to us by the apostle Paul. "We all with open [unveiled] face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3: 18). With Christ in glory before our souls, (and He is fully unveiled — revealed to us,) beholding all the glory of God displayed in His face, all the moral perfections, all the blessed attributes, the sum of the spiritual excellency of God, concentrated and told out in that glorified One, — occupied thus with Him as the object of our contemplation and delight, we are, through the power of the Holy Ghost, gradually (for it is "from glory to glory") transformed into the likeness of the One on Whom we gaze. But, we repeat, we never here fully attain to His likeness; for it is only when we see Him as He is that we shall be like Him (1 John 3: 2). Just in proportion to our likeness to Him will be the manifestation of His life through our bodies. Hence there can be no rest here in attainment, as also no attainment of perfect holiness. There may be the claim of holiness through faith, but it cannot be asserted too strongly that the holiness of which the Scripture speaks is entire

conformity to a glorified Christ. This is scriptural holiness, and we may attain, by God's grace, more of this daily; but it will be ours fully only when we see our blessed Lord face to face. At the same time, those who have learned the truth of redemption, and have entered upon the joy of deliverance, will have but one desire, namely, that Christ, and Christ alone, should have His rightful place of supremacy, and therefore complete sway, over their hearts and lives.

In conclusion, we may point out briefly the characteristics of the consecrated saint. First and foremost, he has no will. Like the apostle, he says, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." Crucified with Christ, the will connected as it is with the old man, is gone before God, and we consequently treat it as already judged, and refuse its activities. The will of Christ is our only law, and we are

His for His sole and absolute use. Then, also, the consecrated believer seeks only the exaltation of Christ. Take again the apostle Paul when in prison, and with possible martyrdom before him, we find that it was his earnest expectation and hope that in nothing he should be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or death. Self disappeared from his view, and the glory of Christ filled his soul. Together with this, we learn that Christ was the be-all and end-all, the motive and object of the apostle's life — a sure mark of consecration. "To me," he says, "to live is Christ." And while to die would be gain, he has no choice, for the reason given — that Christ was every thing to him, and He only knew how the apostle could best serve Him. Lastly, his hope was, to be with Christ. When Christ is the object of our affections, if He fills our hearts, we cannot but look forward to be with Him. Where your treasure is your heart will be also, and the heart ever craves to be with its treasure. If death, then, is before the consecrated believer, he will say with Paul, "To depart and be with Christ is far better;" and if death is not before him, he will be living in the power of the blessed hope of His return, that he may be with his Lord forever and ever. For this is the hope which He Himself sets before the soul; so that if He says, "Behold, I come quickly," the heart of the consecrated one will, in the language of John, respond, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

God's Way Of Holiness

One bright spot in the prevailing and increasing darkness around is seen in the intense desire, which has been begotten in many hearts, after more conformity to the will of God, as expressed in His word. Corruptions of the truth abound, and worldliness in manifold forms is blighting the spiritual life of numbers of God's people; but, together with this, there are many who are seeking for a larger measure of scriptural holiness. True it is that many untrustworthy guides and erroneous doctrines have appeared, misleading and entangling souls in bondage; for Satan is ever on the watch to turn to his own account every revival in souls of the work of God, and he never does this so effectually as when he transforms himself into an angel of light. Still whatever mistakes have been made, and however many the perversions of the truth, we cannot but thank God that any longing after more holiness, and after more devotedness to Christ, has arisen; and we cannot but hope, at the same time, that it is a real action of the Spirit of God, corresponding with trimming the virgins' lamps, (Matt. 25), in response to the cry that has gone forth, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." It is on this account that we

desire, in the following pages, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to make straight paths for the feet of all who seek to follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. May He so help us as both to preserve from error and guide into the truth.

One preliminary observation, however, must first be made. The primary need of souls is the forgiveness of sins, cleansing from guilt by the precious blood of Christ, peace with God through the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 4: 24, 25; Rom. 5: 1). If these blessings are unknown, vain will be the pursuit after holiness, however determined and resolute the efforts made. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," (John 3: 6), and will ever remain such, whatever the form — fair and pious often — it may take in the eyes of others. No, the first step in the way of holiness cannot be taken until after the new birth and the possession of peace with God. It is well therefore that the reader should pause, before proceeding further, to inquire if he, by the grace of God, knows what it is to be saved, to have passed from death unto life, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This question settled, he may then, but not before, seek to discover the way of holiness — according to God.

In unfolding the scriptures on this subject, it is necessary, before all, to ascertain what is *GOD'S STANDARD OF HOLINESS*. It is owing to the neglect of this point that so many serious errors have arisen. Raising a standard of their own, some have been deceived, and have, at the same time, deceived others, into thinking that they had attained holiness — mainly because they have not fallen into known sin, thereby substituting a good conscience for holiness. The warning words of the apostle, when writing to the Corinthians, should have been an antidote to this error. He says, "Measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves (they) are not wise." (2 Cor. 10: 12). Now, in regard to this, it will be sufficient to lay down the following positions: first, that God's standard is the only one believers can accept; and, secondly, that He alone is the judge as to our conformity to it.

Bearing then these principles in mind, we may proceed with our inquiry; and in order to this, we beseech the reader's earnest attention to the following scriptures. Speaking to the Father, our Lord says, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John 17: 19). Again we read, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3: 18). "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8: 29). Once more, "Beloved, now are we the sons (children) of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him (that is, in Christ), purifieth himself even as He (that is, Christ) is pure." 1 John 3: 2, 3.

Leaving the exposition of these passages for the present, one and the same truth, it may be pointed out, appears in all: namely, *that Christ glorified is the model, God's model, to which we are to be conformed*; and it follows therefore that Christ in glory is His standard for the believer. Nor could it be otherwise, as will be seen, if we do but recall the character in which our Lord is sitting at the right hand of God. When He was down here He was God manifest in flesh, God in Christ, the presentation therefore — albeit He was perfect man — of God to men; but now that He has gone up on high He is there as man, as the glorified

Man, although, and it must never be forgotten, in Him as such dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Hence He is spoken of as the beginning of the creation of God, as the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, for in truth He is according to the eternal counsels of God, the last Adam, the second Man (the Lord) from heaven.

Just therefore as all of Adam's race are born in His likeness, so, in result, all who are connected with the Christ will bear His image (1 Cor. 15: 45-49). Thus it is that Christ, and Christ alone, is presented to us as God's perfect pattern — His perfect pattern of holiness for His people. Nothing lower than this can then be accepted without injury to the soul, simply because it involves the substitution of man's thoughts for the thoughts of God.

This requires, however, a further word of explanation. When it is said that Christ in glory is our standard, we mean, when speaking of the present subject, that God desires that we should be holy even as Christ is holy, for it is only in Him that perfect holiness is discovered. Measures of it may be found in eminent and devoted Christians, according to the degree in which Christ has been formed within them, but it is only in Him, who is now seated at God's right hand, that it is seen and exhibited in all its blessed perfection.

Thus, in the scripture already cited, He says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." He was ever the holy One as He passed through this world ever undefiled, notwithstanding that He came continually into contact with sin and evil. He could even touch the unclean leper and yet not be contaminated; for the active energy of His own holy being repelled all the defiling influences of the scene through which He was passing. In a word, He is not more holy now than when a sojourner on the earth, for there could be no degrees or variations in that which was always perfect. When therefore He says, "I sanctify myself," He means, that He was about to set Himself apart to God in that new place to which He was about to depart, that His own might also be sanctified, according to His own measure, by the truth of what He would be there as glorified Man. Here He had, though ever untainted, to do with sin and evil, but "in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth He liveth unto God," and, in a scene where neither sin nor evil can penetrate, He is set apart wholly for God, in a separation as complete as the perfection of His own moral being. His sanctification thus comprises perfect separation from evil, and, if the phrase may be permitted, entire separation to God — all the energies of His holy nature finding their perfect satisfaction and delight in God. And in this state and place He is, we repeat, our model or standard. This was shadowed forth even in the old dispensation. Speaking to His people through Moses and Aaron, Jehovah says, "I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11: 44); and Peter, on the basis of this scripture, writes, "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1: 15, 16).

Before proceeding, let the reader pause again, and consider the immense advantage it is to have his eye rightly directed to God's presentation, in Christ glorified, of holiness to His people. When holiness is made to consist in feelings, experiences, desires or attainments, the eye is necessarily turned within, and the soul occupied with itself; and the consequence is that, discovering its own vileness and corruption, together with its powerlessness to free itself from the power of evil, it will often fall into a state of despondency and hopeless bondage. Or if, as in some cases, deceived by seasons of bright and happy experiences, it should embrace the thought

that holiness has been attained, it will only be to be painfully aroused from its dream, sooner or later, by some violent outbreak of the flesh and fall into sin. When, on the other hand, Christ is before the soul, and self and its experiences lost sight of and forgotten, the influence of all that He is, in His blessed perfection, is brought to bear upon us, His beauty and excellency are increasingly discerned and appreciated, and there will be, as may be explained further on, a gradual transformation into His likeness. Bear then, ever in mind, that holiness is to be found not in ourselves but in Christ, and hence, that if we would be holy we must ever have Him as the standard before our souls.

Having thus seen that Christ in glory is exhibited as the model of the believer, the model to which the saint is to be conformed, we may now consider the means by which this conformity is to be attained. A moment's consideration will show that there are two aspects of this part of our subject; that there must be on the one side, abstinence or separation from evil, the avoidance of sin, and on the other, positive growth in the likeness of Christ. Let us take these two aspects in the order stated.

First as to a sinless walk, or, if it may be so stated as to bear on recent discussions of the subject, ceasing from sin. Now it is freely admitted, or rather earnestly insisted, that **THERE IS NO NECESSITY FOR THE BELIEVER TO SIN**. It is the language of the apostle John, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." 1 John 2: 1. Nothing therefore can be plainer, whatever, alas, the actual facts of the case, than that the believer should heartily accept this truth. For though he may be often betrayed into sin, owing to his having an evil nature, to his want of watchfulness, and to his lack of dependence on God, he should never for one minute receive the thought that sin cannot be avoided. If he once admits that sin is a necessary part of his experience, he will soon lose sight of its true character, its hatefulness to God, will next give up the practice of self-judgment, and, in the end, become the prey and the sport of the evil one, as to his walk through this world.

"Whosoever," says the apostle John, "abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen Him, neither known Him." And again, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3: 6, 8, 9.

It is quite true that the Apostle speaks in these scriptures according to his wont, in what is termed an abstract way, that is, he confines his attention to what is born of God, and hence does not think, in this place, of the evil nature, or the constant failures of God's people. Still he points out what is characteristic, showing, us that a Christian, or child of God, should be marked by, should have the distinguishing feature of, not sinning. They are therefore very solemn words, words which ought to have their due force in our hearts and consciences, if we would be in communion with the mind of God as to the conduct of His children. Nor let any be discouraged by such statements; for, together with them, will be found the means of being kept from sinning. Thus it is said, "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not."

Here then is the secret — it is abiding in Christ; and there are few who would not admit that sin could not be committed while abiding in Christ. We are therefore but shut up to Him; our very helplessness thus shuts us up to Him, and leads us to cry to Him that He would so keep us

abiding in Him that we may not sin. But this is continual work; moment by moment there must be looking to Him. It is not one act; it is rather our life — our life of constant dependence upon Him and His power.

There is, in this connection, another scripture that may be helpful. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." 1 John 5: 18. Again we have the absolute statement of what is characteristic — that he who is born of God sinneth not; but then the Apostle points out the practical means by which this result is secured. One born of God "keepeth himself," and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Our blessed Lord, in the temptation in the wilderness, is the perfect example in this as in all else. Satan sought to ply Him with every possible seduction, but He "kept" Himself by the maintenance of entire dependence and perfect obedience, and thus Satan could not touch Him, could not withstand the two-edged sword of the Spirit which He wielded, namely, the Word of God. And may we also not "keep" ourselves? Satan has no enticements for the new nature, and God has graciously given us the power, in the gift of the Holy Ghost, wherewith to mortify "the deeds of the body," our "members which are upon the earth" (See Rom. 8: 13; Col. 3: 5), to keep the old man under the power of death, as well as to use the sword of the Spirit, so that there can be no necessity to become entangled in his snares. To overcome his solicitations, however, will require incessant vigilance and dependence, as is shown, by our Lord's words to His disciples, "Watch, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matt. 26: 41.

If, together with this, there is the constant occupation with divine things ("things that are above"), with all those objects, of which Christ is the full expression, which, are suited to the new nature, and feeding on which, that which is born of God in us will thrive and grow (See Heb. 5: 12-14; 1 Peter 2: 2, 3); if, in a word, the heart is filled with Christ, we shall be "kept," and the wicked one, whatever his subtlety, will not be able to touch us. Nothing is more certain; and we must beware therefore of deriving our standard from the actual state of Christians, instead of measuring our condition by God's thoughts and God's standard as given in His word.

There is another thing of equal importance found in the scriptures — a thing full of encouragement to us, especially if we are disheartened by the contemplation of the truth which has just been considered. It is that *God is able to keep us from falling*. (Jude 24). To doubt this would not only be to disbelieve His own word, but also to forget that He is God. And this truth also is full of comfort, because it takes our eyes off from ourselves, our own utter weakness and our many failures, and directs them upward to God and His almighty power. It was in this manner the Lord encouraged His disciples when, daunted by His words concerning the obstacles riches were to salvation, they exclaimed, "Who then can be saved?" He replied, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Matt. 19: 26. This indeed is a blessed foundation on which the soul can rest in the presence of the greatest dangers and snares in the Christian life. Does any child of God then ask, Is it possible to be kept from falling? The answer is at once found.

Yes, God is able to keep you; all things are possible with Him. He who has saved us is He alone who can keep us. As is truly expressed in the lines of a hymn,

"Myself I cannot save,
Myself I cannot keep;
But strength in Thee I surely have,
Whose eyelids never sleep."

Peter also speaks of those who are "kept by the power of God."

Now it is an immense relief to the soul to learn that it is God who keeps; for as soon as this lesson is apprehended, all anxiety and all fear instantly cease, for the soul then instead of tormenting itself with constant apprehensions, looks up to God in childlike confidence, and leans on Him for daily preservation, as it did at first for salvation. Walking thus, day by day, in the knowledge that God is able to keep us from falling, our lives would be characterised by victory instead of defeat, because we should be borne along in the arms of Omnipotence — folded to His breast in the everlasting arms, where no shaft of Satan could penetrate, and out of which no temptation could entice us.

Thus of Israel it is said, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. . . . Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." Deut. 33: 27-29. Omnipotence was thus engaged both for their safety and in their conflicts; and this is none the less true of the believer now; for if God be for us, who can be against us?

It is only a simple consequence of what has been already said to add, that it is *faith which brings divine power into exercise on our behalf*. This is taught everywhere in the scriptures. Peter thus speaks of those who are kept by the power of God *through faith* unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1: 5.) When, moreover, the disciples inquired of the Lord why they could not cast the demon out of the child, He replied, "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you." Matt. 17: 19, 20. We also read of those who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Heb. 11: 33, 34.

It is therefore abundantly manifest that faith links the believer with, and brings in the exercise of, the almighty power of God, or, as might be truly said, brings God Himself in to act for His people, so that, in the words of our Lord, nothing is impossible to them. But faith, and it should never be forgotten, is a real thing, a divine plant that only grows out of the soil of a broken will; for until we have come to the end of ourselves and our resources, and have learned our utter helplessness, we shall never be cast upon God in the sense of entire dependence upon Him and His power — His power which is made perfect in weakness.

A beautiful illustration of this is found in the life of king Jehoshaphat. The children of Moab and the children of Ammon, with others, came against him to battle. Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah, and Judah gathered themselves from all their cities to seek the Lord. The king presented their case before Jehovah, and he concluded his prayers with these remarkable words, "O my God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee." At once the Lord interposed, and encouraged the hearts of His people by the mouth of one of His prophets; "Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. . . . Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them; for the Lord will be with you." 2 Chr. 20. And so it came to pass, for when all Judah began to sing and praise, lifting up their voices in the well-known words, "Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever," God came in, and smote their enemies with utter destruction. God is still God, and His power is still available for the conflicts of His people; and they that trust in Him, whatever the activity and malice of the enemy, will never be confounded.

We thus see that God has made abundant provision for His saints; that if He teaches us that there is no necessity to sin, He also reveals to us the secret of our preservation from it; that our safety lies in Himself who alone is able to guard us, and that He never fails to respond to the cry of faith. It is therefore as true now, as in the days of the Psalmist (and there is power available for the saint today that the Psalmist never knew) that if we cry, "O Lord, hold Thou us up," we shall be safely kept.

Before going further, we ask the reader to remember that, while all this is true, and that, even if the believer were kept from sinning, this is not holiness according to God. If one were so kept, it would be a most blessed testimony to God's power and grace, and He would be indeed glorified by such a blameless walk; but still, it would not be scriptural holiness. This, as has been shown, is conformity to Christ in glory. It is this, and nothing less; and nothing less could be accepted without doing violence to the whole teaching of the word of God.

It is precisely on this point that so many mistakes have been made. Failing to perceive that God could not accept any standard of holiness short of that which He has displayed, in all its perfection, in the One He has glorified at His right hand, many have made it consist, as before stated, in being kept from sin — from known sin. The Apostle has anticipated this error, when he says, "I know nothing by myself"; (or, as some translate, I am conscious of nothing in myself that is, he did not know of any allowed sin, but he adds) "yet I am not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord." 1 Cor. 4: 4. The Lord alone can discern the true state of our souls.

But it is sometimes advanced, that, by the constant application of the blood of Christ, the very tendency to sin may be eradicated. The doctrine is so widespread, and the point is so important, that we call especial attention to it. There lies in the contention a threefold misconception: first, as to the real nature of holiness; secondly, as to the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ; and, thirdly, as to the abiding character of the flesh. Let us, then, examine the scripture on which this contention is based.

"If," says the Apostle John, "we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1: 7.

Three things are here plainly indicated: walking in the light, fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ cleansing from all sin. Now in the teaching to which allusion has been made, the last two are dependent on the first, upon walking in the light; and it thus becomes necessary to inquire into its meaning. Is it, as contended a practical thing? Is it, that is, a state to which some Christians, as distinguished from the mass, attain? In other words, does walking in the light mark out a holy class, those who are living in true separation to God? The whole teaching of the context forbids the supposition. The third verse shows that all who received what the apostles had "seen and heard" concerning "the word of life" (v. 1), were brought into fellowship with them, and thus into fellowship (for that was the character of their own fellowship) with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. All believers, therefore, are in this fellowship; there is no other; it is, in fact, Christian fellowship.

This truth is laid down as the foundation of what follows; and hence the Apostle proceeds to supply a test of its reality, whereby he shows that it is not enough to *say* that we have it, for if we are in its possession our whole sphere and position are changed — we are brought, that is to say, into the light. He thus declares the message that he had heard of Him, that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." This being the case, if our fellowship be with the Father and the Son, we must also be in the light, and could not be in the darkness. If therefore, *we say* that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another (and our fellowship is with the Father and the Son — be it remembered), and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Those who walk in the darkness, are those, then, who, whatever their pretensions, have never received the message of the Apostle, and those who walk in the light are, on the other hand, those who have received it, and with it, eternal life, and have thereby been brought into the holy circle of fellowship with the Father and the Son, into the light as God is in the light. They are two contrasted classes — not two different classes of Christians, but the two contrasted classes really of believers and unbelievers. Darkness is the moral sphere in which the latter walk, as light is that of the former. This will explain the word "walk," because it is the circle or sphere in which the respective classes live and move and have their being, light and darkness designating the moral character of each. (Compare Eph. 5: 8; 1 Peter 2: 9.)

It may be, however, asked, whether it is true then that, all believers (if all are included in the term "walk in the light") have fellowship with one another? The reply is, that the question misses the character of the Apostle's teaching. He is not dealing with the practical state of believers, but with what is characteristic, with what belongs to all alike before God. He does not enter upon the consideration, whether all are in the *enjoyment* of fellowship with the Father and with His Son, and so with one another, but he confines himself, according to his manner, with what pertains to all who possess eternal life. All such are brought into the place of fellowship; the enjoyment of it will undoubtedly depend upon practical states, but this is no part of John's subject. One other thing may be pointed out in confirmation of the above exposition. The words used are "walk in the light *as He is in the light*" - that is, up to the full character of the light in which God dwells which would imply, if it were a practical thing, a walk as spotlessly perfect as

the holiness of God. To walk *according* to the light should be the desire of every saint, but to walk in the light as God is in the light, marks in this scripture, the position into which all are brought as a consequence of having a new nature and eternal life through the reception, in the grace of God, of the divine message concerning the Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested on earth.

It remains, then, only to speak of the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. The above interpretation will have made it clear that it in no way depends upon a practical walk. If this is apprehended, the special argument alluded to is at once answered, for the contention is that where a believer walks practically in the light, the blood of Christ goes on to cleanse (pressing the present tense — cleanseth), as in continuous operation, from all taint of sin. As one has written, "A victory over sin itself, His blood being the purifying medium, whereby we gradually, being already justified, become pure and clean from all sin."

Two fatal objections lie against such a thought. First, the apostle is not speaking at all of the application of the blood in this scripture — only of its efficacy. His subject is eternal life; first Christ as the eternal life, and then as displayed in and through the believer. This seventh verse points out, as already seen, three things belonging to all believers — a walk in the light as God is in the light, fellowship with one another, and the efficacy of the blood of Christ. The last is introduced to show how a saint can be in the light in perfect liberty, without fear, through the all-cleansing efficacy of the blood. But we repeat, that the point here is not its application but its efficacy.

The second objection is, that, according to the teaching of scripture, the blood of Christ is never applied a second time to the believer. Once applied, it cleanses, and for ever cleanses, from all guilt. "By one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified." God has graciously made another provision for the sins of His people if they should fall into them (1 John 2: 1); but it is to miss the whole teaching of scripture to insist upon a repetition of the application of the blood of Christ, and is really derogatory to its eternal value and preciousness before God. (See Heb. 9, 10.) The very next verse, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," should have revealed the fact that sin is in the believer, though he is endowed with power in the Holy Ghost to hold it in the place of death, and will be in him unchanged, and unchangeable, until Christ comes, or until he departs to be with Christ.

Having cleared the subject of what is a real difficulty in the minds of many, we may now pass on to the consideration of the second aspect, namely, the means FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF HOLINESS. It must be borne in mind, that we are speaking of practical holiness, and that the measure of this is conformity to Christ. At conversion we are sanctified through the Spirit in the new birth; and thus Paul could write to the saints at Thessalonica, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2: 13); and to those at Corinth, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6: 11.) He also speaks of the saints as sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1: 2), and further says, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and *sanctification*, and redemption." (1 Cor. 1: 30.) Now this sanctification, whether that through the Spirit, or that possessed as being in Christ Jesus, is perfect from the commencement, and thus admits of no degrees or growth, so that

God on this ground can call His people saints, and holy (1 Cor. 1: 1; Eph. 1: 1; Col. 3: 12; Heb. 3: 1). But the question now before us relates to practical sanctification, in which there may be growth and development, and our object now is to ascertain the means by which this is to be attained; and if we refer again to the scriptures which were adduced at the outset, we shall find the answer to our inquiry.

First of all, we will ask the reader to turn to 2 Corinthians 3: 18: "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." In this striking scripture the Lord is presented to us as glorified, with the glory of God displayed in His face (2 Cor. 4: 6), as He is seated at God's right hand. The contrast is with Moses who, when he came out from the presence of Jehovah, put on a veil, because the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold his face for the glory of his countenance (2 Cor. 3: 7; Ex. 34: 33-36). Our blessed Lord has His face unveiled (the word "open" is really unveiled), and we, that is, believers, are permitted, and are able, to behold it, for the very glory that shines there proclaims the eternal satisfaction of God with the work of Christ accomplished on the cross — on the ground of which it is we have been saved, and brought to Himself. The glory that shone in the face of Moses was a legal glory, and told the people of the holiness of their God, and of His righteous requirements through the law; and they were afraid, for the law was necessarily to them, sinners as they were, a ministration of condemnation and death; but the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as revealed in the gospel, is a ministration of righteousness and of the Spirit.

The point however now to be observed is, that Christ as so exhibited, that is, glorified as Man, as before shown, is God's ideal of holiness, for, in truth, His glory displayed in His face is but the expression of His own perfections. God is light, and God is love, and this is what He is, and, confining our thoughts to holiness, the perfection of what He is as light (though, blessed be His name, this can never be dissociated from what He is as love) is now seen in Christ as glorified.

How then are we to be transformed into that glorious likeness? The answer is plainly given. "We all beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord." The agencies of our transformation are then beholding the glory of the Lord, and a divine operation through the Spirit of the Lord. Let us then examine these two things.

First, beholding the glory of the Lord. This glory, it may be repeated, is what is seen in Christ as man at the right hand of God. Down here He, while truly man, was God manifest in flesh; there He sits as man, glorified as man in response to His having glorified God on the earth, and finished the work which had been given Him to do. (John 13: 31, 32; John 17: 4, 5). This glory is fully revealed in the gospel, and believers, rejoicingly beholding it as the proof of accomplished redemption, delight to trace it out, and to meditate upon the glorious perfections of the One who is now their Saviour and their Lord.

But where do they "behold" this glory, these excellent perfections, unfolded? *It is in the written word;* and the word of God becomes their constant study, because the various rays of His glory are seen shining forth through its pages. In the Gospels His moral glory brightens up every

step of His pathway through the wilderness, and on the cross there was the concentrated display of His perfection as man, for there He was tested to the uttermost in a new way, in the place of sin and for sin, when He endured the hidings of the face of His God. It was to this He Himself referred when He said to His disciples, "Now is the Son of man glorified." But at the right hand of God He subsists in a new condition. Down here, except for a brief moment on the mount of transfiguration, His glory was shrouded, save to the eye of faith (See John 1: 14; John 2: 11); but now it is all displayed in and through His glorified body — more fully and more completely than when the three disciples were "eye-witnesses of his majesty."

All these perfections of God — His holiness, His love, His majesty, His truth, His power, His righteousness, His mercy, His grace — are all unveiled in Him, for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily; and not only are all these unveiled in heaven, but they are also revealed in the scriptures that speak of His present place and power at God's right hand. What rays of His present glory, for example, shine forth from Ephesians 1 - 4; Colossians 1 - 3; Philippians 1 - 3; as also in the Epistle to the Hebrews and elsewhere?

This is what the apostle means by "beholding," not endeavouring to imagine what Christ is like, but gazing with the spiritual eye upon the various unfoldings of His glory in the written word. And if He has been made precious to our souls, if our hearts have been drawn out to Him, loving Him because He first loved us, we shall find unceasing delight in meditating on His perfections — on the glories of Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree. We shall seek and love to be in His company — in this way anticipating the joys of eternity; and, thus occupied, while thus engaged, (for this is the teaching of the Apostle) we shall be gradually transformed into His likeness.

Even in human things, if we admire the character of some great man, we love to study his life, to read his history, and we thus insensibly catch something of his spirit. It is indeed a moral law that we become assimilated to that which we admire. Human characters are often formed by taking some chosen model for imitation. Much more is this the case with the Christian. His only model, as we have seen, is Christ, and by keeping Him before his soul, not in one aspect but in all that He is, and delighting in Him, he is changed, as this scripture teaches, "into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord."

These last words reveal the second agency of transformation under which we are brought. It is not by the action, so to speak, of a natural law, as in human things, but it is by the mighty operation of the Holy Spirit, who loves to fashion us after the image of Him on whom we gaze, who takes every ray of the glory that falls upon "the eyes of our heart," and seeks to reproduce it, and does even now in measure reproduce it, in us. Alas, that we should so often hinder His working! But if we have Christ before our souls in the way indicated, then the Holy Spirit works, for He delights, wherever there is purpose of heart, to take the things of Christ and show them unto us, and by showing, to give them all their transforming power upon our souls. Then there is growth, and in no other way, in practical holiness.

If we now refer to another scripture, we shall find abundant confirmation of the above statements. "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them

through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John 17: 15-19.) The most cursory glance at this scripture reveals the intense desire of our blessed Lord for the holiness of His people; and, while uttering His prayer to the Father that they might be thus sanctified, He reveals the means of its attainment. The foundation of all lies undoubtedly in verse 16. "They," He says, "are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;" for, as He says elsewhere, He had chosen them out of the world, and, by being born again, they had been forever morally separated from it. He therefore desired that they should be kept from its evil, should have their garments unspotted and moreover, that they should be sanctified by "thy truth," adding, "Thy word is truth," showing, that the Father's word was to be the means of their sanctification.

Then He speaks of having sent His own into the world even as He Himself had been sent into the world, and thereon grounds the statement, "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

We have already explained that to sanctify Himself was to set Himself apart to God on high as the glorified Man, and thus as the model to which they were to be conformed; and the means of their conformity to Him is contained in the words, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth," through the truth of what He is as glorified. The sanctification of His people is thus seen here, as in 2 Corinthians 3: 18, to be effected by the constant application of the truth — the truth of what Christ is. The difference between the two scriptures lies in the fact that in the former, the use of the means — beholding the glory of the Lord — is brought into prominence, whereas in the latter, our attention is directed rather to the application of the means. But the mode of sanctification, of growth in holiness, is the same in both, and in both cases the goal is entire conformity to Christ in glory.

The passage quoted from 1 John is slightly different, though entirely in harmony with the teaching of those just considered. First, the apostle reminds us that we are now the children of God; and then he says that it is not yet manifested what we shall be, but we know, he says, that when Christ is manifested, when, that is, He appears in glory, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man, he adds, that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure (1 John 3: 2, 3).

Here again, as the reader will perceive, Christ in glory, Christ as He will be displayed at His appearing, is set forth as our model, for we shall be like Him when we see Him as He is; and this prospect is given to us as a motive to our daily sanctification, to our judging ourselves continually according to what He is. The means of this sanctification we have gathered from other scriptures; here the point is, that even now we can accept no lower standard than the glorified Christ. We measure ourselves in the hope of being like Him when we see Him, by His absolute purity, and thus, by the grace of God, refuse all that is not suited to Him, and judge ourselves for the least allowance of anything inconsistent with His holiness.

This involves, and most blessedly involves, two things; our having Christ ever before our souls, and our being continually in His presence. Then, and then only, shall we detect, by the light of His glory, what is not according to His holy presence, and in communion with His own

mind, shall delight to put from us everything of which He would not approve, and to acquire all that would satisfy His own mind and heart. Hence our diligence in this will be a question of affection, for if He possesses our hearts our one desire will be to meet His approval, and it will be our earnest endeavour, as the apostle Paul writes, whether present or absent, to be acceptable to Him.

There are several other scriptures bearing on the subject, to some of which we may refer. In 1 Thessalonians are the following words: "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all, even as we do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." (1 Thess. 3: 12, 13.) This connection between the exercise of love (not human love, but love in the Spirit, the activity of the divine nature, for "God is love") toward one another, and toward all saints, is exceedingly beautiful. As another has written, "This power of love maintains the heart in the presence of God, and makes it find its joy in the light of His presence, and earnestly desire that all saints may be in His presence, their hearts fitted for it, and there. For God is love, and the exercise of love in the Christian's heart (fruit of the presence and the operation of the Spirit of God) is in fact *the effect* of the presence of God; and at the same time it makes us feel His presence, so that it keeps us before Him, and maintains sensible communion in the heart." And further, he adds, "Being thus the development of the divine nature in us, and the sustainment of our hearts in communion with God Himself, love is the bond of perfectness, *the true means of holiness*, when it is real. The heart is kept far away from the flesh and its thoughts, in the pure light of the presence of God, which the soul thus enjoys." Another scripture, speaking of entire sanctification, is found in the same epistle. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5: 23.

We add but one other passage, one that presents another aspect of the subject. Speaking of chastening, the Apostle says that the fathers of our flesh chastened us for a few days after their own pleasure, but God "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Here we are taught that God Himself takes us in hand, using the trials and persecutions by the way as needed discipline, to encourage us in the pursuit of holiness (ver. 4), and indeed to secure that we shall be partakers of it. His chastenings therefore are out the expression of His love to us (vv. 6,7); and reading our trials and sorrows in the light of this truth, what sustainment, what consolation is afforded! All this the heart of the reader will appropriate to itself, as our object now is only to point out that if, on the one hand, we are given the positive means of growing conformity to Christ, on the other, we are taught that God has His own way of weaning us from things around, and of drawing us closer to Himself, that, learning more of His own heart, we may increasingly desire to become partakers of His holiness. God is for His people, and if He reveals His desires for them, according to His eternal purposes of grace in Christ Jesus, that they should be "holy and without blame before him in love," (Eph. 1: 4), He Himself provides for their accomplishment. To this end He has bestowed on us the gift of the Holy Spirit to enable us both to hold the flesh in check, to reckon ourselves dead to sin, and also to appropriate the means of growth in holiness as revealed to us in His word. He moreover watches over us unceasingly in His grace and love, that brings in, when needful, death upon all that might hinder us in this blessed occupation; and, by the revelation of Himself to our hearts in His dealings with us, He

ever seeks to draw us closer to Himself, so that His Spirit, ungrieved within us, might be free to fashion us after the image of Christ, according to His sovereign will.

We may now sum up in distinct form the teaching we have gleaned from the scriptures on our subject.

1) Holiness according to God is conformity to Christ in glory; and hence the believer cannot accept any lower standard. We never surpass even our own ideal; on the other hand, being what we are, we seldom attain to the pattern prescribed even in human things. It is of paramount importance, therefore, that our eyes should be fixed upon God's ideal — that is, upon Christ. Thus the Apostle says, You "have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge *after the image of Him that created him*; where" he says, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." (Col. 3: 10, 11) Christ is the expression of the image of Him who created the new man, and it is after Him that the new man is to be renewed in knowledge. He is everything as our object, as well as in all as the power of life, and all else therefore, all human distinctions utterly disappear — leaving Christ alone to fill the vision of the soul.

2) It follows from this truth that holiness according to God will not be fully attained until we are with the Lord. This, indeed, is the precise statement of the word of God. We shall be like Him when we see Him as He is (1 John 3: 2). Beholding His glory we are changed into the same image from glory to glory — gradually, that is, from one degree to another, until we see Him face to face, and then His name will be in our foreheads, full likeness to Christ will be displayed on every brow (Rev. 22: 4), for all then will be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Even our bodies will then be transformed, for the apostle teaches that when the Lord Jesus Christ comes, He will change the body of our humiliation into the likeness of the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. 3: 20, 21). It is for this we wait: for the return of our Lord, and then, and then alone shall we be holy according to the thoughts of God.

3) While this is true, and ever to be insisted upon, it is equally of moment to remember what has been seen, that there is no necessity for the believer to sin. To expect to fall into sin, to allow the actings of the flesh in any shape or form, or to admit the thought that we are powerless against our evil nature, our inborn corruptions, is to forget the truth of the cross, of our association with Christ in His death and resurrection, of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and of the place into which we have been brought in Christ before God. Every failure, every sin is due to ourselves, to our want of the maintenance of dependence upon God, to our disobedience to the word, or to our want of watchfulness, and should be so owned and judged in the presence of God. No quarter, no excuse, no palliation must be allowed for sin; and if, by the grace of God, this were fully accepted, there would be far more brokenness of spirit, a far more thorough self-judgment whenever the believer is unhappily betrayed into sin; and, together with the perception of the possibility of a blameless walk, grace would be looked for to preserve and sustain in it, and, looked for, it would be received.

Does the reader doubt this? Let him search the Scriptures, and if he find it as stated, as he surely will, let him set this path before himself, and remember for his encouragement the words,

"I will cry unto God Most High; unto God that performeth all things for me," (Psalm 57: 2), and this also, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4: 13). The answer to our helplessness is His strength which is made perfect in weakness; and in Him therefore we may confidently rest, for He is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24.)

4) It should also be observed that our growth in holiness, while we are waiting for its full attainment at the coming of the Lord, will depend upon our diligence, our purpose of heart in the use of the divinely given means. As we have seen, beholding the glory of the Lord, occupation with Christ, contemplation of Him and His things, is what is used to form us after His likeness. If, therefore, instead of busying ourselves with this blessed occupation, our minds are set on things of the earth, on those things that minister to our own ease, comfort, or pleasure, upon political agitations or movements, upon the world or the things of the world, there could be no increase in likeness to Christ. The mind takes its colour from that with which it is occupied: hence it is only the mind that is engaged with Christ that will receive the impress of Christ. This fact cannot be urged too earnestly.

The Apostle Paul in Philippians 3 is our example in this respect, as he himself teaches (v. 17); and the secret of this is, that he had only one object before his soul, and so entranced was he with its beauty, that he counted all things but loss for (because of) the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He thus desired only to have Christ as his gain, and with his eye on the goal of full conformity to the One on whom he gazed, he did but one thing, namely, to forget the things that were behind, and, reaching forth unto those things that were before, to press toward the mark of the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. The attractions of Christ, as so presented to his soul, were the secret of his purpose of heart, as they must be also of ours; and the reader will not fail to remark, that the Apostle calls on all who are perfect, that is, all who have before their souls the prospect of being like Christ in glory, accepting no lower truth of their calling, to be like-minded with himself. And he adds, "If in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto you." (v. 15.) Shall we then accept anything lower than this which God Himself sets before us? Communion with God is to have His own desires in our hearts; and, if we are but under the power of the attractions of Christ, we shall be drawn away from all that might have detained us, and, with full purpose of heart, shall follow after (growing daily as we follow after), if that we may get possession of that for which also we have been taken possession of by Christ Jesus.

5) Connected with this truth is the fact, that our walk will be like that of our great Example in the proportion of our attainment to His image. Whatever measure of likeness to Christ has been really attained will, if we are walking in the Spirit, be expressed. The apostle John writes, "He that saith he abideth in Him [in Christ] ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 1 John 2: 16. He thus shows us that Christ is our perfect example, and that, even as to walk, no lower standard can be accepted, as also that such a walk can only flow from abiding in Him. John, as before observed, deals only with the abstract, and therefore perfect thing, and in this case supplies a test thereby for any who *profess* to be abiding in Christ. Abiding in Him we must accept, however it may judge and condemn us, His walk as our pattern as we pass through this world.

But the other truth remains, that we cannot exhibit more holiness than we already possess, more conformity to Christ than we have actually gained. We may deceive ourselves and others as to our attainments, but this is the truth before God. Moreover, for the expression of what of holiness may have been acquired through "beholding the glory of the Lord," two things are necessary: an ungrieved Spirit, and, what is a consequence of this, the acceptance of death upon all that we are as born of Adam; even as the Apostle writes, "Always bearing about in the body the dying [putting to death) of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. 4: 10. Self indeed must be set aside if Christ is to be displayed; and the reader will not forget that Christ displayed is the holiness of the believer.

6) It will have already been gathered that the Holy Spirit is our only power for a holy walk. Of ourselves we cannot take a single step in this path. The utmost human efforts, the most resolute determination, are of no avail either to keep ourselves from evil or to follow after Christ. It can only be by the Holy Ghost; and He will display His mighty energy in and through us, just in proportion as we have Christ before us as the object of our souls, as we are walking with a single eye to His glory.

7) In conclusion, we beg to commend the whole subject to the earnest attention of the reader. There is nothing that brings so much glory to our blessed Lord and Saviour, or that gives such a powerful testimony to His name before men, as a holy life. May He grant that both reader and writer may grow daily in His likeness for His present joy, and for their truest blessedness!

"Blest Saviour, keep our spirits stayed,

Hard following after Thee;

Till we, in robes of white arrayed,

Thy face in glory see!"