

# The Glories of Christ as the Son of Man.

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## 1. THE TITLE OF SON OF MAN.

EVERY intelligent and devout reader of Scripture must have discovered, to some extent, the vast range of truth which is unfolded and displayed in the various titles of our blessed Lord. Not one of them is without significance; they all indeed present some rays either of His essential or acquired glory. To study them, therefore, if guided and taught of the Holy Ghost, is the way to attain a deeper knowledge of His Person, and thus to be filled with God's thoughts of His beloved Son. We may then well be encouraged to embark upon the consideration of the subject, even if we confine our attention in these pages to the one mentioned at the head of this chapter, viz. that of the Son of Man.

It is found, as the reader will remember, in the Old Testament, and is used, as may be afterwards shown, in a prophetic way of Christ. Both Psalm 8 and Daniel 7 introduce it, and manifestly in connection with the future glory of our blessed lord. It is also used of Ezekiel (Ezek. 2, 3, 4, etc.), and its application to the prophet in his especial circumstances will greatly help us to determine its meaning as assumed by Christ Himself.

We may then pass at once to consider the term as adopted by our Lord and Saviour. Two things will aid us to apprehend its force and meaning — its place in Psalm 8, and the period of its

adoption in the synoptic gospels, that is in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The subject of the first Psalm is the Righteous Man; in the second Psalm, God's King is introduced, but "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. 2: 2, 3). The apostles cite and apply this scripture to the action of Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel in the rejection of Christ; and they also emphatically declare that the Jews, in crucifying their Messiah, did but accomplish whatsoever God's hand and His counsel had determined before to be done (Acts 4: 25-28).

Thus, while God's purposes can never be frustrated — for He will yet set His King upon His holy hill of Zion — Christ, when presented to the Jews for acceptance, was rejected. The next four psalms depict, to speak generally, the state of things amongst the Jews, consequent upon the refusal of their Messiah, and also the feelings and experiences of the godly remnant who have attached themselves in heart to Christ before He establishes His throne; that is, during the period of His rejection by His ancient people. This brings us to Psalm 8 — a very important one in the ways of God. Its opening sentence, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" gives the key to its interpretation. It is no longer a question of Israel or of the Messiah, but the whole earth is in view, and all things are put under the feet of the SON OF MAN. Now, inasmuch as Adam was not the Son of Man, it would be plain, even if we had no further light upon the subject, that a greater than Adam was here set forth. But we have an inspired interpretation of the psalm in Hebrews 2, where the writer of the epistle shows that Jesus, who for the suffering of death was made a little lower than the angels, is now crowned with glory and honour; and he proceeds to show, beyond all contradiction, that it is under the feet of the glorified Man at God's right hand, He having tasted death for every man (or everything), all things are put. Indeed, in two other epistles this is directly stated (see 1 Cor. 15: 27, 28; Eph. 1: 22).

The conclusion then is, from the foregoing considerations, that on the rejection of Christ by the Jews He assumes the title of the Son of Man, and as such passes in prospect into a wider circle of glory in which all men and all things will be subjected to His sway. This conclusion will be confirmed by a reference to the teaching of the gospels. In Luke we read, for example, that on one occasion our blessed Lord put this question to His disciples, "Whom say the people that I am?" After they had answered, "John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again, He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God." Then we find that He straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing, namely, that He was God's Christ — the Messiah — saying, "The *Son of man* must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day" (Luke 9: 18-22; see also Matt. 17: 9. Mark 8: 27-31; Mark 9: 9, 12, 30-32).

From these passages it is abundantly clear that the Lord adopted the title of Son of Man in view of His rejection, suffering and death; and secondly, it is as manifestly taught that it is in this character as the Son of Man that He will have universal rule throughout the world. Daniel thus says, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was

given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him" (Dan. 7: 13, 14).

Allusion has been made to the fact that the prophet Ezekiel is addressed by the same title, and the remarks of another upon this may aid the reader in understanding its general purport. He says, "The throne of the supreme and sovereign Lord God is seen in Chaldea — in the place where the prophet then was — among the Gentiles. It is no longer seen at Jerusalem in connection with the land; nor have we any law embodied, so to speak, in the throne, according to which an immediate government was exercised. Consequently the voice of God speaks to Ezekiel as to a 'son of man' — a title that suited the testimony of a God who spoke outside of His people, as being no longer in their midst, but on the contrary as judging them from the throne of His sovereignty. *It is Christ's own title, looked at as rejected and outside of Israel*, although He never ceases to think of the blessing of the people in grace. This puts the prophet in connection with the position of Christ Himself. He would not, thus rejected, allow His disciples to announce Him as the Christ (Luke 9), for the *Son of Man* was to suffer."\*

\*The Synopsis, vol. ii., new edition, revised, of J. N. Darby.

To apprehend this teaching concerning the title in question will enable us to pursue our subject with greater intelligence and profit, especially if it be remembered that it is only through the ministry of the Holy Ghost we can know the things that are freely given to us of God (1 Cor. 2).

## 2. THE SON OF MAN "LIFTED UP."

**JOHN 3: 11; JOHN 8: 28; JOHN 12: 32.**

IT is only in the Gospel of John that the term "lifted up" is used for the crucifixion of Christ. It is, moreover, a striking thing that the word so rendered means also "exalted"; and it will be seen in our meditations that while it signifies, as the evangelist tells us, the character of the Lord's death (chap. 12), it includes, in the presentation of the truth in connection with it, His exaltation. It only occurs three times, and each time it is employed in different connections as to the teaching, so that taken together these scriptures set forth an immense scope of truth, embracing indeed the whole of the present interval, the manifestation of Christ to His earthly people, and His exaltation and glory in "the world to come," that is in the millennium, when He will shine forth unhindered as the Sun of Righteousness. We may then proceed to consider each occurrence of the phrase, "lifted up," hoping to be enabled to give all outline of its various teachings.

The first time the words are found is in John 3, where, as indeed in each case, it falls from the lips of the Lord Himself. Speaking to Nicodemus, after pressing the absolute necessity of the new birth, He says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (vv. 14-16).

It will be noticed, even by the most casual reader, that the *necessity* for the Son of Man to be lifted up is as absolute as it is for man to be born again. Both necessities are indispensable — one for man, and the other for God. It is sometimes, indeed, advanced that the necessity for the Son of Man to be lifted up was for man, inasmuch as he could not otherwise have approached God. This is undoubtedly true, but the question is whether this is the aspect of the truth presented in this scripture. Attention to its terms will show, we judge, that it is not, that it teaches us rather that it was a necessity for God in the accomplishment of His purposes for the bestowal of eternal life upon those who should believe in His beloved Son. For this end it was necessary that the judgment of death should be borne, and its power set aside, if life out of and beyond death were to be revealed, into which the believer could be brought in association with Christ. This might be illustrated in another way. Before God could reach the heart of man, and shed abroad His love there through the Holy Ghost, three things were required: Man, the man in the flesh, must come up under the eye of God for judgment, and this came to pass in the cross of Christ and so effectually that he has disappeared for ever from before God; secondly, Christ must be exalted in virtue of His death; and lastly, the Spirit of God must be given (see John 7: 39). In this way God, if we may use the expression, was set free to work according to His own eternal thoughts in Christ Jesus. And it may be added, that these eternal thoughts of His have already been accomplished in the One whom He has glorified at His right hand, for He is the true God and eternal life.

The Son of Man then has been lifted up; and the One who has been thus lifted up is presented as the Object for faith. He has been lifted up "that whosoever *believeth* in Him." This will explain the remark already made that His lifting up includes His exaltation, for where is He presented to men as the object of faith? Is it on the cross? No, it is as glorified at God's right hand; it is to Him there that the gospel directs men, and it is to Him there that men must believingly look, if they are to enter upon the blessedness here unfolded.

To whom then, it may be inquired, is this gospel proclaimed? It is to the whole world, not only to the Jew, but also to the Gentile; for the rejection of Christ by the Jew was but the occasion for the outflowing of the grace of God to all men of every clime and race. There is, therefore, absolutely no limit; for as the apostle Paul teaches, after he has demonstrated that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified, the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. This much indeed is involved in the "whosoever," for this term includes the possibility of any one in the wide world receiving the testimony of God.

And together with believing in the Son of Man having been lifted up, but now glorified, is linked eternal life — that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. Rescued from the judgment of God under which he lay, from the wrath of God (v. 36), and from Satan's power, so that he should not perish, the believer has eternal life. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Eternal life is thus connected with the knowledge of the Father as revealed in and through the Son; and it is enjoyed when, in the experience of our souls, we have reached Him on the other side of death, where in association with Him we are as sons before the Father's face. If any one should earnestly inquire how Christ may be reached on the other side of death, the answer may be given in the Lord's own words, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I

will raise him up at the last day" (John 6: 54). It is then by the appropriation of (making our own) the death of Christ, and so becoming identified with it in this world, that we pass morally (not actually, but in spirit) out of this world and join Christ where He is, and thus enter upon the enjoyment of eternal life. Every believer in the One who has been lifted up has an undoubted title to eternal life; but it is only through the appropriation of the death of Christ that eternal life can really be possessed. When, however, we are raised up at the last day, according to the Lord's promise, then we shall be actually in association with Christ and all alike will possess, in a sphere where death can no more enter, this divine and unspeakable gift.

One thing more has to be observed. All this blessedness proceeds from the sovereign love of God — God so loved the world. We have said the *sovereign* love of God; for surely, as every one will admit, there was nothing in the world itself to call forth this expression of His heart. Pity there might have been, but not *love*; on the contrary, there was everything to call down the execution of His judgment, for all had gone out of the way, and there was none that did good — no, not one. And yet He *loved* — such is God! And remark that the greatness of the love is seen in the greatness of the gift: He *so* loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. It was the Son of His bosom whom He gave; and the Son became Man, that He might accomplish the will of Him that sent Him; and in His death on the cross He endured all the judgment which lay upon man to open up the way by which God could righteously satisfy His own heart in bringing to pass His eternal counsels for the blessing of His people. What a theme for meditation! And it is a theme which, the more it is considered, the more it will beget in the soul thoughts of praise and adoration in the contemplation of such ineffable love and grace.

The second occurrence of the expression "lifted up," as applied to the Son of Man, is found in John 8. Surrounded by the unbelieving Jews, who had refused the plainest testimony to Christ as being the Sent One from the Father, Jesus said to them, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am [He], and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things" (v. 28). The first thing to notice is that it is not now, The Son of Man *must be* lifted up, but it is, When *ye have lifted up* the Son of Man, etc. If in chapter 3 it is, as we have seen, divine necessity, here, as evidently, it is the guilt of the Jew. On this account we are here in altogether a different circle. In John 3 it is all the saints of this present period who are in view; here it is the Jew (but including, as representing, the Jews of a later date) who is brought before us in these words of our blessed Lord.

Wherein, we may inquire first of all, lay the guilt of the Jew as here indicated? It may be seen in two ways — in their rejection of the word and works of Christ, and finally in His crucifixion. For the Jew, as indeed for every soul to whom Christ is presented, everything depended upon Who He was. If He were the Sent One of the Father, if God were His Father, as the Jews themselves alleged that He claimed, thus making Himself equal with God (chap. 5: 18); if, moreover, the plainest possible testimony to the truth of His Person were brought to them (John 5: 32-47; John 8: 18, 19), then they had no excuse for their sin in rejecting His claims. In truth they had not, for in their wilfulness they closed their eyes both to the testimony of John the Baptist and to that of Christ Himself; and they waxed harder and harder in their opposition to His claims, so that, while confessing that they could not deny that He did many miracles (John 11: 47), they persevered in their determination to put Him to death. Besides this, they were so

obdurate in their enmity that, in order to accomplish their end, they denied before Pilate all their national hopes and expectations in declaring that they had no king but Caesar (John 19: 15).

Such was their shameless guilt; and the Lord, knowing all from the beginning, charged this home upon them in the words, "When YE have lifted up the Son of man." Pilate, indeed, was willing to let Jesus go — to release Him at the feast — and in passing judgment upon Him, he only yielded to the passionate demands of the Jews in giving sentence as they required (Luke 23: 24).

Coming back again to the terms of our scripture, two things would follow upon His being lifted up by the Jews: first, they should "know that I am [He]," and secondly, "that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." When they asked Him, "Who art Thou?" He replied (we give another translation), "Altogether that which I have said to you," that is, His word was the perfect expression of Himself; but, as we have pointed out, they refused this testimony, and yet the time would come when they would know who He was, and whence His testimony — whether as connected with His word or His works — had proceeded. To what time, then, does the Lord refer? First of all, there may be, and undoubtedly is, an allusion to what took place at Pentecost, when a multitude were smitten at heart with the sense of their sin in crucifying their Messiah. They knew then, and they confessed who He was. Great, however, as was the blessing in these Pentecostal days, there cannot be a doubt that the meaning of these words of our blessed Lord requires a vast extension beyond that period, and that they will include the time spoken of by Zechariah, when God will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; "and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zech. 12: 10).

In the full interpretation, therefore, of this scripture, the Lord undoubtedly looks onward to the time of His appearing, and the effects of it upon His unfaithful people, when, like Thomas, who typifies this remnant, many will see and believe. It may be also that, as Revelation 1: 7 seems to imply, some among them will be convinced, when they see the Son of Man coming in His glory, that Jesus of Nazareth was their Messiah, and yet still resist His claims. This indeed would seem plainly taught, awful as is the testimony to the character of the heart of man, in Matthew 24, 25 and other scriptures. But it should be remembered that Christ is the test of men now, as He will be then, and consequently that our relationship to God depends upon our attitude towards His beloved Son. One remark may be added for the better understanding of this scripture. As will be seen, it is not only that the Jews will know, after they had lifted up the Son of Man, that Jesus, as presented to them in His humiliation, was their Messiah, but they will also acknowledge that He was the Sent One and the Revealer of the Father.

In the first of the passages considered it may be well to recall that the saints of this period are especially in view; in the second it is the Jew; and now, as we may see reason to conclude, in the third (John 12: 32), all men, of every nation and of every tongue, are embraced. It is indisputable that Christ glorified, after He was lifted up, became, as is often said, the point of attraction for all; and the moment the Spirit of God came down to testify of His glory at the right hand of God, souls were drawn to Him on every hand by His mighty attracting power. Still, blessed as that was and is, the promise contained in this scripture is world-wide and universal;

and it refers, in its fullest meaning, we cannot doubt, to the coming age in which Christ will have the dominion throughout the world, when the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and all men, either really or with "feigned obedience," will be drawn to His feet and own His blessed sway.

If now we attend a little to the connection of the passage, this conclusion will, we judge, be clearly substantiated. It may then be seen, first of all, that the whole of this scripture, from verse 23 to verse 36, springs from the incident of the Greeks who came up to worship at the feast, and who embraced the opportunity of expressing to Philip their desire to see Jesus. When Andrew and Philip mentioned this desire to Jesus, He answered, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a [*the*] corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The application of these Greeks to see Jesus became to Him the promise of the day of His glory, in which all kings will fall down before Him and all nations shall serve Him, when God will give to Him the nations for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as His possession.

Bearing this in mind, we shall be enabled to apprehend the meaning of His reply to Andrew and Philip. There are, at least, three important truths contained in it. The fundamental one is that He could have no link with man in the flesh — that is, in perhaps simpler language, that grateful as the desire of the Greeks might have been to His heart, He could not then accept their homage, representative as they were of the nations, any more than He could yield to the design of the people, in an earlier part of this gospel, to take Him by force and make Him a king (John 6: 15). Secondly, He teaches that the pathway to His glory in this world lay through death, resurrection, and exaltation to the right hand of God; and, lastly, that it could only be on the platform of resurrection that He could have His people in association with Himself. This principle holds good, whether for believers now or in the world to come — the coming age.

So far, therefore, in the all-embracing significance of the Lord's words all believers are included; for the firstfruits of the death of the Corn of wheat were seen on the day of the Resurrection, when, for the first time, the Lord claimed His own as His brethren, and when He put them into full association with Himself — as sons with Him before the Father's face. And every believer from that day to this, and every believer from now until the Lord comes again, will be the produce of the Corn of wheat as having died, and is, and will be, of the same kind and order as risen together with Him. All this is blessedly true, but, as we cannot doubt, the Lord, when He comes down to verses 31 and 32, opens out a still wider prospect.

Before, however, we come to this, attention may be called to what is involved in this world for those who enter upon association with the Risen One. In one word it is *fellowship with His death*, identification with His rejection and death, and consequently the hating of their life in this world. Loving our life in this world is wholly irreconcilable with and exclusive of life eternal. But then, what blessed encouragement He ministers to us to take up our cross and follow Him: "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour."

Commending this to the meditation of the reader, we may arrest him for a moment to consider the marvellously solemn words which follow. We have spoken of the Lord's pathway to

glory as lying through death; and now this pathway in all its sorrow, and as He only could fathom it, opens out before His soul. The effect is that He exclaims, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say?" It was the contemplation of the cross and its curse (Gal. 3: 16), as the judgment of God, with all that this involved for His holy soul in the hiding of God's face, which wrung this troubled expression from His lips. And thus exceeding sorrowful as unto death, even as in Gethsemane, He cried, "Father, save Me from this hour." It was a part of His perfection, the perfection of Him who was ever in the bosom of the Father, delighting in Him and being delighted in, in their mutual and complacent love, to shrink from the horror of that great and unrelieved darkness of Calvary — and, as He had come to do the will of God, His blessed and perfect obedience and devotedness shone forth in all their lustre in His adding, "But for this cause came I unto this hour." Then, lost as it were, if such language be permissible, in the absorbing desire of His soul to vindicate the Father's name, at all cost to Himself, whatever might be entailed upon Him of unspeakable sorrow and agony, He said, "Father, glorify Thy name." Thus He offered Himself for the glory of God, and the conflict was ended!

The response was immediate — the delighted response of the Father to the perfect submission of His beloved Son. As He elsewhere said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. *This commandment have I received of My Father.*" (John 10: 17, 18).

The answer was that the Father had already glorified His Name, surely, in the raising of Lazarus, and that He would glorify it again, that is, as we understand, in the resurrection of Christ Himself (cp. Ps. 21: 4-6; Heb. 5: 7, 8). The victory was therefore won in the assurance of resurrection, and the full results of the cross, as a consequence, opened out before His soul. First, the world was already judged; all its tarnished and defiled glory came morally to an end in the cross, and with it the assurance that its prince would be cast out. Finally, the Father glorified, the world judged, and Satan cast out, the Lord adds, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me."

As we have seen, it was in the first place, "The Son of man *must be* lifted up"; then, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man"; and now it is, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth." And then we are explicitly told, "This spake He, signifying what death He should die." Our attention is therefore called to the fact that He was cast out of this world, lifted up from *the earth*, and crucified on that shameful cross. But we behold in this God's triumph over man's sin, and the Lord's own victory over death, the grave, and Satan's power. Man lifted Him up from the earth, as unworthy to live any longer upon it, and there they, to add to the ignominy of His death, crucified Him between two thieves; but God stepped in and, after His burial, lifted Him up still higher, yea, to the highest spot in the universe, to His own right hand, where He has given Him the name which is above every name, and decreed that every knee in all His dominions shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Such was God's response to the rejection of His beloved Son.

It only remains to consider once again the force of the expression "Will draw all men unto Me." We have already said that while Christ is the point of attraction for all during this period, and that while every believer is a demonstration of it, we must look further for the entire

fulfilment of this prediction. In Psalm 22, for example, we are told that, as a consequence of the death and resurrection of Christ, all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and that all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him (v. 27). So here, in our judgment, the Lord looks onward to the day of His glory in the coming age, when all men will be drawn to His feet, and when all alike will be constrained from the heart, or otherwise, to own Him in His exaltation as Lord and King. It is then that His salvation will no forth, and His arm will judge the peoples, the isles will wait upon Him, and on His arm will they trust. It is our privilege, in anticipation of that day, to know Him now as the Sun of Righteousness, and to rejoice in the prospect of that time when His blessed beams will reach the remotest ends and corners of the earth.

### 3. THE SON OF MAN GLORIFIED AND GLORIFYING GOD.

#### JOHN 13: 31, 32.

WHEN the Greeks desired to see Jesus, He said to Andrew and Philip, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." The glory of which He thus speaks is rather the result of His work on the cross than the cross itself. It looks onward, we apprehend, as pointed out in the last chapter, to the day of His glory in this world, when as Son of Man He will be the Head of the nations (Ps. 18: 43), and when all things will be subdued under His feet. But when He says in the scripture now to be considered, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him," it is the cross and the work done there, together with His consequent exaltation, which are in view. This fact shows both the fulness of Scripture, and also the need for its careful consideration. The same words in different connections may mean entirely different things, and hence the necessity for the study of the context under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

It will be profitable, therefore, before examining these profound words, to point out the circumstances under which they were uttered. The Lord had been teaching His disciples, through His own blessed example, and placing them thereby, under the obligation, to wash one another's feet: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (vv. 14, 15). Thereupon He proceeded to draw back the veil which concealed the traitor in the midst of His own. And with what infinite sorrow and compassion for this poor slave of Satan He did it! Yea, we read that after He had recalled to them the scripture, "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me," He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me." It was not simply *one* of you, but it was one of YOU. Ah! it was that which troubled the Lord in spirit, that one of the twelve, one of His chosen companions, one of those who had heard His blessed words of grace and seen the miracles of His power, one of the objects of His fostering care — that such an one should have yielded to the incitements of Satan to betray Him. Then, in answer to the question of the disciple who was lying on Jesus' breast (Peter could not, and was conscious that he could not, ask it), Jesus said, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." Then we have the solemn statement that after the sop Satan entered into Judas. Morally, it was all over with him from this moment. Hitherto Satan

had led this poor man, governed him through his lust for money, and thereby hardened his heart against all the gracious influences of the Lord's presence, of His words and works, but at this juncture, as if his day of grace were past, Satan entered and took full possession of the man, leading him captive for the accomplishment of his will. All this is surely implied in the words of Jesus, which were not understood by the other disciples, "That thou doest, do quickly." What a threefold revelation is thus made: first, that nothing was hidden, nor could be hidden, from the eyes of the Lord; secondly, that man's heart is capable of all iniquity; and lastly, that Satan spares no artifices in his ceaseless activities for the destruction of souls.

The traitor thus exposed went immediately out: *and it was night*. It was night actually, but assuredly we may attach a deeper meaning to these significant words. "As long as I am in the world," Jesus had said, "I am the light of the world." Judas, captivated by the devil, went out from the rays of that blessed light, and hence, of necessity, when the door closed behind him, it was night — the night of death — the awful darkness of which enwrapped his soul for ever; for he had entered that land of which Job speaks — "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness," because, it may be added, there lies upon it the judgment of God.

No one may venture to penetrate, or could penetrate, into the sorrows of the Lord's own heart through this scene, but one cannot fail to perceive that it was a relief to His spirit when Judas had gone out, for the evangelist would seem to call attention to this by saying, "*Therefore*, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." It was indeed the treachery of Judas which brought up before His soul what lay before Him in His conflict with Satan's power on the cross. Satan had tested Him at the outset; but, foiled and defeated, he had departed from Him "for a season." That season was now ended, and his seduction of Judas was but the commencement of his final onslaught, the issue of which, blessed be God, could only be his complete overthrow. For it was through death that Jesus destroyed ("annulled") him that had the power of death, and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Another thing may be noted. The Lord's heart was restrained by the presence of Judas, and thus it was only after the traitor had gone out that He made the ineffably blessed communications contained in verses 31, 32. And do we — we who are gathered out to His precious name — do we not know, from sad experience, what it is to limit the outflowings of the Lord's heart by the presence of sin? Alas! how often do our feeble meetings testify to this! The Lord may be in the midst of His people as really as He was with His own on this occasion, but how can He display Himself to our hearts unless we are in moral suitability to His presence, unless we have put our shoes from off our feet because the place whereon we stand is holy ground? May the Lord Himself fasten this instruction upon our hearts in the power of the Holy Ghost!

We may now pass to the consideration of the communications made. We cannot doubt that the passage from verse 31 to John 14: 3 hangs together; but we will, in the first place, confine ourselves to what we have in verses 31, 32. It may be at once perceived that there are mainly three things: the Son of Man glorified on the cross; God glorified in Him, the Son of Man; and, lastly, the Son of Man glorified by God in Himself. These we may, however feeble our apprehensions, proceed to meditate upon in the order given.

It may be observed at once that the true character of what was before the Lord may be gathered by the form of His words. As we read it in our translation it is, "Now is the Son of man glorified." What the Lord really says is, "Now has the Son of man been glorified." The incident of Judas had brought before Him the cross and its awful character, and, as having already passed through in spirit all that it involved for Him, He could say, "Now *has been* the Son of man glorified." The issue of the cross was thus foreseen and stated, in the full assurance of victory over the whole of Satan's power. It might be going too far to regard it as a triumphant outburst, and yet it partakes of this character in that He looks right through all the darkness of the cross and onward to the glory in which He would be glorified at the right hand of God.

What, then, is to be understood by the expression, "Now is the Son of man glorified"? It will be seen at once that the reference is not to His actual glory on which He entered after His resurrection, but that it is rather to the display of His moral glory in His death on the cross. All His blessed perfections came out in a new way and under new circumstances. In all His sojourn in this world, in every step of His pathway, He was ever the perfect One, ever devoted in His entire obedience to the Father's glory, so that He could testify that He always did the things which pleased Him. He was thus always the object of the Father's complacent delight, as indeed it is said, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." It was not, therefore, that He was more perfect — this could not be — on the cross than in His life. But the truth is that, searched and tested, as He had never been before, by the holy fire of judgment through which He passed when forsaken of God, there was a greater manifestation of His moral beauties and excellencies. All these came out so richly and so fully that He became enshrined, as it were, in their brightness and halo. The light is ever light, but when the rays of the sun are seen playing upon a dark thundercloud their brightness and beauty are intensified. So with our blessed Lord — all that made up the perfection of His life towards God and towards man was enhanced and magnified by the thick darkness of the cross. All that He is was there expressed and glorified.

Let a few words of another be given, that the heart of the reader may comprehend, by the power of the Holy Ghost, this character of the cross, and be more deeply affected by its contemplation. "Now, in Jesus on the cross, the Son of Man has been glorified in a much more admirable way than He will be even by the positive glory that belongs to Him under that title. He will, we know, be clothed with that glory; but, on the cross, the Son of Man bore all that was necessary for the perfect display of the glory of God. The whole weight of that glory was brought to bear upon Him to put Him to the proof, that it might be seen whether He could sustain it, verify and exalt it: and that by setting it forth in the place where, but for this, sin concealed that glory, and, so to speak, give it impiously the lie. Was the Son of Man able to enter into such a place, to undertake such a task, and maintain His place without failure unto the end? This Jesus did. The majesty of God was to be vindicated against the insolent rebellion of His creature; His truth, which had threatened him with death, maintained; His justice established against sin (who could withstand it?); and, at the same time, His love fully demonstrated." And who, we may inquire, was sufficient for this glorious work, to accomplish all these ends, except the Son of Man? There was no other in all God's universe, no creature in heaven, however exalted, who could have stepped in and endured all that the glory of God required on account of what man was, and of what he had done. If this be so, as all Scripture testifies, we can apprehend a little of the meaning of the Lord's words, "Now is the Son of man glorified."

All this may well invite us to a more constant meditation upon this aspect of the death of Christ — we mean the aspect which brings so vividly before us, not only what He effected on the cross for God, though this be the foundation of all eternal blessing, of the vast universe of bliss, nor even what He secured for His people, though without this we could never have been in association with Him before God, but also that which brings out in such a marvellous manner the glories of His person. The more we are affected by these, the more our hearts will be conducted into fellowship with God concerning His beloved Son, and the better we shall understand the greatness of the work which He accomplished on the cross.

The second thing brought before us is that on the cross God also was glorified in the Son of Man: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." "Satan having here all the sorrowful rights that he had acquired through our sin, Christ — perfect is a man, alone, apart from all men, in obedience, and having as man but one object, that is, the glory of God, thus divinely perfect, sacrificing *Himself* for this purpose fully glorified God. God was glorified *in Him*. His justice, His majesty, His truth, His love — all was verified on the cross as they are in Himself, and revealed only there; and that with regard to sin." And this witness is true, for God had claims upon man, and of necessity all that He is was against man because of sin. And, blessed be His name, He that knew no sin was made sin for us, and there in the place of sin He met the full and complete judgement of God against it; and He glorified God in all that He is in doing it, so that God, set free in righteousness, can make those for whom Christ died the righteousness of God in Christ. Such is the effect of the Son of Man having glorified God on the cross, and such is God's triumph — the triumph of His grace over Satan and man's sin. In eternity alone will the extent of His victory be displayed.

There is yet another thing: if God be glorified in Him, in the Son of Man on the cross, the Lord proceeds to say, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him. The language is most precise, and the word "straightway" will, we judge, give the key for its interpretation. The first clause cannot mean less than that God, in response to His being glorified in the death of Christ, would glorify Him in Godhead glory, for, as we read in one of Paul's epistles, the glory of God is displayed in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4.) And if in another respect, the reference must be to the same thing when the Lord says, in speaking to the Father, in John 17, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." This much then may be affirmed, in connection with this transcendent subject, that the glory on which Christ has entered as Man at God's right hand is the expression of God's estimate of that glorious work which was wrought out in the death of His beloved Son; and secondly, that by that work Christ established a claim upon the Father's heart, a claim which it was the delight of God to acknowledge in the face of the whole universe. The exaltation of the Lord Jesus is thus the measure of God's appreciation of His having glorified Him on Calvary. And, if we are in fellowship with the heart of God, we shall also delight in the glory of the Son of Man; and the more we meditate upon it the more will Christ be formed in us, inasmuch as it is through the contemplation of the glory, which shines out unhindered without a veil, from His blessed face, that we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit.

It has been mentioned that the word "straightway" gives the key of this scripture. Its use, indeed, in this place is most striking. It calls our attention, we cannot doubt, to the fact that other glories would come in due time — the time already spoken of-in which Christ as Son of Man will be Head of all men and all things, whether in heaven or on earth, and also to the circumstance that while all this was assured in the counsels of God, yet that God would not wait for this manifested glory in its own place and time, but would at once — immediately, as the word means — glorify the Son of Man. This was, in fact, both His answer to man's rejection of Christ, and also the announcement of His perfect satisfaction with what had been accomplished upon the cross. It is thus the complete revelation of the heart of God towards His beloved Son; for the Father loveth the Son and has given all things into His hand. And it is the peculiar privilege of the Christian to know Christ in His glory before He is manifested to the eyes of all, and thus to be associated with Him while He is hidden. It is to this the apostle Paul refers when he writes to the Colossians, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our own life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." John also writes of the same precious truth, saying, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear (is not yet in outward manifestation) what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear (be manifested) we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." To understand this is essential for entering into the proper character of the Christian life, as well is for the possession of the secret of all growth and blessing.

We said at the commencement of this meditation that the rest of the chapter — as well as John 14: 1-3-hang upon the verse we have considered. It might then be profitable to indicate the connection for the guidance of the reader. In the first place, after having told His disciples that God would glorify Him immediately, that there might be no manner of possibility of misunderstanding He plainly tells them that He was about to depart from them. "Little children," He says, "yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come so now I say to you." Then what do we next find? It is this: in the prospect of His absence there is a company — the company of His own (not merely of the twelve, for we read that, after the actual departure of Christ there were a hundred and twenty waiting for "the promise of the Father," but comprising all His followers) — who should be knit together in love, by that love which is the bond of perfectness. As He says to them, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." That is, His own love, and His own love as expressed in death for them, was to be the standard of their love one towards another. As the writer of this gospel says in his first epistle, "Hereby perceive we the love (what love is), because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3: 16). No lower standard than this could be accepted, because it is the measure of the love of Christ

If this be so, it will readily be apprehended that it is not only the absence of Christ which is here supposed, but also the presence of the Holy Ghost. For love in activity amongst this new company could only spring from the divine nature, from their having been quickened together with Christ, and this expressed in divine power. But it would take us too far to explain the teaching of this now; it will suffice to call attention to this new company bound together by the indissoluble tie, and clad with the beautiful robe of the divine nature — which is love. Remark also that the manifestation of this love to every member of the company, and to all alike, would become their proper testimony in the world. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples,

if ye have love one to another." It is not, therefore, the holding of certain truths, *not the possession of light*, but loving one another which is the testimony that we are the disciples of Christ. Let us not shrink from facing this divine fact; and, as we face it, let us ask ourselves whether this testimony has not utterly failed. The broken state of the Church, the divisions of Christendom, and sectarian rivalries and jealousies alike proclaim our disgrace. And there is another question we might ask. It is whether in the circle of our own fellowship loving one another is the prominent characteristic. Surely if we are faithful in the answer we render, it will bring us into deeper humiliation before God. If this *be* the effect, it can only lead to blessing, as it must produce self-judgement and restoration. Then the hindrances to the manifestation of love being removed, there will be soon seen, at least in the little circle of believers in which we live and move, the normal testimony of the church in the midst of the world.

The next thing is the intrusion of Peter with the inquiry, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" Peter really loved the Lord, but in the consciousness of this he was under the delusion (alas! how many of us have often made the same mistake!) that he could, in the energy and strength of his own affection, follow the Lord even through death itself. "Lord," he replied, when told that he could not follow Him then, "why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." "Wilt thou do this?" was the Lord's response; and then He drew back the curtain and revealed that, on that very night, before the cock crew, His poor disciple should deny Him thrice.

Such is man, and even man at his best, when trusting to himself. And this is the significance of this scene in this connection. It is the Lord writing the sentence of death upon all that man is in the person of Peter, to the end that man in all that he is may for ever pass away from the eyes of God's people, as completely as he has passed away from the eye of God judicially in the cross of Christ.

Before adding a few words upon the beginning of John 14, let us recall the circumstances of the disciples. The Lord, as already seen, had made known to them His approaching departure, and now He reveals to them that Peter — Peter who had been so prominent among them, and who had been one of three who were permitted to witness His glory on the holy Mount of Transfiguration, as also the sorrows of Gethsemane — was about to fall into the depths of shame through thrice denying his Lord. It was a terrible position, inasmuch as, as far as this world was concerned, they were losing everything. Yea, death was thus written upon all their human hopes; but, blessed be God, it is just when by grace we are enabled to accept death upon everything here that He can open out to our vision the glories of the world beyond. This truth is here strikingly illustrated. It was precisely when the disciples had, through the communications made to them, come to the end of everything, that the Lord said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me"; and then He proceeded to unfold to them the Father's house, that He was going to prepare a place for them in it, and that He would come again to receive them unto Himself, that where He was they might be also. What unspeakable consolation for their sorrowing hearts!

But it is not our purpose to comment at this time upon the revelation thus made to the hearts of the disciples, or the antidote it contains for troubled souls for all time. We only desire now to emphasise its principle, that the brightness of this world must be dimmed, in whatever way it may be brought about, that the end of man and man's hopes must be accepted, that there

must be the absolute closing up of all human hopes, if we would gaze with unclouded vision upon, and dwell in spirit amidst, the blessedness of the Father's house, where all the redeemed will be finally gathered, every one of whom will be conformed to the image of God's Son, and where He will for ever be in their midst, in His blessed pre-eminence, as the Firstborn among many brethren.

Does the reader inquire how it is possible to dwell now in that glorious circle? The answer is: only in one way. It is only when, in the power of the Holy Ghost, we admit Christ into our hearts, and yield to Him full and undisputed sway, that, in responsive affection, we shall be constrained to follow Him to the other side of death, where He is, and then we shall live of His life, and feast ourselves upon His own delights.

#### **4. ALL THINGS PUT UNDER THE FEET OF THE SON OF MAN**

##### **PSALM 8; HEBREWS 2: 5-9.**

IN our consideration of the title of the Son of Man, we necessarily referred to this subject, but we propose now to carry it farther and to call attention to the actual establishment of the supremacy of Christ as the Son of Man in the coming age. The Scriptures deal largely with it, and open out before the believer the blessed prospect of the coming and universal glory of Christ in the world to come; and at the same time we are never allowed to forget that His exaltation is the meed and consequence of His humiliation and death upon the cross. For example, as we read in Philippians 2, "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a [or 'the'] name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (vv. 8-11).

One other remark is necessary for the understanding of the subject. It must not for one moment be supposed that all the things which are put under the feet of the Son of Man are of the same extent in all the scriptures in which they are mentioned. Thus in Psalm 8, whatever might have been in the mind of the Spirit, they do not appear to go wider than dominion over the whole earth. Thus we read, "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under His feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." But when we come to the Epistle to the Ephesians it is evident that the circle is enlarged to include things in heaven as well as things upon earth. It accordingly runs, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things" (better "head up" all things "in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1: 10; see also vv. 20-23). Then also, if we refer again to Philippians 2, we find that things under the earth\* are also to be subjected to Christ. Of the limits of His sway there will be no end, as they will be co-extensive with the whole universe, for nothing is excepted, as Paul teaches, save Him, God the Father, who put all things under Him (1 Cor. 15: 27).

\*The apparently similar phrase in Revelation 5: 13 is in reality quite different, and only includes animate things which live and move under the surface of the earth. This is the fulfilment of Psalm 150 — "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord" — everything on earth, whereas the expression in Philippians comprises also infernal beings.

This will help us in some measure to apprehend the meaning of the words, "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. 4: 10). For when all things in the universe are put under His feet He will surely flood them all with the light and blessedness of His own glory. Hence the language of the hymn

"Of the vast universe of bliss,  
The centre Thou and Sun:  
Th'eternal theme of praise is this,  
To heaven's beloved One:  
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,  
That every knee to Thee should bow."

Before proceeding farther it will be profitable to consider the source of this gift of all things to Christ. There are several scriptures, in different connections, which reveal this, but we take, first of all, the one at the end of John 3. The Baptist's testimony closes, without doubt, with verse 34. The evangelist then, as guided by the Spirit of God, says, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (v. 35). The Lord Himself, in Matthew's Gospel, speaks in the same way — "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father" (11: 27; see also Luke 10: 22). but it was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who was commissioned to reveal directly the Father's delight in the Son as the fount and source of the gift. This divine complacency in the Son is strikingly illustrated in another scripture, as also the delight of the Son in the Father. Answering the Jews, who, in their wicked hate, were seeking to kill Him, "because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God," the Lord said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For *the Father loveth the Son*, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth" (John 5: 18-20). It is true that it is of Christ as the Son that these things are said, but surely it is of the Son as become man, if not presented here in the character of the Son of Man. In the very next chapter, however, He, the Son, speaks of Himself as the Son of Man, because there His rejection and death are distinctly in view. But the scripture has only been cited to point out more clearly that it was because of the Father's complacency in His beloved Son that He has decreed that all things should be put under His feet.

It should also be borne in mind, if we would enter into the thoughts of God, that there are two grounds of the bestowal upon Christ of this universal supremacy. In the first place, it is God's response to what the Lord Jesus wrought out on the cross, where He glorified God in all that God is; and in the second place, it was God's answer to man's rejection. Yea, it was through

the sufferings of the cross that Christ reached His throne. It is on this account that in Revelation 5, where the Lord takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, He is seen as "a lamb as it had been slain." The aspect presented, however, in John's Gospel is, that the gift proceeding from the Father's heart according to His eternal counsels for the glory of His beloved Son, the Son of Man must be lifted up before He could take up His inheritance. What a subject for meditation! And how plain it is that, since all God's thoughts circle around His beloved Son, we cannot be *in* fellowship with the Father's heart unless the Son be the absorbing object of our affections.

We may now proceed to consider the various steps the Lord takes before He assumes His inheritance. These are pointed out very clearly in Hebrews 2, where Psalm 8 is cited, interpreted, and applied. We are here, therefore, under divine guidance, and we cannot, therefore, be mistaken. If we give the whole passage the reader will all the more readily comprehend its import. It is as follows: "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" [or, every thing].

The point of the apostle then is, after having stated that the world to come is not put in subjection to angels, to show that, according to Psalm 8, it is put under man. Having given the psalm at large, in order to place the matter beyond question, he exclaims: "But now we see not yet all things put under him." This was patent even to the most superficial observer. How then was the psalm to be fulfilled? This he goes on to demonstrate: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." Jesus then is the Man, the SON OF MAN (which Adam was not), under whom all things are to be put.

This having been made evident, the steps are given by which Christ, as the Son of Man, attains His supremacy. The first of these is His Incarnation. This is expressed in the striking language, which needs to be weighed to discover its force and beauty, "Made a little lower than the angels." This could only apply to the form which our blessed Lord was pleased to take when He came into this world, to the body, in fact, which God had prepared for Him; for, as we read, angels were His attendants and ministers in the days of His flesh (Matt. 4: 11; Luke 22: 43). There are several scriptures which show the depth to which He descended, in His blessed grace, even in this respect. Isaiah, for example, says that His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men, the effect in this case, it may be, of His passing through this sin-stricken world, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, inasmuch as He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. Even so, it illustrates the statement, and Paul tells us that, in our blessed Lord's stoop from the highest height to the lowest depth, He took upon Him the form of a bondsman (Phil. 2). Surely then He was made a little lower than the angels and our hearts might well pause to admire and adore, as we think of this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.

The next step is manifestly His death: "Made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death."\* There were two reasons for the suffering of death in the Lord's pathway to His exaltation and supremacy in the world to come. In Hebrews 1 we read that He was appointed "heir of all things"; and hence it was a divine necessity that He should take up all the liabilities that lay upon His inheritance before He could possess it. This, in fact, is implied in the clause in verse 9 — "that He by the grace of God should taste death for every thing" — not only for every man, but also for every thing that went to make up His inheritance. Paul touches upon this in Colossians, where He says, "And, having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven" (Col. 1: 20). And in this passage is also found the other, the first and foremost, ground for the suffering of death—having made peace by the blood of His cross, through glorifying God concerning the sin which had come into the world. On this foundation God can righteously come in and bring everything into suitability to Himself, into ordered beauty before Him, so that He can rest in perfect complacency and delight in the whole scene, the universe of bliss, which has been subjected to Christ and which He will irradiate with the effulgence of His glory.

It is often discussed whether the Lord's incarnation here was in view of the suffering of death, or whether it was on account of the suffering of death He has been crowned with glory and honour. Both are equally true, but we cannot doubt that in this place the former interpretation is correct, and hence that the punctuation in the *Authorised Version* is correct.

A word or two may be given upon the remarkable connection of this scripture. After saying "that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man," the apostle proceeds, "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The significant point is the introduction of the "many sons" whom God is bringing unto glory, in connection with the "all things," thus opening out the whole scope of the purposes of God, whether in regard to the "all things," or to the "many sons" who are under the leadership of the Captain of their salvation. It is, we cannot doubt, to teach that it was requisite for the glory of God in the accomplishment of His purposes ("it became Him") that the Lord Jesus should pass through the suffering of death. It was in this way that an immutable basis was laid for the establishment of the universe of bliss, wherein all the glory of God will be displayed and where Christ will be the Centre and Sun of all. The reader will also observe the association and identification of Christ with the "many sons" as another reason of His being made perfect through sufferings, for both "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

The next step, or rather stage, on His way to His inheritance is that He is "crowned with glory and honour." We have this expression in (indeed it is cited from) Psalm 8, but not the words "for the suffering of death." The time had not come for the revelation (though indeed it is found in a later psalm, and it is implied in Psalm 2) that for the fulfilment of all that is promised there the death of Christ was necessary, and that the whole system of things of which the psalm speaks, even on its earthly side, could only be established on the basis of resurrection (see Eph. 1: 19-23; Phil. 3: 20, 21). All this has now come out in the fullest light; and while waiting for its actual accomplishment, we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God. Rejected, disallowed of men, but chosen of God and precious, He will sit there until His enemies are made His footstool, and then will be seen -

"Outstretched His wide dominion

O'er river, sea, and shore,

Far as the eagle's pinion,

Or dove's light wing can soar."

And what Christian is there who does not delight in the present exaltation of Christ, as well as in His forthcoming universal sway over all things in heaven and on earth? Surely it is the joy of all such to contemplate the Crucified One as crowned with glory and honour — God's delighted response to man's rejection of His beloved Son. Wherever there is fervent love to Christ, the joy of the apostle Peter will be understood in proclaiming again and again to the Jews, that "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (see Acts 2: 36; Acts 3: 13; Acts 4: 10; Acts 5: 30, 31).

For the assumption of His universal kingdom, Christ waits at the right hand of God. But in the meantime, in virtue of all things having been delivered into His hands, He exercises His power in blessing in several ways, some of which may be indicated. In the very first place in which our Lord refers to the subject, He gives a remarkable intimation of the use of His power in grace. Rejected by the cities wherein most of His mighty works had been done, the whole scope of the Father's purpose opens out before His holy soul, and, in the midst of the deepening darkness which was settling down upon the chosen nation, He praises the Father because He had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes. With an overflowing heart, if we may venture thus to speak, He added, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Thereupon He unfolds the fact that all things were delivered unto Him of His Father — and He further says, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" — words which, on the one hand, guard and declare for ever the impenetrability of the mystery of Divine Persons in their mutual relationships, and which make known, on the other hand, that the Father is revealed only in and through the Son. It is on this divine fact, wherein the whole truth of Christianity consists (for this revelation is made on the foundation of the Cross, the exaltation of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit), that the Lord cries, in this blessed invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Before His omniscient vision rose up all the burdened souls of every age down to the end of time, and this invitation was but the expression of the yearning of His heart to give them rest. To everyone who responded to it He would give the promised rest by the revelation of the Father — "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" John 17: 26). Thus the rest and blessedness of heaven may be received by those who are still upon the earth.

Akin to this, there is another activity in the same connection of all things being given into His hands. We thus read, "Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may also glorify Thee: as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" (John 17: 1, 2). Without going into any detail concerning this remarkable utterance, two things may yet be remarked. The first is that Jesus desired to be glorified only that He might glorify the Father. This was His absorbing object, whether down here on earth or at the right

hand of God. He had glorified the Father while on the earth (v. 4), and He would still do so when He Himself was glorified. Morally, therefore (if we may thus speak), His life above is but the continuation of HIS life on earth. We may not pause to make the application: the question, however, may be put, whether this should not be also true of the saints of God. If so, what solemn searchings of heart should be produced! Then moreover, it will be seen that the Son will glorify the Father, exercising the authority which has been given Him over all flesh for this very purpose, by giving eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him. And He will do this by bringing them one by one into the enjoyment through association with Himself, of the life which He enjoys in that region which is outside of and beyond death. And the form of this enjoyment is given in the following verse: it will be in the knowledge of the Father and the Son, in that holy circle where the Father's affections and the Son's affections are, known and enjoyed because, as in association with Christ in His own relationship and His own place (John 20: 17), we shall be as sons before the Father's face.

There is also the ministry of the Spirit connected with all things being delivered into the hand of Christ it is thus we understand the following scripture: "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall he speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you. (John 16). If Psalm 8 refers, as we have seen it does, to the earthly side of the world to come, this scripture as plainly points to things in heaven, even though things on earth be not excluded. And what are the things implied in the expression, "All things that the Father hath are Mine"? They cannot be less than the "All things which are connected with the eternal counsels of the Father for the glory of His beloved Son." In Ephesians, a scripture already cited, we see the full and public issue of all God's ways in government, where we read that God has "made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which he hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of" ["for the administration of"] "the fulness of times He might gather together in one" ["head up"] "all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 2: 9, 10). Lower down also, in the same chapter, the apostle prays that the Ephesian believers might know what is the exceeding greatness of God's power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly place," [see how the Holy Spirit delights to glorify Christ!], "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. *and hath put all things under His feet*, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (vv. 19-23).

We have given this marvellous passage in full, in which expressions are piled up one upon another to call our attention to the greatness of Christ in His unspeakable exaltation and supremacy, as a specimen of the ministry of the Spirit in unfolding the things of Christ, whether as relating to the present or the future. But we must not forget that this ministry is now carried on in our souls when room and liberty are given to the activity of an ungrieved Spirit. The revelation of His glory and of His supremacy is indeed found in the Scriptures, but it is much to be observed that, until this is made good in us by the Holy Ghost, we are not in the light of His glory, whether in this age or the age to come. Nothing is clearer than that the Lord promised His

disciples a continuous ministry of the Spirit in taking of His things the things of the Father which are also His, and showing them unto them. We may therefore look for the same unceasing activity; and it is not too much to say that nothing would more delight the heart of Christ than that we should be finding our pleasure in apprehending His things, and in exulting with joy upon His present and coming glories. If we are found thus engaged, it is very certain that we shall be delivered from this present evil age, and that, like Saul of Tarsus, we shall not be able to see for the glory of the light which has dawned upon our souls. Not that the dangers of this scene will be absent, only if our hearts are occupied with Christ and His glory we shall have no taste even for the brightest things which the god of this world can offer. Surely, then, it will be our constant prayer that our souls may be flooded with the light of the glory of Christ.

## **5. THE SON OF MAN TAKING POSSESSION OF HIS INHERITANCE.**

ALL things as we have seen, are put, in the purpose of God, under the feet of Christ; but, as the apostle expressly says, we do not yet see all things put under the "Son of Man," but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour. This, then, is the present position. Christ is the Son of Man of whom Psalm 8 speaks, and indeed, as Hebrews 2 says, He is the Heir of all things; and this very term "Heir" shows that He has not yet succeeded to His inheritance. But the title is His by the will of God (Phil. 2); He has taken up all the liabilities that lay upon His vast domain, for He has tasted death for everything; and now, crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God, He waits for the appointed moment when He shall come forth and take possession of all that the Father has delivered into His hands. There are then three stages to be considered: the present moment, the period during which Christ is exalted on high; His coming forth in power to subdue His enemies, and His rule until all things are subdued under Him. Let us then consider these in the order named.

In regard to the first, we have already pointed out several of the exercises of power on the part of Christ in virtue of all things having been delivered into His hands, and these we need not recall. But we may with profit consider the cause of the delay in His assumption of His dominion. It is most strikingly stated by the Lord Himself in the synagogue at Nazareth. When He stood up to read there on that Sabbath day, there was delivered to Him the book of the prophet Esaias. "And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4: 16-19). Turning back to the prophet Isaiah, whence this quotation is made, we find that the next sentence is, "And the day of vengeance of our God." This day has not yet arrived, and hence between the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God the entire interval of the day of grace has to be interposed. If therefore Christ waits at the right hand of God before taking possession of His inheritance, it is in order that the gospel may go forth on every hand, so that those who are to be heirs of God and co-heirs with Himself might be called in, and that the Bride may be conducted across the desert to the true Isaac, who, having presented her to Himself a glorious church, holy and without blemish, will display her in the same glory with Himself, when He comes forth to take possession of His inheritance.

The cause of the delay, therefore, is nothing less than the heart of God as expressed in the gospel 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; and the proclamation will be sounded forth in every quarter of the world, until Christ arises from His seat at the hand of God. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. How much therefore hangs upon the present moment! And how it magnifies the grace of God that He should delay to put His beloved Son into the possession of His kingdom because He lingers over the world that cast out and crucified Him! Well indeed might we exclaim with the apostle, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out!"

Before entering upon our consideration of the second stage — Christ coming forth to claim His possessions — it will be necessary to connect this event with the interval between the close of the day of grace and the appearing of Christ. As we have seen, — when Christ arises from His seat at the right hand of God the day of grace is closed for ever. It is then that He comes for His people, for all who have been gathered in from the earliest ages up till that moment, or, if we confine our attention to 1 Thessalonians 4, for all His own from the day of Pentecost. To give the apostle's own words — "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (vv. 16, 17). Adding to this the instruction given in 1 Corinthians 15, we have two things: first, that, before the public manifestation of the Lord in glory, He will interpose with power in the domain of death and raise His sleeping saints; and, secondly, that He will change the bodies of the living saints. These are the words of the apostle in this chapter: "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be raised incorruptible" (vv. 51, 52). And let it be distinctly observed that the power which the Lord puts forth in raising the sleeping, and in changing the living, saints is said to be in virtue of having all things put under Him (Phil. 3: 20, 21). It is, so to speak, the first wave of His power, which, flowing forth from the throne of God on which He sits, will flow on until it has submerged every hostile power, and brought everything into subjection to His glorious sway.

The result of this exercise of His power is that the saints are ever with the Lord; for it is consequent upon this that they are introduced into the Father's house, that where He is they may be also (John 14: 1-3). Two other things take place before His appearing in glory: the judgment seat of Christ, and thereupon the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19).

All is now ready for His coming forth; but we may refer to another preparatory scene in heaven which will help in the apprehension of what follows. In Revelation 5 we hear, after being permitted to see the Sealed Book in the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne, a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof? There was no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth who could take up the challenge; and then we are told that the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, had prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof. Announced under such commanding titles, John beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living

creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a LAMB as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. He is a Lamb as it had been slain to show that it was through His death upon the cross that He had won His victorious title to possess all things. It is true that the scene here only embraces the earth; and yet at the close of the chapter every creature which is in heaven, as well as on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea unite in the loud acclaim, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." This scene is most important since it establishes beyond question that it is through His sacrificial death the Lord obtains His universal dominion. It is this indeed that the redeemed, the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, and every creature in the wide universe of God, own in their several ascriptions of praise and adoration, as recorded in this chapter.

We may now, all the more intelligently, proceed to dwell upon Christ's coming out to claim His rights and to take possession of His inheritance. It will add to our interest in this marvellous event if we remember that through His grace we shall be His companions in the glorious display of that day; for it is then that He comes to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that have believed. The Lord Himself has described the manner of His appearing in most solemn and striking language: "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." And again: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," etc. (Matt. 24: 27-30). The suddenness of the appearing is much dwelt upon by both Paul and Peter. Both use the expression "as a thief in the night" to describe it, and thus also its unexpected character. As the former says, "When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh." The light of the glory of the Lord will then burst, without a moment's warning, upon the moral darkness of this world, when He comes to take account of everything according to God's righteousness in government, and when He shall send forth His angels to gather out of His kingdom all things which offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. This is therefore called the day of the Lord, because at that time He will administer the authority of God in righteousness, whether in dealing with evil, or in justifying and establishing His earthly people for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" (Ps. 96: 13).

There is yet to be considered the sway of Christ in the world to come, during the thousand years, under which all things are subdued or put under His feet. At the outset He will be occupied with the powers of evil. We need not go into details, as it will be sufficient to remind the reader that He will first of all destroy the Antichrist with the brightness of His coming; He will also destroy all the nations that will be gathered against Jerusalem; He will establish His throne in Zion; He will gather His people Israel from the four corners of the earth, for "He that scattered Israel will gather him," and He will settle them in blessing under His beneficent and righteous rule. Then it will be through Israel that He will subdue the nations on earth. Thus Jeremiah speaks, addressing Israel in the name of Jehovah, "Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war:

for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms," etc. (Jer. 51: 20).

We need not, however, pursue the subject in detail, for the fact lies everywhere, even on the surface of the prophetic scriptures, that when once the kingdom of Christ is established in the age to come, all men must submit to His rule, and that, even though enmity may still possess their hearts, they will proffer their subjection. We accordingly read several times in the Psalms that there are many who, afraid at the display of His power, will yield to Him feigned obedience. As He Himself, speaking in the Spirit, says, "As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me" (Ps. 18: 44, 45); and again, "Say unto God, How terrible art Thou in Thy works! Through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee. All the earth shall worship Thee, and shall sing unto Thee; they shall sing to Thy name" (Ps. 66: 2, 3). But it is in the seventy-second Psalm that we see the effect *upon earth* of the establishment of the supremacy of Christ, consequent upon the subdual of His enemies, when there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent. In this beautiful picture of the reign of the Prince of Peace we behold every element of human happiness and earthly blessing. Take the following verses for example: "In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him. For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in His sight. And He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for Him continually; and daily shall He be praised. . . . His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed" (vv. 7-17).

Well indeed might Christ be termed by the prophet Haggai the Desire of all nations, for surely in this inspired description of the state of things under His rule in the world to come, we behold the answer to the longings of men's hearts in every age. Poets have stepped in to voice the inarticulate sorrows of men, but they have only dreamed dreams; prophets have feigned out of their own imaginations a coming era of universal bliss; and politicians have laboured in the fires to redress grievances, to break the yoke of the oppressor, and to pass laws which should secure liberty and freedom for the people. But all these dreams, imaginations, and labours have been falsified in the issue, and have thus come to nought. And why? Let the answer be written large: **IT IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE ALL IGNORED SIN, AND BECAUSE THEY HAVE SHUT OUT CHRIST.** It is through the reign of Another Man, even the exalted Christ, and through His rein alone, that the happiness of man will be secured. Oh that men would acknowledge this even now, and, in view of the coming of Christ, listen to the exhortation of the Psalmist, "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Ps. 2: 10-12).

We have not forgotten that, thus far, only the earthly side of the kingdom of Christ has been considered. We turn now, therefore, to another scripture which brings before us all the elements of that day, good now to faith, but which will be, in the coming age, in actual display. The apostle is contrasting the age of law with the world to come — Sinai, as representing the quintessence of law, and Mount Sion, where David established the ark of God, as significant of royal grace. After setting forth the terrors of Sinai, which affected even Moses so greatly that he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake," he proceeds "But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly, and to the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12: 22-24).

If the reader has comprehended the slight alterations made in the text, he will the more readily perceive the division of the several clauses, each of which is then introduced by the conjunction "and," as in the original. And if our attention is directed for a moment to two of the things named, the character of the scene here introduced will be placed beyond question. These two are "Mount Sion," and "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Now it is evident that these do not exist at present, in the sense here intended, excepting in the purpose of God. They are spoken of in the Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testaments, but they are not to be found as yet on earth, and, therefore, it is clear that the apostle speaks of what is true to faith. Hence it is that he can say to believers, "*Ye are come* unto Mount Sion," for faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. In the coming age, the world to come, spoken of in chapter 2, these things will be seen as in actual display, when, as we read in Psalm 48, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great king," and in the Revelation, "He showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Rev. 21: 11).

Having made plain that the actuality of these things is in the world to come, wherein all things, whether in heaven or upon earth, are put in subjection to the Son of Man, a brief reference may be made to the several particulars here brought together. The first is Mount Sion, and the next "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem"; these have already been spoken of. Then we have, "And to an innumerable company" ("myriads") "of angels, the general assembly" (or "the universal gathering," that is, of the heavenly hosts). These are the myriads of angels spoken of in Revelation 5, all of whom will be attendants upon the Son of Man in His kingdom, the executors of His commands or the ministers of His pleasure (see John 1: 51). The Lord speaks of Himself also as "the Son of man coming in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8: 38). Next we have (as it should read), "And to the church of the firstborn, which are written enregistered in heaven." These are saints of the present period, whose names are recorded in the book of life, those who will form the Bride of Christ, all of whom are counted as firstborn ones in virtue of their association with Him who is the Firstborn from the dead, and who, on this account, will share in His inheritance, and are, therefore, called His co-heirs. Then follows, "And to God the Judge of all." Allusion to this character of God (for it must be remembered that it is the world to come which is in question) is frequently found in the Psalms, as, for example, "He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and

the people with His truth." But He will do so by "that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17: 31). Then we have, "And to the spirits of just men made perfect." Another class or family of the redeemed here comes into view, one, it may be judged, which includes all the saints of every age prior to the coming of Christ into this world. As we may gather from Hebrews 11, they were all "heirs of the righteousness which is by faith" (see vv. 4-7), and on them had dawned the light and glory of the world to come (see vv. 8-16). But all the blessing in which they stood before God was in virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ which were yet *to be* accomplished. Now that redemption has been effected, Christ having obtained eternal redemption, they can be spoken of as "the spirits of just men made perfect," and hence, when Christ comes to claim His people, they will share in the first resurrection. We thus read in Matthew's Gospel "that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8: 11), a time which refers to the period of our subject, namely, the time of the public display of Christ's glory in the kingdom.

The next thing is, "And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant." There is a profound reason for the introduction of this office of Christ in this place. Two things in connection with this subject have been previously taught in this epistle. In Hebrews 8 it is said that Christ, "who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man . . . has obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (vv. 1, 2, 6); and, furthermore, it is said that the new covenant is made with the house of Israel, although it is ever to be remembered, as 1 Corinthians 11 and 2 Corinthians 3 evidently show, that all believers are brought into the enjoyment of the blessings which the New Covenant secures. Now Christ is both High Priest and Mediator. As the great High Priest He appears before God on our behalf; as Mediator He is the One through whom God has approached man. In other words, God comes out through the Mediator, and man (the believer) goes in through the Priest. And there is to be added to this, that the terms of the new covenant explain God's attitude towards man. For Israel it secures, as may be seen in this chapter, the law written in the heart, and forgiveness of sins; and for all believers now, righteousness and the Spirit, according to the apostle's teaching in 2 Corinthians 3.

We may now point out the reason of the introduction of the new covenant in this place. It will form the ground of God's relationship to Israel in the coming age, ratified as it has been in the blood of Christ and it reveals, at the same time, the attitude of God towards all, the terms of His relationship towards all, who are under the rule of Christ in the kingdom. In brief, it will form the basis of His righteous government in grace.

Last of all, and indeed as the foundation of all the blessedness which has been unfolded to our view, we have, "And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The reference is undoubtedly, we judge, to the sprinkling of the blood upon, and before, the mercy-seat on the day of Atonement, inasmuch as it was the blood upon the mercy-seat, making propitiation as it did, which constituted the efficacious ground of God's relationships with His people. In like manner the blood sprinkled upon the lintel and door-posts of the dwellings of Israel in Egypt secured them from judgment, formed the righteous basis of their redemption out of Egypt, of their passage through the Red Sea, and of their entrance into Canaan. The precious

blood of Christ, it cannot be repeated too often or too strenuously, is the foundation of all blessing, for therein God's righteousness has been declared and His heart revealed. And these two things, pursued to their consequences, make up the gospel of the grace of God. It is no wonder, therefore, that the apostle adds, "That speaketh better things than that of Abel." This called down from God vengeance upon Cain, whereas the former, the blood of Christ, has secured the blessedness of believers now, the heading up of all things in Christ in the world to come, and the new heaven and the new earth, after the first heaven and the first earth shall for ever have passed away.

To seize the significance of this glorious scene it is necessary to remember that Christ is the Head and centre of it all. Every redeemed family is brought into it, all the heavenly hosts are there, together with all principalities and powers, and the joy of all alike will be found in their willing subjection to Christ as Head of all. Thus it is a scene on which God will rest in His love, in entire complacency, for then all distance will have been removed, and everything will have been brought back into ordered suitability to Himself. It is then that the song of praise will be uttered by every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." At this blissful prospect the four living creatures said, "Amen." And the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped.\* And surely our hearts will also be bowed before God with adoration as we contemplate this glorious period when in the very scene of His sorrows and rejection Christ will be universally exalted and glorified.

\*The words that follow should be omitted.

## **6. THE END AND OBJECT OF THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN.**

### **1 CORINTHIANS 15: 28.**

IT will contribute to our comprehension of this final part of our subject, if we first point out the significant place which the above passage occupies in the chapter. The apostle's theme is the resurrection of the body, which some in Corinth had denied. Before developing, and indeed demonstrating its certainty, he recalls to the minds of the Corinthian believers the gospel which he had preached among them, the gospel by which they were saved, if they kept in memory what he had preached unto them, unless they had believed in vain. This gospel, which the apostle had received, for he had only delivered what had been committed to him, consisted of three parts: first, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures secondly, that He was buried, and lastly that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. If therefore this gospel was true, the resurrection was also true; or, as Paul goes on to affirm, to deny the resurrection was to deny that Christ had risen, to assert that the apostolic preaching was in vain, and that their own faith was vain. It was on this account that the apostle gave so carefully the evidence on which the truth of the resurrection rested (vv. 5-8).

But there is another thing. The apostle being about to point out the consequences, the far-reaching results of the resurrection of Christ, in connection with the kingdom, will have us to

apprehend that the world to come is to be established on the principle of resurrection, that everything in it will take character from Him who is risen out of death, as the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead. It is thus that in verses 3, 4, after the clause, "He died for our sins according to the Scriptures," we are told that *He was buried*. Man was vicariously judged in the cross of Christ, for He died for all, and in the grave of Christ man was representatively buried, inasmuch as the end of all flesh had come before God judicially in the death of Christ; and, raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, Christ was now of another order, being in the condition of the Second Man out of heaven (v. 47). It is absolutely necessary to comprehend that the first order of man, Adam's order, has been terminated for ever for God in the cross, and that Christ is the Man of His counsels as risen from the dead, as well as that everything now proceeds on the basis of resurrection, if we would enter into God's purposes and thoughts, whether in regard to the kingdom in display or to the saints of this period.

Coming now to our special scripture, it may be seen that it is a parenthesis. Having pointed out the sorrowful consequences of denying the resurrection, the apostle asserts the fact that Christ is risen, and goes on to unfold the whole of its significance, embracing, as it does, eternity itself. It is with this that we are now concerned.

First and foremost, then, Christ risen is the firstfruits of them that slept, "for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. for as in Adam all die" (see Romans 5: 12), "even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Here then is the parting of the ways. Death is the portion of all whose descent is from the first man, Adam; and life is the portion of all whose lineage can be traced back to the Second Man, the risen Christ. The resurrection of Christ therefore — for the subject here is that of resurrection — *secures* the resurrection of His people, even as the firstfruits are the pledge and guarantee of the harvest. Blessed truth! And how full of consolation to all who mourn over the loss of dear ones who have died in the Lord! Is Christ risen? Then they will also arise at the appointed time; and they will come forth from their tombs with the bodies of their humiliation transformed into the likeness of His glorified body. Well therefore might we cry out triumphantly, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (vv. 55-57).

In the next place we have the order of the resurrection. "But every man in his own order" [or "rank"]; "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power," etc. (vv. 23, 24). The remarkable structure of this scripture must not be unnoticed. Between the resurrection of Christ and that of His people lies the whole present interval until the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, as we read in 1 Thessalonians 4; and again, between those who are raised at the coming of Christ and "the end," of which verse 24 speaks, we have to interpose the period between the return of Christ for His people and His appearing, and also the thousand years which will constitute the duration of His kingdom. There are thus three great events marked — the resurrection of Christ, the resurrection of those that are His, and the delivering up of the kingdom at the end.

In the last chapter we dealt with the character of the rule of Christ in His kingdom. with this agrees the statement here that He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The word "must" in this connection is much to be observed. It is the same word as in the statement "Ye must be born again," and in both cases it means no less than a divine necessity. And wherefore this in regard to the rule of Christ? Surely the reason must be looked for in the fact of His rejection on earth. The very scene that witnessed the contumely, scorn, and hate which men poured on His head, saw Him with the mocking crown of thorns, "the crowned King of all patient sufferers," and put to death as a malefactor, must be the theatre of the display of His glory, and of His universal acceptance. Nothing less would satisfy the heart of God for His beloved Son in this world. Then it is added, to give completeness to His triumph: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Every foe had been subdued, death, here personified as an enemy, only remained, and now, all its victims being rescued from its grasp, it is for ever set aside.

If we turn for a moment to the book of Revelation, we shall find this significant event recorded. In Revelation 20, after the judgment of the great white throne before which all the dead, unconverted while in this world, both small and great, are summoned, and where all receive their sentence according to their works, we read that death and hades were cast into the lake of fire (v. 14). Thereupon in the next chapter, wherein the new heaven and the new earth appear on the passing away of the first heaven and the first earth, and the holy city, new Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband, a proclamation is made: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God." Now mark the infinite tenderness and pathos of what follows: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH." The Lamb of God has now taken away the sin of the world, and hence its bitter fruit of death is gone for ever. He who was made sin upon the cross has for ever abolished death, so that its dark shadow will never more be seen in that world where God will be all in all. What a blessed prospect for those whose hearts are bursting with the sorrows of bereavement! And what an antidote to the fear of death it is to know that its power is already broken, and that it will soon be altogether abrogated! Through the resurrection of Christ the bonds of death have been loosened, life and incorruptibility have already been brought to light through the gospel, and soon we shall be in that scene where old things will have actually passed away, and where all things will have become new. For He that descended into the lower parts of the earth has ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.

Such is the issue of the reign of Christ. When He comes again into the world, men everywhere, save the throng of the Gentiles who are brought through the great tribulation, and a remnant of His ancient people, will be in enmity against Him but He will come forth out of heaven with irresistible grace and power, and, as we have already seen, "all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee" (Ps. 22: 27). Universal subjection to Christ will thus characterise the coming age; every knee on earth, as well as in heaven, will bow before Him, whether really or only professedly, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. In the language of the Psalmist, "His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed" (Ps. 72: 27).

We may now consider the end and object of the kingdom. As regards Christ Himself, it is, as before pointed out, that He might be supremely exalted in the place of His rejection, that where He was reviled, contemned, and crucified, He might be acclaimed by all as Lord and King. But our scripture brings before us another object, and it is to this we desire to call the reader's attention. First, then, let it be noticed that an exception is carefully made. It says, "For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted who did put all things under Him." It might seem strange that it should be necessary to make such a remarkable statement. The reason will soon appear, though it may now be stated that it is connected with the ineffable grace of Christ in becoming man, and in remaining man for ever.

There are, then, three steps in the ultimate object of the kingdom. In the first place it is in order to deliver it up to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. We learn from Psalm 2 that He will receive the authority of the kingdom from God: "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession"; and He Himself says, speaking of the same subject, "Even is I received of My Father." His authority will therefore be wielded on God's behalf, and thus, when His mission is accomplished, He delivers up the kingdom which had been committed to His hands. When returning to the Father from the earth, having come to do His will, He said, in His blessed perfection, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do," and we know that He will be able to use the same language at the close of the kingdom. Being what He is, all His works must be perfect, like Himself. Nor must we lose sight of His own joy in having again glorified the Father on earth, and in finishing the work which had been given Him to perform, nor indeed forget the joy of the Father's heart in receiving from the hands of His beloved Son what He had committed to Him. John 5 gives us a most blessed inlet into the complacent relationships existing between the Father and the Son (vv. 19, 20); and it is therefore allowable to meditate upon the mutual delight of the Father and the Son in the delivering up of the kingdom.

The second step is seen in verse 28: "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him." This brings us at once face to face with the great mystery of redemption, and with the glory of the purpose of God for man as set forth in His beloved Son. What we mean by the mystery of redemption is the Incarnation, that it should please God thus to approach man, to become God manifest in flesh. Two scriptures will unfold this to its: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself"; "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (2 Cor. 5: 19; Heb. 2: 14). It was thus in a Man — the Man Christ Jesus — that God drew near to man, and, at the same time, set forth all that God is. But this is not all. Having as Man glorified God in all that God is by enduring all that the glory of God required on account of what man was and is, He Himself has been glorified as Man at the right hand of God. Having become Man for the work of redemption, He remains Man for ever; and thus when every enemy has been subjugated, when all things have been put under His feet, having delivered up the kingdom to God the Father, He remains for ever identified with His redeemed, the Leader of a chosen race, pre-eminent amongst all for whom He died, yet taking the place of subjection to Him who put all things under Him. It was so while in this world. As He Himself said, "I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father who sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say,

and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak," (John 12: 49, 50). So in eternity itself, He, a divine Person, having become Man — a Man of flesh and blood, but now the risen and glorified Man — will be ever Man, and as such subject to Him whose will He came to do. What grace! we cannot but exclaim. For we are made companions of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, and we shall thus remain His companions, as the result of His blessed grace, through all the countless ages of eternity. But it will be the delight of all to acknowledge His pre-eminence, to behold Him anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, for it is then that He will reap the fruit of all His toil and be for ever satisfied.

This brings us to the glory of God's purposes for man. It is as Man that Christ, as we have seen, has been glorified, and Christ glorified as Man is the pattern and expression of what God's purpose is for all the redeemed. One scripture precisely states this: "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). As a well-known hymn has put it:

"And is it so? I shall be like Thy Son.  
Is this the grace which He for me has won?  
Father of glory, thought beyond all thought,  
In glory to His own blest likeness brought.  
"Nor I alone, Thy loved ones all, complete  
In glory round Thee there with joy shall meet,  
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,  
Object supreme of all, by all adored."

This glorious goal is made sure by the immutable purpose of God, who chose us in Christ for this before the foundation of the world. But are we to rest satisfied in that we *shall be* conformed to the image of God's Son? No, though we shall surely be filled with divine joy at this marvellous consummation of the purpose and grace of God, we shall use diligence, just in proportion as we enter into God's thoughts to grow daily in the likeness of Christ. It will be our delight to behold the unveiled face of our glorified Lord, and thereby to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3: 18). We may see in the language of Paul what should be the present effect in our souls of the revelation to us of God's purposes. He says (we give another translation): "I follow after, if that I may get possession of that for which also I have been taken possession of by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 12). That is, since Christ had taken possession of him that he might be conformed to His image, he himself, in full communion with this end, the end of the purpose of God, would diligently and steadfastly follow on to this goal. So should it be with every believer; we all alike should seek grace to keep our eye upon Christ the glorified Man, because He is, in that condition, the expression of God's

purpose, the Model, so to speak, to whom we are to be conformed. And let it be remembered that the greater our diligence in the contemplation of the Model set before us, the larger our growth in moral conformity to Christ.

The third and last step remains to be considered. It is the ultimate object and end of the delivering up the kingdom, and the consequence of the Son Himself being subject to Him that put all things under Him: it is that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL. We may not attempt to explain these wondrous words, though we may offer a few observations with the view of eliciting the adoration of our hearts in meditating upon this blissful prospect. The end of redemption then is that God may be all in all. If the expression in John 3, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands," is timeless, if, that is to say, it refers to the past eternity, setting forth the Father's delight in the Son, and reaching that it was His purpose, before the foundation of the world, to deliver all things into the hand of the Son, we have a wondrous unfolding of divine thoughts. From all eternity, in that case, it was in the heart of the Father that the Son should be supremely exalted in this scene; and Hebrews 1 teaches that the Son is appointed Heir of all things. For the effectuation of His purpose the incarnation, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ at the right hand of God were, as we have already seen, necessary; and now we learn that there was another object in it all, that God might be all and in all. If the Father was bent upon glorifying the Son, the Son was equally bent upon glorifying the Father (compare John 13: 31, 32; John 17: 1, 2).

As to the expression itself, a similar one is found in Colossians 3, but used there of Christ. After speaking of the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him, the apostle proceeds, "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL" (vv. 10, 11). This, we apprehend, is not so difficult, as the expression is used in contrast with the distinctions which obtain amongst men. It will mean, therefore, that in this region or circle (that of the new man) all that is of the flesh has disappeared, and only Christ, and what is of Christ, remains, so that Christ is everything (for that is the force of the expression) as well as in all. It is Christ objectively and Christ subjectively, and there is nothing besides. How blessed!

So after the Mediatorial kingdom has been delivered up to God the Father, the Son Himself becomes subject, for He takes His place, as the glorified Man, in the midst of the redeemed, the First-born among many brethren, and God is all in all. He is EVERYTHING and in all — as we read in Ephesians, though in a different sense, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. All that God is, His glory, will be in full display, and He is love: and this will form the element in which all the redeemed will live and move and have their being for ever. God is love, and dwelling in love, they will dwell in God, and God will dwell in them. Thus God will be in all, as well as be everything. And the foundation of all this lies in that stupendous and finished work of Christ on Calvary. Hence it is that Peter says, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3: 13).

It has yet to be remarked that when the name God is used, as in this case, absolutely, it includes necessarily all that He is in the unity of the Godhead, all that He is as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God is and must be God in all that He is as revealed in and Through the three divine

Persons. This has to be borne in mind in weighing the words which have been before us. One other observation may be made. In the eternal scene unfolded in Revelation 21: 1-8, it will be noticed that there is no mention of Christ, only of God, whereas in the heavenly Jerusalem it is God and the Lamb. This is in harmony with what has been considered in Corinthians. Christ having become identified with the redeemed, as the Firstborn among many brethren, God is ALL IN ALL; and He therefore, in the blessed and beatific display of what He is, pervades the whole scene.

On such a subject how powerless are human words! But inasmuch as the revelation has been made to us, there is surely blessing to be found in meditating upon it in the presence of God. And may the blessed Spirit of God, who alone can preserve us from error, guide us into the truth of the revelation made, and form us according to it, that God may be glorified in us, and we in Him!

"THOU art coming, mighty Saviour!.

'King of kings,' Thy written name

Thou art coming, royal Saviour!

Coming for Thy promised reign.

Oh, the joy when sin's confusion

Ends beneath Thy righteous sway!

Oh, the peace when all delusion

At Thy presence dies away

Thou art coming, crownèd Saviour

Not 'the second time' for sin;

Thou art coming, thronèd Saviour

Bringing all the glory in.

All Thy Father's house, its glory,

Hangs by sure behest on Thee

Oh, the sweetness of the story!

Saviour, come, we wait for Thee

