

Notes on Scripture  
from **Memorials of the Ministry of G. V. Wigram.** Vol. 1.  
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**Preface.**

The beloved late G. V. W. was a remarkable gift to the Church of God. His conversion was a striking one. He has written an account of it himself. He says:

"Good instructions as to the contents of the Bible were mine at school, at seventeen, under a John the Baptist ministry; but I never knew the gospel till, at nineteen, I went abroad, full of the animal pleasures of a military life. I and my comrade spent a long and tiring day on the field of Waterloo in June, 1824. Arriving late at night at -, I soon went to my bedroom. It struck me, 'I will say my prayers.' It was the habit of childhood, neglected in youth. I knelt down by my bedside; but I found I had forgotten what to say. I looked up as if trying to remember, when suddenly there came on my soul a something I had never known before. It was as if some One, Infinite and Almighty, knowing everything, full of the deepest, tenderest interest in myself, though utterly and entirely abhorring everything in, and connected with me, made known to me that He pitied and loved myself. My eye saw no one; but I knew assuredly that the One whom I knew not, and never had met, had met me for the first time, and made me to know that we were together. There was a light, no sense or faculty my own human nature ever knew; there was a presence of what seemed infinite in greatness — something altogether of a class that was apart and supreme, and yet at the same time making itself known to me in a way that I as a man could thoroughly feel, and taste, and enjoy. The Light made all light, Himself withal; but it did not destroy, for it was love itself, and I was loved individually by Him. The exquisite tenderness and fulness of that love, the way it appropriated me myself for Him, in whom it all was, while the light from which it was inseparable in Him, discovered to me the contrast I had been to all that was light and love. I wept for a while on my knees, said nothing, then got into bed. The next morning's thought was, 'Get a Bible.' I got one, and it was thenceforward my handbook. My clergyman companion noticed this, and also my entire change of life and thought.

We journeyed on together to Geneva, where there was an active persecution of the faithful going on. He went to Italy, and I found my own company — stayed with those who were suffering for Christ.

I could quite now, after fifty years' trial, adopt to myself these few lines, as descriptive of that night's experience:

"Christ, the Father's rest eternal,  
Jesus once looked down on me,  
Called me by my name external,  
And revealed Himself to me.  
With His whisper, light, life giving,  
Glowed in me, the dark and dead;

Made me live, Himself receiving,  
Who once died for me and bled."

His ministry, like his conversion, was of no ordinary kind. Like the precious stones on Aaron's breastplate, it sparkled with the varied beauties and glories of the Person of the living, glorified Christ — Christ as Son of man and Son of God. The Christ of God was his one theme. Whatever might be the Scripture preached from, the truth unfolded was always exhibited as some ray of His glory. This was the feature of his earlier, whatever his larger spiritual apprehensions in after years, as well as of his later ministry. It was, on this account, ministry of the highest kind — of the highest kind, because it bore the evident stamp of the Holy Spirit, who (said our blessed Lord) "shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John 16: 14.)

Nor can it be forgotten that his life (as those who knew him most intimately testify) equally with his ministry was characterized by the power of the Spirit of God. In one of his addresses he says, "The first impression on my heart when converted was, 'Enoch *walked* with God.' That was my start. 'Now then,' I said, 'I will walk with God.' Beautiful as far as it went; but I very soon found, as Luther said to Melancthon, 'You will find old Melancthon stronger than young Philip.' I came to my wits' end, for I wanted a fund whence to draw so as to live it out." He found that fund; for he goes on to say, "You are unable to live out of resources in yourself — you must not act as though your life is separate; CHRIST must be the fountain." At a meeting, also, in London, he once said, "It is all very well to get the heavenly side of truth; but let me remind you that this alone will not do, for nothing will compensate for lack of *walking with God*." This indeed, it may be safely averred, was the prominent feature of his spiritual life. And most blessed is it when the testimony of the lip is confirmed by, and finds its counterpart in, the walk and conversation. It is in such a combination that God is most abundantly glorified.

It was but natural therefore that those who had known the life and ministry of this servant of God, and had glorified God in him, should have desired that some written record of his ministry should be preserved, judging that the Lord might still use it for the comfort and strengthening of the souls of His people in this day of confusion and departure from the truth. Abundant materials were found — much in his own hand-writing, and much in faithful, though fragmentary, notes of his lectures and addresses. Not only his representatives, who have undertaken the publication, and those who have been charged with the responsibility of selecting and arranging, but also the whole Church of God, will be the debtors of those who have so readily responded to the request for material.

After much prayerful consideration it has been decided to publish two volumes. The contents of the first (the present) comprise — Notes on Scripture, transcribed from G.V.W.'s own Note Book; Lectures and Gospel Addresses, with a few Letters. The second, to be published shortly, if the Lord permit, will consist wholly of matter written by G.V.W. himself for publication. Some of these papers are critical — written to illustrate the character of the Hebrew moods and tenses. They are, however, made very simple, and exemplified in new translations. C.E.S. has most kindly undertaken the revision of this part of the work. The remaining papers are on ecclesiastical subjects, and were issued in the colonies. They are most valuable, being an exposition of the principles of the Church of God, in its constitution, regulation, and discipline.

It only remains to express the earnest hope and prayer that it may please God to use these volumes for His own glory in the edification of His Church.

E. D.

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## Part First.

### *Notes on Scripture.\**

\*This section is transcribed from the writer's note-book, written during his last illness, and although fragmentary, the notes bear traces of repeated correction and revision. — ED.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." (Gen. 1: 1, 2.)

I learn from this, that "in the beginning," before heaven or earth existed, there was "God who created" them, that it was He who originated them. I learn, too, that at first, "the earth was formless and void;" and also that "darkness was upon the face of the deep."

How long ago was that? I know not; nor how long it lasted. That which God wrote, I receive and consider to be fact, not fiction.

God's written word then adds (at the close of v. 2), "And the Spirit of God moved over" (that which I knew not before to have existed) "the face of the waters."

From internal evidence, in the difference between that which precedes, and that which follows after (apparently a new subject) from verse 3, I have the impression that this portion is as the close of that which precedes it; and is not the commencement of what follows afterwards. But impression takes its place in my mind, and is a very different thing from what is a fact in God's presence, received by me, otherwise ignorant of it; but now accrediting it as a reality, because of a plain and definite statement made by God and written in His word. I am sure that God wrote it, and I receive it; but I wait for fuller light ere I can speak of the connection of that fragment rather with what precedes, or with what follows it.

Creation (the creation of the heaven and the earth), and the ordering of the Adamic heaven and

earth (and the account of which we then have), are two distinguishable things, and might have been at two distinguishable times. I might, indeed, add a third thing; for it is written: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? . . . . Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . . Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof, When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38: 2, 4, 6, 7.) Here, while addressing Job, a man on earth, God names sons of God as having been present, and expressed their delight, when the foundation of the earth was made fast, and the corner-stone laid. There were then some intelligent creatures, heavenly beings (and they do not appear to have darkened counsel with words without knowledge), that witnessed the preparation of earth for man.

The *first* of the two things named above is creation of the heaven and the earth.

The *second* is, from verse 3 onward, the ordering and arranging the *Adamic* earth according to the Mosaic account.

Between these (*the first*, and *the second*), if twelve millions of years existed for the geologist to explore the remains, in any order which investigation may discover to him, nevertheless he gets the origin of that state from God, through Moses; as also is the continuation of the account of the ordering and arranging of the earth as a residence for man.

But if there be a parenthesis or gap which is void, let us be cautious and humble; for it is guesswork *at best*, when man has nothing but his own observations, and not facts stated by God, to go upon.

Let him take heed lest he overlook this possible hiatus, and create a world for himself, and accuse God falsely, objecting to a Bible written with a specific object (not geology), just because he does not see this hiatus. I object not to observations; but I do altogether to the proud spirit which sets fallen man's observations above revelation made by God.

Blindness in many has, through their self-satisfaction, hindered their seeing this possible gap; many of them have overlooked, too, the difference of things observed, and the accounting for them; and degraded both themselves and the study of existent nature. Of this globe's duration, whatever changes may have taken place upon it, we have the testimony of men that were competent to gather evidence about it, that it had run a course of something like 4,000 years ere the Christ was born: this with 1878 since, and the certified statement of the only One that knows futurity, that He, the Christ, shall reign over it for 1,000 years, leads, as do various texts, to the thought common to many of a 7,000 years' course for it.

He that reads what God has written, must divide between impressions formed in his own mind, and observations of his own, and that of which he can say: "But *this is written*." Otherwise he will give his impressions as though they were prophecies by God.

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Jehovah, abstractedly, "the self-existent" *in relationship with man*; it includes God manifest in flesh, the Mighty One, Jehovah's fellow, now at the tip-top of everything in ascension, heavenly glory, and the whole system one with Himself in and by God the Holy Spirit, through the blood of the Lamb. (1 Peter 1: 14-25.)

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[True children's walk; careless children's correction. To us all obvious.]

Government (the thought running through both epistles of Peter) may bring in profession upon earth, true or false; and also the earthly side, of which we are not, but which is ours as parts of the bride and the wife. He and His; all is ours!

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There is more room in Christ, in God, in heaven, to give me rest and peace and joy, than in the whole universe to disquiet, trouble, and grieve me. But the Holy Spirit alone can fill me with it.

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Beloved of God the Father, and of the Son, to whom He gave you, and who loves you as Abba's gift to Himself and in token thereof has given you of His Spirit.

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And if God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, fills the eye, there will be no seething-pot within us of turmoil, fear, or hard thoughts. God for me; and the Anointed Man crowned with honour and glory at His right hand. God made Him to be a sin-offering for us, and now we are become the righteousness of God in Him.

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'Tis the law of the *Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, which has made me free from the law of sin and death.

And it is the very Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which originates all the expressions in and from us; for we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory. 'Tis the Spirit moves us (not we who move the Spirit, save, alas! when we grieve Him). It is the Spirit who is the whole power of life in us, and suggests each thought which is according to Scripture, feeds each affection in the renewed heart with Scripture, and changes us into the same image of Christ from glory to glory. Self (flesh) is enmity to Him, and is in contrast with the Spirit.

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### **Isaiah 26: 12.**

"Lord, thou wilt ordain (adjudge) peace for (to) us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us," is a wonderful testimony for us.

It is not by striving to evoke life in our bodies that we act, unless something be very wrong in us or our circumstances. A mother's love comes towards her first-born at its birth, and her actions will flow out to it, according to the measure of intelligence and strength which she has.

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It is among the praises of any aged saint, "having known Him that is from the beginning" (1 John 2: 13, 14), to rest in Him, have Him as the refuge, from which they see all above, all around, all within, and all below.

Grace which has forgiven the sins of all of the household of the Father (v. 12); of fathers, young men, and babes; names, in addition to this universal characteristic of the family, three others distinctive of the three several classes in the family, thus: "The fathers have known Him that is from the beginning." "The young men have overcome the wicked one." "The babes have known the Father."

Then the Spirit goes on to the practical exhortative part. But the fathers' herein is practically knowing Him that is from the beginning (v. 14), and the young men have their reminding, cheering, and exhortation (vv. 14 and 17), and the babes too. (vv. 18-27.)

All sins forgiven to all. But the aged having learnt in the nursery, and in the battle of life according to the privileges and experiences of the family, now "have known Him that is from the beginning." What a rest to those that prove they are of this class, by being practically shut up therein. All the subtle guile and antichristian workers, all the liars denying the Father and the Son; the unction of the Holy One and the eternal life, and the teaching of the Spirit, shown to them as babes, made the abiding in Him to be safety. The young men's lessons too, different from the babes, they had learnt. And their distinctive privilege and lesson was, having known Him that is from the beginning.

As one thing after another arises from Satan, or from our darkness within; from around us in the world, or from our own unrestrained energy, the test, "Is this of Him that is from the beginning?" What place has He relatively to this?" gives light. And if I am in Him that is from the beginning, and know Him, it marks my path for me; and truly a most blessed path is that which has Him that is from the beginning, for the beginning, middle, and end of it. and of all the circumstances by the way, and of one's own self too. Gracious the love that has made it mine; may I walk and abide in it.

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"I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." (Gen. 49: 18; Isa. 25.)

When Jacob called his sons to hear what should befall them in the last days, he marked out also what in the histories of each struck him. To him doubtless the blots in their lives leading to failure were very humbling; but he was holy in doing so. He seems to have seen the family in its unity in the last days, and in the future of those who pleased God all would come out. "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord," appears to have been outbreathing from his soul about himself.

He who had been called Jacob (laid hold of the heel) had had many tricks and unseemly ways of making short cuts to the blessing, which were none of them of God, nor profitable to himself. His confidence all seemed to break down at Jabbok, and he found that a cry to God was his secret of blessing when his name was changed to Prince with God — "Israel."

He had had to wait for Jehovah's deliverance of him, and Jehovah had never failed to deliver him. Perhaps what he had just said about Dan, "A serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward," naturally evoked the expression of whom he had found to be his Deliverer.

If any one turns to Isaiah 25 they will find part of the vision before the Holy Spirit's mind, larger, and broader, and fuller than what Israel saw, but part and parcel truly of the then dying patriarch's outbreathing. (v. 9.) "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God: we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

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## **The Unity of Scripture.**

The Bible as one book (the only one written by God, and one wherewith none can be set in comparison) gives as a whole the only full truth about the gospel. God in His being, and own estate, and character, and attributes, set in contrast with man in his origin, and constitution, and place, and character.

More might be made of this in teaching, I judge to advantage, than has been done. Creation, providence, government, but most of all eternal redemption and salvation for eternity, each gives its tribute of light. And the revelation not only of God as Creator and Upholder and Governor, but the glories of these, all displayed by the Son, and brought out to light by the Holy Spirit, are in blessed contrast with man, who sold his inheritance, ruined himself, and being under Satan (God's adversary), and in the flesh, got a world of sin and death and judgment for his posterity to share with himself outside the paradise or Eden made for man by Him on whom he had turned his back. And yet ere the turning out of Eden, man heard of a better state of things — of the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head. The light of hope thus shone out amid darkness.

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## **Matthew 13.**

### **The Kingdom of Heaven.**

This was in the apostles' minds, and their measure of light in Acts 1: 6. But the word for then, was the promise of the Father. And the mind of Jesus was upon being made Lord and Christ, and shedding abroad of what came out at Pentecost; and this, not as King of Israel, but for the glory of God and the blessing of man, and as showing out the depth of the riches of God's mercy and wisdom, while the King of Israel was rejected.

It is as Lord and Christ that He originates the Pentecostal blessing, and as Lord and Christ it is that the closing of that new blessing will be in 1 Thessalonians 4 — His love drawing Him forth then a second time to come from off the throne eternal, but now as the anointed Man. And He will come and glean up all His sleeping ones (even those whose death was not judgment, but rest), and snatch up those that are alive and remain here till His coming.

And not as King of Israel does Scripture represent Him in Revelation 5 - 9, though acting for Israel. From the throne of the Lord God Almighty His actings flow, whether of power against adversaries, or as preparing for a new season of blessing.

The kingdom will have a King when it is set up. 1 Cor. 15, Dan. 7 show that. But who will be the bride, the Lamb's wife? and where her place?

The heavenly saints now gathering are to be the wife of the Lamb, and in the place on high, her abode, as the court of the kingdom below. They above as the habitation of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.

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## **Colossians.**

The testimony of Epaphras to Paul was, that they had love in the Spirit. (Col. 1: 18.) This is the only mention of the Spirit in the epistle.

And yet the epistle is a specimen of the presence and power of the Spirit most remarkably: first, in the way that the apostle sees everything that he writes as himself being in the Spirit, and so sees everything on God's side of it, and Christ's, and not man's earthly side.

And, secondly, in the extraordinary range of the truth as brought out by him. Be it they had come

short of apprehending that most precious part of the Ephesian truth of the mystery; viz., "seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and that they were still therefore afloat about many things, the adversary too harassing them. The Spirit knew the inward truth of the mystery, and its settings, and connection with Christ, and the Son of the Father. Paul had alluded to them in his letter to the Ephesians, but had not opened them out in detail, as here. The Spirit of God moves Paul now to go into the details, in particular as to the glories, external and internal, of this Son of God.

Truth given in Col. 1: 15-20 and Col. 2: 9, 10 has a most transcendent height about it; and that in Col. 2: 14 to Col. 3: 4, a depth as answering the evil present truly marvellous.

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## 1 Timothy 2: 1.

The service and office which here we find our God and Saviour puts upon us, ought to be noticed by us and acted upon.

Making "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for *all men*."

God watches over the earth, and sees the needs of man, as such; and the fruits of His covenant given to Noah, are part of the blessing. But thankless man sees Him not who is the giver, sees Him not who causes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and gives rain to the just and to the unjust.

In the needs of men around us, even amid God's judgments, we are to be those who can in heart and act connect the griefs with the ear and mind of God, so fulfilling a service of privilege to Him. And, as the unseen hand pours out its rich blessings on the world as such, we are to turn ourselves to be givers of thanks.

Prayer too is called for in behalf of God's agents of government — "For kings, and all that are in authority;" the end, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

The call is not to pray for *our* monarch, as some suppose, so individualizing the matter to ourselves, and putting ourselves into a false position as to the powers that be. The exhortation is as to God's ordinance of government of the world by the sword of a Caesar, or any other, and our own God in it, and we are to pray for all such upon earth, that all (we) saints may be quietly and peaceably governed.

If God has committed the word of His grace to me, I can well commit it and myself, in whom it dwells, to the hand of the Lord. Little, Lord God, am I among thy people upon the earth; but the message sent by thy risen Son, through Mary, has reached unto me. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God."

A word — and I cannot either deny or reduce it to barrenness — most precious. The risen and ascended Lord Jesus owns us as brethren, and has communicated to us, as such, that His Father is our Father, and His God is our God. This is known in heaven above as reality, on which He acts, as light of the most precious kind.

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"Thou God seest me!" Before thee I walk according to Christ Jesus. Thou wilt enlarge and make more comprehensive my knowledge of Him in the Spirit.

To give up what thou wouldst have me to be without, and to take up what thou wouldst have me to be in, or upon me, be this, through grace, my service to thyself, Father of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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I have a Saviour. He is in heaven and I upon earth. He has saved, is saving, and will save me from all that He can find to save me from, until, having saved me from and through all, He will safely deliver me up faithfully to Him who entrusted me to Him, to be my Saviour, even His Father and God. Possessed of such an One, I need to have nothing in mine own hand.

I have a Saviour! Yes! I have not only a Saviour God, but God has given to me the Christ, His Christ, and He is my Saviour.

In what details. O God! my God! (in and through Jesus Christ), wilt Thou this day enable me to work. out with fear and awe, the deep sense of Thy presence and nearness upon me, mine own deliverance.

For verily it is Thou only that energisest in us the being, willing, and acting energetically, according to Thine own good pleasure. (Phil. 2)

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"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. 4: 6.) When the angel of the Lord was conversing with Zechariah, he said. "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, Not by might," etc.

'Tis well for any vessel that the Lord may be using, or that may be waiting on the Lord, if haply He will use him, to bear this in mind. All the might and power, when the Lord is working towards works of grace among men, is by His Spirit. It is good too for the vessel to receive and treasure up the negative not, as applied to himself. Resurrection power working amid death around and within ourselves is what *we have to count upon*.

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Without controversy that which we find in Paul's letter to the Colossians is strange. A people of whom he could say, Crucified together with Christ, dead together with Him, and buried together with Him, alive again through Him, certainly no longer in the grave where He lay; but not ready to say, "Seated together in heavenly places in Him." The knowledge of the first five things was most important, as means to an end. But the holders of them were still afloat, moved to and fro — they knew not the anchor, sure and steadfast, dropt within the veil. The state of any such now involves an ignorance of the person of the Lord, and a disparagement of Himself and His glories (not known to them yet as real), and of the nature of His salvation, and of His supreme pre-eminence.

The way in which the apostle deals with them, in introducing afresh the higher glories of the Lord, and pointing out the effects of their dividing any part of the truth from His person, are important.

What they had heard and received, was all about God, and the Anointed Man, and what was in Him. (Col. 2: 9, 10.) "In Him dwelleth all the fulness (*pleroma*) of the Godhead bodily."

The positive fulness of the infinite personal Deity abode in Him. And what had they in Him? All that there was in Him; with that they were fully filled, according to the thoughts of God in Paul.

Col. 1: 19. "For all the fulness" — a positive thing that left nothing that was good out — "was pleased to dwell in Him." All that there was in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as God dwelt there; so that He could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Such was His pre-eminence, and to every part of His work this attached (for His works all grew out of Himself) — His obedience unto death, the death of the cross; His being laid in the grave; taking life afresh; leaving the chamber of the dead, and

taking His seat on high, bidden to do so of God, on the throne of the Majesty in the highest. Did one part belong to any, and not all? Was His love not theirs? not upon them? Had He not loved the Church, and given Himself for it? Had He not as a present object to sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word? Was not all part of a plan to issue in His presenting it to Himself a Church in glory, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but to be holy and without blemish?

He does not write, you admit, five grand truths in Christ, but overlook a sixth. That would be a human way of working. He does not write that they were nothing without that, so far as ability, the present need; for he had begun with their love in the Spirit, and of their having been made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, whom God had delivered also from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. He names too, not only this fulness, but also His being the image of the invisible God (Col. 1: 15), pre-eminent to all; the Creator of all powers, whether in heaven or earth; the upholder of everything in its own proper place for Himself, etc. He speaks then (v. 18) of Him as the Head of the body — the Church; the Resurrection One, in whom alone is life.

There was no life save in Christ; and if any one did not hold Christ the Head, in whom alone was life — the more they did hold the worse for them — surely they were beguiled; and surely the to and fro movement of those beguiled must hinder their living to God alone.

And then (Col. 3: 1) he quietly takes advantage of the admitted fact of their being risen with Christ, to urge them to seek things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and to be steadily occupied with things above, not on things on earth; for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, you also shall appear with Him in glory. Thus only self could be set aside by them, and living out of the world, they would not walk as men of it.

I do not know any scripture which more insists on rest in Christ as the spring of the new life, through the fulness which is ours through faith in Him.

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## **Romans 8: 1. No condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.**

### **Rom. 8: 2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," etc.**

That which God has appointed as an efficacious, continuous action, is a law. The law of night and day, of the Phenomena in the heavenly bodies, of seasons, days, and years, is given to us in Genesis 1; see also Rom. 8: 22.

The law given through Moses is the efficacious, continuous action upon man as a creature, when fallen, of the righteous requirements of the Creator over and from man.

The law of day and night is an appointment of God. The law of Moses is inseparable from the relationship of a self-existing Creator, and His creature man.

He made man for His own glory. If man has subserved that, good; if not, what then? The curse, if I am the rebel against the insulted God, is all that my own state and my position authorize me to expect.

But the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is quite another from the law of Moses. 1st. It sets me free from it. Am I in Christ Jesus? Is He the Anointed Man? Jehovah the Saviour, is He to be cursed for having me in Him? All His dependent obedience unto death, is it to be ignored? And all the merits

in Him which led God to award to Him a place at His own right-hand on the throne as Son of Man, and He able there to display God's delight in perfect obedience — is all that to be set aside, and made nothing of because of my demerit, because I deserve the hottest place in hell for my having served Satan, and because I have no fitness of my own for any other place than that? None, certainly, of my own for God's presence. But He has won that place already; has been in it 1800 years, and God cannot repent of that. It is the expression of His own righteousness. It is His vindication of Himself; and the showing of His reasons for His silence when the wicked said, "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God."

Either I must pull Him down to my low level, or He, through His work, will raise me to His level. And mark it now, O my soul! I have already the Spirit of life in Him. He is not merely as a rock hiding me in a cleft, but I have the Spirit of life *in me*, to which the law attaches freedom, not from condemnation only, but from the law of sin and death.

The *Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus has *its* law, and sin and death have *their* law, and the former sets free from the latter. Moreover, what was lacking has been supplied; for God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, and condemned sin in the flesh. There was the Sin-bearer; there the Man who knew no sin (no other such has there ever been among men), Seed of the woman, holy, harmless, apart from sin, had the sentence against sin executed upon Him, and (Rom. 8: 4) with special object of writing love to God and man upon the hearts and minds of all those who are partakers of that *nature of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*; and so it is with us. If we stood upon our being men, then we should have to honour self, and walk according to it, and so have our minds occupied with the things of men down here. Many a one has tried that, the trying to draw out from self what God would like. Many I have known to do so even after they have known this (Rom. 8), and the solemn warning not to go to the broken cistern, but to the well with its living water — water which only becomes cooler and fresher in the proportion in which it is drawn from. No; my standing is not according to the law of Moses, as if my standing were in flesh; but it is in Spirit — the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; and being according to this law free, I mind the things of the Spirit. To try to lop off sins and to appropriate graces, as we see in the Colossians under law of Moses, is a very different way from our way; for under the Spirit of the Lord there is liberty. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3: 18.)

Rom. 8: 6. The flesh's mind, death; the Spirit's mind, life and peace. For flesh's mind, enmity against God. How simple! The mind of man (fallen) is not, cannot be, subject to the righteous requirements of the Creator; it cannot be so. So, then, my standing and abiding there cannot please God. To say they can involves no less than this, that God cultivates flesh and the fallen man.

Rom. 8: 9. No, we are not standing there; we are not as ruined creatures looking up to see what the Creator will do with the ruined creature which has not and cannot meet His most just and holy requirements. Brought into existence to subserve His glory, we have not done so. We are not there, or we should not have the Spirit of God dwelling in us. This Spirit characterizes our standard. God has wrought, and we have His Spirit — Spirit of the anointed Man — or we are none of His; but having that there is a law — the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus — and that sets us free from the other.,

Rom. 8: 10. The effect of this, Christ being in us, is (however sure of blessing) now deeply humbling; for it declares the *body to be dead\** because of sin.

\*The reader will weigh this interpretation for himself. — ED.

Before it was said we were set free from the law of sin and death, this was meant as to the

condemnatory power of Moses over us. *Here* our bodies are declared to be dead because of sin directly we come to Christ in us. Out of that pit no pure water will rise — nothing like Christ in my human body; and I know it directly I know Christ in me. But if the body is dead, the Spirit is life, because of the establishment of righteousness.

Perhaps (Rom. 8: 9, 10) Christ is the Anointed Man as the object set before us — Christ by faith, as we have it in Eph. 3; and the Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit. But Spirit of God (v. 9), Spirit of Christ (vv. 9, 10), and Spirit (v. 9) are to be marked.

Verse 11. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from among the dead does dwell in us, then He that raised up Christ from amid the dead will also quicken, or give life, to our mortal bodies by [because of] His Spirit which dwells in us.

Rom. 8: 12. We owe the flesh nothing; good we never got from it; it has no claim to our living according to it. If we do, our path will end in death. If through the Spirit (through whom are all our benefits) we mortify it, that is an action of life, leading to life. Then too we shall know, that being led by the Spirit of God, we are the sons of God; born of Him, and having received authority or right and power to become sons.

The characteristics of the Spirit on our side, as it were, are then gone into, even of Him who is named the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit.

Rom. 8: 15. He is not one characterized by bondage and servile fear. We have received Him, and know that of Him. On the contrary, He whom we have received is the Spirit of sonship or adoption, and we learn to cry without a thought, Abba, Father.

Rom. 8: 16. And Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Note the double and concurrent witness of the Holy Spirit Himself, and of our own spirits as children, for it is important. Such as to present privilege. Then as to hope (Rom. 8: 17): "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs together with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" with Him. This does the apostle write by the Spirit for our fullest confirmation in these precious privileges and hopes. The contrasts of the Spirit as looked at, on the one hand, God's side, or on ours, are to be noticed. "The Spirit of God," as to nature and power; *Spirit of Christ*, as to that part of glory being revealed — not now creation, providence, government, but Himself — God manifested in flesh, the Mighty One, Jehovah's Fellow, making good and revealing as a man, expiation, righteousness, and thus eternal salvation and redemption; on the throne, now our Deliverer and Saviour, and shortly our Glorifier. God the Spirit, and Spirit of God, and of the Anointed One personally indwelling us.

On the other hand, He is the efficacious power of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8: 2.) Walking according to whom, instead of according to ourselves, we get to be God's freemen. Good self is more dangerous in this case than bad self, because the former really turns its back upon gracious power and salvation, as being in another than itself, and looks to hold its Adamic position, which it has lost, and would fain cultivate innocency and perfect conformity of self, as a creature toward the Creator, and is self-deceived. The deception is patent. If its course were good in God's eyes, and not only in its own, God Himself would still be cultivating the Adamic nature and flesh, man's own fallen self. But He is not doing so at all, but gives over a man like Paul to see what, and where, the real difficulty is in Rom. 7: 24; viz., that he was a ruined creature, needing deliverance for himself. Thus he is carnal. sold under sin; not allowing that which I do; I will to do one thing, but do it not; but what I hate, that I do; if I do what I would not, I consent to the law that it is good. It is not I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. Surely in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing, if to will

is present with me, but that I cannot find how to perform that which is good; the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do. (Rom. 7: 20) Now if I do that I would not, it is not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (Rom. 7: 21) There is now a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (Rom. 7: 22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (Rom. 7: 23) but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom. 7: 24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Intellectual clearness in a heathen philosopher of old could see the marks of one mind and plan and character, who thereupon confessed to the unity of Godhead. But while standing firm to that, and put to death for it, he did not see his own folly, if there was but one Supreme Being, in himself bidding his disciples to sacrifice a cock, as vowed by him to Esculapius.

Romans 7 clearly came after Acts 9. Saul was converted to, and by Christ, before he wrote to the Romans, or had to study the two minds which are brought before us in Romans 7. Fallen man is Satan's slave, and while intellect can see and arable upon the relative positions of Creator and creature, just claims and requirements of the Creator and the utter ruin of the creature, will is stirred within us; power in us over ourselves there is none. The answer and cure are in another. All the groanings about self are all met and put aside directly we turn from self and our circumstances to Jesus Christ our Lord. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 7: 25) The grand lesson in all this seems to me to be this, that there are two minds in man, according to the standing he takes; either that of a creature under its Creator, looking at itself according to the flesh, or that of a ruined sinner cast upon the Saviour God and the salvation of Christ. The law of Moses attends the former, the latter goes after Christ, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. A man may intellectually weigh the two, until almost insane confusion fills him.

But no one can get into freedom upon the first position until he knows two things; first, how to say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made me free from the law of sin and death;" and, secondly, that the standing, and life flowing from it, sets the expiation of sin over against the law of sin and death that remains in us, and will remain, and be remembered by us, until we see Him Himself, and are made like Him, seeing Him as He is.

Many a badly-taught Christian passes through the bewildering conflict, ere he at all knows clearly about this law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus making the believer free, and the judgment passed upon Him who was holy, harmless, sinless, being the condemnation upon Him of sin which is in us. It did reign; it still indwells, and will, until the Saviour comes back with His salvation, and takes it out of us.

Rom. 8: 10. To be earnestly looking forward as one awaiting God's Son from heaven I should not be watching mine own shadow behind me: "I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3: 15.)

Rom. 8: 11. God is light. In God's light I see light, for I see Christ there; and there too I learn in contrast to Him whatever is darkness in or immediately around me. How long until Christ shall be come? Give me a strong, bright lamp in a passage before me, and I shall not be able to tell you the distance. What is that if the heart loves Him who is coming, and is spending itself in shortening the intervening space? And when He does rise up to come forth, then will He recommence displays of new glories to bring Israel back to their land, etc., when we are satisfied in His presence, and with His likeness.

Nevertheless, the sooner He comes the better; and though when we think of His service and people we ought to be able to deny ourselves, and for His people's sake stay on, yet if our hearts are fresh to Him, it were self-denial and constraint the staying. How few are in that state, that of being in a strait between two things — the better for them to depart and be with Him, the more expedient for His people to stay and work. Do see whereabouts you are, my reader, in this matter. 2 Cor. 5 gives the other side — I groan after the glory, and desire to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.

But why are we not to look straight up from where we are to where He now is sitting at the right hand of God? This would warm the heart to Him, and let light into us, as to the dirt of the place where we are.

"We see Jesus," wrote Paul (Heb. 2), as if his eye beheld Him, "crowned with glory and honour." Himself seen anywhere causes all else connected with man to drop into a secondary place. Paul wrote thus about Him, and having attained to the fulfilment of Psalm 8, He (Jesus) entered and sat down on the throne, all things put under His feet, and thus become the securer to His people of all things being put under theirs.

It is a simple fact, which people think very little of, even believers; but it is truth. A man in glory in heaven is a truth dear to the heart and mind of God. Of course, you may say, the Lord Jesus is there now on the throne of the Majesty of the highest, and will bring His heavenly bride thither hereafter.

Yes; but I was thinking of Enoch having been translated without seeing death. He has been on high from before the deluge; and again, the prophet was seen going up as in a chariot of fire; and again, that when Christ died, not only was the "veil of the temple rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." (Matt. 27: 51-53.) This, I suppose, is referred to in Col. 2: 15.

Some consign these to the grave again. I dare not do so, unless it were written. Sure I am I have no wish, as parent to such a thought, to originate it.

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Enoch, a man in all things like myself, in glory now well-nigh 4,000 years; Elijah, a man like him, and like me, there on high for now some 3,000. These as items and details throw out the matter pointedly to my mind, and helpfully too in my littleness.

## **The Christ was the last Adam, life-giving Spirit.**

### **We were ruined sinners.**

He gives to the believer, or receiver of God's word, eternal life; having taken Himself, at Golgotha, the whole penalty of sin from the hand of God.

Why does the Christ love the Church? It is not for me to attempt to answer this in full, but a word or two may be well, if written modestly. The question rises in various minds from various causes. If the facts of the Christ being the only-begotten Son of the Father on the one hand, and Son of God on the other, are simply present to the mind, it would seem to me natural for a person to say, "God is love," and "As is God, so is the Christ." He has a being of His own quite unlike mine, and a character as Son of God: a right, therefore, to love; a right to express His own character, which is love.

God draws His motives from within Himself, not from that which is below Him: so the Son of God likewise. But as the only-begotten Son of the Father, how should He but delight in the pleasure and purpose of God and the Father to bring many sons to glory? How should He but love those chosen in Him? How but love us as gifts of God to Him; and instead of what we were, or are, or yet may be, occupying His mind so as to make Him disparage such poor gifts — the less the gift in itself, more store to Him in its being a gift to Him; and given to Him as the expression of confidence in Him, as able to bring the many sons to glory, and to make their native poverty and pitiful wretchedness the occasions of the display of His own glorious all-sufficiency, while carrying out the good pleasure of His Father's will? Does He not love us too for what we have cost Him? For all the patience wherewith He waited for us till He saw us in the stream of time floating downward, and then called us by His grace? For all the care and toil which He has bestowed upon us, leach one, up to this moment?

But there are three things more I would say. First, it was in eternal redemption and salvation that He was to bring out the new name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Precious to Him the moral glories involved and unfolded in that name. How but love the material in and through which it would be revealed? Secondly, His own glories, and offices, and sufferings, and works, were to proclaim Him whom He loved. How then but love us? Thirdly, while I have spoken of us as children of God individually, the Church — and that was in the thesis — the mystery, is the *chef d'oeuvre* (masterpiece) of all God's works; the espoused now, about to be shortly the bride, and then made the Lamb's wife in the presence of God; to reign with Him through the millennium, and then the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. How should He but prize and love that which will soon come out a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and be presented by Him as such to Himself? (Eph. 5: 25-27.) But yet, the corn of wheat, God's corn of wheat, falling into the ground and dying that it might not abide alone, and what passed then and there on the cross, is the deeper and fuller expression of His love to us. He gave Himself for the Church.

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"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." (Gal. 6: 14, 15.) It is a strange position for one who had been a persecutor, injurious, and a reviler, to find himself in — glorying in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Adam received the honours of his position in Eden, when invested by the God of power with his headship over the earth.

He of whom we speak, our Lord Jesus Christ, brought out into light what was the moral glory of God, and His own glory, when He died upon the cross, and became obedient then unto death — the death of the cross.

I would muse and rest a little upon this. As to God, His irresistible power knows no check whatsoever. But as sure as this His power is irresistible, so sure likewise is it that He has a character of His own, which in no case will He violate. Morally, He could not violate His own character. He knows, as God, how the well-being of dependent creatures throughout the universe hangs upon, in their various measures of capacity, their knowledge of Him, and so being cheerfully subject to Him.

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There are the Being in all its distinctive peculiarities, the attributes, and lastly the traits of character of the Supreme, which never were revealed or fully uncovered till the cross of Jesus our Lord.

And then they came out fully, and presented, as I judge, the balance of the power and wisdom, and other attributes, together with the love, and light, and mercy, and compassion, and holiness of the Godhead, the clue to all the divine ways and thoughts when the new name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost shined forth, though not understood by any save God Himself. And this we contrast with the world — the selfish flesh of man and Satan. The cross was the stupendous work which formed the root of eternal redemption and salvation; the basis, too, of putting right all that had been wrong in or about any creature that had chosen to try to be independent of God.

But to turn to the cross itself. The Son of God was there as God's Anointed Man, in the region of death, scene of the temporary triumph of Satan over the first Adam, the earth was sin full: Satan, its prince, was there; he that was the executioner\* of the sentence of death for sin — sin into which, with subtlety and malice against God, he had beguiled Eve and led Adam; he was there, with murderous intent against men, and with power too, for he had the power of death.

\*This statement is left unaltered, though some may question it. — ED.

The hour, solemn hour! was come, in which the Christ of God was there too. For the hour was come, when He was to stand between God and Satan; and to stand there upon the question of judgment, and righteousness, and holiness, as to sin against God. Blessed be God who had such an One to put forward. One that was Jehovah's fellow, God manifest in flesh, over whom the devil had no power, nor the evil world; for He was holy, harmless, undefiled, apart from sin. The truth was Himself, and light as well as love was in Him.

And the light did shine out, and with it the truth stood confessed, as to every one and everything, and love was vindicated too. There was a cup full of wrath in its contents, God's unchangeable mind against sin in the creature. In Eden total darkness as to God and man had been the first and immediate effect of hearkening to the serpent, and defiantly setting God's word aside. Moral death had set in. Death of the body would follow; and what would be in the end? With the serpent cast down into the place prepared for him, they that followed him would be there also. Repressed and excluded from the presence of Him, whom having rejected, they then hated, ever learning the internal bitterness of sin, and never coming as creatures to the end of the lesson of what rebellion against the Infinite Creator means. What in the very constitution of things is never-ending, everlasting, could not be expressed in time in a finite creature: the thing is infinite; for God is infinite. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," is a wise and true word; yet no human language could carry even that which the Christian mind can see in the positive side of it.

That cup the Lord claimed for Himself. It was the cup which the Father had given Him; should He not drink it? Shrink as a perfect man from being forsaken? "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" He must and did in Gethsemane, and John 12: 27, etc., shows He did. But taking it at His Father's hands, drink it He would; obedient unto death, the death of the cross, as the One that said "Lo! I come, to do thy will, O God." And He took it, and drank it, and died that thereby He might thereafter stand confessed as the One that was the last Adam, life-giving Spirit.

But 'twas the hour of darkness then. No creature mind could answer the questions then, Where was God who had again and again publicly owned Him as "my beloved Son?" Why is He, the Christ, thus left? Where is the Spirit of God? Has the world, and the prince of the world, power over Him? Is man's wicked flesh thus to triumph? The darkness was felt darkness; the sun withdrew its light. To the understanding of a John, a Mary, etc., what did it mean? They knew, through faith, God; and they knew the Christ. Their trust and hope were outside of themselves; their rest was in God alone. All around totally inexplicable to reason and to sense.

Himself, He knew all about it, though nevertheless He entered into and felt it all perfectly. His God's name and honour had been outraged by man, in and from Eden downwards. It was no light burden to bear the penalty thereof, and He had to allow man then and there to express his thoughts about His God upon and against Himself. He had the consciousness of the contrast between flesh in men, and His own flesh (as spotless, the only One that could be a sin-offering). He felt He had, too; the patient waiting for the devil to outwit himself, and go beyond the limits of any power which was of God; and I know not what else was in the mixture which He, as the One dependent upon and obedient to God, had to drink. In the midst of it all, He it was, and He alone, who gave to God His place, and fully owned God in it all. The light of "there is God "shined out in perfect light amid the darkness, though the time was not come for God's being love in it all to be declared. He knew the love, and His love attributed in His own mind all about redemption, and salvation to God. He was the servant of God in it, suffered then as He had done before all what was apportioned to Him. And how does the power and value of His obedience unto death, the death of the cross, make Him to be the touchstone of "what is truth" then and there, when with enlightened eyes and hearts we, since Pentecost, look back upon it! Below the superficial surface of the current of the world, there was an under current of the counsel (Acts 2: 23) of God. Below the surface of One crucified through weakness, there was the Lamb of God bearing sins. And above it all, there was glory to God in the highest, peace toward man.

Nothing, I believe, is known by us aright, until its connection with the cross of Christ in God's mind is known. His cross may well make us count and act towards the whole system of the world, as towards a crucified, put-to-open-shame, thing, by its having crucified Him. Its character was revealed thereby, and the love that He bore and bears to us may well make us act as having ourselves been crucified together with Him on it (Rom. 6), according to the mind and COUNSEL OF GOD.

The word of God, as it originated creation, so does it regulate His creatures.

In Eden, the blessing given to man was to remain his, unless or until he set aside God's word. From the ruin of the fall there is no escape but by receiving and becoming subject to the Word of God, in the declaration about the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head. The word of God (John 1) lies at the bottom of every fragment of the word written in its very core. Well may God, then, give to it the place He does in the affection He bears to the Son of His love. And well too may all blessing to us hinge in very grace upon our receiving that Word. This, it seems to me, is to be noticed, too, as to the Spirit. He puts forward the Word, and now the word about the Christ before Him; thus recognising, as does the Father, the Word, that word of God presented in person, and each detail of it given expression to by the Son; to speak of whom is the province of the Spirit.

The powerlessness of the Word apart from the Spirit, save to test man, is admitted.

Have you received the word as the word of God, and about the Christ? (Make sure you fail not in this.) In what part of it? The Spirit is behind and with it? Be assured of that, and He will make it to be quickening and vivifying.

In a certain sense, the reception and presence of the Spirit with a believer is a matter of faith, proved by the word he holds, and by the holding of that word. And yet the established believer who knows the doctrine of Rom. 8, knows that it is the Word that found him, rather than he that found it; the Word that has laid hold of and holds him, rather than he that holds it.

The difficulty in some minds, as it has often appeared in reading meetings, and at *les conférences*, so called, (though they be but reading meetings upon a larger scale than usual, and giving little more place to the teacher), is as to the order in which the Spirit, and the Word through which He works, stand forward in the Scriptures.

It seems to me that God's order in counsel and plan and work for Himself, and His order for man in learning and knowing and doing, etc., are often in contrast, and necessarily so.

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Choosing in Christ — who did that? God. And when? But what can I know about God's choice, or "the when," or "the to what," until I have heard the gospel and received it, and am established in it?

God knows and acts, too, as to the end from the beginning. In learning Christ we learn in spirit much more than we think. "Why persecutest thou Me, Saul?" contains in germ the whole mystery. Howbeit Saul then knew not what it was all about; nor what wonders "the spouse," "the Bride," "the Lamb's wife," would have circling around the one Person in three different positions. Scripture is to be searched into, and all the ways and habits divine of God in writing it noted; His use of various words; His order and consecutions, whether as to the unbeliever or the believer.

Wondrous and adorable is God in the way in which He serves all now in some way or another. Wondrous too ere the Lord sent the message (John 20: 17) to His brethren, how He had let both Mary and them show out whereabouts they were, and searched and proved their hearts in so doing. Thus, as in John 21 throughout, all the fulness of the free grace in Him stood forth conspicuously. How beautifully free and full and gracious were those outshinings of His worthiness and love!

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Any one tracing out even from a concordance the occurrences of the word "spirit" may find enlargement of mind upon the subject. But a concordance has been called, a "dunce's book." and reference to it turned aside from for the more excellent way of finding your passages in the page of Scripture; and there too you find their contexts. This is a far better way; and though we may at times be kept waiting till we find what we seek, that only tends to impress upon us our ignorance of the book, and the contents of the passage too, and then the value of searching; for they that seek shall find. To consult a living person about it might help on communion of saints one with the other.

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Above me, God; down below me, God; before me, God; behind me, God; all round about me, God. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. Who, as David said, can get himself away, can escape where God is not?

But the believing Christian only can say (1 John 4: 12, 13), "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."

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The Christ as the object of his perception of things above, as sitting on the throne of God, and of His Father and our Father, and the Spirit of God indwelling and ruling in his heart, Paul seems to have laboured with the heavenly Church in view, and in his mind, by day and by night. The church external down here grew up, through Satan's guile and man's corruption, while these labours went on; but his own divinely-inspired truth about the Church, God's Church, the bride and wife of the Lamb, ruled in Paul. Satan and man and flesh might, and would, do their worst; and he (Paul) knew what man would be allowed to do spite of all his service; but all would work together, and be overruled to the praise and glory of God, and to the blessing of those who should be kept through it all until the coming of the Lord, kept through the power of the truth as taught them by God.

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They lose much who read the Bible by chapters only. For not only is the continuous sense thus often marred and lost, but also the contrasts in the sequences of consecutive chapters are missed by us in our weakness. To give a concise example of what I mean:

John 16 gives us Christ among disciples, teaching them in private about the new state of things then about to be introduced; viz., the Holy Spirit given, as on Pentecost, and the world in direct conflict with those in whom He would be.

John 17. What a contrast! Himself in free and full communion, talking with the Father about these very people, in their then present and future state, as looked at by the Father and Himself, and this in their hearing, as they were around Him.

John 18. Again what a contrast! He goes forth with His disciples to Cedron, to meet Judas, and make His own progress onward thence, through the Aaronic High Priest's palace (Himself in lowly guise, yet hereafter to be the true Melchisedec), to the Roman emperor's hall of judgment, and thence onward to Golgotha.

John 16, 17, 18. How perfect, He, and His wisdom, and self-possession, each in these three scenes!

As Servant, and as Son, and as Sufferer at man's hand and at God's, how perfect! and how attractive to the believer!

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I am poor, but not needy; for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed me. He has given me a portion with the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, as it is written, "Has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." (Eph. 1: 3.) Well may such speak well of Him who has spoken so well of them. His will has so expressed itself in His word — most blessed and precious word which endureth for ever, and can never fail; for "God is not a man, that He should he; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Num. 23: 19.)

"Who has blessed us;" the blessing has been conferred; is therefore ours already. Observe the largeness of it "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." It has not been given to us to keep, but to a better and more competent keeper, to One who could say, "I and my Father are one." (John 10: 28-30.) Where is it? "In Christ." Just as "our life is hid with Christ in God," so is the portion here spoken of. We have to know it, and, like Paul, through faith, and by the Spirit, to overflow with thanksgiving, our hearts and minds being occupied through grace with it. Observe, there is not only largeness with "every," but a description which, while giving definiteness, acts in a certain sense as limitation. "Every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies." "Spiritual" here, for a heavenly people, stands in contrast with material, for an earthly people (Israel). Blessings through the Holy Spirit shall come on, overtake, Israel, when she hearkens to the voice of the Lord its God; blessing in the city, the field; the fruit of the body, the ground, cattle, kine, sheep; the basket and store; in coming in, and going out (Deut. 28: 6). And while some may say, this is conditional on *her* obedience, faith replies, "Yes;" and she will be chastened therefore, but the promise stands in Hosea 2: 14-23, and secured upon the ground of what God will Himself be to her after that.

These blessings will flow from God to a redeemed people upon earth, and through the Spirit; but the Holy Spirit will not dwell in these blessings, as we shall find Him actually in spiritual blessing of

the heavenly places when we come to them in detail; earthly and heavenly give the character. For here, and note it, though the heavens and the earth are conjoined, and form one whole, they are distinct. See the proof of this in that we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. And again, during the millennial reign the kingdom is on the earth; but the court of it, the Lamb and His wife, in heavenly places. And again (Eph. 1: 10), all things in Christ will be gathered together in one, whether things in heaven, or things on earth. In Him (Col. 1: 20) all this was settled before the world's foundation. (Eph. 1: 4.)

And in one aspect of the subject it seems as if there was something like another limitation. At all events, note it, that in verse 3 (the mystery is the subject which the Spirit is introducing here), the portion or dowry of the heavenly people is looked at; but beside the dowry, character, and place of the assembly, there is the relationship between us and the Lord individually; that is, the assembly of God has a sphere marked for it, as has the kingdom. Material blessings are not ours now if we are sheep for the slaughter, killed all day long, delivered unto death, or dying daily. Material blessings fitted for man upon earth are not now ours, will not be ours hereafter; but our own portion, every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. But yet as espoused, as bride-expectant, or as wife of the Lamb, we get a connection with Himself personally, so that all things are ours (1 Cor. 3: 21-23) in another sense. [The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory Eph. 1 and 2 give us as to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and (Eph. 1: 17) the facts presented to faith revealed therein. But Eph. 3: 14 (parenthesis) gives us the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our communion through the new name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, an inexhaustible experience for us.]

All the promises of God in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now He that establisheth us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God, who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Cor. 1: 22.)

Oh that we were filled with these things as the sincere milk of the word! that we were minding these things! One who lives on milk will oft have a white line on the upper lip, where a little has dried. I would that the counterpart of that were true of me; not a mind occupied with circumstances of this world, or even of this earth, but of things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. The professing Church has Babylon, and its portion in time and on the earth, but cannot keep it, and has nothing beyond it in heaven. If minding earthly things, it is clear, though they may abide beyond, my part of the night down here; yet I cannot keep myself amidst them, nor can they satisfy man's heart any more than husks that the swine do eat can satisfy man's stomach. But if minding heavenly things, the Christ, satisfaction and delight of God and of the Father while time runs its course, and for eternity, abides the same: and He through the Spirit is enough for me as Son and Heir of God. God is a great giver. He has given us His Son, and will with (as here, in) Him give us a place in the sphere where He is, and is to be most displayed of all.

What an interest in me, in us, did the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ show! And how plainly is that interest written about here — our treasure as seen by God locked up safely for us in the Lord Jesus Christ! And what is the measure of the Christ's love to me, to us, whom His God and Father has thus blessed, and handed over to Him that we might be in Christ?

In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you — though another thing shows our safety whose is the blessing.

"Love freely begets love" was a heathen saying; "looking is the food of love" an English poet's. We have in our book, "We love Him, because He first loved us;" and, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ was first in loving. God is

love. He blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Paul knew and taught this in our verse. We receiving it, can bless Him who has so blessed us first.

There is something, here withal to challenge each one. Art thou the one professor who is here spoken of? Believer, this is your position, your burden, your service due, as following Paul, as Paul followed Christ! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc. May I, and thou, be doers of this word, and not hearers only!

All spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. What, in detail, are they? If I singled out from this context, Eph. 1: 3-14, the answer I should say: from verse 4, the being holy and blameless before Him in love; verse 5, being in a place of sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself; verse 6, made accepted in the Beloved (or graced in Him); verse 7, redemption through His blood, and the forgiveness of sins; verse 8, His abounding to us in all wisdom and intelligence; verse 9, the knowledge of the mystery of His will; verse 10, as to the gathering, hereafter, together in one, all things which are in Christ, whether in heaven or in earth, in Him; verse 11, in whom a peculiar inheritance has been allotted to us; verse 13, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; verse 14, who is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. These are but part of the blessed inventory, but they form a part of it. Other scriptures may give out their contents, and each, I doubt not, in harmony and keeping with the more immediate subject of the contents where they are found as these are.

Observe it, the prediction of blessings upon earth, or earthly blessings, have the family of Abraham as their line, and the land of promise as their centre while this globe remains; yet all by Jesus Christ, and through the Spirit. These predictions, however, as to earth, extend beyond an earth which can be burnt up (2 Peter 3: 10); for they include a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (v. 13, and Rev. 21: 1-5.)

And observe, too, the difference between the blessings upon earth as freely given to Adam at the first, and to remain his unless, or until, he broke his allegiant subjection to the word of the Lord God. Scripture unfolds the hopes of the earthly blessings from the fall onwards, and there is no difficulty in following out from creation onward the opening stream. But of none of these is it written that *they* were from before the world's foundation, though of course God knew the end from the beginning. Those blessings are all written about in the word, in the Old Testament; but not so as to our blessings in the heavenlies.

Of us, whose they are, it is written after Pentecost, and not till then, "According as He chose us in Him before the world's foundation." And as we read (Eph. 3: 4, 5) of the mystery of Christ, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;" for the mystery from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things. (v. 9.) Eternal redemption and salvation were not written about in times previous to Pentecost.

The choice of us, of me, in Christ from before the foundation of the world is the point of departure of the word of God about our blessing.

And even as to Adam in Eden, and Eve too, if he was a type of Him that was to come, He that was to come was, and His portion before God too, ere He made the first man Adam, a living soul, a type of the last man Adam, a life-giving Spirit. That is clear. He chose us in Christ; what a precious word! what a grand truth! And He thus exercised this good pleasure of His will — motives drawn from within Himself, and plans formed by Himself, when we were not in existence; and not for our sakes, whose first appearance in existence would be as having fallen in Adam, and enveloped in all the fruits

consequent upon sin, but rather for His own glory as God, and for the setting forth of the Father's supreme delight in the Son, in us, and through the Spirit. And yet the littleness of the creature is never so seen as when it will be displayed in the glory in Christ, and with God — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Why do believers so shrink from giving God credit for being better than man, or themselves individually? His supremacy is awful to a sinner; but to the believer, surely, as sustaining His character and work shown to-usward, Peter 1: 17-21 makes it most blessed to us.

Oh, if He were not sovereignly supreme to maintain Himself while showing out His character and work, what could a poor ruined creature do? But when I look at His Being, self-existent; and at His power, and character, and works, even I can say, No refuge for the ruined creature like that which is in the unruined Creator.

I turn now to the first of these wondrous blessings (Eph. 1: 4), that we might be, or for us to be, holy and without blame before Him in love.

Holy is said both of God and of the Father. The primary idea of holiness I judge to be, not purification, but separation in principle and fact to God and the Father. Put apart for God and the Father first, and then that position ruling every thing. (John 17: 19.) "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth," is the verse which settles this. He could not have purified Himself, the One who knew no sin, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, apart from sin. But He did separate Himself, and went and sat down on the throne of the majesty in the highest, the accepted Sin-offering, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. And the new display made in Acts 2: 33-36, abides still, and the knowing of it was the separation of believers down here, and is so now to Him who is their anchor and forerunner fixed within the veil.

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