

Blue.

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Introductory

There is but one mind in heaven, and that is the acknowledgment of the worth of the Lamb that was slain. "Him hath God exalted"; to Him hath Jehovah said, "Sit on my right hand till I make thy foes thy footstool." The whole intelligence of heaven is occupied in discovering all the glories of the Person and work of the Son. Here then, is heavenly-mindedness; it can only be the portion of those who are risen with Christ There is one all-absorbing subject — it admits not of a divided mind — the loins of the mind must be girded up. It is a subject, too, which is inexhaustible. He who is a father in Christ is one who has unlearned all else, in order to know Him that was from the beginning; and has yet to pray "that I may know him." It is, therefore, by knowing Jesus, that we know the mind of heaven. There is nothing fanciful or speculative in this; it is not giving the rein to a lively or warm imagination, in order to picture to ourselves what might be the employments of heaven, but it is our ability, through our knowledge of Him who descended first into the lower parts of the earth, and then ascended far above all heavens, to have fellowship with those who are there. The same substantial reality which is presented to us, is also to them the engrossing object, even the Lamb that was slain. It is this which measures the utter distance between the utmost stretch of human intellect, or loftiest flights of man's imagination, and one led by the Spirit — the subject is so different.

"Subjects for the Household of Faith," Page 70, 71.

Blue.

**"And they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen."
(Ex. 28: 6).**

The complex materials which formed the high priest's garment called the Ephod, and indeed, all the priestly robes present an interesting subject of enquiry. Since they speak of the glories which shine in the Son of God, who is called to be a Priest after the order of Melchisedek, they are sure to present a rich compensation to those who reverently wait on the Lord for the explanation. They all speak of Him

in one way or another, and while the gold tells of what is divine and glorious, the blue follows on to indicate the pre-eminence of heaven in correspondence with that glory and in relation to all the ways of God. Here then, my friend, is a field for research where we may contemplate heavenly and eternal things by the Spirit of God, which history cannot offer, nature cannot promise, nor science unfold; unreachable by the natural mind, incomparable for grandeur, and, because belonging to the realm of faith and revelation, infinitely beyond both the reach and conception of the creature. How great and glorious beyond all thought is the Person of our blessed Lord, and how infinitely gracious of our God to make it known to feeble creatures in this way. There is plenty of glitter and worldly pomp all around to captivate the natural heart, and those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth are accustomed, while passing through the world, to keep in check their natural desires. They may, however, let themselves out with perfect freedom in the happy contemplation of spiritual verities which are pure, heavenly, and eternal. "Things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and which have not come into the heart of man, which God hath prepared for them that love Him " (1 Cor. 2: 9).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the end and aim of all Scripture, and many and varied are the ways which the Holy Ghost takes to set Him before our hearts. Delightful as is the tracing of the typical signification of the gold with its representation of the divine glory in Man and the display of divine righteousness, there is quite as important and equally interesting line of thought in the blue. We must see, indeed, that the whole accumulation of types, shadows, promises, and prophecies, find in Him their end, and "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." Speaking on 2 Cor. 3, "There is," says W. Kelly, "a distinct purpose or idea couched under the legal forms as their inner spirit and this he — the apostle — lets us know is really Christ the Lord. 'Now the Lord is that Spirit,' this it is that runs through the whole legal system in its different types and shadows."

This brings us to the Tabernacle, the dwelling-place of God, and scene of the manifestation in type of the divine glory, every ray of which shines in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And since it is spoken of as a figurative representation of things in heaven, we may note a beautiful link of connection between the seen and unseen, the natural and the spiritual; God as it were, speaking to us by the things He has created rather than by the language of earth. The tent of mystic beauty with its sacred furniture and favoured priestly family voiced the language of another world, indicating in those early days, the intention of God regarding another order of Man, and with Him a new company in priestly dignity, clothed in garments of glory and ornament to worship in holy splendour. Here remark the peculiar place of the tabernacle as linking together the two grand systems of Creation and Redemption, the former setting before us omnipotent power and beneficent goodness, and the latter, eternal counsels of love from which all the rest sprang. Created things are made to teach the uncreated, and the soul is made to adore as the Holy Spirit unfolds the eternal verities which lie behind the things that are seen.

Besides the actual fabrics which composed the structure there were certain colours arranged in such a way as to give an appearance of magnificence to the whole. The tabernacle was made of fine twined linen with blue, purple, and scarlet and covered with cunningly wrought cherubim. Then there was the hangings before each entrance, including the holy veil, as well as the clothes of service and the priestly robes all being brought from the great workshop of nature and cunningly wrought by the designer for beauty and order, because it was the habitation of Him who deigned to take up His abode among His people. The fine twined linen gave a groundwork for the colours, and is in itself a fit emblem of the spotless humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, while the colours speak of the combination of graces and perfections which were proper to Him. This is seen in Hebrews 10, where the holy veil is said to represent His humanity. As the colours were arranged in the cloth in an orderly way so that unity and consistency would be seen in the whole they speak of the moral perfections of Him in whom

all was so perfectly blended as to set forth a perfect human life on the earth.

A distinction must be made, however, between these colours. The purple and scarlet are well known to indicate dispensational and royal glory both in Israel and the nations, speaking both of the Davidic sway and the time when the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to Him as Son of Man. Blue is the colour which speaks of heaven and heavenly things. This gives an interest to the latter different from the other two. While the claims of royalty and kingly dignity is seen in every step, all was in perfect accord with the ways, thoughts, and life of heaven all the way through. It will be seen that the blue was the predominating colour all through, for besides the combination with purple and scarlet, it is found in many places where the others are absent. See the lower fastenings of the breastplate, the long blue robe of the ephod, the ribbon which encircled the mitre and encircled the holy crown, and such is the Spirit's use of this colour that it appears again in another set of symbols altogether where everything speaks of glory. We allude to the Scripture use of precious stones where we meet with the sapphire, which is said to be the colour of the deep blue sky. It is found in combination to exhibit the divine glory in Creation, Grace, and Redemption (Ezek. 28: 13, Ex. 28: 18; Rev. 21: 19), and is used in the description of the throne of God Himself (Ex. 24: 10; Ezek. 1: 26).

It is just possible, however, to use the types to hide the great antitype, and to be able to give a good account of the material figures with but a poor apprehension of the Lord Himself. Leaving therefore, the department of types and shadows, we enter the domain where the Person in all His moral beauty is portrayed, where the sinfulness of sin and the ruin of man supply the dark background which brings His perfection more distinctly into view. Never was there such a record as the Gospels give for there the activities both of good and evil are seen in all their varied ramifications in character, conduct, and life, and there the supremacy of good is set forth to the delight of the heart of God by a Man. The second Man out of heaven is seen making good the claims of God in the midst of a fallen race, and He is contrasted with the first man not as a sinner only, but as to order of origin. "The first man out of earth made of dust; the second Man out of heaven."

The distance and estrangement which sin had wrought was removed for faith in the birth of Christ. This is put with certain touches of exquisite beauty in the early chapters of Luke. The incident of the *heavenly visitant* and Zechariah leads to the song about the day-spring *from on high*. Then Gabriel with the most momentous of all messages, the most mysterious of all mysteries, declaring the power of the *highest* which leads to the song about the mighty One whose name is Holy. Next, the Angel of the Lord and *the heavenly host*, saying glory to God in the *highest*, and on earth, peace, goodwill to man. The aged Simeon who sees in the holy Child God's Salvation to *all the earth* and most wonderful of all, the *opened heavens*, the descending Spirit and the Father's voice proclaiming the worth of His beloved Son.

The history of the intervening years is passed over till the time of His ministry with the exception of the incident in the temple, all being summed up in the words, "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour both with God and man." We have often wondered at this silence and asked the reason why? All can understand that nothing could be recorded to meet mere curiosity, and that God has given all that is needed. We can understand, too, that the prophetic history of our Lord in the Old Testament includes the whole life pathway from Bethlehem to death, resurrection, and glory, see Micah 5: 2; Isaiah 53: 2; Psalm 16. A beautiful moral reason may be seen, however, in the history, if we take account of the change in His position when His public ministry began. From that moment, His life-work consisted in the declaration of the heart of God to man, this we have recorded to meet our need. But before that time, He was declaring *before all heaven* what Man is to the glory of God, and we can surely see how morally fitting it is that this should be omitted on earth and recorded in heaven. The

spiritual eye will discern here the profound lessons taught by the omissions of Scripture.

He entered upon His service, not as One who was head and shoulders above all others merely, or towering above a Moses or a David as they had been above their generation. Nor is He one who perfectly reaches the standard which others sought to attain. No, He is alone of His kind. This is where some err — who use beautiful language about the Man Jesus — as if He had connected Himself with a ruined race to lift it by His incarnation. Some one said by way of illustration, that man was broken china, but He was whole china. This is to display ignorance of His marvellous stoop. It was met by the answer, "No. He was not china in the sense of the illustration at all." He was "That holy thing" spoken of by the angel "The second Man out of heaven." "We," says the apostle, "beheld His glory as of an only-begotten with a Father, full of grace and truth."

The testimony of His fore-runner shows an accumulation of glories. Personal, moral, and dispensational, besides pointing out the sacrificial, which is the basis of sin's removal from the creation. The King, the Lamb of God, the Son of God, who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, the Bridegroom, and withal, the Man out of heaven. It is with this last we are concerned here, and how beautifully it shows the blue in relation to the gold and the royal colours in Him. "He who comes from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthy and speaketh of the earth, He that cometh from heaven is above all" (John 3: 31).

He came not to associate in worldly and earthly pursuits, or make His life consist in such things; there was therefore, bound to be a gap between Him and all others. We can conceive of a messenger coming from heaven delivering his message and returning without interfering with anything here. He made known His mission indeed, bringing heaven's richest and best among men, but along with that, He lived among them in the same circumstances, meeting the complications incidental to this life, apart from sin, putting His own heavenly stamp upon all.

Nor could it be otherwise, for nothing could add to Him. He must give character to all He comes in contact with. The reality of this lies deep in the nature of things. His Person makes the place and gives character to it, so that every day is alike sanctified, and every place alike holy. His birth had illuminated the stable at Bethlehem with a glory far surpassing earth's stateliest mansions, so His Presence makes the mountain-top a sanctuary and: the little boat a shrine. Think of the unfolding of truth both moral and prophetic, in the two mountain discourses recorded in Matthew 5 - 7 and Matt. 14 - 25: or again, the comprehensive sketch of dispensational truth recorded in chapter 13 of the same gospel, which runs on to the consummation in the coming kingdom glories. Then remark the amazing display of power in the two boat scenes of Matthew 8 and Luke 5, where both the physical and animal creation obey His mighty voice, and note how in another kindred scene, He made the waves a highway to reach His own when they were in need (Matthew 14).

But far surpassing all is the mountain scene of Galilee, where the combined glories of the King burst through the veil of humiliation, pledging to the hearts of His own the future display. Here we contemplate the gold, blue, purple, scarlet, combined with the fine linen of His spotless humanity, where His face was like the sun and His raiment glistening like the lightning's flash. Well may we with them behold by the eye of faith His Majesty, and reverently listen to the Father's voice proclaiming from the excellent glory the worth and preciousness of His beloved Son. The scene marks an epoch in His earthly career. He reaches the highest point and from there he treads the downward path to the cross, where in death He lays the basis for the full and universal display of all that which the transfiguration was a pledge.

But not scenes of nature only. The busy haunts of life must be frequented, where the activities of

man are met, in the village, town or city where the great questions of life, national, political, and ecclesiastical, must be met and adjusted in the light of heaven and the Father's will. It is in such scenes where wisdom and resource is called for, that the variety of His glory shines out and the pledge of His ability to subdue all things is given, for He must reign till He puts all things under His feet.

The Village.

Nazareth, the scene where the presentation of Man Godward had been set forth is visited with a view to presenting the heart of God manward. Though no prophet is accepted in his own country, the people there must hear from His own lips that He is the sent One of God. All bore Him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth, but when He asserted the sovereignty of God and the universality of grace, they were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city. His life had been sought in infancy by Herod, but now it is the people among which He had lived and for whom He came from heaven, that seek to kill Him.

The Town.

Capernaum was the centre from which flowed forth His royal bounty and from which He journeyed over land and sea. Certain of His disciples were drawn from it and many works of mercy were done there. The nobleman's son, the ruler's daughter, Peter's wife's mother, and the woman with the issue of blood. There the grand discourse on the bread of God, the food of everlasting life was given, that a man may eat thereof and not die. It might well be said of that town that it was exalted to heaven; bodies and souls were under His beneficent ministry and many were made to rejoice for time and eternity. But alas! the time came when He had to speak of judgment and pronounce woe on the favoured town.

The City.

Jerusalem is the city of which glorious things had been spoken. The One was here that only could bring to pass all that was promised, but she knew not her day, and like Hagar, she must remain in bondage with her children many days. The seat of the nation's learning, the home of the leaders was here, and yet here was the scene of the strongest opposition. Here was seen the fiercest bigotry and untiring energy of opposition which at last culminated in the dark tragedy of Calvary. It was here the leaders were met in the great controversies of John 5 and John 7 - 9. His own relationship with the Father set forth in sovereignty of life-giving, and supremacy of judgment, and as One who speaks the word of God and carries out His works. In that city, during the last week of His life, He met and answered the leaders in the pressing problems of the moment and when He puts before them His inquiry no one could answer. Then in a chapter which is unequalled for penetrating scrutiny He exposes and pronounces judgment. But such is the state that it cannot be that a prophet perish outside that city. Well might He say, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen her brood under her wings, but ye would not (Matt. 21: 23 and Luke 13: 34).

On the political side the bondage of the nation is apparent. His answer to the question, "Is it right to give tribute to Caesar or not?" shows He was not there to rival the emperor or intervene at that moment for the overthrow of the Gentile. Deliverance from the yoke is linked with their repentance and reception of Him as Messiah; this had been refused. If we let Him alone said the leaders, all men will

believe on Him and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. They did not let Him alone, and what they feared was carried out and with terrible vengeance. A kingdom in the earthly carnal sense could not suit the heavenly One. If My kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight for it. His kingdom we know to be righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

They stood, however, in a place of nearness dispensationally, having the covenant and the fathers, etc. His ways in the case of the Syrophenician woman shows that however they may refuse Him, the messenger of the covenant and vessel of all the Messianic blessings, He will honour and adjust everything in relation to the divine promises, putting the woman in her true place before Him,, meeting her need, and at the same time maintaining the distinctness of the nation's place in the ways of God. The children's bread is reserved, and she learns that though His grace abounds for every need, He will respect the promises made to the Fathers and the sure mercies of David.

We may note how sovereign grace and responsibility meet and are maintained here. The vessel of all the promises stood before them and every conceivable way had been tried to show them the character of the time. All having failed, the cross comes more definitely into view as a basis for the fulfilment of the same promises on the principle of divine grace, for behind the gracious offer of the Messiah to Israel at that time lay the great truth that His kingdom could not be a worldly one, but founded on His atoning death at Calvary. While He is on high at the present time all the sure mercies of David are found in Himself, ready to be made good to the nation, but on the principle of sovereign grace. "Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

Part 2.

Since the Holy Word exhorts us to consider Him we may draw yet nearer, and with quickened sensibilities behold the beauty of the Lord. The complete absence of what is called character meets us at every turn, every moral trait blending with every other and all crystallizing into one perfect whole. He was the humblest yet the most dignified; the most gracious and gentle, yet uncompromisingly firm and unswerving. Zeal apart from cruelty, lowliness without being mean, a kindness which delighted to make His followers His most intimate friends — their joy a place of sweetest intimacy which, however. in the very nature of things, forbade what we call familiarity. No sign of fear nor hesitancy of speech, and having spoken, there is nothing to withdraw, modify, or call for apology. This latter we see in His most devoted servants.

{ "There was no unevenness in Jesus, no predominant quality to produce the effect of giving Him a distinctive character. He was, though despised and rejected of men, the perfection of human nature. The sensibilities, firmness, decision (though this attached itself also to the principle of obedience), elevation, and calm meekness which belong to human nature, all found their perfect place in Him. In a Paul I find energy and zeal; in a Peter ardent affection; in a John, tender sensibilities and abstraction of thought, united to a desire to vindicate what he loved, which scarce knew limit. But the quality we have observed in Peter predominates and characterises him. In a Paul blessed servant though he was, he does not repent, though he had repented. He had no rest in his spirit when he found not Titus, his brother. He goes off into Macedonia though a door was opened in Troas John, who would have vindicated Jesus in his zeal, knew not what manner of spirit he was of, and would have forbidden the glory of God, if a man walked not with them. Such were Paul, and Peter, and John.

But in Jesus, even as Man, there was none of this unevenness. There was nothing salient in His character because all was in perfection to God in His humanity, and had its place and exactly its

service, and then disappeared. God was glorified in it, and all was in perfect harmony. When meekness became Him, He was meek; when indignation, who could stand before His overwhelming and withering rebuke?" J. N. Darby, Synopsis, Volume 1, pages 181-2.}

In the greatest of the earthly race there are the faults of their virtues, and much that is humbling comes out in the defects of the great and the follies of the wise. Beautiful characters are portrayed by men of scholarly attainment and refined taste, and from nature's point of view there is much to admire, but all break down somewhere. His gracious acts made hearts to leap for joy, and in that way He could not be hid, though often charging them to tell no man. We have in the Gospels a grand and incontrovertible proof of inspiration, for no mind of man could imagine what is given there. A perfect account of a perfect life written by men for the most part simple and unlearned.

Well may we ponder with deep adoration that Holy Person whose life here stands alone in all its heavenly and unsullied beauty. in the knowledge that all that was outward which could be taken account of by others, sprang from what He was with the Father. "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent me." He who came forth from the Father and was necessarily one with the Father, accomplishes all the Father's will, heaven thus breaking in on the life of man on the earth for its own intention and honour, in the blessing of the creature of God's purpose and electing grace. But oh! what has that meant for the world which has sealed its doom in the awful guilt of putting the Son of God to death, the shameful death of the cross?

But, with all, there was much He passed by. In the nature of things it must be so. The equalisation of capital; — "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" was His answer. Though appointed Judge for eternity He would not adjudicate in the things of time in a death-stamped scene. He had come to put things right, but not in this way, therefore, things are adjusted in the light of eternity, men are met by that which reaches the conscience and the selfishness of the heart laid bare.

So it was with the world of learning. The work of God is in creation as the mirror wherein is reflected His natural attributes. Man is part of these works and is himself a marvellous piece of workmanship. In the works of creation he finds ample scope for his intellectual powers, and at that time had reached an advanced stage of science and philosophy as men speak. Whatever his progress in these things he is wrong at the centre. Having fallen from his original estate he is a lost sinner at a distance from God and unable to help himself. At that very moment, with all his learning, all the great questions pertaining to his life and being stood unanswered, and by him unanswerable. It was impossible, therefore, that the Lord Jesus could take up such things. His coming was in relation to a theme which lay nearer to the heart of God than even creation's wonders, viz., the declaration of eternal love. Moral relationships in regard to eternity, heaven, earth, and hell, sin, righteousness, and judgment, the exposure of man's heart as a sinner and the revelation of the heart of God to meet him, are the things which engage the heavenly One.

No other could do this. Heavenly messengers had often been here, but merely to deliver their message and return. Both Enoch and Elijah had been caught away, and with the exception of the momentary appearance of the latter on the mount of glory, nothing had been heard of them. Again, in the commerce between earth and heaven, Paul was taken to the third heaven, but coming back could not utter what he heard. With the advent of this blessed Person, all the mind of heaven comes out. He whom God has sent speaks the words of God. How surpassingly lovely is the scene in Luke 15, where He sets forth the joy of God and the delight of heaven in the recovery of the lost. He there shows how the divine heart is satisfied in satisfying the heart of the fallen creature, the blessed God Himself giving

impetus to the joy of the whole scene.

Though leaving alone the world of science He is perfectly acquainted with the book of nature. The heavens declare the glory of God, and well we know the earth and sea join in the glorious song. From all these He draws that which illustrates and enforces the great and abiding principles of the creatures obligations to the Creator. Both animate and inanimate are used, for the sun, moon, and stars come in as well as the eagle, raven, and sparrow. So with the earth, mountains, rivers, trees, as well as sheep, lambs, wolves,. and for the sea, His kingdom is likened to a net cast therein, and when He would bring home to men the sorrows and consternation of a coming day, He likens it to the sea and the waves roaring.

But that He is perfectly acquainted with the great drama of life in all its phases may be seen from the fact that the moral world is laid under tribute also. Kings with their subjects and armies. Masters of estates and their stewards, trades in all varieties, profit and loss, building planting, sowing, etc., etc. In the world of letters there are schools of philosophy, all of them more or less put in language by a process of reasoning beyond ordinary people. With Jesus our Lord it is not so, for there the simplest may draw water from the wells of salvation, which the most advanced can never fathom.

Though conversant with all that was going on, His business we have seen was the work of God. In the execution of that He met not only the contradiction of sinners, but want of faith, and understanding by His own. This latter He felt keenest of all, and it was -teen most of all in the three who were favoured by being brought into the place of intimacy and nearness with Him. The brothers wanted Him to put forth His power on one occasion for destruction and on another had betrayed a covetous spirit in seeking a conspicuous place with Him in His kingdom, and Peter on one occasion sought unwittingly to come between Him and His great work of the cross, while at the end, all are found in disagreement about who would be the greatest. All is met in view of their place in testimony after He had gone on high. The time of His ministry is used by Him while proving the world's guilt to fit them for the great work of their lives, viz., the spread of the testimony after He had gone on high.

Having glanced briefly at His ways among men in the outside, let us with reverence view Him a moment among His own. He had adjusted with beautiful precision the detail of life in view of heaven and eternity and now the time has arrived when He can speak freely to them of the Father and of heaven and the counsels of love. Here; with deep delight, we behold the Lord in the midst of His own in anticipation of the day of the Church, where He could bring out without reserve the heavenly communications which concerned His glory and their association with Him in a new scene where all is of God.

As soon as Judas goes out the Lord opens His blessed heart. The presence of the betrayer had caused Him distress of spirit, but now He is free to bring out all the deep, thoughts of His love. He consoles them by telling them of the Father's house and their place there with Him, and though unseen, He would come to them till the time came when He would come *for* them. He takes them into full confidence regarding the working out of divine interests and the new heavenly testimony in which all the Father's glory is bound up in and with the Son, and whatever was the necessities they connected with it, they had only to seek the Father in His Name, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Nor need they hesitate to do this, for the Father Himself had affection for them because they had received His Son.

He speaks of His relationship with the Father and theirs with both Him and His Father, all being made good to them by the Holy Ghost whom He would send. The Father's house as prepared by Him, the Father's love, Himself the object of it, and they with Him to enjoy it, the Father's purpose as

centring in Himself and they in that purpose as given to Him by the Father. The earthly, Jewish side is left far behind in the plenitude of revelation and unfolding of the heavenly. He speaks so as to draw out their difficulties, transferring them, in thought, from Judaism and the earth to the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of God as revealed in Christianity. In that way, John 13 and John 14 are seen much like a Bible reading, where the disciples put forth their questions to Himself and are led on into the deeper things of God.

On reaching the end of John 16 He turns from speaking to them to the Father. The communications of the previous chapters were to them, here, all is to the Father. He had glorified Him on earth and now looks up and seeks to be glorified above, that He may continue to glorify Him in that place. Surely this is the place where Christ is all and in all (Col. 3: 11). His voice alone is heard, He traces the new heavenly testimony from its source, in the bosom of eternal love long ere time began, to its ultimate consummation in a coming eternity of bliss. Their having been given to Him as the Father's love-gift to Himself, to have part with Him in all He takes up as Man, which necessarily would identify them with Him before the world in His rejection.

He had kept them in the Father's Name and had given them His word. All He brought from heaven is deposited with them, the name, the affections, the word, and the Father's purposes of love. All had been given. And now the Father will keep them because it concerns the glory of His Son. Loved with the same love as the Father had for Himself, and then brought home in a display of glory before the world that hated Him, and them also because of Him. He marks out a place for them in that radiant scene which is peculiar to one favoured class; a place which for favour and excellence passes beyond words, where He will have them with Himself to behold Him in that which is only His. The eternal glory which is beyond their creature ability to share, He will have them with Himself to behold.

We might stop here and ask how far these things have become a reality to our souls. A reality however, which for Him necessitated the cross. Before He could become the Centre of the glory He must first be the Centre of all the shame and ignominy. The scene in John 13: 17, most lovely in its historic setting, could have no meaning did we not see by anticipation the marking out of a new order of things based upon His atoning work at the cross. He had said (chapter 16: 16), " A little while and ye shall not see me." He was going down into a depth where they could not follow, and they would weep and lament, but He would see them again and their hearts would rejoice with a joy none could take from them.

During that little while, the blessed One had been in the conflict battling death's forces and meeting God about the whole sin question. Accomplishing the work which is of the greatest consequence for God and for the whole creation, by which all the activities of time are adjusted in relation to the divine glory. Having borne the full weight of all by going into death, He breaks death's power by rising, and thereby establishes a new creation where all is of God. The resurrection message to Mary reveals for His own that new relationship with Himself on the other side of death, which connects with the thoughts, feelings, tastes, and joys brought out by Him to them in that memorable night before He suffered (John 13: 17).

The blessedness of this should be pondered, seeing it is not on the surface. It is clear that every relationship must carry its own affections and feelings with it, and it is most instructive to see the way the Lord brings these latter out as connected with the presence of the Holy Ghost in our souls. The following extract may help us here.

{ "This was the introduction of the disciples into the realisation of that new state which Christ inaugurated by His resurrection, Son of God in power. They should see the second Man beyond death,

and be in living communication with Him. . . . It was the same Christ, but what was of all importance, the basis of all for us, it was Christ beyond death, the power of Satan, the judgment of God, and sin; He who had been made sin for us and by whom our sins had been borne and put away, that God might remember them no more. We see here the link between Jesus, known in His humiliation in our midst in grace, and man in his new state, according to the counsels of God, a state in which He could no more be subject to death, nor put to the proof." J. N. Darby. "On the Gospel of John." Chapter 16. }

But if He comes forth in resurrection it is on the way to the throne. His going there is an event which must affect all parts of creation. Think of it, a Man above, upon the throne of God. Past angels, lordships, principalities, dominions, and authorities, beyond every circle, leaving far behind the vast hierarchies of the heavens in their stupendous grandeur, almost unknown to us, distancing every conceivable force, to the very centre of the universe, the throne of the Majesty on high. Scripture speaks of His own throne upon which He shall sit with His royal bride in the day of glorious display; the throne He sits on at the present time is His by virtue of His Deity.

He is there in Manhood that in Him all the grace of the heart of God may shine out to the creature, a fact which gives a completeness to the truth, the force of which is sometimes missed. His coming out from God as we have seen, was to make Him known, this brought out the grand secret of eternity, that a God of love will have man richly blest and at home in His own presence for His own satisfaction for ever. Such a revelation necessitates an answer in man, for God cannot be defeated. The great truth comes to light, therefore, in the exaltation of Christ, that He who came out to make the revelation as God has gone in as Man, in answer to what has been revealed, thus completing the circle of truth so that revelation and approach are complete in Himself in view of the Gospel going forth.

There is another point of importance here. At a time when God was compelled to chasten His people for their sins, the prophet Ezekiel beheld in vision a Man above upon the throne. The exaltation of Christ is the fulfilment of that vision. If, however, we examine the circumstances, we shall see a very marked difference. The prophet, sees the throne in judicial character with judgment about to be accomplished, a circumstance which is more in keeping with the character of the throne seen by the apostle in Revelation 4 and 5. The Old Testament seer beheld the throne in view of the great dispensational change which was about to displace Israel and begin the times of the Gentiles, while the New Testament apostle beheld it at a time when all was preparing to put Christ into possession of His inheritance. Note the perfection of Scripture here. The Old Testament prophets spoke of the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow, passing entirely over the church age: the New Testament seer stands beyond that age when the church is seen in heaven participating in the praises of the Lamb.

Well we know that the presence of Christ upon His Father's throne during the present age constitutes the reign of grace. "That as sin has reigned unto death even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Having been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, He is seated on high as the Centre of royal power and authority and made the Administrator of all the grace of heaven. The contrast both with Ezekiel and the Apocalypse is easily seen, for instead of messengers of judgment sent forth, the Holy Ghost comes from a glorified Christ to carry out the will of the Father and the Son. This is something new, being outside of the time-ways of God and belonging to the counsels of eternity. It is the full glory of the throne. The One who bore the judgment is there. in the supreme rights of His Person and work, and while that continues judgment, though not cancelled, is deferred. This recalls the sapphire stone colour of the deep blue sky, and tells of the triumph of God in richest blessing where all that He is shines out in holy splendour in full and unmerited blessing to sinners.

Part 3.

So far, the moral perfections of the Lord Jesus in His life upon the earth have chiefly engaged us: a theme which calls for the exercise of holy affections. Let us turn now to the application of His grace and redemption to His saints that we may learn how the heavenly is woven into their being by the Word and Spirit of God. This calls more for the exercise of the renewed mind and connects itself with His ministry from the place where He now is, having in view the believer's transfer from his fallen state as in Adam to a new status and position spoken of in Scripture as being "in Christ."

Here a difficulty meets us because of how few there are that have any real sense of the importance of the present time. It may be said that the hour of Christ's session at the right hand of God is exceptional and differs greatly from the divine dealings in every other hour in the history of time. Not only is it fraught with the richest unfoldings of the mind of God, surpassing anything before revealed to men, but the Spirit of God dwells in the believer to form him by the things revealed. It may be distinctly affirmed that the apprehension of Christ in glory by the Spirit puts us at the centre of all God's thoughts, and gives the key to the unlocking both of the counsels, of eternity and of all His ways in time. The light of a glorified Christ rays itself forth on all the activities of the Godhead in time, illuminating the histories, types, and shadows, with a glory which no Old Testament saint could conceive, throwing, too, its beams forward, and opening up the whole vista of glory through millennial times to God's eternal day. "Undimmed Thy radiancy appears, changeless through all the changing years."

The gospel of the glory of the blessed God comes forth to meet the sinner in his need, showing how all his guilty state has been met for God at the cross. The Holy Ghost works in him, bringing the joy of what Christ has done for him into his soul and linking him up with his risen Head in glory, the divine plan being not only to clear him from the effects of the fall, but to go back to the original created position and transfer him from the earthly to the heavenly order. If we ponder this carefully, we shall see how in the wisdom of God He uses man's failure to effectuate His own purpose, and in recovery, brings him back not merely to where he departed from, but to a place marked out by Himself in the counsels of eternity.

On our side, this could not be the work of a day, but is connected with a process of experience whereby the soul learns its own resourcelessness and the incorrigibility of the flesh. It is true that every believer begins with the reception of the Spirit which constitutes him part of the new order, but it must be apparent to all that changes of great import are involved in all this, and the more real the person is, the more painful must be the experience. The revolution in the soul which makes a man love what he hated and hate what he loved, involves a thorough shaking from the very foundation of his being, taking in the source of thought, feeling, desire, and conduct. It is a transition which affects both character and conduct, being connected with moral questions, involving responsibility to God and faithfulness to fellow-men, it concerns both righteousness and holiness, and is attended with great searchings of heart. This is that process spoken of as deliverance, called by some sanctification, which is set before us in Romans 7: 14-25. The marvel is, that such a transfer can be made while in a bodily condition which is suited for the earth, and in that way incapable of giving expression to the new heavenly thing implanted there.

If such a lesson is not soon learned, neither can it be got merely from books. Being an experimental process it involves the ups and downs of circumstances in trial and conflict which are necessary to self-knowledge. As we grow in this, the evil of our sinful nature shows itself more and more which, in the light of all the grace which has reached us, makes us cry out in distress: — "O

wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of this body of death?" It is then that the gladdening truth dawns upon us that all this wretched state has come under the eye of God in judgment in our glorious Substitute at the cross, and we say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7: 24, 25). A landmark in the soul's history is thus reached and the person can now offer his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is his reasonable service (Rom. 12: 1).

Happy are they who have reached this in the soul's history; a point by no means transcendental, but a deep, practical reality known and enjoyed by those who were once far from God in their sins. For such, life is much simplified, all being reduced to a question of what is of Adam or what is of Christ. The outlet from the fallen state, whether Jew or Gentile, was by death, that only could end a condition which as long as it lives is rebellious; and the believer, in virtue of the death of Christ and the gift of the Spirit, is privileged to reckon himself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6: 11). The importance of our being thoroughly alive to this and entering upon it will be seen from the following, where deliverance is spoken of in relation to life and nature.

{ "Now the things of the Spirit are the things of Christ, "all that the Father hath." Are these things less real and substantial than the things of the flesh? (Hebrews 11: 1). What of our home with its new relationship and joys? What of the fellowship which is ours with the Father in His thoughts of, and plans, and counsels and work for, the glory of the Son? For which we need indeed, Christ dwelling in the heart, that we may comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, but are strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man for this very purpose. What of the new objects thus presented to us, instead of the poor things we were pursuing after the flesh? What of the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, to which we are called? Is it less powerful to our heart than the association and fellowship of men we once belonged to and took such deceived interest in? What of the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory — which none of the princes of this world knew — to replace and displace for us for ever its wisdom, and learning, and philosophy.

. . . The heavens, with Christ there as the intimate link that connects us with all that is there, are the present revealed scene of our home, relationships, objects, hopes, joys, interests, and pursuits, that thus a heavenly people may be formed practically as such, by what is heavenly on the earth — showing out nothing but what is heavenly." "Truth for Believers," Volume 2, Pages 183-185, J. A. Trench. }

Looking back from this standpoint we can clearly see that the grace which came out in the birth of Christ could not stop there. That wondrous stoop had the cross in view, that the power of death which rested on man might be broken and that the Saviour might enter on life of another order wherein others could be associated with Him before His God and Father. He laid down flesh and blood, which in Him was perfect, to take up an order of Manhood which abides for eternity, while in that same act He brought to an end for God, and for faith, the state of ruin in which the objects of His mercy lay. In His exaltation the Holy Spirit came forth for the interweaving of the blue in their souls, forming in them a new moral being which is of God in Christ Jesus, constituting them heavenly: redemption and new creation, having in view for them not only deliverance from that which came in by the fall, but lifting them from the earthly as created, to the heavenly in new creation.

This work is of fine needle-work, every stitch involving the displacement of what is earthly, and is accomplished by the Word penetrating the heart through the conscience, involving constant exercise of soul, but with richest blessing. Normally, it is the result of a proper estimate, the things of heaven taking their own proper precedence, but often becomes a costly process because of the tendency to cling to things here. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life " (Job. 2: 4), and the

ruling passion being strong in death there is often a struggle at parting with what is of earth. The effect of this formative work is put by John as that which is 'true in Him (Christ) and in you (the saints) in the first epistle, chapter two, and in chapter four it is put in the words, "as He is so are we in this world."

This meets the thought underlying the garments made for Aaron's sons. While the beautiful priestly robes belonging to the high priest spoke of what was proper to, and inherent in our Lord in His glorious Manhood — nothing could possibly add to Him — the embroidered robes made for his sons, speak of the moral qualities of Christ formed in the saints to-day by the Holy Ghost. They too, were clothed in garments of glory and ornament, indicating, another order of things, all of which link up beautifully with the scene and state into which reconciliation brings, as seen in Colossians and Ephesians, as well as with the grand paraphernalia of glory seen in the tabernacle and its heavenly priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Reconciliation supposes the person brought from alienation and distance to the place of nearness in the complacency of God, a condition of things made possible by the removal of enmity in the death of Christ. To be inside the house one must have on the best robe where the eye of God rests upon His saints as accepted in the Beloved. This, the parable (Luke 15) shows, has in view, love's response and festive joy where, adorned in the beauties of Christ in measure, and under His Headship, God can have returned sinners before Himself as sons for His pleasure. Of Israel Jehovah has said, "I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badger's skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen? and I covered thee with silk" (Ezekiel 16: 10). . .

It is in the Epistle to the Hebrews however, that the Holy Ghost seems to present the antitype to Aaron and his sons, for although the garments of glory and beauty were never worn in the Holiest in Israel all is in view of that here. Whatever breakdown may have been in man's hands, all that was sketched out must have its answer in Christ. We come into the apprehension of the revelation of God in Christ, where the delight of God is known in the expression of His counsels of grace in His well beloved Son and in perfect suitability, as the priestly company robed in garments of salvation can rest without reserve. Christ is shown to be both Son and Priest, the one hanging upon the other, the same being true of the saints whom He leads in as His companions to all the blessedness of that scene of heavenly glory. As the Minister of the sanctuary and Mediator of the covenant, saluted by God as Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, He is able to control the whole company, forming and giving character to all, and having gone in by virtue of His perfect sacrifice, He carries on through the saints the service of the sanctuary, declaring His Father's name to His brethren and leading their praises to the Father.

Ephesians opens out the purposes of eternity which necessarily shows the whole time scene to be but yesterday, every bit of which is controlled in view of these counsels and their fulfilment in the eternity to come. As we open the epistle we are, in a certain sense, outside of earth and time, being led back to before the foundation of the world, to see what engaged the Godhead regarding the display of itself and for its own pleasure. The range of blessings, the thought of which strikes the note of praise, are spiritual and heavenly as contrasted with basket, and store, and the land of Caanan and at the same time, secure in Christ as contrasted with the first Adam. The great point is Sonship and the inheritance fruit of the divine will which leads on to the new man, the House of God, and the Body of Christ.

With that should be noted, however, the significant description of the new *heavenly position* brought out here as nowhere else in Scripture. In chapter 2, the saints are viewed in the work of God in their souls as having anticipated *in a spiritual way* both the truth of resurrection (1 Cor. 15), and translation to heaven (1 Thess. 4). "But God . . . has quickened us with the Christ (ye are saved by

grace) and has raised us up together and has made us to sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2). The blessing peculiar to the day, consequent on there being a Man in heaven and a Divine Person here, is that saints are heavenly in constitution, and in character, and in hope, and thank God, heavenly also in destiny.

Nor is it different with John, the character of whose ministry is to claim the world for God. If, as is often said, Paul takes the saints to heaven, but John brings God down here, nothing could more perfectly show heaven and earth brought together in moral accord. In that Gospel eternal life being (after the Person of the Lord) the great theme, the transfer from the earthly, sinful state to association with Christ in risen heavenly life is shown. The sovereignty of the Son as life-giver, whose blessed voice is heard in death, our side being the appropriation of that death by eating His flesh and drinking His blood, all looking on to the time of meeting them in resurrection where, as last Adam, by breathing upon them He associates them with Himself in resurrection life before His God and Father.

There is nothing mechanical, legal, nor forced in all this for God does not lift a person out of his sins and lay him down so to speak a full-grown saint all at once, as a man would transfer a log of wood from one place to another. We are moral beings and He works in the soul, producing feelings of sorrow for sin and desires after Himself and holiness which bring about moral progress by which the person travels in his consciousness from the fallen Adamic condition to a new state in Christ. The sense of the new environment follows, for there must be the position. This gives the range of things the soul is introduced into — a faith system where all things are of the God which has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.

O EVER GREAT AND GRACIOUS GOD AND FATHER, BEFORE WHOSE MAJESTY ALL CREATION TREMBLES, WHAT INTELLIGENCE CAN EVER CONCEIVE THE WAY THOU HAST TAKEN TO BRING GLORY TO THYSELF IN THE REMOVAL OF OUR RUIN, SIN, AND SHAME? AND WHAT INCONCEIVABLE WONDERS ARE SEEN IN THE FACT THAT WE ARE TAKEN OUT OF IT ALL AND PRESENTED BEFORE THEE IN HIM WHO ALONE COULD DO IT, THE ONE WHO IS THINE OWN CO-EQUAL, BUT MARVEL OF ALL MARVELS, IS A MAN. JESUS LORD, EVER TO BE ADORED, WE ARE AMAZED AT THY WONDROUS STOOP AND DESIRE TO HONOUR THEE HERE, THEN TO LIVE WITH THEE IN A SINLESS, STAINLESS SCENE TO PRAISE THEE AND THY GOD AND FATHER IN THE POWER OF THE ETERNAL SPIRIT FOR EVERMORE

Part 4.

It is one of the greatest deceptions of the human heart that it can accept the wealth of blessing which grace brings, persuading itself that all is right, while the practice betrays the opposite. In what is around us today many are found in positions which belie the heavenly status of saints and the heavenly calling of the Church. We do well to remember that a mental acquisition of truth leaves the conscience untouched, and that credulity is not faith, and that only as the truth reaches the heart by the conscience can there be any real soul progress.

Part with a glorified Christ necessitates sharing the portion of a rejected Christ on the earth. The practice consistent with such blessing may therefore engage us for a moment. Since conduct springs from character, and the Spirit in the Christian forms a new heavenly character, there is bound to follow a new line of practice different from that of saints in former days. He who we have seen gilded everything down here with the colour of heaven, has left us an example that we should follow His steps (1 Peter 2: 21), and consistency demands it, for "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to

walk even as he walked (1 John 2: 6).

In previous ages they rightly used the sword, he that does so today shall die by the same (Matt. 26: 52). They were commanded to fight, Jehovah fighting with them, and some have honourable mention because they waxed valiant in fight in Hebrews 11. But now they are commended for having endured a great fight of afflictions and taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Solomon prayed that Jehovah's eyes might rest continually on the House he had built for His name, and Daniel prayed in his chamber with open windows toward Jerusalem, but Stephen looked up and saw the glory of God and Jesus. Israel prided themselves in the pleasant land but now they seek a heavenly country. "For if Joshua had given them rest then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day." Hezekiah wept in the presence of death as that which was taking him away from his blessings, but Paul rejoiced in the prospect of the same because it was his servant to usher him into his heavenly home.

There is a sameness yet practical difference which we note between the saints of the heavenly and those of the earthly calling. Prayer, piety, and separation must ever mark the children of faith in this fallen world. But even in these things, the way of a heavenly people will be different from all others. This lies in the nature of things, each being formed by the revelation given. Piety today is bound to bring in God as revealed in fulness of love in trinity, a thing which was not possible for the saints of former days. Prayer for them was outlined by their knowledge of God, and is often marked by calling down judgment on their enemies, a thing diametrically opposed to the spirit of the gospel. Then as God's witnesses they were to be separate from the nations, but must enter into the affairs of the state and if necessary, take up arms in its defence, a thing which marks the most faithful men of the Old Testament.

The saints of today have put on the new man where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, but Christ is all and in all, a thing which lifts him out of national and patriotic feelings, entirely forbidding the thought of his taking part either in politics or in wars. In the application of all this to daily life we know that God would not deny His saints a happy domestic circle. It is not to be had, however, by putting things of nature first and saying, I have married a wife and cannot come. The same may be said of the piece of land and five yoke of oxen. Such things are by no means evil in themselves; the whole point being how they are used. They belong so to speak, to the twilight of God's ways with man. Adam got a wife, the Patriarchs got flocks, and Israel got the piece of land. Now the blessed God sets forth, through the work of His Son, that which ever lay near to His heart, viz., the things of eternal purpose wherein is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Instead of being in the twilight He would have us in the full sunshine, enjoying the full measure of divine favour — enjoying the feast He has provided in a risen Christ (Luke 14).

Since the divine Centre being changed from earth to heaven immensely enlarges the blessing it must also affect the obligation, and since it greatly enlarges the outlook, it must cause the charge of narrow-mindedness to reflect back upon the man of the earth. The Jew had a divinely-given portion on the earth which the Gentile never had: on the other hand, the Christian has a portion in heaven which they as Jews never can have. If in the providence of God, Christians are entrusted with certain things here, they are for time and the circumstances connected with their sojourn here, and must be given back. "If ye have not been faithful," says the Lord, "in that which is another's." — temporal things — "who shall give to you your own?" — the things of the Spirit. In this way we are adjusted in relation to both spheres and shown that the use made of the things of divine providence affects us now in relation to the heavenly sphere, and will affect our future position in the kingdom glory.

But follow with us a little further. It is a day of great and imposing architecture, houses are built flat upon flat to a great height so that an elevator is necessary because the higher they go the further they get from their source of supply. It is not so in the spiritual realm. The Christian belongs to God's upper chambers (see Psalm 104: 3, New Translation), heaven is his source of supply and the Holy Ghost is the Divine Elevator which keeps him in touch with the Lord, who is the Administrator of all the divine bounty, When a member of parliament is made a peer, he is said to be transferred to the upper chamber. The simple believer in the Lord Jesus Christ who is indwelt by the Holy Ghost, has his life, his home, his all, in the upper *chambers* of God.

Like the lightning conductors, we are privileged to transmit heaven's precious things to earth. We have access to that blessed scene with a view to carrying down into the detail of life on earth the mind of heaven. This answers to the ribbon of blue on the border of the Israelite's garment. How important for us to cultivate the mind of heaven by setting our minds on things above and seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. No mere stretch of the imagination can do this. We sometimes hear of high talk and low walk, and doubtless the Lord has had to deal with us about this. In Ephesians we got the highest expression both of the truth and the walk, the latter being connected in that Epistle both with the Person of our Lord and the purpose of God (see Eph. 5: 1, and 2: 10).

Have we not sometimes thought that offering the body to God as a living sacrifice is some great thing done only by preachers or those devoting themselves to the work of the Lord in a foreign land and forgetting that it is the simple obligation of every saint. It is very much in evidence that we may assume to be preachers and missionaries and yet not have given our bodies to God as our reasonable service. It were better not to encourage the inherent desire for activity on the part of young saints till they have learned something of the blessing, for it has been well said that the Lord has more to do in us than by us, and rightly understood, the saint is like a lamp-post, always shedding light in darkness but making no noise.

If we have followed thus far, it will be clear that the attempt to link Christianity on to the world's system can only end in failure. Many have tried this to their sorrow. It has often been said that the world needs good men, and Christians are the men to fill responsible positions for the good of the people. It is true that the world is helplessly in need of good rule, but the death of the Lord Jesus Christ proves it to be a system dominated by Satan who is its god, and the sentence of God lies upon it. The blessed God sends His servants to it with the good things of heaven, this is the proper service of those who have learnt the goodness of God. No amount of good men could ever put this world right, the Christian is taken out of it in view of the divine system and is being trained in it in view of future service above while on his way home.

But what of the religious side? Here the success of the enemy seems complete. The judaising element having become almost universal so that the enjoyment of heaven and heavenly life by holding the Head is either unknown or ignored. Worse indeed than this is seen in the spread of satanic systems, calling themselves Christian, wherein we have the resurrection so to speak of all the heresies of early days. It is not of these, however, we wish to speak, but of the church as composed of all those who know Christ as their Saviour.

It is a time of great gospel work. Many laudable efforts are put forth, and many are found devoting their time, strength, and means to the service of Christ for the conversion of souls in a way which He can and will appraise. There is much that is noble and unselfish for which we can sincerely thank God. But after all, we cannot ignore the fact that it is far from being the full Gospel of the glory

of the blessed God (1 Tim. 1: 11).

What is preached is largely man's relief, forgiveness of sins, and heaven in the end, comforting as far as it goes, but often without insisting on repentance, as if a fallen sinner could enter into blessing by a mere mental assent to the Word. This, by lowering the Gospel, tends to popularise that, which in the nature of things, can never be made so in this world. God's Holy Gospel, which shows the establishment of divine righteousness in the cross, is lost sight of, as also the removal in judgment of man in the flesh, the gain for the believer of a new relationship in virtue of which he is united to a glorified Christ, the ability to take account of himself as belonging to a new generation and consequently, the triumph of God in having man for Himself in a new power in the very place in which he fell.

Why all this? Is it that God has ceased to work among His people? Far be the thought. It can be proved on the contrary that these last days have witnessed the greatest revival of truth since Apostolic times. The Lord has graciously given back the truth in such a way that many have been enlightened and blessed beyond anything known since the apostles left the scene. But alas, like every other movement of the Spirit, it has waned, and many favoured with the light of Paul's gospel and the revelation of the Church as the Body and Bride of Christ are letting all go for what appears to be an easier path, proving that it had never reached the heart by the conscience.

It is sweet to think, however, that there are some who through mercy are seeking, though in weakness, to answer to the mind of the Lord for the moment. Like the men of Issacher that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do, and did it, there are those to-day who value Christ's word and seek to keep it. To such He says "Thou hast a little power and hast kept my word and hast not denied my name." There is nothing outwardly imposing, but they have seen and escaped from the wholesale departure from the truth by taking heed to Christ's word.

How blessed to know that at such a time as this the individual may have the word of Christ dwelling in him richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, a blessed reality which opens up for him the whole Christian revelation, giving access to the Father and all the system of heavenly and holy affections connected with the Father and the Son and the home of divine affections to which the Son will bring His own. In this way many hearts have been recalled at the close, and able to stand in the presence of Laodicean indifference in the conscious light and gain of what was true of the Church in her brightest day.

But if they taste the joys there are other things to be reckoned with. In the history of the professing church in Revelation 2 and 3, we get the development of evil in that which calls itself the church, and reach a time in the progress of the apostasy when Christ Himself is shut out. Those who are loyal to Him are bound to share that place for He has said that where He is there would His servant be (John 12). Faithfulness to Christ in a day of apostasy puts one outside of the circle of accredited religion, as we see in the man whose eyes the Lord had opened in John 9. They cast him out because of his testimony, but the outside proved to him the most blessed place of all, for in meeting with the Son of God he reached in principle the holiest of all. So it is here. The world-church goes on, having the pretension and receiving honour one of another in much outward pomp and show, she trades in gold, silver, and precious stones, but there is no mention of the blue, the heavenly calling and the rights of heaven are disowned. In the midst of it all, there are those who through infinite grace are led into the mind and secrets of heaven, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and that blessed scheme of divine counsel wherein is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

But there is more, for the promise to the overcomer at the point we have reached in Philadelphia

(Rev. 3), is couched in the most precious words of all. Let us listen with adoring hearts and seek to weigh something of the depth of feeling expressed here by our Lord. "He that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more at all out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from MY God, and My new name." Who shall attempt to expound a verse of Scripture like this? Blessed, holy Lord, the time is near when Thy blessed heart shall find fullest expression in bringing out into public distinction those, who through Thine own grace, have had in this scene any measure of faithfulness for Thee.

"O endless joy, how shall my heart Thy riches all unfold:
Or tell the grace that gave me part in bliss no tongue hath told.
Lord, let me wait for Thee alone: my life be only this,
To serve Thee here on earth unknown, then share Thy heavenly bliss."

They had kept the word of His patience, and to overcome was to hold fast what they had that no one take their crown. The public mark of His approval would be to make them a pillar in the temple of His God. It had been the place where He dwelt between the Cherubim, where everything uttered glory and where He was approached in holy splendour. A pillar there is His answer to a little strength here. The Jachin and Boaz of Solomon's temple are evidently in mind, but here we are infinitely above all that is connected with Israel and the earth. "They shall go no more out" is His answer to the place they had been in here. The time of testimony goes on here today along with the holy privilege of priestly approach, but then the idea of testimony in a scene of reproach shall have ceased for ever for he shall go no more out at all, but remain in the sunshine of eternal love by the Son's eternal decree and for God's eternal pleasure.

"And I will write upon him the name of My God." The resurrection message to Mary will be recalled when He used the words "*My Father and your Father and My God and your God,*" and the prayer of Paul to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1). It is the place the only-begotten stood in as Man, for He delights to bring us as His well-beloved to that bright scene above to share with Himself all that is there. It is Christ in the day of His glory distinguishing those who have shared His shame by displaying them with and like Himself before His God.

Then there is the administration of the throne, and the city is where the throne is set. "And the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from My God." He who once wrote upon the ground and to-day is writing upon the heart shall then show — like what David did with his devoted followers when he came to the throne — in complete identification with Himself all those who remained loyal in His absence. The City being the Vessel of rule in that radiant scene, all administration will emanate from it, and the word of the Lord here assures to the devoted heart a place of rank and honour which shows the insignificance of the distinction which is being so much sought after to-day.

"And My new name." How beautifully touching this is at the end of such a marvellous communication, where He speaks of His God four times over. He had undertaken to accomplish the will of His God and had been exalted to the highest place in virtue of that work. God had highly exalted Him, giving Him a name above every name, something new and belonging to the new resurrection world where all His renown shines out. He would not withhold even this from those, but write upon them His new name. Blessed, glorious Lord, Thy love would produce in our hearts loyalty to Thyself, not for what it gives nor for reward merely, but for its own blessedness and the prospect of being with

Thyself for evermore.

All the above is connected with the Kingdom reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is precious to think that grace will take every blood-bought one to the Father's house, that scene of love which our Lord has gone to prepare. His death puts all on a level, and the grace that takes the greatest saint to heaven will take also the least. In the Kingdom, however, the Lord is the righteous Judge who gives to every one according to his works. We must therefore connect the place of distinction spoken of above with the coming out to reign with Christ in glory, and in doing so, it will be evident that whatever place one fills in the day of Christ's glory must be in exact correspondence with divinely-formed ability here in the day of His reproach. This shows the true connection of the writing of Revelation 3: 12, with the writing on the heart of 2 Cor. 3. The writing of Christ on the heart today by a ministry of righteousness from heaven, produces conformity to the glory and corresponding reflection of itself on the moral waste around, this fits the person for the service of the King! in the time of His glorious reign, when His people shall be willing in the day of His power and when the glad earth shall ring with His praise. Hallelujah. Praise Jehovah from the heavens: praise Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts (Psalm 148: 1, 2).

The connection between what is heavenly and the truth connected with the terms second man and new man is of such an intimate nature that our meditation would scarcely be complete without a few moments' consideration.

There are four passages in the writings of Paul which we may note, — "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him " (Rom. 6: 6). Here there is no mention of a new man, and it is noticeable that it is our old man, i.e., not exactly the old man viewed as an abstract entity, but what belonged to the saved ones out of the fallen first order seen to be judged in the death of Christ. Next, "that He might form the two, in Himself, into one new man making peace " (Eph. 2: 15). In this there is no mention of the old man, but simply that which was in view in the death of Christ and has come to pass in the establishment of Christianity by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven and the removal of the enmity existing between Jew and Gentile by forming them in a new state. Again. — "Your having put off, according to the former conversation, the old man which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts; and being renewed in the spirit of your mind; and your having put on the new man which, according to God, is created in truthful righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4: 22-24). There is here the mention of both with the moral character of each, the new being alone spoken of as created. Lastly, "Do not lie one to another, having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new, renewed into full knowledge according to the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3: 9, 10). Here again we have the creation of the new man and his renewal after the image of Christ. The last two passages give our coming into what Christ has done. He formed the new man; we put that man on by the same act as we put off the old, viz., turning away from ourselves to Christ for salvation.

From all this we see that the character of the old man is unmixed evil. It must be clear, therefore, where he came from: to connect the origin of that with God would be to make Him the Author of evil. On that account the Spirit is careful to avoid using the word created in regard to the old man in the above passages. On the other hand, neither good nor evil was directly connected with the creation of the first man, but simply that he is out of earth, earthy; the contrast not being between good and evil, but between the earthy and the heavenly, as seen in the words of 1 Cor. 15: 47. Man, the creature, is upon the scene and placed in responsibility before the state described as deceitful lusts existed. There could indeed have been no fall if responsibility had not been there before. It is clear that the first man was created of God and life with its moral obligation known before the breakdown took place by which the old man came into existence.

We who live in the full light of divine revelation can see that both the above terms, or at least, the ideas connected with them, centred in the race down through the Old Testament ages. It would be meaningless, however, to speak of a first man until there was a second, and also of an old until there was a new. We must then keep clearly before us that it was man as created by God, a moral and responsible agent, that God was dealing with down through the ages of probation, and that it was that same being His judgment dealt with substitutionally in the Person of His Son at the cross. It was said to Adam, In the day thou eatest thou shalt die. In his fall, sin entered, and death by sin, the very thing by which he would be removed from his created place as representative of God in His authority on the earth. If the point be missed here we may fall into the mistake that it was the old man only, i.e., the state described by deceitful lusts that God removed from before His sight in the cross, losing the solemn truth that the sentence of death lay upon him as a fallen creature, and that that sentence was carried out judicially for the divine glory at Calvary.

The distinction between the two terms — for there is a great distinction — may be further seen from the fact that the old man is defined as a lie and only evil with not a shadow of good, nor a capability for it. This is not said of man as God's creature, nor could it be since he is the highest part of the Creator's work, and though fallen, is not spoken of before the incarnation of the Son as being incapable of good. At his Creation he stands as the grown and beauty of the whole order, the most marvellous exhibition of the power and wisdom of God: and such is the combination of his creaturehood, physical, mortal, moral, and spiritual, that to this day he is to himself the most wonderful prodigy of all. As it is written, "fearfully and wonderfully made."

It was this that Satan set himself to destroy, and how well he succeeded, though the evidence is all around, only God can say. But a house may be broken down and dilapidated and still retain some marks of its former greatness. So it is with man; depraved thoughts, perverted feelings and actions, and indeed, much more of a like character. But amidst it all there remains that which God can take account of as in accord with Himself — natural affection (what would this world be without them) innocence, intelligence, etc., etc. These, though mixed up with much that is sinful, God's eye can take account of and He can appreciate (see Mark 10: 21). Were this distinction kept more in view we might be able to use with more caution the phrase "end of the first man " as handed on to us by those taught of God, and see more clearly his removal by judgment from the place he stood in between Eden and Calvary.

If there was some time elapsed between the creation of the first man and the entrance of the old in the same way, an interval of time passed between the coming of the second Man and the creation of the New. Our Lord is seen as the second Man during His life here, and is sometimes spoken of as a *new Man*, but Scripture connects the creation of the new man with His death and resurrection. The removal of the old and the creation of the new is outside the creature's reach, being work of the God; the point for us is to put off the one and put on the other, the warrant being, that our old man is crucified with Christ.

As to the place of nature in all this, man may be spoken of as the natural man, whether innocent or fallen. It is of interest to see that the words, natural man, in 1 Cor. 2 is taken from the same word as the Scripture (Sept. ver.) uses for man as he came from the hand of God. Whether he be innocent, fallen, or recovered, nature remains, not unaffected, however, for the fall has affected his whole being. In conversion he receives a new nature, and in connection with it, the Holy Ghost to dwell in his soul, whereby everything in his life may be adjusted according to the will of God. We see in our Lord how perfectly all is adjusted, everything perfectly honoured as of God. So with those brought back to God in Christ there is power to carry out all the legitimate claims of nature in a becoming way, but being heavenly in calling, their life consists in the things of the diving nature — heavenly things.

Natural relationships are God's richest mercies to a heavenly people, and it is well when they are received as such, if for wise purposes our gracious God is pleased to assert His claim on these we are made to feel the pain connected therewith. How marvellous are the ways of God. If at the cross we see the darkest deed we have also the divine estimate of him that did it. It had been the divine intention that a public demonstration of His estimate of the sinner should be given. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The blessed Lord takes that place vicariously, that the judgment might be carried out and in Him the divine estimate of man is publicly declared to all. The deed that fills up man's guilt demonstrates his state and sets him aside for ever.

Taking the four forms in a general way, the second Man must be first morally: He is the beginning of the creation of God, and became Man by an act of His own. Not so the first man who, being a creature, had no choice; being created in innocence, a state which could not apply to the Lord Jesus. Again, the new man like the first is a creation, but contrasts in that he is created in righteousness, etc., instead of the innocence of the first. The new contrasts with the old as to truth and falsehood; the old is a lie. Again, the second Man could not be a creation because He is God the Son, the old man is not a creation because God is good.

We can see then, that beside the well-known dependence of the earth and its inhabitants for physical existence, on the heavens there may be traced the moral and spiritual dependence as well. In doing so, however, we must remember the place the earth has in the mind of God above all other parts of His creation and that its very existence is the necessity of divine counsel. At its creation, the intelligences of heaven peal forth the Creator's praise, and throughout the multiplied distances of the universe there was heavenly celebration. When earth's foundations were laid — home of him who is the crown of all creation — the scene in which would be worked out both the ways and purposes of God, "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Can we wonder, if these holy beings had some divinely-given glimpse of the mysterious depth of suffering and consequent height of glory that lay in the womb of the future for the new-born earth and its future inhabitants, things which were destined to bring out the deepest and richest revelation of the Being and Nature of God.

For a brief moment the complacency of God rested upon all, but the fall soon cast its blight upon the whole scene. Even then, however, the rule of the heavens asserts itself and promise, prophecy, providence, and government goes on, heavenly visitors and communications being kept up, till in the incarnation of the Son, the distance and estrangement was for faith removed. The Spirit's presence here, consequent on redemption, maintains that still, for heaven could not be shut on a Divine Person on the earth. All is thus prepared for the greatest transaction of the time-ways of God, when millions shall in glorified bodies go up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4). These bodies of glory are characterised as our house which is from heaven, the connection being maintained between the present heavenly status of the saints and the permanent state in glory, for "He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit " (2 Cor. 5).

However we may speak of heavenly life upon earth it can never be permanent here and therefore, the Church, as composed of the saints called in the day of Christ's absence, must ever be an exotic here. The time is near when it shall not be so, when every man shall sit under his own vine and when Israel shall dwell in safety alone and his heaven shall drop down dew, when they shall be satisfied with favour and filled with the blessing of the Lord, and it shall be said, "Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord" (Deut. 33). Earth shall then rightly be his home, and the rule of the King Messiah being in force, the curse removed, and creation's groan hushed, man will hold the earth for God, not as in untried innocence but as knowing good and evil, and by divine power, cleaving

to the good for ever.

For those of earth's race taken up to be the bride or the second Man earth can never again be their home. The upper chambers is that alone which answers to the relationship which is theirs. Myriads of saints belonging to other dispensations will be there also, for earth can never again be the home of resurrected persons. Such will be promoted to positions of rank and honour in proportion to past faithfulness on earth, but for one class remains the highest place of creature exaltation. Earthly saints will live through that long reign of blessing in flesh and blood. The close of the Millennium must therefore bring about for them the transfer to new and eternal conditions, for all things have then become new. The new heavens and new earth speak of the whole scene in perfect accord with the will of God through the Son's atoning work, but leave room for the distinction throughout eternal days of heavenly and earthly life according to the will of God.

The Book of Revelation shows the whole company gathered home without distinction, an order apparently maintained all the time the preparatory judgments are being poured out in view of the Lamb taking His inheritance. But a moment arrives when the false apostate church is judged, then the glorified church in heaven is seen in her own place, in relation to the Lamb as distinguished from all the other heavenly saints. From that time, right on through days of Kingdom glory, she is seen as the vessel of administration, and Help-meet of Him who claims her as His royal Bride, the distinction being maintained throughout eternity, when she is seen as the tabernacle of God, wherein He dwells for the outshining of His glory for evermore.

This is the prospect; may we make an appeal to the heart in the light of it all. As part of that favoured company whom He will have brought home publicly as loved by the Father with the same love that rests on Him, the Son, to be witness both to the glory and love of God, a glory and love known now in faith by the strengthening power of the Spirit, where the Church is as a chaste virgin espoused to Himself. Shall we not seek by the Spirit to dwell with delight on the ineffable beauties and glories of Him who loves us so much? speaking to the Father in holy worship of what He has taught us of the glory of that blessed One whose stupendous stoop to Calvary baffles all thought. And shall we not appreciate more the favour of being associated with the Son before the Father in the joy of such holy relationships, where the treasures of the Father and Son are made known, where the Holy Ghost delights to open out the wealth of eternal counsel, where all things are of God and where, clothed with the best robe, we can enjoy the Father's deep delight in the revelation of Himself in the Son. May it be the blessed portion of both reader and writer to enter into and enjoy these things for the glory of our adorable Lord. Amen.