

Fine Twined Linen

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"And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen with cunning work." — Exodus 28: 6.

Part 1.

If the first four things mentioned in the above verse speak of the glories of the Son of God, Personal, Moral and Official, covering a very wide field; the fine linen into which these things were wrought, or dyed, speaks of the Man Christ Jesus in Whom all glories shine. In this fine linen, we pass in thought from the side of eternal Godhead in an eternal Person, to the side of Manhood in the same Person and behold the MAN in Whom every glory centres and indeed go beyond that to the complete unveiling of God.

Of the five things mentioned, all of them except gold were to be found in the *veil* of the sanctuary. Here, the inwrought cherubim took the place of the gold, whereas in the *ephod* the gold was present but no cherubim. The holy veil hung between the holy place and the holiest of all and was suspended by golden hooks upon four pillars. This formed a doorway into the place where all was gold and every whit uttered glory. The Man Christ Jesus is in Himself the "way" into where all the deep unfoldings of God are displayed. The veil speaks of His *flesh*, that is, His precious *body*. (Hebrews 10: 20); and if the four pillars be taken as expressive of the four Gospels and their writers, we can see the answer to the Holy of Holies in His Person and are led to these holy records as being the inner shrine of God's holy book. The fact that the veil speaks of His flesh explains the reason why the *gold* was displaced by cherubim, for that holy Man ever displayed the justice of God which the cherubim set forth, but beyond all that "God was in Christ" a holy mystery which speaks of the heavenly grandeur which was inside the veil.

With the *ephod* it was different. Here, Christ is prefigured as Head of a **new order in resurrection**. This leads in thought to the Epistles of the New Testament and particularly to Hebrews where He is seen as the great King-Priest, the *Glorified Man*. To supply a figure of this there-must also be gold. "He that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Hebrews 5: 5, 6. In the *Gospel* we see Christ in relation to God's glory in **this world**, the scene of sin and man's failure; but in the *Epistles* we behold Him **Head of a new world**, which is the domain of divine purpose where all His glorious perfections shine out, with nothing of sin to interfere.

While we dare not separate, we may profitably distinguish between the unique Personality of the

Man Christ Jesus and the various features of glory and beauty that shone out in Him. There were incidents in that busy life that brought each to the front, here one, and there another, so that it might be the outshining of the gold of divine Sonship or, the simple display of the *Man* who stamped everything with the blue of heaven's beauty. Again, it might be the dispensing of covenant blessings as Son of David or, the homeless Son of Man Who was the appointed Heir of all things. But besides these, there were times when He might be seen as it were in the centre of a circle, where each glory combined in such beautiful harmony in Him, as to give all in one distinctive view.

Two outstanding events, namely, the Temptation at the beginning of His ministry and the Transfiguration at the end may illustrate this. At the end of Matthew 3 the Father proclaims Him, His Beloved Son and immediately the tempter comes forward with the challenge — "If thou be the Son of God."

All this relates surely to the *gold* of His glory but the tempter goes on to that which relates to the *blue* as seen in the Man out of heaven. The first temptation takes us back to Eden and the Lord's answer from Deuteronomy gives a sublime description of man's place in relation to God but in an obedience peculiar to Himself. "The obedience of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1: 2. The second recalls the *scarlet* by the mention of the holy city and the temple. The third recalls the *purple* and bespeaks His universal place as Son of Man by the mention of the high mountain and the kingdoms of the world. This is a scene of perfect moral beauty. God gets His place; man gets his place; and, for the first time in man's history, the Devil gets his place from One who has a perfect right to all but seeks no place at all.

The vision on the holy mount presents a scene of unalloyed delight, where there is nothing to oppose. We judge there is nothing absent to complete the picture which, by including the Father's voice and the Shekinah, carries us in thought **beyond the administrative order** of full millennial display, to the glories of the Father's house where sons shall be at home with the Father and the Son, in a scene pervaded by the Spirit's power. The heavens and earth in all their departments of blessing and glory are depicted here but beyond that, the Father's voice indicates something, which John the Apostle of love was given to bring out, and the blessed Son of the Father, Who is here rejected by man, is the centre and guarantee of all.

God's order in the race must be noted that we may see how this blessed Man adapted Himself in every way to the divine plan. The Creator puts forth His intentions for the race in one man. The character and order for the whole is set forth in the head. This works out both in regard to created status and moral condition; those connected with Adam being *earthly* as to creaturehood and *sinful* in moral condition, while those connected with Christ are *heavenly* in origin and *holy* as to condition. In all this we can see Adam as a figure of Him that was to come. Here we touch the scheme of sacred typology, the wealth of which pours itself out around the Person of this blessed MAN. This in itself is a rich study but we must remember that it is only one side, that side indeed which connects itself with the time ways of God. When we turn to the study of God's eternal purpose, we behold our Lord as the eternal Son, marked out for incarnation and redemption. Consequently, Adam's creation was a necessity and He, the eternal One, the great proto-type. We rightly say that at the birth of our Lord, all, including heaven, earth, and hell, were in commotion. (Psalm 90; Hebrews 10; Matthew 2; Luke 2; Revelation 12). But along with that, God required One to make known His plan and purpose. Man on earth needed a Redeemer and Satan the enemy looked on, entirely ignorant of divine resources, trying if he could, to thwart and hinder the work of the blessed God. The advent of the Son met every need, God's perfect *claims* and all His desires, and man's every *need*, and forever defeated and exposed all the forces of evil.

That advent filled up the whole ways of God by taking up every thread of these ways, not only in type and shadow but also in promise; prophecy; government and grace; imparting a completeness to all, while at the same time going back beyond Genesis. He, the Son, linked up in Himself the whole scheme of God's eternal purpose, that God might be made known in a triumph of glory from eternity to eternity, and the universe put on the basis, not only of omnipotence but on the stable footing of redemption which, through Calvary's depth of woe, the depths of God found a channel to flow forth.

From the above it will be seen that the Incarnation made it possible for the Spirit of God to speak of our Lord both as **Second Man** and **Last Adam**, while every thing both in nature and revelation witnesses to Him as *first* in **cause, dignity, moral sequence** and **result**. In coming into time, unlike Adam, He became a *babe*, that in every phase of human life God might be glorified. Much was called for in this world for moral disorder prevailed and all along the line outstanding individuals had tried to put things right. Being themselves part of the ruin, this was impossible. The only way things could be put right was by **Calvary** since man was lying under the judgment of death. He came to die *that* death and to redeem the creature who lay under it, but all the way to it from the manger was marked by His putting the stamp of heaven and the will of God on every detail of life here as in flesh and blood. What could be more pleasing to God? Yea, what could be sweeter to the believing heart that has drawn upon His grace and delights to worship Him?

But some one will say, This involves going over ground already trodden. (See the booklets "**Gold:**" "**Blue:**" "**Purple:**" "**Scarlet.**") Our answer is, Why not? Who would lay claim to originality here? Nay — let us ask — who would desire it? If such transcendent things are to engage us forever, surely we may well continue in them now. But after all, such a fear may be groundless. Many and varied are the highways of Holy Writ. We need not travel precisely by the same route as before. There are lines of truth in this holy book of God but little known; sights and scenes within the domain of the Spirit but little frequented which will yield both honey and cream if we will but commit ourselves to the care of our great guide the Holy Spirit. He will lead us into the Messianic chambers of Holy Writ to behold Him Who preceded all; Whose will originated all, and Whose stupendous stoop put the stamp of finality upon all.

Before coming to the New Testament, let us glance a moment at the range of moral instruction wrapped up in these holy garments. Aaron was to be clothed with garments for glory and ornament. The Tabernacle had been previously set out in prescriptive order which, in type, speaks of the holy universal order and calls for a living centre who would impart life and completeness to the whole scene. The high priest is the answer. He is taken out of ordinary life and clothed with these garments of official splendour as fore-shadowing our Lord in His triumph and splendour, at the centre of redeemed creation. The ingenuity of divine device gives a present application of all this as a faith system in the Assembly, as seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but in the nature of things the typical significance goes on to the full issue in glory. The fine linen of the passage is the translation of the Hebrew word **Shes**, which signifies *whiteness* and supplies another colour to the group mentioned here. It would remind us of the spotless purity of the Man, Christ Jesus. It was woven of twisted threads of flax, foreshadowing the union in Him of every beautiful grace, in the power of which every detail of that perfect life was adjusted.

Two different orders of dress were called for on the part of Aaron in the exercise of his priestly duties. On the day of atonement he must lay aside the garments of glory and be clothed in fine linen only, because his duties on that day bespoke the Cross in all its magnitude of meaning for God and the creation. The garments of glory and ornament might be suitable for him to function in the whole year through but on that day, they must be laid aside. The solemn reality pictured here, the reader may see

portrayed in Hebrews 9. In verse 12 of that chapter, the Lord entered the holiest in virtue of His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. This answers to the solemn time when the blood of the sin offering was taken within *the veil*, for upon that day the blood of the sin offering was prominent. While all the glory of God is made to rest upon our Lord in that aspect, it was not in itself a time for a blaze of glory but a time of woe. Then in verse 24 of the same chapter He is seen as "gone into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us." These last two little words here indicate that He is there in the robes of glory. And why not? since all the woe is past. It may be further noted in verse 12, that the Lord takes ground which we in Hebrews 10: 19 are exhorted to occupy, but in verse 24 He is gone to where we cannot go till He Himself comes to take us there. The Holy Spirit has come out to report His glory there but besides that, He leads us even now to enjoy all the blessedness of His own company within the holiest of all. Heb. 10: 19-22.

Another class of robes is used to designate our Lord in judgment. "Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke." Isa. 59: 16-17. In this dress He comes forth conquering and to conquer, for — "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were In heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." Rev. 19: 13-16. In all this we may visualise the rider of Psalm 45 Who, in majesty rides prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness and Whose arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies. Jacob's words about Benjamin point to the same time when, in solemn majesty, He shall devour the prey and divide the booty. This is the Man of Isa. 63, Who comes from Bozrah, glorious in apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength, Whose garments are stained with the Blood of His enemies. Scripture puts this as the vintage of the earth but the harvest is to follow when He shall sit upon the throne of glory — His own throne — in solemn majesty, when the nations shall be gathered before Him; the harvest of the earth gathered in and all this in view of His glorious administration when His Name shall rule throughout the multiplied distances of creation. Here again we may connect Psalm 45, where the King is seen in robes of royal splendour; where His Israel takes her proper place and the nations of the earth come in to fill up the picture.

Various other features of the character of our Lord mark the Tabernacle and its services. For example — "Take fragrant drugs — stacte, and onycha, and galbanum — fragrant drugs and pure frankincense; in like proportions shall it be. And thou shalt make it into incense, a perfume, after the work of the perfumer, salted, pure, holy." Exodus 30: 34-35 New. Trans. None of these ingredients grew in Israel's land and it is striking that to this day, it is not known for certain where they come from. May not the divine intention be to remind us that our Lord learned nothing from man, or this world's teaching, but that all He was and did was of the **Second Man** out of heaven. It was said of Him, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" And again. "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?" There was nothing here to minister to Him; He grew up as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground. All was to be tempered together by the art of the perfumer.

Here we stand and behold with deep adoration Jesus — our Lord Jesus — in His own inimitable perfection whom none but the Father can know. Neither irreverent curiosity, nor unholy speculation will help us here for — "Jesus fills that holy place" as well as everlasting love. But if flesh cannot follow, thank God faith may and He graciously beckons us to Himself that we may behold Him, the

Only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. We know now in measure and ever shall delight to learn the wonders of His glorious Person but it must ever remain true that, "No man knoweth who the Son is." Luke 10: 22. This abiding wonder must remain true within the circle of Deity to all eternity. "Ye shall not make for your *selves* according to the proportions of it; it shall be unto thee holy to Jehovah." If the redolence of it came out in His life, well we know that its fulness came out at the cross. It was to be beaten small and laid up before the testimony. This carries us in thought to the hour of His bruising for — "He was bruised for our iniquities, and with his stripes we are healed."

It will be recalled that the burnt and meat offerings go together, fore-showing what Christ was to God both in life and death. In the burnt offering, the carcase had to be parted in pieces but this was after death. In the anti-type, the parting all took place before He died; all the dissecting and scrutinising had to be gone through that the excellency of the offering might be proved and so the holy scrutiny of divine majesty searched Him in the hour of Calvary. The peace offering seems to amplify this for at the close of that blessed life, the Holy One of God was parted in pieces in a way beyond all our comprehension. "At a place called Calvary," holy Manhood in Him was torn to pieces in the midst of the most coarse and cruel indignities and brutalities, in a way that leaves the sufferings of the most spiritual far far behind. He was indeed led as a lamb to the slaughter for these men were so hardened under the power of Satan as to be carried beyond all the practices carried out in the execution of the vilest of criminals. "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me." "They that sit in the gate speak against me and I was the song of the drunkard."

But there is another side and to that we may turn. "Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning." Leaving the pictorial scenes of the typical system, let us with reverence draw near and behold the Saviour, more directly as He is presented in the holy Gospels where, surpassingly, the inimitable grandeur of His moral glory shines forth.

Part 2.

If the Old Testament may be looked upon as a great picture gallery where our Lord is portrayed in sundry ways and divers manners, the New Testament takes us *inside* where we see God unveiled in a MAN. The holy Gospels are the areas storehouse of heavenly manna — the resource of God for a wilderness people. It is true we are made God-conscious here, but that was also true of the previous part of Scripture. There is not merely gold, blue, purple and scarlet with what they entail in that glorious Man but the majesty of Deity. It is not only glories of different variety coming out, one here, and another there, but God at one time, Man at another and more often *both* in one holy combination which produces praise but baffles thought. For example — see the wearied Man of Mark 4 in that holy slumber connected with the sinless condition of humanity which He had taken up. The next moment, His Godhead power shines forth in quieting the storm. The scene at the tomb of Lazarus combined both. Not only was it from human lips that the command was issued for the dead to come forth but the cheeks of Him Who did so were wet with the holy tears of human sympathy.

His obedience was different from all others, even from man in innocence, since it called neither for *command* nor *prohibition*. The law of His life was such that it ever gravitated Godward. Hence, the obedience of Jesus Christ was unique. He did not serve in view of reward nor could there be any servile work, for it all sprang from a nature that knew no distrust. The joy set before Him of the accomplishment of His Father's will, produced a life in a scene of contrariety that stands alone; treasured up before God for ever. Nothing could rival the joy, or compare with the pleasure it gave, of carrying out all that was due to the Father. "As the living Father has sent me and I live by the Father."

Again. "I have set the Lord always before me." **This was the law of the Man.** (2 Sam. 7: 19, Rev. Ver. and New Trans.). If He be viewed in relation to the moral virtues, these are in Him elevated to a new plane. **Truth, integrity, patience and sincerity** are all there but on the high plane of the will of God. All His actions have a charm of their own whether commanding, or obeying. He did what He did, because He was Who He was, and in doing it, He showed Who He was and IS.

See Him in command. We have already noted His way both with nature in the storm and the unseen region in raising Lazarus. With the Devil it was, "Get thee behind me," with demons, "Hold thy peace;" with the diseased, "I will;" with the woman of Samaria, "Go, call thy husband" — which had soul conviction in view; the resurrection message, "Go, tell my brethren." Whatever be the sphere, **He is Master** but all had in view the unveiling of God. In Luke 4 we read that the people of the village where He had been brought up sought to cast Him over a precipice but He walked quietly away as if nothing had happened. So we read again in Luke 7, in the house of Simon, He asserted His supremacy, Simon was judged, the sinner for which He came from heaven was blessed, and God was glorified. What hidden glories lie behind the scene of His temptation, yea, whether we take His service, temptation, transfiguration or, greatest of all, His crucifixion, there is that that could be written which would fill more books than the world could hold.

While the above incidents bring out each side of the Person of our Lord respectively, that is, both Godhead and Manhood, it should be noted that each side implies and necessitates the other. To illustrate this we may turn to Hebrews 1, 2. The first chapter describes the incomparable glories of the Son but in Manhood. The second shows us His incomparable greatness in Manhood but in language that implies that He is God. So it is in the Gospels, whichever side comes out, the other is Inseparable in His Person. There is therefore another class of His sayings and doings which are not so much expressive of one side but are the fruit of the combined activity of both in one Divine-Human Person, In proof, note the words, "I am the light of the world." John 8: 12. "I am the resurrection and the life." John 11: 25. While each of these statements came from a Man, they indicate one Who was more than a Man and not less than God. The terms Saviour and Redeemer carry the same sense, implying as they do something that only God could accomplish but necessarily by Incarnation. We have seen this at the tomb of Lazarus, but is not the same thing clearly in evidence when He walked on the sea? He calmed their fears when they thought it was a spirit by saying, "Fear not, **I am.**" It was God Himself, not in abstract Deity, but the Man they knew as their Master and Lord. The same may be said about the feeding of the multitude for, while all the grace and compassion of the Man Christ Jesus came out, it was in the Omnipotence of creatorial power and goodness.

Having noted these distinctions, let us follow this wonderful Person like some of old whom He called to abide with Himself. His separation was different from His servant John the Baptist. Such was the state of the people that John was called to live in the desert but the Lord went in and out among the people. As the centre and source of holiness, He walked in the midst of the uncleanness, unstained and unstainable. The location of the servant apart, has been taken up in the church in a monastic way with sad and solemn results. The time will come when the words, "Come out of her my people" will sound forth. Rev. 28: 4. Meantime, we are called to walk, "as He walked." (1 John 2: 6), in a profession that is fast developing into full-blown apostasy. The servant was said to have a demon but the Master was called a gluttonous man and a winebibber.

In holy simplicity, combined with divine dignity, Jesus goes into the house of a Pharisee and sits down to eat. On another occasion we see Him at a family gathering; then at a social feast in the house of Levi; and again, at the marriage of some of the friends. There is nothing stand-offish nor austere, while there is always that holy influence emanating from Him that gives character to all. Society in

general was His province. He accepted the invitation of the rich; was at home among the poor; stooping to encourage what was of God everywhere but always supreme. The customs of society and the barriers which separate the classes and the masses, could be nothing to Him whose abundance was at the disposal of all. With the rich we may in general identify the official classes. Doctors; Lawyers; Scribes; Pharisees and Sadducees. Though there are exceptions here and there, these in general were opposed to Him. In fact, this class hung upon His footsteps till at last they succeeded in getting Him crucified. With the poor we may in general identify the diseased and sorrow stricken. This was the class which benefited most by His ministry. "The poor have the Gospel preached."

But the national position of our Lord is a great study. It has been pointed out that while others fill their day and serve their generation, all are patriots and live for the land of their birth. In the conditions of human life this is somewhat of a necessity and indeed is counted a virtue. David was a Jew; Alexander a Greek; Caesar a Roman and so on but Christ stood in relation to all. As the vessel of covenant promise He was the Son of David and took the place of a Jew (John 4: 22), maintaining carefully Jewish blessings and privileges. (Matt. 15: 24). But He was a MAN and as such, He stood forth in relation to, and on behalf of, mankind. At that time the people of Galilee were simple and open-minded, while they of Judea were more sophisticated and given to petty disputations about the Law. In the bosom of both classes burned a fiery passion, ever ready to break out and throw off the Roman yoke. This led to tumults in which much fanaticism was displayed as may be seen in Acts 21, or Acts 7. There was seething among them that feeling which led to the fall of Jerusalem later. Here was one Who was fitted to be a leader. Such works of power proved beyond all doubt His ability if He would only put Himself at their head. This would ensure their place of supremacy among the nations and had not their Scriptures marked out that place for them? His refusal drew out their hatred with a violence that only His death could appease. The very position they wanted Him to take, they used against Him. The depth of the iniquity of the human heart comes out in Caiaphas when he said, "It is expedient that one man die for the people and that the whole nation perish not." Little did he think that like Balaam of old, his tongue was directly under divine control. All ended in the dark tragedy of Calvary where both Jew and Gentile filled up the measure of their guilt.

As we have said, He was a MAN. Two thousand years of man's history had run its course before there was a Jew or a Hebrew nation. His coming in relation to the race was made known both in type and promise in that age. The seed of the woman could not be limited to anything short of the whole race. Israel's rejection of Him opened the door for all and as it were, put Him in relation to the whole race. "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob . . . I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." (Isa. 49: 6). This distinction runs through all Scripture. The Gospel of Matthew shows Him Son of David and Abraham but with Luke it is the Son of Man. The temptation also brings out both, but with a further distinction between the Man in His full moral beauty and the Son of Man in official splendour. The full question there goes back to Eden and Adam in thought but the kingdoms of the world speak of the rights and glory of the Son of Man. There is far more said of this distinction than we are accustomed to think for the glories of the Son of Man in official capacity awaited death and resurrection and go out to the whole creation but the beauty, simplicity, subjection and obedience of the Man, Christ Jesus, in the varied detail of life and the complications of man's sinful condition morally, socially and nationally, becomes a feast to the devout heart. It is here we see His power for moral estimates. In the human race, every man is what he is, as a result of certain conditions. Heritage and environment are the leading factors. We all inherit both virtues and vices and are all, more or less, affected by our surroundings. Here is One Who is outside of all this. Why? Because He is the Second Man out of heaven.

Yet, while rendering to every one their dues, He had not come to take up politics. God was glorified; the covenant people owned and Caesar allowed his rights but He did not come to divide to men their inheritance. Luke 12: 13, 14. His work had to do with eternity and eternal realities. Man's condition and his petty rights accounted for the state of vexatious confusion existing and in his ignorance, he applies his moral standard to everything. What must it have been for our Lord to move about in a state of things like that? Knowing where He came from and where He was going and with sensibilities unimpaired by sin, He trod a path which was all His own and which in the nature of things, must inevitably lead to the cross. None can know fully what he must have felt, beholding the race around Him in all its stages of degeneration, grovelling in disease both physical and moral, with little knowledge of God, less of themselves, and without any moral objective because dominated by sin.

The same perfection of touch is seen in His ways with the Ecclesiastical order in Israel. The Tabernacle stood as a system of visible and sensuous worship, which could only be temporary and indeed was permitted as a type for the time then present of the eternal order, which was to be set up in the power and glory of redemption, which meant for Him the cross. He had not come to destroy but to fulfil and in the midst of the ruin of the dispensation in man's hands, it was necessary to disentangle certain great principles and put them in order. Marriage; the Sabbath; Circumcision; all were put in their proper setting as belonging to the ways of God in a time prior to Moses. As God's great centre standing in time with all the weight of the divine glory resting upon Himself, He adjusted all in relation to the past — right past kingdom days — to God's eternal day. The law was honoured in all its claims; the ritual owned by sending those Whom He had cleansed to the priest; the Calendar in all its enactments was answered to, while strewing on account of their state that the feasts had ceased to be Jehovah's. In a system where the word of God was set aside for tradition, He honoured that **Word** in a life which was its reflex to the most minute detail.

In this way our God has set Christ — the object of His own delight, before our hearts for our delight and adoration. Ought we not with a devout heart to dwell on the walk, ways, words and actions of that Holy One in the clear sunshine of His presence as glorified and thus acquire riches for eternity without putting the hand on the Ark, or entrenching on that which must abide in its own sacred majesty for ever? In this way, the very theme that infidelity seeks to make capital out of, becomes the food and delight of the believer's soul. Again, note another striking feature of that life. Christ drew attention to Himself in a way that would be sin for a creature but is a proof of Who He is. "Follow me" were His words. And again, "Come unto me." But further, "He that loveth father, or mother, more than me, is not worthy of me." Would not language like this be enough to produce distrust in any other and to cause us to mark him off as one to be avoided? But we may go further, for there are words of His which would be blasphemy on the lips of any other. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Who else could speak in such a way? To give one more example, who else could say in reference to holy Scripture, "Ye have heard that it hath been said . . . *but I say.*" (Matt. 5: 21, 22)?

So far we have thought upon our Lord in His perfections in the precise adjustment of moral qualities, every one of which was in full accord with every other and all in due proportion, whether in activity or at rest. But says some one, Why make so much ado about it all? Who that knows Him we answer, can keep from singing His praise and spreading His fame? "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." "What is thy beloved more than another beloved that thou cost so charge us?" "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand — or, as in another translation, 'He is conspicuous among myriads' (Youngs Trans.) — His countenance is as Lebanon. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." How well it is when words fail us that we can turn to the holy book where He is well

known and find there language which fitly describes Him. "Ye that stand in the house of Jehovah, in the courts of the house of our God. Praise ye Jehovah; for Jehovah is good: sing psalms unto his name for it is pleasant." There we may behold the beauty of the Lord and enquire in his temple. "Now will I sing to my beloved, a song of my beloved touching his vineyard." "O Lord our Lord how excellent is thy name in all the earth." He is well known throughout the height and the depth of the universe, adored by His own, though feared and dreaded by demons. "Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee." "Thy countenance is as the sun shineth in its strength." "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad." "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Thou art greater glorious Saviour than the Temple, or Jonah, or Solomon; Lord also of the Sabbath day. "In the greatness of thine excellency, thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee." Before John the Baptist thy forerunner; before Abraham; before all things. God, co-equal in eternity with the Father and the Spirit in majesty and splendour, albeit a gracious, tender, lowly, and lovely Man. We love to think of thee, adore Thee, own Thee, and glorify Thy name. Like a favoured one of old we can say, "The king hath brought me into his chamber and his love is better than wine."

My beloved reader, what thinkest thou of these glorious words concerning thy Lord and Master? "Hast thou seen Him, heard Him, known Him; Is not thine a captured heart? Chief among ten thousand own Him; Joyful choose the better part." Blessed Lord to see Thee and be like Thee is our joyful hope but Oh ! how sweet it is to be brought by the Spirit into all this to-day during the time of Thy rejection, when all that which lies before us in the day of Thy displayed glory, can be entered upon, and enjoyed on the principle of faith. To us Lord, these are, "The precious things of heaven," — things that, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Cor. 2: 9, 10. Yes, we love thee blessed Lord and however feeble we are, we can be in the same measure of blessed at-homeness with Thyself and God our Father. Made in infinite grace Thy companions in the blessed stability of redemption's glorious worth, we render unto Thee the homage of which thou art so worthy, both now and ever more.

Can there be any wonder then — we may ask — if one is beside oneself in the contemplation of such a lovely Person? In reality we have to bow and admit that the wonder is the other way about. Nothing could prove the lack of moral refinement and depth of spiritual feeling, than the callous way we all speak of Him who fills the Father's heart. This raises another question to which we must turn, namely, Why should such a life have to come to such an inglorious end in this world? Yea more, Why should it have to cease and not be perpetuated in the earth? The answer to this covers a vast range of Scripture, bringing in the counsels of God and the deepest things of divine revelation all of which leads to another part of our theme to which we now turn.

Part 3.

Coming to the truth of atonement, it is necessary to view the great work of our Lord at Calvary as the centre of the eternal plan and purpose of God, in relation to the whole creation. Redemption in Christ is the central thought around which not only all the time ways of God circle but also His eternal plan and purpose. The first of these regards man in his creature responsibility; the latter is sovereign grace by God towards him, when he had lost all as a responsible creature. This is the outcome of the eternal purpose of God. Nothing could be clearer than the way the Incarnate Son is presented in Scripture as coming at the end of a long period of testing; the culminating point in the history of man's

moral history in creature responsibility. Having been tried in a variety of ways, first in Eden, then by promise, law, covenant and prophets with continued failure, last of all God sent forth His Son. "This is the heir, come let us kill him and seize on the inheritance," is what they said. These things are so clearly put in Scripture and so often dwelt upon that we need not go further here.

On the other hand, nothing could be clearer than the way our Lord is presented as coming forth from the womb of eternity to accomplish the will of God by redemption, in His sacrificial work at the cross. These two great thoughts of man's responsibility and God's sovereignty run all through Scripture, as seen in the two trees of paradise but there can be nothing more profound than to see how they come together in our Lord at the cross. That work which finished the history of man's responsibility in the darkest crime in the history of eternity, was at the same time a work accomplished by the Son, which brought out the full revelation of the heart of God, and instituted a righteous basis upon which all the counsels of His heart, in majesty and glory, will rest for all eternity. The combination of these two grand conceptions, worked out in the time scene in the great conflict of the ages — the conflict between good and evil — is the story of how the great and glorious Godhead has revealed Himself. That revelation has brought God out in nature, character, and Being, in a way that unveiled Him as a glorious Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; strewing each One at work in carrying out the eternal counsels, and that in a way which brings out the thoughts, feelings, delights and motives of divine Persons, which will be the delight of redeemed myriads for evermore. This is what comes before us in this part of our meditation and it will serve, we trust, to answer the question of how that glorious life, portrayed in the Gospels, is to be perpetuated in the creation, *eternally*. In the relative working out of things, it should not be forgotten that sin entered the creation in the higher ranks, long before man was created. God's dealing with it therefore at Calvary had the whole creation in view. But that stands as it were, at the outskirts of revelation. Man is the creature in which the whole question was to be wrought out; earth the centre and Calvary the place. In that dreadful hour — the centre as it were of two eternities — God is eternally glorified. Let us look then a moment at the cross from each of these viewpoints, that of man — the creature's guilt, and then at its glorious expression of the eternal thoughts of God.

"**Crucify him.**" In the first mention of these words, the speakers doubtless thought of once, and forever, sinking in irretrievable defeat and shame, the Saviour's Name. Chagrined, outwitted, and defeated by the power of good, His opponents take refuge in the diabolical subterfuge of imputing His mighty works to the Devil. This conclusion reached, they fix upon Him His death sentence. "It is needful that one man die for the nation." If we do not see to this, said Caiaphas, the Romans will kill us. (John 11) This meets with full consent but, who is to do it, and how is it to be done? We will take him to Pilate. Rome, our captors will do this. His claim to be a king constitutes the charge of treason, and he will be crucified. Such a death involved irremediable shame, infamy, execration, beyond recovery. Scripture had pronounced upon it a curse. "Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree." Rome was too proud to crucify her sons. Such a death was reserved for slaves and felons only.

But note the estimate of His own people. Lepers must be put outside the camp. The pestilential infection of murderers, blasphemers, and lepers, must be kept back from the dwellings of men. Outside the gate, carrying His cross, Jesus must go a victim. If it be Rome, He must go to the bottom by crucifixion; if it be His own people, He must go outside the gate to Golgotha, carrying His cross. What a state poor, blind humanity was in, to go thus far with the Saviour. It was **that very state** which He, in grace, was meeting at that very moment. But what must have been the divine estimate of fallen flesh when, for its substitute, nothing less than curse would do. The curse, darkness, and abandonment of Calvary was our due but the sinless sufferer was our substitute. It is thus we get God's estimate of the

creature He had been cultivating for four millenniums.

Guilty, vile, and helpless we: Spotless Lamb of God was He!

'Full atonement,' can it be? Hallelujah! what a Saviour!

But the transcendent glory of Calvary links with the eternal plan and purpose of God. This plan had man in view for richest heavenly favour. His creation was but yesterday comparatively, but with it the Incarnation of the Son was indissolubly linked. Such purposes presupposed a state of breakdown that only the coming of the Son into Manhood could meet. In the creation, man came last but his fall created the position for redemption, hence, on the very day he sinned *the promise of the redeemer was given*. Redemption, it should be remembered supposes a third party. That third party was Satan in the form of a serpent in Eden. This of course proves that sin was there before, but man, listening to the tempter, brought it into his race and raised at once the question of the rights of God. Redemption is that which frees from an encumbrance something which already belongs to the redeemer. To free the property or inheritance from the encumbrance, a ransom must be paid. This is the story, the entrancing story of the Redeemer's blood. "The precious blood of Christ."

The seduction of man by the enemy not only corrupted him and alienated him from God. It robbed God of the creature; of His highest predilection. Of the original entrance of sin we may know but little but that its entrance into the human race raised at once the whole question of God's righteousness in the highest and most important part of His creation — is the burden of a great part of holy Scripture. As a creature, Satan may well have known that the Creator had His own inviolable rights, in the creation. This is what he challenged but he could have no possible knowledge of the infinite resources of wisdom, love, and power, which lay behind these rights. The story is well known. Satan's success brought death as the judgment of God on His creature man. Not merely the article of death but its moral power, as that which Satan pressed on the spirit of our Lord in Gethsemane — death as the judgment of God. But if in His character, God in righteousness and holiness stood publicly out against man, what of His nature which is **Love**? Here we touch the resources of God which no creature could know. It was then that the time ways of God began in the fallen race and He put forth His rights in a variety of ways as, for example, in the law. But we are dealing here with the purpose of God and that raises the question of how He has put forth these rights **in grace**. We can conceive of God putting forth His rights in judgment, and Satan, not knowing the resource of the Creator, doubtless expected this. If God had put forth His rights in that way and carried out His sentence, He could, out of His resources have created another race to take the place of man. This would have displayed His power but what of His purpose of Love? Such a course must have spelled for Him defeat in the best part of His creation. But our God — whose resources none can fully know — is neither arbitrary nor capricious; hence the story of redemption in Christ Jesus in all its sublime dignity of glory, will be the theme which will fill an endless eternity with His praise.

In speaking thus of the rights of God, we refer to His just and holy claims on His creature which is His own property. This should be distinguished from the *attribute* of righteousness which is inherent in the blessed God and is an eternally abiding principle. God put forth His rightful claims in the way of *grace* in His Son and in view of this, righteousness and grace have been termed synonymous in Romans 3. This should be carefully guarded however, for in ver. 26 of that chapter, both thoughts are expressed. The declaration of His righteousness, is the public declaration of **His perfect consistency with Himself in constituting the believing sinner righteous**. Moreover, the cross is much more than the putting forth of the Creator's rights on man. When we view that cross as establishing the authority of God, the moral Governor of the universe, we can see righteousness as a divine attribute and, in its

operations, it becomes the standard for the whole creation and indeed, in result, everything must come to that measure.

The bearing of the cross upon man as distinct from the higher ranks of creation, calls for a few more remarks. God's predilection of the human race is proved by the Incarnation of the Son. The fact that the Word became flesh, passing by the hierarchies of the heavens, shows man at the centre of divine purpose. The stoop of the Son into Manhood proves this both as to purpose, promise, and fulfilment. Then note, creation began in the heavens and ended on earth with man. With redemption and NEW CREATION, it is the other way about. "For by him were all things created, that are **in heaven**, and that are **in earth**." In creation the progress is *downward*. "By him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, whether they be things **in earth**, or things **in heaven**." In reconciliation the progress is *upward* and begins with man. Col. 1: 16, 20. Revelation is given to man who, in divine sovereignty, is himself at the centre of God's eternal plan. The circumference takes in the whole wide creation which, as we said, forms the outskirts of that revelation. The death of our Lord is the great central basis upon which all rests for the universe, man included. But the bearing of that death upon man is different from what it is on any other part of the moral creation. It is clear that the unfallen hosts above do not need the blood, as sinners do upon earth and it is just as clear that the fallen hosts of the heavenlies do not get its saving efficacy as sinners do on earth. In connection with this, note the purpose of God was to put Christ, the Son of Man, at the head of all things. This is strewn in Psalm viii, with its quotations in the New Test. See how this works out in the transfer from Godhead to Manhood in our Lord's Person, as taught in Heb. 1 and 2. From eternity, the Son is the appointed heir of all things. Between the creation of all things and His taking them up, they became defiled by sin so, He became Man to make purgation. Consequently He takes His place at the head. That place indeed He fills by double right, that is as Creator and Redeemer but the main point is, all things are put under a MAN. Then, as the man is not complete without the woman, the Church is taken from Christ to be presented to Him as Eve was to Adam, so that in the day when God displays Himself in all the wonders of all His plan and purpose, man, who at the cross expressed the creature's worst, will be seen at the highest point of glory with Christ and in the enjoyment of God's very best. **Hallelujah**. Surely it is fitting that the Apostolic doxology should come in here. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Eph. 3: 20, 21.

We would now close this part of our meditation by endeavouring to bring together the two great aspects of the cross we have looked at separately namely, the creature's guilt and God's eternal purpose. So many thoughts flood the mind that care is needed on this, the most profound of all themes. It has been said that the cross will be our lesson book throughout eternity. As we gaze upon it we see the unimpeachable justice of our God combined with the unquenchable desire of His heart to have the creature — whose dreadful guilt came out there — at home with Himself in perfect moral suitability for ever. Heaven called for it; earth needed it; hell demanded it; each from motives peculiar to itself. Heaven, the source of all good; hell the place of all evil, while earth was locked in the dreadful conflict between good and evil. Both heaven and earth have got all they required with an immeasurable excess, which puts the whole creation on an eternally stable foundation — *redemption* — and floods the throne of God with a new glory which eternity itself will never exhaust. It has glorified God, met our every need and has laid low the combined forces of apostate creation forever.

But perhaps the most wonderful thing of all is that the cross has unveiled, in the creation, the great and glorious God. Nothing else could conceivably reveal to the creature the great Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the relationships and affections inherent in Deity, nor the counsels of

eternity, with the part each glorious Person in the Holy Trinity takes in relation to each other, in the working out of these counsels.

Creation, providence and government, though bringing out His power, wisdom, authority, and goodness, could not make Him known. God has been revealed in love, light, and glory, so that He might be known in the Son as Father and all that has been revealed, has been made good in the heart of the creature, in a triumph of glory surpassing thought. The cross explains the riddle of the universe — the riddle of suffering, strewing the necessity of creation itself. It explains the permission of sin and the why of the four millenniums of the first man's culture. It has brought his moral history to a close by bringing to light the Second Man and His race that is to abide for eternity. It shows us too how all things serve God's great end, for sin, Satan, death, demons, and hell, must serve Him. There is nothing — there could be nothing — like the cross. It is the complete solution of every moral question; the means by which all wrongs shall be righted and above all — if we may with all reverence say it — *the cross explains God*. It explains the exigency of His heart to have man before Himself in the holy relationship of sonship, so that the Father's house might be marked by family feelings and the Son firstborn of many brethren — all pervaded by the unction of God the Holy Spirit.

There is yet one tender touch in connection with the peculiar place and calling given to men, as connected with the cross and the purpose of God. We who are subjects of His mercy are called to serve and praise Him as revealed by the Son Who became man to make Him known, while the unfallen angels serve their Creator with the obedience of delight in the relationship and status wherein they were created. In this connection, how wonderful to think that they come under a MAN and will worship God in that MAN. However great and good all this is, it can never equal the reciprocal joys of those who were saved from earth and sin. Their service and praise is the fruit of the divine nature and as a result of the transfer from Adam fallen to Christ their glorious Head. Here we touch that which passes beyond all creature conception for grandeur of glory. We shall praise Him as being in His own life and nature, but as those who have been down in the pit of sin and death, which nothing but Calvary's depth of suffering and woe could rescue us from. Glory be to God we are not to be in heaven merely as forgiven sinners, great and wonderful as that would be; we are to be there in the nature and life which belongs to the place. No unfallen status or Adamic innocence can match this. The praise of those who have known the depth of sin and proved the mercy of God in their rescue, is a most marvellous supposition. Yet, when we think it is beyond that, in the divine nature and in a new relationship: when we think, I say, that it is from such a height that we look down to the depth, we can have some little idea of the difference of the service and praises proper to redeemed sinners who went so far as to outrage the name and character of God, and crucify His blessed Son.

"And at the moment the burnt offering began, the song of Jehovah began, and the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments of David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded, all the time till the burnt offering was finished. And . . . the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves and worshipped." 2 Chr. 29: 27; 29.

This pictures our Lord in sacrificial excellence of glory in whom we are accepted, not as the sin offerings which had all to be consumed outside the camp, but as the One who has gone through death and risen again to establish an order which will throb with His life, vibrate with His praise, as being the eternal perpetuation of what came out in the Gospels. It will be the eternal reflection of the Being and nature of God. The marvel of it; the mystery of it; yea, its stupendous height and depth of glory will be the answer, yes, God's glorious answer, to the solemn hour of Calvary. Jesus our Lord, what can we say? for all language fails and thought is lost in holy amazement as we thus contemplate THEE. Hallelujahs and Hosannas; feelings of joy; delight and ecstasy; all fail to rise to what is Thy due. We

will thank Thee for all Thou hast given and praise Thee for all Thou hast done, but in the profound sense of Thy infinite and eternal greatness which gives all its lustre to Calvary, we adore Thee for WHO THOU ART.

It might perhaps be thought that a little might have been said on the bearing of the cross in relation to the lake of fire and those who go into everlasting punishment. Perhaps the bitterest pang of all for those who go there will be the thought that they themselves spurned a way of escape. It is a character of things not much dwelt upon and perhaps this is best. Scripture itself indeed says little of it. Turning to our theme, we may now see why that holy life was taken from the earth and how, in the divine resources of wisdom it will be *perpetuated* for evermore.

Part 4.

We may now be able to see why the perfect life of our Lord had to come to an end in death. He had taken up life in flesh and blood condition with that end in view. There was the purpose of God to be accomplished and our state to be dealt with and beyond all, He was to enter into His glory that way. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24: 26.) We are far removed here from the current teaching which links our Incarnate Lord with man in his fallen state and then goes on to speak of Him as a great world teacher, citing the sermon on the mount as a beautiful compendium of moral instruction for fallen flesh. To teach that His coming was for the adornment of a fallen race is confessedly black, so black indeed that, but for the mercy of God, it would have destroyed the truth long ago. This Judaising of christendom has led, in the estimate of the masses, to bringing Christ back to flesh and blood and putting man under law. This *denies* the cross and puts man — like the Galatians — under law and thus continues the testing of man, which the cross had already brought to an end. This teaching not only ignores the cross but sets aside the whole range of divine purpose as revealed in christianity. "Beware that thou bring not my son — the risen one in type — thither again" said Abraham to the servant, when he sent him to call a bride for his son Isaac who in type, had passed through death on the mountain top. Previous to that, Abraham had not only to part with Ishmael — type of man in nature — but had also to take Isaac to the mount and figuratively pass him through death. (Heb. 11: 19.) So Christ whose perfect life met in every way His Father's approval, goes down into death that the eternal plan and purpose of God might be brought to fruition in the establishing of the world of God's glory in resurrection.

How often is the resurrection of our Lord spoken of as the *birth of a new creation*? Such is the prevailing confusion that there is little sense of the glorious way our God has taken, through His blessed Son, to remove all the disorder. Three passages of Scripture will demonstrate this. "This is he that came by water and blood." **His coming into the world and death upon the cross.** 1 John 5: 6. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour has come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." John 16: 20, 21. **His resurrection.** "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come . . . by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place." **His present place in heaven.** These three passages show (1). that our Lord was born into this world at Bethlehem and died upon the cross as witnessed by the water and the blood. (2) That His resurrection, seen in the figure of the birth of the man, has inaugurated a New Creation. (3) That He has gone back to heaven in the good of this new system and sustains it in His high priesthood.

In connection with the new creation, we need our thoughts widened out from individualism. As

soon as Adam's race began to multiply, there was a necessity for administration. It is impossible to have a company without organisation of some kind. In this way we have in the resurrection of our Lord the dawn of a new day and a new world for faith to enter into and enjoy. It has been well said that in the first creation man came last, but in new creation Man is first, that is, Christ in resurrection. As to full bodily condition, He only is risen but by the operation of the Holy Spirit there is a company on earth united to Him as His body and of such it is said, they are even now risen together with Christ. Col. 2: 12.

This links itself with a further development of the purpose and plan of God. **There is now a Man in heaven.** In the provisional ways of God, man was created for the earth but in the purpose of God, as the fruit of redemption, his eternal home is in heaven. This shows the remarkable way in which grace reaches back beyond the fallen state to lift him out of the original condition and put him in a new heavenly status in the risen Head — the glorified Man. This is a most blessed racial reality. The place and the state suited for the first order was seen in Adam innocent, the first head. The place and state suited for the new order is seen in Christ risen and glorified in heaven. His place determines ours because of the relationship of life and sonship we have with Him. Glory be to God. Such wonderful blessings are far beyond us for we are creatures and ever will be, but the blessings we are brought into are far beyond creature conception,

The blessing of men on earth through the administration of a Man glorified in heaven, is foreseen and richly set forth in the Old Test. Psalms 110, and 132, with their quotations in the New Test., give both the present exaltation of Christ and His present administration in those who form His body. Comp. Eph. 4. Acts 2: 34. Heb. 1-2. Again and again the typical picture presents the Gospel age in detail. If we take the time between Adam and Enoch; the story of Joseph and his glory in Egypt; the volume of typical instruction contained in the journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan; all prefigure and speak of the time when heaven's resources would be administered by a MAN in the glory, through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit down here. As the sun rays itself forth in the solar system, so Christ in glory is the pledge of security for the whole moral system. His going there put the stamp of finality on the whole divine procedure because by that act, revelation and approach were completed. The One who came out to reveal has gone in, carrying Manhood in His Person in there, in answer to what He revealed.

At the risk of being thought tedious, we would endeavour to amplify the transitional blessing at this point, by speaking of life in its moral activity in a three fold way. (1). When on earth our Lord stood alone as the corn of wheat who must abide alone until death. (2). His disciples, though born again, were in the life and status of man in the flesh. (3). By death the Lord laid down the flesh and blood condition and took up life in a new state entirely. This new life He brought His disciples into by association with Himself in resurrection, by breathing on them. Just as He had breathed into Adam and he became a living soul, so the disciples were one with Him in life and status. The Spirit puts it thus. "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Heb. 2: 11. The Gospel is not reformation in any possible sense. It reconciles man to God by reconstituting him in his moral being and in that way transferring him from under the original Adamic headship, to the Headship of Christ. "Reconciliation;" "in Christ;" and "new creation" all go together. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature — new creation — old things are passed away; behold, all things are new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself." 2 Cor. 5: 17, 18.

In this way we reach in thought, the connection between the robes prepared for Aaron and the holy vestments for his sons. It will be recalled here, how the Lord insists on the impossibility of

patchwork in the parable of the new garment in Luke 5. New creation is the complete change of texture in our moral being and in no other way could there be the perpetuation of the life of Christ here. In the sons of Aaron we see that God would have a company separated from the life of flesh, for the service of the sanctuary. In His going on high, Christ took His place as Minister of the sanctuary and in that capacity, His saints are without any disparagement in association with Him as the consecrated company, for the service of God within the Holiest of all. This for us supposes an indwelling Spirit, Who forms us after Christ, so that in the power of intelligent affection we may even now enter in to that sphere of light and life, on the principle of faith, having part with Himself in all that concerns the glory of God.

This is put in such a lovely picturesque form by our Lord in Luke 15, that we are able to visualise it. The best robe is to fit us for a scene of holy festivity; a scene of holy joy, which is the fruit of the Father's counsels and to which He gives impetus in the words, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring. hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry . . . And they began to be merry." This reminds us of a scene in heaven where the words ring out, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready." Rev. 19: 7. Here again, all is "fine linen clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." But the picture in Luke 15 is beautifully illuminated by the words of Ephesians 1: 3, 4. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.**" In Zech. 3, the filthy garments had to give place to "*Festival-robos.*" New. Trans. Here in Ephesians we learn that a God of holiness will have those who are the fruit of His own love, in His company, for His pleasure and in perfect moral suitability through the work of His Son. "To himself" as verse 5 assures us. The parable also links with the truth of the sanctuary as taught in Hebrews. The fatted calf is the death of our Lord in the character of the **peace** offering which includes the communion of the worshipper. In that way, we have the truth of the *inside* as in Hebrews, linked with the grandeur of the revelation at its height as in Ephesians.

Thus far, we have had the place of the believer before God and in the life of Christ. That life is to be seen coming out here,. That is to say, the character of Christ is seen in His people. This is the christian circle where they are portrayed in relationship with one another, reciprocating the grace of Christ, and thus His life is reproduced down here. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering: Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." Col. 3: 12, 15. This is the description of what was seen coming out in the life of Christ in the Gospels, now seen, in the Epistles, as coming out in a company during His absence. We may be asked, Where is it to be seen? It is to be seen, thank God, in the Church. In spite of all the break-down today, we may still see the beautiful features of Christ, in His people. This is what prevents the world from pandemonium today. Moreover, it pleased God to give a complete expression of it in the Church before He allowed the breakdown to come in. If we read Acts 2 to 4 at one reading, we shall find a beautiful answer, in the saints, to what came out for the pleasure of God as recorded of our Lord in the Gospels.

Then there is the conduct suited to those who are linked up with the testimony of our Lord on the earth. The manner of life suited to those who are heavenly, as being united to a glorified Christ. *Sincerity* — "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Luke 12: 1. *Reverence* —

"And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body . . . Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." vs. 4, 5. *Courage* — "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." v. 8. *Greed* — "Take heed and beware of covetousness." v.15. *Worry and distraction* — "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." vs. 22, 30. These are the traits of a heavenly man. They have all been seen in our Lord in this world and the Word says, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to so walk, even as he walked." 1 John 2: 6. Thank God there is no lack of power from Himself on high to carry it out. Then what shall we say of our attitude in the place of *servants*? "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, . . . Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Luke 12: 35, 37.

Thus far we have traced the way divine power and wisdom have taken to perpetuate in the saints, the wonderful life of our Lord as seen in the Gospels. A word is called for on the dress which the Lord has provided, for the saints to stand in His interests to-day and to thus anticipate the day in which He will appear in judgment. We have already seen how He is coming in judgment, clothed with the garments of vengeance for clothing and clad in zeal as a cloak. Isa. 59: 16. This conflict is not with flesh and blood but with the hosts of evil which have their place in the heavenlies. This is perhaps the highest favour committed to the saints, or indeed, ever committed to man. It is that subtle character of conflict going on in christendom today, in which the enemy has had such success, by attacking our Lord and the whole range of heavenly truth, treasured in the Church to-day.

The Epistle to the Ephesians where this conflict is mentioned unfolds, as no other Epistle does, the magnitude of christianity in relation to the counsels of eternity. It shows that the present economy of grace as a faith system goes on to the day of full display when faith shall be no more called for. This is new creation or the resurrection world we have been speaking about. Mirrored forth in that system, our Lord stands, with His Assembly, at the centre of all. He stands in relation to all creation in a glorious triumph of grace. All this is apprehended and enjoyed by the saints to-day, by faith. This is what the enemy is out to oppose and every inch of the ground has to be contested. So, in Ephesians 6, we have the armour which we need in this conflict, outlined for us. "Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth." Not only are the Messianic rights of Christ in the earth attacked, but His universal authority as Son of Man — His rights both in heaven and on earth. What adds both pathos and solemnity to this conflict is, that christendom, in its leaders, has gone back to the God-defying wickedness of the early centuries and the multitudinous schools of thought of the Gnostics. This same playing with holy things is in evidence amongst those leaders in christendom calling themselves Modernists. The sad feature of it all is that the Gnostics were openly opposed to christianity, but the enemies of the truth to-day are inside, taking the place of giving us new light; delivering us from the traditions of the past, while robbing the people of all the holy things of God. How terrible is the position of church leaders today. The synagogue of Satan is what the professing church has become and the throne of Satan is set up there. Rev. 2: 9, 13, 14; Rev. 3: 9. In the great hierarchy of the professed body of christendom, men are set up as officials who do not fear to attack the birth, ministry, and atoning work of our Lord, in such a way that the common people, whose guides these men assume to be, are afraid.

It was fore-seeing all this that the Lord has doubtless given back to the Church in these last days, the whole Apostolic testimony. This, in the goodness of our God, has come into the hands of many of

the flock of Christ in power, so that a remnant are fitted to stand, in the face of the apostasy of the ages. Laodicea, with all its pretension has come. Some have got the eyesalve to see the situation and to open the door of the heart to give Him His place, Who is so worthy, and consequently, have the joy of supping with Him in the very midst of apostate christendom. It is only the fear of God that delivers from the fear of men and such are delivered from the hereditary class, who claim to be what they are not but are in truth, blind leaders of the blind.

We must remember that this is a moral conflict. It has long raged, including in its arena heaven, earth, and hell. Its present aspect has gone on since Calvary and will continue till the Lord Himself appears. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10: 4, 5. This warfare may be visualised in the men who were the servants of Christ in the days of the Acts of the Apostles. Here were men who knew that the race was not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. They were clothed in the armour of light and exposed the hidden things of darkness, pulling down strong holds in such a way, that their enemies were compelled to say, that these men had turned the world upside down.

The whole armour of God is thus provided for us that we may stand and, having done all — that is, having conquered — may still stand. There are Truth; Righteousness; Peace; Faith; and Salvation. These are the divine verities provided for this awful conflict and the way they are bound together, so as to become effective, is by PRAYER. This is the power. It has long been said that a man of prayer is a man of power and surely in this way, it is proved. Then it has to be remembered while the clash is on earth, we are made conscious that our real enemies are lords of darkness; spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavenlies.

Needless to remark, all these garments are moral as indicative of certain features which the Spirit produces in those who belong to Christ. Material dress has its place and it is well when dwelling on these abstract realities, that we should not only be clothed with humility but also in modest apparel. We have reached a time when morals have got so low that modesty is little known and that which Scripture designates abomination, is seen in our streets without shame. It is one of the proofs that Laodicea has come and the saddest thing of all is, to see how easily believers fall into such things. But as we close our meditation on fine linen, we may recapitulate and it may be glance at christendom in relation to the truth we have had before us.

Our point in part one was the wealth of typical instruction contained in the Old Testament concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. As the centre of the divine volume, He fills both Testaments but in the Old Testament it comes out necessarily in type, figure, symbol, promise and prophecy. Prophecy foretold what history records namely, that the march of events in this world, from Adam, for four millenniums, was towards the incarnation of the eternal Son of God. During much of this period, Messianic songs sounded out in strains of heavenly music, both from men and women, in ecstatic vision, as under the control of the Holy Spirit. This glorious event was foretold in a threefold way as answering to what we have already seen in the Divine-Human Person of our Lord. (1). God Himself was coming down to deliver. Ex. 3: 8; Isa. 13: 3, 5; Zech, 14: 5; Mark 1: 1, 3. (2). The seed of the woman; the Son of Abraham; the Son of David; the Prophet like unto Moses that would be heard. Gen. 3: 15; Deut. 18: 15; Matt. 1: 1. (3). These two lines of Messianic prophecy run right through the Old Testament, but combine together in Isa. 6: 9 and Micah 5, where the Babe of Bethlehem is described as the eternal God whose goings forth have been from eternity.

This leads to part two namely, the holy Gospels and the grandeur of the incarnation. Coming then to the holy Gospels we pass from types and pictures and come under the charm of a MAN. If we must have a department, this is the Holiest of all. No other subject is like this. It bows us in humility while we exult in praise. Its simplicity inspires us with confidence but its grandeur with holy amazement. At times there is ecstasy of delight, while at other times it is the silence of holy awe. All is wonderful! His Name is Wonderful. Isa. 9: 6. We worship and adore. Here behold the matchless beauty of that MAN, in the simplicity of obedient service; serving His God faithfully, in unbroken dependence on the one hand, while on the other there is the Majesty, Omnipotence, and Omniscience of God. Putting the two together we have the Divine-Human Person of our Lord in a holy mystery where there is perfect control with perfect submission; command with obedience; endless resource with poverty; supreme power over all in heaven, earth, and hell yet, submitting to the cross. This is the record of the Gospels. This is our Lord, the peerless Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! why do we not adore Him more? Marvel of all marvels, this is the One this world has crucified and, still taking advantage of His wondrous stoop, continues to tarnish His glory.

This leads to part three where we have considered the cross in relation to the creature's guilt and, behind it all, the wonder of the cross as the fruit of the eternal purpose and plan of our God. The perfect submission of our Lord to everything that apostate creatures could heap upon Him and along with this, His set purpose to carry everything through for God's glory according to plan and the blessing of the creature whose malignity put Him there. In the light of this, think of the way our blessed Lord is set aside today, both in His incarnation and atoning work. We do not refer here to this deluded world but to christendom — that which calls itself by His Name. Could we have a more melancholy picture than the numbers of church dignitaries, who belittle and ignore the work of the cross, by assuming that the Lord Jesus connected Himself with man in the flesh to lift him up? Perhaps there is nothing more amazing than the way Christ is belittled in christendom. When we think that soon every part of the universe is to vibrate with His praise, from the highest down to every blade of grass, Why is it, we may well ask, that men who stand high in official dignity in that great religious hierarchy called christendom, are not intelligently in the light of His Incarnation and Redemption and leading His praise just now? Instead of that, there is the deplorable sight of many of these men at a loss to know what to do and sadly crying out for a new age.

This leads to part four where we saw how God had made good His thoughts in a remnant. There are those today who, in infinite grace, see the perfect beauty of His plan and purpose and can in holy liberty worship and adore. Such have learned the meaning of God's plan and see how, like the key to the lock, it fits into and solves every problem. Surely every sane person would admit that since it is His plan, it must be perfect in every way. Instead of attempting to bring Christ back to this life and eulogising Him as a great Teacher to set up again fallen men, they have learned the racial character of the Gospel which comes from a glorified Christ, to lift them out of the Adamic condition and link them with Christ in glory, as the new Head of a new race, into which thank God, no fall can ever come. "Hallelujah! Sing unto Jehovah a new song; sing his praise in the congregation of the godly. Let Israel rejoice in his Maker; let the sons of Zion be joyful in their king. Let them praise his name in the dance; let them sing psalms unto him with the tambour and harp. For Jehovah taketh pleasure in his people; he beautifieth the meek with salvation. Let the godly exult in glory; let them shout for joy upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand." Psalm. 149: 1, 6. New Trans.

So beloved reader, we sought your ear at the beginning of our meditation and now, one word at the close. We have looked together at some of the entrancing scenes of holy Scripture. Things which

the **Gold; Blue; Purple; Scarlet;** and **Fine Twined Linen** portray. Have we learned something of the wonders of the holy Book of God? It shows us God: man; angels; and devils, as well as heaven; earth; and hell. It shows us the sphere where good and evil rages and man's entrance into the conflict with all its terrible results and terrible consequences for those who refuse salvation from Christ. It shows us where time touches eternity in the past and leads us on through storms and conflict, to where eternity touches time's end in the future. How marvellous and beyond all our creature thoughts is all this! It shows us man's world where the fallen creature grovels under Satan's tyranny, where sin, death, and demons operate and where the creature is engaged with things which must — however great in his estimate — pass away for ever.

Beyond all this, it shows us God in His Own world. That scene where all that is pure and holy obtains and sin and death can never come. Here He displays Himself in the fulness of redemption, grace, and glory, surrounded by those who have been made capable by redemption, to respond to Himself in holy adoration for ever more. The time scene sets forth many wonderful things both on the side of good and the side of evil. Above all, it sets forth GOD. In that scene He is seen today in perfect control of all whether Providence, Government, Long-suffering, Goodness and Truth. Oh! how marvellously does it display Him in redemption, where all His wonders are seen in plan, purpose, and execution in His blessed Son — now being made good by His Spirit. The centre of all the grand legacy which eternity will draw from time's eventful history, will be the abiding miracle of God the Son's becoming flesh, to carry out in the creation, the eternal counsels of the great Godhead. His stoop to Manhood and the cross with the holy grandeur as recorded in the four Gospels — all will abide and form the grand centre of that eternal scene, in the light of the grand fact that Manhood, in Him, has been carried far beyond its originally created condition, to the place marked out for it in the counsels of eternity. His Incarnation and Atoning work will continue to be, as it were, the twin pillars upon which will rest the stupendous fabric, which the great Godhead has built up out of the time history of sin, sorrow, and woe. While, in the time history my reader in our schooling days, let us give ourselves to these heavenly and eternal verities, that we may carry with us into eternity some of the spoils of victory. This has now been made blessedly possible by the constant supply of the mighty power and grace of our God.

"And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work."