

# Faith and its Foundations

by W W Fereday

## Table of Contents

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| FAITH.....          | 2  |
| LIGHT.....          | 2  |
| REPENTANCE.....     | 3  |
| LOVE.....           | 4  |
| GOOD WORKS.....     | 4  |
| RIGHTEOUSNESS.....  | 5  |
| CONVERSION.....     | 6  |
| TRUTH.....          | 7  |
| NEW BIRTH.....      | 8  |
| LAW.....            | 8  |
| FORGIVENESS.....    | 9  |
| GRACE.....          | 10 |
| JUSTIFICATION.....  | 11 |
| IMMORTALITY.....    | 11 |
| CONSCIENCE.....     | 12 |
| JUDGEMENT.....      | 13 |
| SALVATION.....      | 14 |
| MERCY.....          | 15 |
| ETERNAL LIFE.....   | 15 |
| PEACE.....          | 16 |
| REDEMPTION.....     | 17 |
| REST.....           | 18 |
| RECONCILIATION..... | 19 |
| ATONEMENT.....      | 19 |
| HOLINESS.....       | 20 |
| RESURRECTION.....   | 21 |
| SIN.....            | 22 |
| SAINTSHIP.....      | 22 |
| HOPE.....           | 23 |
| FEAR.....           | 24 |
| WORSHIP.....        | 25 |

## **FAITH.**

In days of agitation and doubt, such as the present, the question is of paramount importance to us all — What is Faith? Much depends, both for the present and for the future, upon the answer we are able to give our hearts to this question. Perhaps the simplest account of what faith is, is furnished to us in the words of Paul the Apostle, uttered in the midst of the violent storm which befell him on his voyage to Rome. The circumstances were most distressing. For several days the vessel in which he sailed had been tossed up and down in the Adriatics with every prospect of total loss. When his fellow travellers were at the point of despair, he told them of the simple message that had been conveyed to him by an angel of God, that not a life should be lost of all the two hundred and seventy-six contained within the ship, adding: "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27: 25).

Here we have the whole secret of faith — "I believe God." The first man and his wife lost confidence in their Creator when in the garden, preferring rather to credit the word of the serpent; ever since it has been common with man to distrust and disbelieve his God. Faith is the return of the soul to man's original confidence in his Maker.

May the voice of God be heard today by those who desire to hear it? Most assuredly. Is it conceivable that a Being of unfathomable love and goodness would leave the vast human family without some light wherewith to illuminate its darkness? The thought is unnatural and impossible. Where, then; may the divine voice be heard? In the Scriptures, which are "God-breathed," as Paul assured his son Timothy long ago. Let us, then, cherish confidence in the sacred writings, accepting them as the very Word of God. If these be surrendered, all is gone; we are then without shaft or rudder wherewith to shape our career through the intricacies of the present world. Where, too, if we refuse to hear the Scriptures, are we to turn for light concerning the unfathomable beyond?

The arch-enemy well knows where the key of the situation lies; hence his persistent efforts throughout all ages to wrest the Scriptures from human hands. His tactics change with changing times; at one season rousing secular authorities to an epidemic of Bible burning, at another season filling the religious atmosphere with unholy criticism. But whatever the tactics the aim is always the same — to destroy both faith and that on which faith rests.

"Sirs, I believe God." In the Book He tells me of my sins, humbling me into the dust thereby. As a faithful Watchman, He warns me, in writings that will never deceive, what must be the consequences of sin, if pursued and loved. More, and better than all, He unfolds to me a heart of infinite affection, which held not back even from the sacrifice of His own well-beloved Son, that sinful men might, on a perfectly righteous basis, be saved and blessed for evermore. Surely such a God is worthy of all my heart's confidence and love!

## **LIGHT.**

Light and love are the two essential names of God; the one being expressive of the absolute purity, and the other of the perfect tenderness, of His nature. The same writer who tells us that "God is light" declares also that "God is love." These most important statements are both found in the first epistle of John.

Man being now a fallen creature is morally the exact opposite of what God is. Hence the Apostle's words to the Ephesian believers: "Ye were once darkness" (Eph. 5: 8). Peter, in addressing other believers, says: "He hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2: 9). As

in the physical sphere, so in the spiritual, darkness and light are the opposite of each other, and cannot in the nature of things intermingle. Man is thus by nature in total ignorance of God; the prince of darkness, having complete control of the mind, filling it with false thoughts of God. Sin, and nothing but sin, marks those who are so deeply alienated.

An everlasting night of darkness must have been the portion, of us all had not God intervened in the plenitude of His grace. "Through the tender mercy of our God the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1: 78-79). John tersely speaks of the Saviour's coming thus: "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1: 4). Christ was thus the revelation of God to men for their blessing. The cross could alone adequately declare all that God is; that mighty event has shown for ever His immaculate holiness and love.

When Christ becomes known to the soul by faith there is a very real and positive shining of God into the heart. This dispels a man's moral darkness once for all. Hence forward he walks in the light of the knowledge of God and His Son. He is "light in the Lord" a "child of light," a "son of the day" (Eph. 5: 8; 1 Thess. 5: 5). He has the light of life, and from him in consequence goes forth a holy reflection of Christ in his ways. He puts off the world of darkness, and puts on the armour of light. In him is seen the fruit of the light in all goodness and righteousness and truth. He has no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather exposes them (Rom. 13: 12; Eph. 5: 8-11). His whole life is a divine testimony in the midst of the moral gloom of this evil world. How deep and fundamental is the difference between those who believe and those who believe not! The one class walk by faith in the light now, and will dwell in, heaven's light eternally. The other grope in darkness now, and have nothing before them but blackness of darkness for ever.

## **REPENTANCE.**

Repentance is treated in Holy Writ as the natural concomitant of faith. Hence the Apostle preached to both Jews and Gentiles "repentance toward God; and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20: 21). What is this repentance? It may be defined as self-judgement or self-loathing. Now, seeing that we are all far more prone to judge others rather than ourselves, and to see other people's sins more readily than our own, repentance, such as God looks for, must be, like faith, divinely wrought in the soul.

Perhaps the greatest preacher of repentance the world has ever known was John the Baptist. It was one of the most striking features of his testimony. His austere manner gave such offence to his contemporaries that they declared he had a demon. He was certainly a great leveller. All classes felt the sting of his words. Pharisees, punctilious in their religiousness though they were winced under his stern denunciations of unreality. Sadducees also, who were characterised by their free handling of divine revelation, whereby they sought to eliminate from it all that is supernatural, trembled at the preacher's burning words. John did not hesitate to call both Pharisees and Sadducees "a brood of vipers." Yet, while doing this, he was by no means a companion of present-day Socialistic demagogues who have eyes only for the sins of the rich and exalted; tax-gatherers, soldiers, and the common people in general all felt the severity of his lash in their turn.

The truth is that the whole human family, high and low, learned and unlearned, religious and irreligious, is by nature in a condition of alienation from God. Hence Paul's statement when at Athens: "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17: 30). For our help, we are furnished in the Scriptures with examples of repentance in persons drawn from all classes, both social and moral. Who is not familiar with the Miserere, Psalm 51? It is the confession of a king. Who has not heard of the

words of sorrow for sin that were uttered in the ears of the dying Saviour at Calvary? It was the confession of a common thief. We recall also the wail of the upright Job, "Behold, I am vile"; and the lowly acknowledgement of the once self-righteous Paul that he was "the chief of sinners."

It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance; (Romans 2: 4). When the eyes of a man become opened to the truth concerning the God with whom we have to do, when all His love and grace pass in review before his soul, the natural pride and rebellion of his heart utterly gives way, and he is glad to lie in dust and ashes at His blessed feet. When the stupendous thought is grasped (fathomed it never can be) that God sacrificed His only-begotten Son for the putting away of our abominable sins and iniquities, even the most stout-hearted is constrained to yield. And what next? "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51: 17)

## **LOVE.**

God is not light only; He is also love. Light and love are not mere attributes of the Deity, as righteousness and holiness; they are the very nature of God. Light condemns sin, and demands judgement upon it; love seeks the salvation of the sinner; and has provided an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. Hence the magnificent Gospel message: "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). These words came from the lips of none other than the Only-begotten Son Himself. The cross declares God's love in all its fullness of meaning. What it cost Him to put the Son of His love in the sinner's place none of us will ever comprehend. If the cross of Calvary fails to convince men of God's fervent desire for their blessing, nothing else, whether deeds or words; could ever prove convincing.

Scripture describes man as a naturally loveless creature. Amiable qualities he may indeed possess, but love is lacking. "Hateful and hating one another" is God's description of the revolted human family (Titus 3: 3). The whole law is summarised in the commandments to love God with all the heart, and one's neighbour as one's self. But where is the natural man who does either Christ is the true test of man's condition in this as in everything else. He was once here tabernacling amongst us as God manifested in flesh. Was He loved as such? Having become man He thereby became man's neighbour; was He loved in this character either? Both as God and man He was hated and rejected, even unto death; what can be said for man in view of such an appalling fact?

It would be as reasonable to look for grapes on a bramble-bush as to look for love to God in the heart of the natural man. The heart must welcome to itself God's great love ere it can move aright towards God. The response soon follows the reception of the love of God. "We have known and believed the love that God hath toward us" says the happy Apostle. He adds almost immediately: "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4: 16-19). Love to God and Christ, love to the brotherhood! love to all men, flows naturally from the heart that has been filled and warmed with the infinite love of God. What is impossible to the unregenerate man is the most natural thing conceivable to all who are born of the Holy Spirit. They are partakers; through grace, of the divine nature.

## **GOOD WORKS.**

Good works have invariably been held in high esteem amongst men, but it has sometimes happened that they have been accorded a false place in the mind. Some, for example, have judged them to be the sole procuring cause of salvation; others; not caring to go so far, have considered that they at least help forward the matter, even if something divine is required in addition. Both opinions are at

fault, if Scripture is to be believed. If it is indeed true that the fleshly mind is enmity against God, filled with rebellion against His law, and incapable of being brought into subjection thereto, then it follows that "they that are in the flesh (i.e. the unregenerate) cannot please God" (Rom. 8: 7; 8). This entirely disposes of the notion that human works of any kind can contribute in the smallest degree to the salvation of the soul. God's titles for the varied products of our fallen nature are "dead works" and "wicked works."

Salvation is the fruit of a totally different principle. "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2: 8-9). He who knows the plague of his own heart will be grateful for such a statement as this. Such a principle as grace gives hope for the most unworthy; indeed it opens the door for us all. But grace must have a foundation of righteousness on which to work; else the grace of God would be mere trifling with sins which is impossible. The majesty of the divine throne must be upheld at whatever cost; the holiness of the divine nature must be met in all its claims and dues. Here the cross of Christ comes in, which is at once the full answer to all the divine requirements and the very expression of all the grace of the heart of God towards erring man.

In the presence of the stupendous work of the cross, none of us dare entertain the thought of salvation by our own efforts. Had this been possible for any, then surely Christ died in vain. Nor dare we think to add to the virtue of that work by our own petty deeds, however and whenever performed. Either notion would really be an insult to Him who suffered immeasurably for our blessing.

What, then, is the true place assigned to good works in God's great plan? They follow salvation as naturally as fruit springs from a living tree. The New Testament epistles are full of strongly worded exhortations as to the propriety of good works, but they are all addressed to those possessed of living faith in the Son of God. Paul, Peter, John, and especially James, all insist earnestly that they that believe should be careful to maintain good works. Christianity is a vital reality, and revolutionary in its effects when really received into the soul. It makes the proud man humble, the selfish man unselfish, and the thief a worker and a giver. There is no moral force in the world to be compared with the true grace of God revealed in Christianity.

Nothing acceptable can be rendered to God until all His gifts of love have been received; then begins a holy activity which will not end with this fading scene, but will be continued in His heavenly presence for ever.

## **RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

Righteousness may be defined as uprightness and consistency in our moral relationships. Tested by, this standard the whole human family must be brought in guilty. What avails it that a man be ever so scrupulous in his dealings with his fellow creatures if he breaks down in his responsibilities towards God? For man's highest relationship is with God, who is at once his Creator and Governor.

It was a pitiful sight that God beheld when He took His survey of men in the manner described in Ps. 14. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." His verdict was: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3: 10-12). In view of such sweeping statements as these, it is sheer insensibility to the true condition of things for any to plead righteousness with God. It is more becoming on the part of us all to acknowledge ourselves verily

guilty, and then cast ourselves unreservedly on God's unlimited grace.

God in His perfect wisdom has found a way whereby He can justify the ungodly, and yet maintain His own inflexible righteousness. The cross has made possible what otherwise would have been morally impossible. Christ's redemptive work has so perfectly satisfied the claims of divine righteousness that God now proclaims Him as a mercy-seat to which all who feel their need may with confidence approach. God has publicly signified His acceptance of the work of Jesus by raising Him from among the dead, and glorifying Him in Himself above. The moment a man turns from himself to God, pleading the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, he is divinely cleared from all charge of guilt, and henceforward stands before God in all the efficacy of Christ's atoning sacrifice. It is righteousness without works, celebrated by David in his thirty-second Psalm, and illustrated long before in Abraham the believer (Rom. 4: 1-8).

The most righteous man that ever lived Saul the Pharisee rejected with loathing the thought of merit in all his once-boasted-of attainments when he saw the righteousness which is of God by faith. Christ; in whom all blessing is centred, became from that moment his glory and delight. He described the new position of Christians to the Corinthian believers thus: "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus who from God is made unto us... righteousness" (1 Cor. 1: 30).

From this flows righteousness in the dealings of every-day life. With one accord the inspired writers of the New Testament press the exceeding importance of practical righteousness in all whom God has justified. The Gospel is belied where this is neglected or repudiated. An unblemished life, which is impossible for the sinner, is more that possible for the saint.

## **CONVERSION.**

Conversion is a moral necessity for all who would have to do with God in peace and blessing. The Saviour indicated its indispensability plainly enough when He said, "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18: 3). The statement is startling in its peremptoriness; put in such a form it constrains us to pause and inquire what this conversion means. To have any misunderstanding here would clearly be fatal to any of us.

Of all the pictures of conversion given to us in the Scriptures, none is more expressive than that of the Thessalonians. Their city had been steeped in idolatry from its foundation, and with the exception of a few Jews who worshipped Jehovah, all the Thessalonians bowed down to the deities of the heathen. Suddenly there entered the place a small band of itinerant preachers, who proclaimed not only the living and true God Whom the Jews acknowledged, but also His Son, Jesus Christ. Concerning the Son of God, they told of His death and resurrection, His entrance into heaven, and His future coming for the full deliverance of all His people. The preaching gripped the hearts of many. Dead deities they had long known, but a living God was a new idea! Deities supposed to be possessed of every savage passion they had long served, but a self-sacrificing Saviour aroused thoughts and feelings in their minds such as they had never experienced before. One of the preachers afterwards described the effect thus: - "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead even Jesus, Who delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1: 9-10).

"Ye turned to God!" That is conversion. The necessity for it arises from the fact that we are all sprung from a corrupt stock; every individual on earth having been shapen in iniquity, and conceived in

sin. It is natural to every child of Adam to go astray like a lost sheep. The divine judgement of our whole race was long ago expressed in the sorrowful words: "They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one" (Rom. 3: 12).

"Ye turned to God," wrote the Apostle to the Thessalonians. The forceful preaching to which they listened brought them face to face, as it were; with God. In His light they saw light. The awfulness of sin, and especially the vanity of idolatry, was thus brought home to their hearts and consciences; terrible lessons truly for any to have to learn. But it was a Saviour-God to whom they turned; hence not terror nor despair, but rest, peace, and satisfaction became their portion, as they learned of His tremendous sacrifice of love when He gave up His only-begotten Son to death for their salvation. Never again could they turn their backs upon such a God; He had fixed and attracted their hearts for ever. "Ye turned to God!" Yes, that is Scriptural conversion, and that only.

## TRUTH.

"What is truth?" The question was once asked by a high Roman official under peculiarly solemn circumstances, but with a flippancy that argued no real longing in his soul for a satisfactory answer. After addressing his question to the only Being in the universe who could answer it, he turned to the clamouring multitude at his palace gates, and surrendered his admittedly blameless Prisoner to their will. The favour of Caesar, even the favour of a fickle crowd, was more to him than God and the truth. It was a truly pitiful scene.

To every serious inquirer after truth (and there have been such in all ages and in every land) God points the finger to Christ. In Him is the truth, and in Him alone. "The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1: 17). The law of Sinai is true, but it could not be said to be "the truth." It expressed in measure God's abhorrence of sin, and it showed His claim to man's allegiance, but GOD was unrevealed by it. None of the ten commandments suggested that behind them was a heart of infinite love which had long before planned to yield up its dearest Object to the agony of the cross for the salvation of offenders. Given too, as it was, to men on the earth, there was nothing in the law to suggest that God had ages! before formed a purpose to have multitudes of men in His own presence for ever, sharing the heavenly glory and blessedness of the Firstborn Son.

Christ is the Revealer of God. Before His incarnation clouds and darkness more or less hid the Creator from the ken of His creatures. Christ's coming into the world has made known all that God is. His love, His grace, His holiness, His righteousness, have all been expressed perfectly in Jesus Christ. He who would know God need not study nature or providence for this purpose (these at best only declare parts of His ways); Christ and Christ alone is the manifestation of God to man. We recall His own words: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 10: 6).

But not only has Christ's coming brought out the truth as to God; it has revealed the truth as to man also. Corruption and violence had marked man's course here ever since the fall; the advent of the Son proved that man is an incorrigible God hater, even though God was visiting the earth with a heart full of love, and with hands burdened with blessings. When they saw the Son, they said: "This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him" (Matt. 21: 38). In the presence of such a crime, still unrepented of, let non-speak of improving or ameliorating the condition of human nature. All such dreams are idleness and folly. Nothing avails for any but a new creation. "Ye must be born anew."

The truth as to Satan has also been manifested by Christ's coming into the world. For ages he had

been the chief rebel in the universe, not only transgressing against God himself, but inciting others also to rebellion; the presence of the Son in human flesh developed the murderer in him. He it was who led all classes on to the murder of their Creator and Lord.

"What is truth?" No more important question could possibly be raised. Tremendous issues depend upon the answer the soul accepts to the esquire. Christ is the only true test and touchstone for us all. In Him, and in Him alone, the soul finds all its problems solved for ever.

## **NEW BIRTH.**

It was a severe set-back to Nicodemus when our Lord said to him, "Ye must be born anew" (John 3: 7). The circumstances were very remarkable. The Lord had but a little while before come up to Israel's stately city of ceremonies from the Galilean village in which He resided. Being indignant at what He beheld in the temple, He forthwith purged it before the very eyes of the authorities. After such an act it was a great thing for Nicodemus, one of the principal religious leaders of the people, to visit Him and say: "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God." It was in answer to this greeting that our Lord insisted upon the necessity of new birth for every one, and for Nicodemus in particular.

The visitor was puzzled. Had the Saviour asserted that publicans and sinners needed to be born anew in order to enter the kingdom of God, he would have understood Him more readily; but the Lord made it a personal thing for himself — "YE must be born anew." Was he not both upright and moral, and withal an instructor of God's people? What more could be required? Surely, such a man as he merited favour from God?

Many in this day are as perplexed as to this matter as Nicodemus. The human heart is slow to admit that we have all sprung from a corrupt stock; that we all entered the world morally tainted; in a word, that our very nature (to say nothing of our actions) is unsuitable to God and to His holy presence. Yet it is true. Every man, therefore; however excellent in the eyes of his fellows, needs a new and spiritual life from God. How is this life implanted in the soul? By the Holy Spirit's application of the Word of God, which is likened to water in John 3: 5, and to incorruptible seed in 1 Peter 1: 2, 3. Persons are spiritually begotten, not by ordinances, but by means of the Gospel (1 Cor. 4: 15).

And what is the Gospel? The Saviour presented it, as it were, in a nutshell to Nicodemus during their midnight talk. He announced himself as "He that came down from heaven" — a divine person tabernacling in flesh. Then He declared that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." He followed this up with the wonderful statement that "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son." All is told out here. Our only hope is in the once-crucified Son of Man. His cross has secured life and healing for all who believe. The moment the eye of faith turns to Him there is wrought in the soul by the divine Spirit that new life of which our Lord spoke, which fits the soul for God and for the light of His sacred presence for ever.

## **LAW.**

We refer to the law of God, given under most impressive circumstances at Mount Sinai. "Wherefore serveth the law?" asks the Apostle in Gal. 3: 19 the point of his enquiry being the object for which the law was given. In the opinion of many, both in his day and in our own, it was furnished as a means whereby men might attain to righteousness before God. But is this the teaching of Holy

Scripture?

It is most certain that God's purposes of blessing were formed long before the day of Sinai. His heavenly elect (Christians) were chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1: 4); and His earthly elect (Israel) were certainly before His mind as far back as the Babel-scattering (Deut. 32: 7-8). The law, then, whatever its value, has nothing to do with the blessing of God's people. Their blessing rests upon an entirely different basis.

"Wherefore then serveth the law; It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come," etc. Here we have God's answer to the query. All hope of salvation for men rested from the first on the long-promised Seed — the Son of God. For His advent the pious yearned and prayed for ages. God filled the waiting time with instruction of the deepest possible importance, using various means for this purpose. Thus the law was given in order to make manifest the awful evil of sin, God intending in this way to prepare men for the coming of the Sin Bearer. Tested by the holy enactments of Sinai, men found themselves transgressors. Such is man's nature that the application of God's law to it only provokes its evil. Hence the startling statement "the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. 15: 56). As a natural consequence, therefore, "the law worketh wrath" (Rom. 4: 15); it can do naught but curse all who are under its claim (Gal. 3: 10). In keeping with this the law is described in 2 Cor. 3 as the ministration of condemnation and of death. As a plummet it shows man his crookedness; as a mirror it shows him his vileness; but help him it cannot. "It is weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8: 3).

Whom the law can only curse, grace can both justify and save. Our hope, then, as ruined ones, is in the abounding grace of God. This marvellous grace found its full expression at Calvary, when the Only-begotten Son of God suffered and died in order that guilty ones might be blessed. Apart from law altogether God has manifested His righteousness, which is unto all (in its scope), and (in its application) upon all them that believe (Rom. 3: 21). Righteousness apart from works is the amazing principle of Christianity (Rom. 4: 6). It is hard to surrender the pride and self-importance so natural to the flesh; yet he who is prepared to humble himself at the divine feet, and take the worthless sinner's place, pleading only Christ and His blood, will be eternally saved, and that without labour and without cost.

## **FORGIVENESS.**

"I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Familiar words, often used by our fellow-men in the presence of God. Yet it is to be feared that many who thus speak would hesitate to assert that their own sins are forgiven, and that they stand perfectly clear before the throne of God for ever. Under such circumstances, one naturally inquires, "Whose sins do they believe in the forgiveness of?"

Certainly, there is not a soul who does not need, forgiveness, though we do at times fall in with some of the ninety-and-nine just persons who judge that they have no need of repentance. But they are deceiving themselves. The wise man's words are all too true: "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not" (Eccles. 7: 20). The summing up of the Apostle is even more conclusive: "There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). Such comprehensive language leaves no door of escape for any; the whole human family is brought thereby under the judgement of God. Moreover, from such a condition none can extricate themselves; no amount of human effort, as amendment of life, almsgiving, etc., can possibly purge away a single sin.

In such circumstances one's heart turns in all its helplessness to the One against whom all our sins have been committed. In Him is mercy, compassion, and love. And there is more. In Him is the

matchless wisdom that has found a way whereby He can fully and frankly forgive the sinner, and yet retain the righteous consistency of His throne. That way is Christ, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (or mercy seat) through faith in His blood" (Rom. 3: 25). If this is the character of Him with whom we have to do, let us away with both the pride that refuses to acknowledge its guilt, and the despair that feels its sins are too grievous to be forgiven. For some are afflicted with the one disease, and some with the other. Nearly nineteen hundred years ago Paul made proclamation in the Pisidian Antioch — "Be it known unto you that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 13: 38); and the proclamation has not yet been withdrawn by the God who authorised it. Such a welcome as the scapegrace of Luke 15 received on his return to his father is awaiting all who will return in true contrition unto our God. The kiss of forgiveness and the ring of endless love are favours He delights to bestow.

## GRACE.

The usual definition of grace "unmerited favour" does not suffice as a description of the grace of God. A coin given to a wayside beggar is grace in the usual and human sense, but there is little in common between such a deed and the gracious ways of God as revealed in the Gospel. We would prefer to define divine grace as the active exercise of love towards those who have no claim.

Assuredly none of us have the smallest claim on God. Men in their natural state are described by the Holy Spirit as "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy; hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3: 3). Such a condition could not possibly attract but must rather repel, an infinitely holy God. Yet the Gospel proclaims that God loved not merely, pitied, but loved men so morally ruined and undone. Hence the passage already quoted goes on to speak of "the kindness and love of God our Saviour, toward man"; telling us, too, that "according to His mercy He saved us," and that all who believe are "justified by His grace, and made heirs together according to the hope of eternal life." This is! worthy of God. He blesses and saves in the sovereignty of His love! finding sufficient cause in Himself; though none be found in man.

On this principle Israel was blessed in a past age. They were divinely favoured, not because of merit in themselves that distinguished them from all others; but because of the sovereign grace of God towards them. On identically the same principle souls are blessed in Christianity. It is not the good folk, the workers for reward, who receive special notice from God, but publicans and sinners, harlots and outcasts, the base and the foolish. Believing in the Son of God, all these are cleansed from their sins by His blood, and "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1: 12). In the ages to come God will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards them in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2: 7).

All the energy of the divine heart is engaged in the blessing of sinners. God loves to bless. The leading principle in the well-known parables of Luke 15 is the joy each Person in the Trinity finds in the salvation of the perishing. The shepherd rejoiced in having found his sheep, the woman in having recovered her silver, and the father in receiving home his wandering son. The Son, the Spirit, and the Father are respectively set forth in these parables in their loving interest in men.

The human heart rebels against the principle of grace. "To him that worketh not" grates sadly upon many ears (Rom. 4: 5). "Without money and without price" has no pleasant sound for the self-righteous and proud. Naaman was offended at the simplicity of God's ways, and his followers are offended still. Yet it is impossible that works should have any place in men's salvation. "If by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise, grace is no longer grace" (Rom. 11: 6). The principle of works

glorifies man; the principle of grace glorifies God. This last must prevail; to God must be all glory, both now and evermore.

## **JUSTIFICATION.**

It was a great moment for his own soul, and fraught with immense consequences for many others when Luther learned from God that justification is by faith alone. For centuries the mass in Christendom had groaned under the mistaken notion that only by toilsome works and the observance of religious ordinances could men hope to stand ultimately in the favour of God. The truth was all along enshrined in the Scriptures, but somehow the eyes of men were holden that they could not see it.

To justify a man is to reckon him righteous. Against such an one no charge can ever be brought; before the throne of judgement he stands acquitted for ever. To justify one who has committed no offence is a simple matter, of which every magisterial bench in the world is capable. But to justify a sinner is another matter altogether; this presents a problem that only God can solve. Both Job and his friend Bildad long ago raised the question, "How can man be just with God?" (Job 9: 25); both having before their minds the fact that man is fallen and guilty. Their question found no definite answer in Old Testament times; for this, as for the solution of many another riddle, men had to wait until God sent forth His beloved Son. "But now," says the Apostle, "the righteousness of God is manifested" (Rom. 3: 21). It is offered "unto all," and it is "upon all them that believe." Its foundation is the blood of Christ; which, shed once upon the cross of Calvary, has answered all the claims of the throne of God in regard to the sins of all God's people, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. Christ's resurrection is the token before all eyes that God's righteous claims have been satisfied. The Man who bore my sins in His own body on the tree is now sitting on the throne of God without one of them. For Him; condemnation is past for ever; and in Him every believer is justified from all things. The believer possesses in Christ a life which is characterised by resurrection-power, and to which no charge of sin can ever be attached. This is what is meant by "justification of life" in Rom. 5: 18. From such a vantage ground the Christian is able to challenge all his foes: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. 8: 33, 34). The very righteousness of God, so dreaded by the guilty, becomes the safeguard and boast of the justified.

The Apostle James has been thought to contradict in his epistle the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. Even Luther failed to reconcile the teaching of the two inspired writers. Whatever difficulty the reader may find vanishes immediately the fact is grasped that Paul is occupied (in Rom. 3: 5) with the justification of the ungodly, while James (in James 2) speaks of the justification of the godly. The one is before God and the other is before men. God justifies the ungodly on the principle of faith; it is of grace alone, works being altogether excluded; the godly justify themselves (i.e., their confession) before men by their good works, hence the statement of James 2: 18. "I will show thee my faith by my works." A life abundant in good works naturally results from the possession of a living faith; when the works are lacking, we may well doubt the profession of the lips.

No man could well be more occupied with self-righteousness than Saul of Tarsus, but there came a day when God revealed Christ to his soul, and divine righteousness in Him. From that moment all his boast was in Christ alone.

## **IMMORTALITY.**

Man is the most richly endowed creature in the universe, so far as Scripture speaks. While the

possession of soul and body allies him to the brute creation, his higher faculty — the spirit — assimilates him to the angels. Yet man's position is more wonderful than even that of the heavenly host, in that he is the divinely constituted head and centre of a system. For everything in this world is dependent upon, and revolves around, man.

Eight times in the New Testament the human body is said to be mortal; but not once is the word used of man's soul and spirit. Our Lord's words in Matt. 10: 28 are decisive that the soul, in contrast with the body, is deathless. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Man having received his being by the inbreathing of God has a character of life essentially different from that possessed by the brutes. HE can say, "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life"; THEY are "natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed" (Job 33: 4; 2 Peter 2: 12).

Man's constitution and being are altogether unique. As bearing God's image, he is the intelligent link between God and the lower creatures, having been placed among and over them as God's representative; as bearing God's likeness he is a moral being, capable of entering into relations with God as those under him could not possibly do. This world has witnessed no greater catastrophe than the fall of man. In one moment this highly gifted creature became a moral wreck, everything subordinate to him was involved in ruin, and all God's delight in the works of His hands was destroyed. "It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart" (Gen. 6: 6).

We are face to face to-day with this tremendous fact: the whole human family in its millions of immortal beings in high revolt against its Creator and Lord. But such is the love of God that He has provided a way of salvation for all at the infinite cost of the blood of His own well-beloved Son. All who receive Him in faith are awarded a better portion than that which was forfeited by the fall. Eden is lost irretrievably; but heaven stands open for all believers. In this way has our wonder working God triumphed over all Satan's machinations and man's sin, gaining for Himself thereby an everlasting name. Amidst the blessedness of the Father's house the redeemed of earth will for ever ascribe the glory of their salvation to God and the Lamb. Not a single child of Adam need be outside of this; the heart of God yearns over all alike, and He has taken infinite pains in order to make His goodness and mercy known. How awful that any being possessed of immortality should wantonly involve himself in an eternity of woe for the sake of a few years of self-indulgence and sin in this blighted scene!

(See also "The dead: where are they?" by the same Author).

## **CONSCIENCE.**

Conscience may be defined in a twofold way: (1) as a sense of responsibility, and (2) as a knowledge of good and evil. The first man was created with a sense of responsibility. From the beginning he knew that he was a moral being, whose life had been communicated to him by the inbreathing of God; but it could not be said that in his unfallen state he had the knowledge of good and evil. It was impossible in the nature of things that he could have such knowledge, seeing that he was surrounded by good, and nothing but good. Wherever his eye turned he saw nothing but what spoke to him of God, his kind and beneficent Creator. His innocent mind did not come into contact with evil until the fatal day when he and his wife listened to the promptings of the serpent, and disobeyed God in the matter of the forbidden fruit. Then he acquired in the fullest sense what we commonly call conscience; so that from that day he not only had a sense of responsibility, but he also had the faculty of discerning good and evil. "The Lord said, behold the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil" (Gen. 3: 22). Alas, for man, Conscience whispers to him ever and again, telling him where his duty lies; but fallen nature is at all times disposed to shirk the good and practise the evil. Conscience is

a useful monitor; but it is too much subject to influence and pressure to be an infallible guide. Conscience may become "seared as with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4: 2). Of what value is it then? Saul of Tarsus with a perfectly good conscience shed the blood of Christians, thinking that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 23: 1; Acts 24: 9). The unenlightened heathen have consciences which bear witness to them (Rom. 2: 15); yet they debase themselves with idolatry.

The truth is; the human conscience needs to be brought under the holy influence of the Spirit of God, in order that its functions may be healthily developed. Then it becomes the most morally sensitive faculty conceivable; it shrinks with abhorrence from every form of evil, and approves and earnestly pursues all that is excellent and good. But when the conscience first becomes awakened by God it is a solemn business. Sin becomes viewed as the mind never viewed it before; in the light of God all its horribleness becomes apparent. "Woe is me! I am undone," cries the alarmed sinner. Then comes the sweet assurance, divinely imparted, that the blood of Jesus has made full atonement for sin. That precious blood is sprinkled (figuratively speaking) upon the sinner's conscience, and it becomes purged for ever. A more wonderful boon than a "purged conscience" could not be imagined (Heb. 10: 2, 22). He who has it can appreciate the words of the poet:

"Not a cloud above,  
Not a spot within."

## JUDGEMENT.

Judgement is a strange word to a God of infinite love. To show mercy is His delight; in executing judgement His heart finds no pleasure. But every Sovereign must of necessity be a judge; how much more Him who is not only Sovereign but Creator? If judgement could be dispensed with, the whole moral order of the universe must collapse. No throne, human or divine, could stand.

As in creation and redemption, so in judgement, the Son is the Person who represents the activity of the Godhead. "The Father judgeth no one, but hath committed all judgement unto the Son" (John 5: 22). Thus the One who once died for sinful men will, at God's appointed season, be men's final Judge. Grace and forbearance characterise the divine dealings in the present age; judgement will mark the ages that are to come. Peter, in his address to Cornelius, spoke of judgement for quick and dead, a dual thought clearly confessed in the creeds of Christendom. The judgement of the quick precedes the judgement of the dead, beginning, as it does, on that solemn day when Christ will be publicly manifested in glory, accompanied by all His saints. This event is at least a thousand years before the end. The principal incidents in the judgement of the quick are (1) the destruction of the armed hosts (European) who will oppose the Lamb at His appearing; (2) the overthrow of Israel's great Northern foe (Russia); (3) the annihilation of Edom for its persistent hatred to God's chosen people; and (4) the sessional judgement upon the nations who have had the Gospel of the kingdom proclaimed to them. These incidents will be found prophetically described in Rev. 19: 11-21, Ezek. 38-39., Isa. 63: 1-6, Matt. 25: 31-46. To these visitations may be added the divine dealing with the revolt at the close of Christ's reign — i.e., a thousand years after His glorious appearing. (Rev. 20: 7-9).

The judgement of the dead is another matter altogether. In the judgement of the quick the redeemed will have some part ("Do ye not know that the saints will judge the world?" — 1 Cor. 6: 2); in the judgement of the dead, with its issues for eternity? no throne appears but one, and no judge but Him who is the Supreme over all (Rev. 20: 11-15). On that awful day, at the very close of the ages of

time, men will be confronted with the record of their deeds to their horror and dismay. Not a single lost one but must appear before that dread tribunal. The proudest heart will be constrained then to bow; and the haughtiest knee must bend in acknowledgement of the Lordship of Jesus. From His verdict there is no appeal; the decision is final, irrevocable, and eternal.

How comforting to the sin-burdened soul it is to know that there is a perfect refuge from the judgement conscience so much dreads! The atoning blood of Jesus justifies God in bestowing a full pardon upon every believing soul." Hath everlasting life... shall not come into judgement... is passed from death unto life" is the divine description of the happy position of all who trust in the Son (John 5: 24). For those so blessed judgement, whether of quick or dead, has no alarm.

## **SALVATION.**

Salvation is only needed by those who are in distress or danger. It is not too much to say that the whole human family is in deadly peril through sin. Every member of our race enters the world morally poisoned; for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not only this, but at the earliest possible stage each one enters upon a career of active transgression against God. Yet, though sin is exceedingly hateful in the eyes of God, the condition of the sinner does not excite His aversion, but rather His deep compassion and love. Hence Paul speaks repeatedly of Him as "God our Saviour." In His great mind a plan of salvation was formed even before sin made its appearance in this world.

As in creation, so in the matter of salvation, the Son is the person Who works out the divine purpose to its appointed end. He came into the world to save sinners; yet men are not saved by His incarnation, but by His atoning death. The death of Christ has furnished God with an irrefragable ground of righteousness on which to act in His grace towards perishing men. Nothing is demanded from men but faith — simple confidence in God and His beloved Son. He who in his deep need turns his eye in faith to God and Christ becomes at once entitled to all the advantages of Christ's most costly sacrifice.

Salvation is presented in the New Testament in a threefold way. (1) It is a PRESENT thing, in the sense of acceptance with God. The Christian is now "in Christ," and is consequently beyond condemnation, justified and reconciled. He stands in the divine favour now and for ever, and is loved as Christ is loved. So we read in Eph. 2: 8. "By grace ye are saved through faith." In 2 Tim. 1: 9 also: "God who hath saved us." The Spirit's use of the present tense in these passages should dissipate every unbelieving doubt and fear. Doubts and fears are an insult to the love of God and a dishonour to the work of the Lord Jesus.

(2) Salvation is also a PROGRESSIVE thing, but in this aspect it is not acceptance with God that is in view, but the difficulties of the daily path. These are very many, and often very serious. The power of Satan, the allurements of the world, and the treachery of the heart within are a trinity of opponents not to be treated lightly by the devout. But Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him? "seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7: 25). This is an effectual guarantee that every saint, however harassed, will reach the destined goal. Christ's present ministry of intercession is the assurance that not one of His own will be suffered to perish on the road.

(3) Salvation is, moreover, a FUTURE thing; in this sense it includes the body as well as the soul. Though free and happy in spirit in the consciousness of the love of God, the believer is frequently constrained to groan by reason of his unchanged body. His body is a link with the yet undelivered creation, and in sympathy with it his groan ascends to God. This will cease at Christ's return. "Unto

them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, apart from sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9: 28). The first coming of Christ met the need of the soul; His second coming in glory will meet the need of the body.

What anguish men will experience who place themselves entirely outside of this great salvation by their rejection of the Saviour-Son of God!

## **MERCY.**

Mercy pre-supposes guilt in the person to whom it is shown. If there were no offence, there would be no need of mercy. In the present condition of human affairs the man who would repudiate his need of mercy would be a strange person indeed. It matters little that some are five hundred pence debtors and others but fifty; all are alike bankrupt, and dependent upon the mercy of God for escape from eternal ruin.

"God, who is rich in mercy." So the Apostle wrote in Eph. 2: 4: "Rich" is a word deep and full when applied to the most exalted Being in the universe. Mercy is a quality in which He abounds beyond the competency of any creature mind to comprehend. But righteousness and holiness — qualities of a very different character — are also found in God, or He would not be the absolutely perfect One that He is. The cross alone reconciles these in their application to guilty man. Hence the magnificent statement of the Psalmist: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85: 10). Truth and righteousness demanded justice on offenders; mercy and peace provided the costly sacrifice which has answered all the claims of God's throne, and secured pardon and eternal blessing for all who believe.

He who penned the words "God, who is rich in mercy," also wrote "I obtained mercy." So sweet was the thought to his soul that he states it twice in the first chapter of his first epistle to Timothy. It was not a mere doctrine with him that such a quality is found in God; he had himself experienced its beneficent action. Yet he was not a moral reprobate. His early course had not been of that scandalous character which merits the just censure of the honourable and the upright. From his youth he had been a religious devotee, zealous beyond all his contemporaries, and blameless in the eyes of the law. It was the discovery that along with his religiousness and morality there was real and deep aversion of heart to God and His Son that constrained him to call himself "chief of sinners," and to cast himself upon divine mercy.

The first drink at mercy's stream transforms the sinner into a saint. All such are bound for glory. Every vessel of mercy will share eternally the bliss of the Son of God. But mercy is needed all along the road, so frail is the truest and best. How comforting therefore the invitation to the tried pilgrim: "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4: 16). Thus it is mercy at the beginning of a man's Christian course, mercy from day to day, and mercy at the close when Christ comes again. Therefore the exhortation of Jude the Apostle: "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

## **ETERNAL LIFE.**

Eternal life has been erroneously regarded by some as synonymous with immortality. The mistake is a serious one, because it confounds what God has given to all men in the way of nature with what His grace bestows on those who believe in His Son. By the divine in-breathing at the beginning God was pleased to confer upon our race a character of being which is inextinguishable. This we call

immortality; and it is possessed by all men alike, whether their eternal destiny be one of bliss or woe.

Eternal life is a totally distinct thing. It is most certain that the contemporaries of our Lord regarded it as an immense boon to be earnestly desired; the various questions that were addressed to Him concerning it leading us to this conclusion. All his inquirers seemed to be of one mind in supposing it to be the reward of human effort; the earnest young ruler of Mark 10. and the captious lawyer of Luke 10. both putting their question in the same form: "Master, what must I DO to inherit eternal life?" It was natural that they should speak thus; for among men every desirable thing is only obtained by, money or toil. Yet if they had realised man's true condition in God's sight and their own condition in particular, they would have expressed themselves differently. Has not the Spirit of God described men as "dead in trespasses and sins?" (Eph. 2: 1). What can the dead do? Did not the Saviour liken men to a debtor who "had nothing to pay?" (Luke 7: 42). What price can bankrupts render?

The truth is, eternal life is the gift of God. As Paul expresses it: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6: 23). Here we have the principle on which God grants this inestimable boon. It is not the reward of good works, or it would be a debt (Rom. 4: 4); it is the gift of sovereign love to those who could neither do nor pay anything in order to secure it. The ground on which eternal life is given is fully expressed in our Lord's familiar words to Nicodemus, recorded in John 3: 14-16. His cross, the satisfaction of God's righteousness and the mighty expression of God's love, has made it possible for Him to confer eternal life on all who obey the Gospel.

Eternal life has two aspects. Scripture speaks of it both as a present possession and as a prize to be gained at the Lord's coming. The one aspect is to be found in the writings of John; the other in the writings of Paul. John's words are most explicit "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5: 11, 12). This is a great reality, to be enjoyed here and now by every believer. Its grand characteristic is the knowledge of the Father and the Son. Paul's language runs differently: "The end, everlasting life" (Rom. 6: 22). Is this a contradiction of the teaching of the beloved Apostle? By no means. Paul's thought includes the body as well as the soul; it looks on, therefore, to the glorious moment of the Lord's return when the bodies of all the objects of His love will be instantaneously transformed, and become instinct with eternal life even as their souls are now. As the same inspired writer strikingly puts it in 2 Cor. 5: 4: "Mortality, will be swallowed up of life."

## PEACE.

No more profound mistake could possibly be made than to bid a man make his peace with God. Such a way of putting things suggests that the questions at issue between man and his Creator are of so slight a character that they may easily be settled by some act on man's part. This is very far from the truth.

The need of peace speaks of a previous condition of war and estrangement. Almost from the beginning of his history man has been at open war with God; his course has been one of rebellion against His will. When we take into account the almightiness of God and the insignificance of man the position is a truly serious one. The struggle, if persisted in can only result in the utter destruction of the puny creature who has dared to lift up his head against the Most High. The great Sovereign of the universe, however, yearns over His petty foe, and has devised a plan whereby, in consistency with the majesty of His throne, He can offer pardon and peace to him. Thus we are told in Col. 1: 20, that Christ "hath made peace through the blood of His cross." Apart from the precious blood of Christ, God could

have nothing for man but judgement. His righteousness demands that sins be not slurred over, but adequately expiated.

His atoning work being accomplished, Christ has gone up into the glory of God. Consequently peace is now proclaimed to all. As Paul expressed it to the Ephesian believers (Eph. 2: 1-7) — "peace to you (Gentiles) which were afar off, and to them (Jews) that were nigh." A full amnesty is thus offered to the whole world. Every offender who will acknowledge his guilt, and lay down his arms of rebellion, is at once pardoned and reconciled. He has no further need to dread God; between his soul and God all is settled for eternity. Pardoned and justified ones are entitled to say "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5: 1); and as they look above and behold the once slain One now glorified upon the throne of God, they can add, "He is our peace" (Eph. 2: 14). There is thus no peace to make. Christ has made peace by His blood; God proclaims it to all, and the Holy Spirit enables all who believe to enjoy the blessedness of it now and for ever.

From this flows peace in the circumstances of daily life. He who has trusted in God for his eternal concerns is privileged to trust in Him for his temporal affairs also. He need carry no weight of care. He has the divine assurance that the very hairs of his head are all numbered. The tender interest of God extends to the minutest things belonging to His people. In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, they are invited to make their requests known to God, with the promise that the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4: 6-7). To the query of the poet, "Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?" the Holy Scriptures thus give a full and precious answer.

## REDEMPTION.

To persons in bondage the word redemption should be a very welcome sound. In lands where slavery is still practised it would doubtless be so; but in spiritual things it is frequently otherwise. It is a humiliating truth, and one which men find it hard to accept, that sin has reduced the whole human family to a condition of servitude. The proud Jews of our Lord's day were offended when He said, "The truth shall make you free. They answered Him, 'We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest Thou, then, ye shall be made free?' "In their case the boast of liberty was doubly false. Politically, they had been in bondage to at least a dozen different powers in the course of their national history; while spiritually they were where all are by nature, in bondage to sin. Hence our Lord's further words to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant (or slave) of sin" (John 8: 32-34).

Slavery to sin is a terrible thing. In various gross ways the reality of it meets our gaze every day, some of our fellow-men manifestly "yielding their members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity" (Rom. 6: 19); but even where its most hideous forms are not seen, the slavery is just as real. And from this terrible condition no man has power to extricate himself; Satan, working through the natural evil of the heart, having forged the fetters securely and well.

The sin-bound sinner must therefore look outside of himself for deliverance. A Redeemer has stepped forward in the person of the Only-begotten Son of God, the redemption price being His own most precious blood. This having perfectly satisfied the claims of God's throne, gives the Redeemer the right to set free all who look to Him in the simplicity of faith. Believers are entitled to say, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1). Over all such, sin has lost its power, and Satan his authority. They delight to yield themselves servants to righteousness unto holiness, and have become the willing bondservants of God and the

Lord Jesus. They serve in liberty of spirit, love being their governing motive from first to last. Perhaps the finest example of this in the New Testament is Paul the Apostle.

Christ's redemption includes the body as well as the soul; but for its application to the body the believer has to wait until His return from heaven. Hence the groaning of which we read in Rom. 8: 23, which has reference solely to the present condition of the body. Even though the Father's love be fully enjoyed, and though identification with Christ in His present glory be sweetly experienced; still the Christian is constrained to groan. The body is yet unchanged, it is liable to suffering and death; and it clogs the spirit in its aspiration after full conformity to Christ's image. In a moment this will cease at Christ's coming, and the believer will find himself, body, soul, and spirit, before the throne of God, from every hindering influence set free for ever.

How mournful that so many should deliberately prefer bondage to the liberty wherewith Christ makes all His people free!

## **REST.**

In a world of toil and strife the very word has a refreshing sound, in whatever connection it may be used. Rest for body and mind is sweet; how much more rest for the soul? To be in quietness in relation to our fellow-men is good; better, infinitely better, is it for the soul to be in quietness with its God.

Rest is spoken of under different aspects in Holy Scripture. We are all familiar with the evangelical invitation given at the close of Matt. 11. First, our Lord says, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This 'is manifestly rest of conscience. Many labour under the burden of realised guilt; others groan under the yoke of religious ordinances by means of which they hope ultimately to obtain salvation. To all these the Saviour offers rest as a gracious gift. His atoning sacrifice has so perfectly satisfied all the claims of divine holiness in regard to sin that none need carry the burden of guilt for a single hour; so completely, too, has He finished His work that none need toil on their own account. Both the guilt laden and the ordinance-laden are thus tenderly invited to be at rest. Believers having been purged once for all have "no more conscience of sins" (Heb. 10: 2). On the ground of the Saviour's work their consciences are in rest and peace before God for ever.

Our Lord proceeds thus in Matt. 11: 29: "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." This goes beyond rest of conscience. It is rest of heart in the circumstances of daily life. Many who enjoy the one blessing know little of the other. Yet the condition is a very simple one. It is the abandonment of self-will, and the hearty acceptance of the authority of Him whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light. Nothing is more disquieting than thwarted self-will. The Saviour knew no such painful experience. In meekness He ever bowed to the Father's will; it was characteristic of Him to say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." He alone is the Christian's perfect pattern. In measure as He is imitated so the heart finds perfect repose whatever befalls. Abraham is the Old Testament type of the restful believer, as Jacob is of the unrestful. The stories of these two men are highly instructive in this connection.

Rest both of conscience and heart may be enjoyed even in the midst of the storms of life; there is another kind of rest yet to come. "A promise is left us of entering into His rest.... There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4: 1-9). This lies outside of the present world. It will be found in the new creation which God will bring in when the heavens and the earth that are now have fled away. Then, when all God's purposes of grace are accomplished, and the full fruit of Calvary is

seen both above and below, God will rest, surrounded by all the objects of His favour, eternally. Divine perfection will mark that rest. There no sin will enter, no foe will intrude, no jarring note will be heard, and toil and suffering will be unknown. Each happy saved one of earth will bear the image of the First-born Son, and will enjoy, conscious nearness to God for ever.

How mournful it is that any should spurn such a Saviour; and thus consign themselves to endless woe where "they have no rest day nor night" (Rev. 14: 11)

## **RECONCILIATION.**

Sin has dislocated the whole moral order of God in the universe. It has robbed Him of all His delight in the works of His hands. In the inspired record of His creative operations we are told repeatedly that "God saw that it was good." At the close of the sixth day's work, when the man was made, a stronger expression is used: "Behold, it was very good." How long the divine delight in His handiwork was suffered to continue we know not; but the very next page of our Bible tells us of man's revolt against the Creator, whereby he involved himself, and the whole system dependent upon him, in ruin and misery. From the third chapter of Genesis we pass to the sixth, and read: "It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart."

If matters had been suffered to rest there, ' As triumph of Satan would have been complete. But that could not be. The infinite resources of God's wisdom, grace, and power have provided means whereby the whole ruined system shall be restored to its Maker. The basis of this reconciliation is the blood of Christ, which, Col. 1: 20 tells us, has already made peace, with a view to reconciling to God all things on earth and all things in heaven. The hour has not yet arrived for the realisation of this. In His long-suffering, God is still bearing with His adversaries, both angelic and human; but when His long-suffering reaches its appointed limit, He will exert His power, and rid Himself of all who continue to oppose His will. The heavens will first be cleared, the final conflict there being described in Rev. 12: 7-9; the clearance of the earth will follow quickly. When the whole scene, both above and below, has been purged by judgement, new heavens and a new earth will appear, wherein righteousness will dwell eternally. In the new creation, with the triumphant Second Man at its head, God will find full delight, the reconciling blood being the moral foundation of it all.

Though the reconciliation of things awaits a day yet to come, the reconciliation of persons is being effected now. The Gospel is a ministry of reconciliation, and is addressed to all; none need remain outside of its priceless blessings. But only those who unfeignedly believe in the Son of God and His sacrifice are, or ever will be, restored to God. It was to such, and such only, that the Apostle wrote." You that were once alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy; and unblameable, and irreproachable in His sight" (Col. 1: 21-22).

## **ATONEMENT.**

Atonement in its primary meaning is the vindication of the claims of the throne of God in regard to human sin. This stands out very clearly in the High Priest's procedure on the Day of Atonement in Israel as described in Leviticus 16. First he carried into the holiest the blood of the bullock for himself and for his house; then he presented the blood of the goat for the people of Israel; but not until these things were accomplished was the scapegoat dismissed with all the sins of the people upon its head. God was considered first, then man.

Sin is a grievous offence in the eyes of the Creator. It has destroyed His delight in man; it has wrought mischief and ruin in His creation both above and below; it challenges His authority perpetually; and it menaces His throne. Not even divine long-suffering, still less divine grace, could be shown to the guilty save on the ground of atonement. The mercy-seat in Israel's tabernacle was God's earthly throne, but it typified His throne in the heavens. The animal blood that was sprinkled on and before His earthly throne spoke to Him from year to year of the richer blood that would in due season be shed — the blood of His own dear Son. God has signified His acceptance of the precious blood of Christ by raising Him up from the dead, and seating Him in glory at His own right hand. The Old Testament declares "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul"; the New Testament solemnly insists that "apart from shedding of blood is no remission" (Lev. 17: 11; Heb. 9: 22). Good resolutions and deeds of charity cannot be accepted in atonement for sin. To present them to God for such a purpose would be to repeat the grave blunder of Cain. Abel's lamb was "a more excellent sacrifice" than the products of his brother's toil. The one was a humble acknowledgement of guilt; the other was a virtual repudiation of guilt. God could not do otherwise than resent the attitude of Cain, while opening the door for repentance even for so serious an affront.

The Christian has the testimony of no less a person than God the Holy Ghost that all the claims of the divine throne have been met by the one offering of Jesus. No other offering of any kind whatsoever is required or could be accepted. To put anything human alongside of Christ's perfect sacrifice would be to question its worth and efficacy. If God is satisfied with what Christ has accomplished; the Christian may well be satisfied also. The Israelite on the afternoon of the Day of Atonement had the comfort of seeing all his sins dismissed with the scapegoat; the Christian has the assurance from God that his sins and iniquities He will remember no more (Heb. 10: 17). There is this immense difference however between the Israelite and the Christian: the one was set right with God for twelve months by Aaron's atoning work; the other has been set right with God for ever by the infinitely more precious work of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Sanctified" and "perfected" are God's grand terms descriptive of the present position of all believers.

## **HOLINESS.**

The great Apostle of the Gentiles was most emphatic when he wrote "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12: 14). The nature of God being immaculate in holiness, none can tread His courts who do not answer morally to that nature. It is impossible that anything defiling should enter there, or anyone who works abomination.

Holiness may be distinguished from righteousness thus: the latter is consistency in one's relationships; the former is an inherent abhorrence of iniquity, and delight in what is excellent and good. Measured by such a standard as this, every member of our fallen race stands disqualified by nature for the presence of God. In this "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). It would be as reasonable to expect to gather figs of thistles, or grapes of thorns as to look for natural holiness in a single scion of the first man. It is the beginning of good things with a man when this is frankly and humbly acknowledged before God.

Here Christ comes in as the sinner's only hope. Himself the Holy One of God, on whom death had no claim, and for whom judgement had no meaning, in His grace He condescended to suffer and die for the sins and unholiness of others. Risen from the dead, He is presented by God to all as the One who meets every need. To the Corinthian believers the Spirit wrote: "Of Him (God) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification (or holiness), and

redemption" (1 Cor. 1: 30). Every believer has in Christ a new and absolutely holy life and natures which enables him to delight himself in God, and which fits him for the divine presence for ever.

Holiness in the daily life flows from the realisation of this. The true Christian yearns to be practically consistent with what God has made him in Christ. He does not occupy his mind with himself; but with Christ, to whose image he earnestly longs to be fully conformed. He looks no longer for any good thing in the flesh; instead, he treats it in faith as a crucified thing, and seeks to develop his new man by the power of the Holy Ghost. He keeps before him continually the important exhortation in 1 Peter 1: 15-16 "as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (or behaviour); because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." In accordance with this, he yields his members "servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom. 6: 19). Affliction, when it comes, he welcomes as discipline from God, sent for his profit, that he may become a partaker practically of God's holiness (Heb. 12: 10).

What a wonder-working God is ours, who is able to take up sin-stained children of the fall, and produce in them a nature and character which answer in every respect to His own! The beginning, or first step, in the path of true holiness is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **RESURRECTION.**

There are unquestionably natural laws, and God is the Author of them. But only irreverence could suppose Him to be subject to, or bound by, natural laws. In this, as in everything else, God is supreme, and acts as He pleases in the universe of His own creation. Resurrection is a divine act. All other miracles pale before it. That a great fish should swallow a prophet, or Jericho's walls fall flat are mere trifles when compared with the power that can enter the domain of death, and call forth in bodily, form persons long since forgotten from this scene.

Three things come before us in our consideration of this theme: the resurrection of Christ, the resurrection of believers, and the resurrection of unbelievers. If Christ's resurrection is fable and not fact, then is Christianity a hollow farce. Preaching and faith are alike vain. Believers, instead of being saved, are yet in their sins, and those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. So the Apostle argues in 1 Cor. 15. Thank God, no such uncertainty exists. Christ's resurrection is one of the best attested facts in the history of this world. The precautions taken by the authorities of that day, the stern regulations concerning sleeping soldiers, the unbelief of the disciples, the large number of those who interviewed the Saviour subsequently, all combine to prove that no pious fraud was perpetrated, but that God really raised His beloved Son from amongst the dead. The fact itself is of immense import. It was God's public vindication of the claims and character of the crucified One, it signified His acceptance of His atoning work, and it involved the complete justification of every sinner who believes in His name.

What God did for Christ, He will presently do for all who belong to Christ. They will have a resurrection in character like unto His. "Every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15: 2 3). The notion of a general resurrection at the end of time is erroneous. No such confusion could possibly mark the ways of God. He has drawn a sharp line of demarcation between those who serve Him and those who serve Him not. At the moment of Christ's descent into the air according to 1 Thess. 4, all believers who have fallen, asleep from the beginning until that time will be raised from their tombs; and, together with the changed living ones, will be taken in triumph into the Father's house. Apocalyptic martyrs will subsequently be added to their number, but the mass of the believing dead will be raised at Christ's return. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in

the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power" (Rev. 20: 6).

A first resurrection implies that there will be a second. This will be the resurrection of judgement, and will take place at the close of Christ's kingdom — at least a thousand years after the resurrection of believers. The Father having given the Son authority over all flesh, He will, at the appointed hour, summon even His enemies into His presence. Alas for all such! Constrained to meet Him as Judge whom they spurned as Saviour, they will be confronted at the great white throne with the record of their works to their confusion and dismay. Beyond that dread event there is no resurrection; the second death is "a death that never dies," and none will ever be raised out of it.

## **SIN.**

To the question, "What is sin?" many contradictory answers would in all probability be given. God's definition of it — which alone is authoritative — may be found in the Revised Version of 1 John 3: 4: "Sin is lawlessness." This way of defining it cuts very deep. Every exercise of the human will in independence of God is by this divine statement declared to be sin. It matters not what the act may be, whether it be that which human courts would punish, or whether it be what would pass muster in the eyes of men, every action taken without reference to God is sin. This leaves no loophole for escape to any of us. Judged by such a standard, every child of Adam must be brought in guilty. Man having been created a being dependent upon his Maker, the fact that he acts, and even loves to act, apart from Him is proof of his revolted and alienated condition.

Our Lord's words in Luke 5: 31-32 are familiar to all: "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Man is here shown to be both diseased and criminal. As the former, he needs healing; as the latter, he needs pardon. The Son of God is both Physician and Saviour, and beside Him there is no other.

In espousing man's cause, the Son of God made Himself answerable for his sin and guilt. This rendered the cross a moral necessity. Not by His incarnation, but by His death, He made atonement for sin. He who personally knew no sin was made sin for us — such is the teaching of the Apostle in 2 Cor. 5: 21. Having placed Himself in His ineffable grace in this position, sin's wages were meted out to Him in divine righteousness. Hence the prophetic statement of Isaiah: "It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin" (Isa. 53: 10).

Such an offering for sin fills the believing soul with holy wonder and awe. The thought that the Creator and Judge of all took upon Himself human flesh in order that He might die for the guilt of His rebellious creatures is too profound for any human mind to fully comprehend. But faith reverently accredits God's testimony to the stupendous fact, and bows humbly and gratefully in the divine presence because of it. Faith recognises the suitability of the confession in Isaiah 53: 6: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." From the moment the soul is able to speak thus in truth, sin becomes a thing of deepest loathing and abhorrence. Every sinner saved pursues holiness and righteousness all the days of his life.

## **SAINTSHIP.**

Those responsible for the printed English Bible have led us somewhat astray (doubtless unintentionally) in regard to this most important matter. Our allusion is to the habit of prefixing "Saint" to the names of the four evangelists, and to theirs only. The unreflecting reader would naturally

conclude from it that some special sanctity appertained to those particular servants of God.

Scripture teaches otherwise. Every genuine believer is a saint, the most simple as truly as the most experienced. In nearly every New Testament epistle the term is applied to the whole Christian company without discrimination. The status of saint cannot be conferred by ecclesiastical authority after the soul has quitted this world; still less can it be acquired by self-effort in life. A person can no more become a saint by striving after holiness than he can become Prince of Wales by apeing the manners of that exalted personage. Persons become saints by divine call (Rom. 1: 6-7). They hear the voice of God speaking to them in the Gospel, telling them of their sins and of the Saviour's atoning bloods and they bow believingly to the message. Hearing the loving invitation to believe and be saved they unfeignedly respond to the call. In a moment they are transformed from sinners into saints. It is God's doing; and it is a marvel of infinite grace. The robber of Calvary and the religious zealot of Tarsus; Mary Magdalene and the excellent Sarah, though drawn from widely different surroundings, were all alike saints, each one having experienced the same gracious work of God in their souls.

The word "saint" means "holy one." Every true believer has been born anew by the power of the Holy Ghost. The new nature thus implanted is holy, and it cannot sin because born of God. Compare 1 John 3: 9. But the most advanced Christian having also within him the evil principle inherited from the first Adam, there is need for watchfulness at every moment lest it lead him astray. Hence the Ephesian brethren were exhorted to behave "as becometh saints" (Eph. 5: 3), for it is always possible for the Christian to disgrace his high calling, and to be false to the position in which' divine favour has set him. Inconsistency of this kind causes the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, and to point the finger of scorn at those who profess so much, yet practise so little. King David is a peculiarly painful example of this; and the humiliating story has been recorded by a divine hand for the warning of the people of God in all ages.

There are two great families in the earth — two only. The one is divinely labelled "sinners"; the other "saints." No merit attaches to the second of these, for they are just what the grace of God has made them. Many of them once wallowed in the depths of guilt; but, having responded to the Gospel message, and having put their trust in the Son of God, they have been cleansed from their sins by His atoning blood, and made meet to stand in heavenly light. "By the grace of God I am what I am," wrote the grateful Apostle. "He that glorieth let him, glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1: 31).

## HOPE.

Hope is an important factor in all human affairs. It has its place in family life, in business life, and in every other department and sphere. Men are enabled to bear the circumstances of the present by reason of the prospects that they see, or think they see, in the future. If hope were eliminated from it, life would be insupportable.

The exceeding importance of hope only makes man's position in relation to God the more serious. As a sinner, what has he to look for in that direction? The Ephesian believers were reminded of their position when unregenerate thus: "At that time ye were without Christ... having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2: 12). "No hope" — terrible words! Yet what human heart would question the truth of them? Conscience assents that Scripture is true in its assertion that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). Not a single man on earth has the least natural fitness, nor the smallest shadow of a claim, to stand in the presence of God's glory.

But what a God is ours? Unwilling that any should perish, He has sacrificed for man's salvation

His Only-begotten Son. He became a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. By His death He has made propitiation for sin. God is not only satisfied with His great accomplishment; He has been glorified by it, so that the claim has been put over on the other side. The Son has earned the right to have all His own with Himself in heavenly glory for ever. This result is infinitely more than a mere cancelling of guilt.

Every Christian is therefore entitled to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5: 2). Hope is likened in Heb. 6: 19 to an anchor which, gripping the unseen, holds the vessel steady amidst the stress of storm and tide. The Christian's hope is thus set on the unseen Christ, who has gone into heaven on behalf of all His people. His presence there as Man on the ground of redemption secures the right of all who believe in His name to be there also. When the appointed hour arrives (He has said, "I come quickly") He will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God. His sleeping ones will hear His voice and respond to it, coming forth from their tombs in resurrection-power; His living ones will be instantaneously transformed; and all together will enter the Father's house in His glorious train; (1 Thess. 4: 16-17). This is the true hope that divine grace has given to every blood-washed soul. How inconceivably blessed to have part in it; but how deplorable the folly of those who exclude themselves from all participation in it by their unbelief and sin.

## **FEAR.**

This is a very comprehensive term, for it covers sentiments

so widely different as the criminal's dread of his judge, the reverence of the child for its parent; and the respect of the wife for her husband. When Scripture states of Gentiles and Jews alike that "there is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3: 18) it means that God has no place in their thoughts, and that His commandments are not suffered to have any restraining influence upon their ways. Terrible condition truly, especially when we remember that man was created by God for Himself to walk with Him, and to do His will.

Of Abraham and Job, among others, it is expressly said that they feared God. Seeing that moral alienation is stamped upon the whole human family, such fear of God is the fruit of divine grace alone. This is abundantly manifested in the case of the dying thief. At first a reviler of the Son of God in the hour of His woe, we presently hear him saying to his fellow, "Dost not thou fear God?" (Luke 23: 10). As he drew near to eternity God rose up before his soul, and he became filled with reverential awe. His own evil, and the infinite holiness of his Creator, overwhelmed him as he reflected upon them.

When the reality of guilt is brought home to a man he cannot but be filled with dread. Thus Felix trembled as Paul pointedly urged upon him the claims of God. There will be a universal trembling when the great Judge appears in the clouds of heaven, and every eye beholds Him. But to every soul whose confidence is in Christ and in the precious blood He shed, the divine message is, "Fear not." such are entitled to know that their sins have been adequately atoned for and put away for ever. Their hearts turn gratefully to the God of infinite love who provided such a costly sacrifice for them. Dread is at once displaced by love. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment" (1 John 4: 18). The Holy Spirit, who is then conferred upon them, is not the spirit of fear, but the Spirit of sonship whereby they cry, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8: 15). From that moment we "serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life" (Luke 1: 74).

But though dread is thus banished from the believing soul, reverence remains and deepens as God and His Word become more fully known. Hence the exhortation, "Let us have grace whereby we may

serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 13: 28). Along with this there is developed an inward horror of sin in its every form, and an earnest desire to walk in complete separation from it. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Prov. 8: 13). He who wallows in sin, whatever his religious profession, has never known our God.

## **WORSHIP.**

Worship is so commonly associated in people's minds with external ceremonies that the fact is sometimes overlooked that true worship is a thing of the heart, an emotion of the soul. Prayer is a blessed exercise for all who realise their weakness and need; thanksgiving is comely for those who have received great things from God; but worship is a higher sentiment than any of these, because it contemplates not His works only, but God Himself — His perfections and glories. Our English word is simply a contraction of the Anglo-Saxon "worthship," which means ascribing honour to one who is worthy.

Mere formalities can never satisfy One who has, as it were, emptied His very heart for the blessing of men. The love that expressed itself in the cross of Jesus deserves more in return than the most elaborate ritual that could be devised. Of mere ceremonialists our Lord once said: "In vain do they worship Me" (Matt. 15: 9); and to one who represented a people who had long contended about places of worship His word was, "Ye worship ye know not what" (John 4: 22). The heart cannot adore One whom it knows not. The heart begins its knowledge of God with the realisation of its guilt, and the sweet assurance that the blood of Jesus has put it all away. This sets the conscience at rest for ever and dissipates all its dread. Then, the gifts being appreciated, the Giver becomes all in all. The more He is known the more profoundly does the soul bow down in adoration before Him. "God my exceeding joy," says the Psalmist. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ," says the Apostle (Ps. 43: 4; Rom. 5: 11),

Though worship is in itself essentially the same in all ages, there are differences connected with it in the different dispensations instituted by God. Thus the patriarchs adored Him as God Almighty; Israel as Jehovah; while Christians are privileged to know Him as Father, the Only-begotten Son who is eternally in the bosom of the Father having been here and told out all His love. Again, in patriarchal times, worship was a family thing exclusively, any kind of congregational gathering being unknown; in Israel, worship was centred in the national gathering, no distinction being made between converted and unconverted; in Christianity worship is associated with the assembly of God, which is a divine election drawn from all the peoples of the earth.

The Holy Spirit is the power for worship, as for every other spiritual exercise. As a skilful Musician He plays upon the hearts of those who have received the infinite grace of God, and produces harmony delightful in the ears of heaven. The Lord Jesus said of true worshippers, "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4: 23). It is truly wonderful that He should find delight in the spiritual sacrifices of the children of men, but the presence of the great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary explains the marvel. The perfections of His own person and work give efficacy before God to all that ascends from His people below.