

Jesus and the Resurrection

W. Kelly.

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"Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him. And some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts 17: 18).

There is nothing, besides making known God's peace and truth, that proves the value of the word of God more than this — the simple and telling naturalness, the fresh power with which it applies to the greatest variety of circumstances. What Paul said to the Athenians is most true of men now. I do not mean that all the particular shades of thought found then at Athens — that those schools of philosophy which divided men — are exactly the same as those of our own day; and I am far from meaning that superstition, that addiction to divine worship of a certain low, earthly, sensuous type can be said to be the most marked characteristic of this moment. For all that the truth is a living thing, and it is the only thing that is living — the only thing expressed in words that abides as it is, Theories and ideas change, and, with their authors, pass away. The truth remains. I know that men ask what the truth is, and that they are uncertain — and no wonder.

The truth is inseparable from the word of God; and, further, the truth is never found even in the word apart from Christ. Hence it is that, as the word is called the truth, so Christ declares that He is the truth. And, further, the Holy Ghost is said to be the truth, not God. As such He is never called the truth except by rationalists, and, I am sorry to say, sometimes by legalists. Extremes meet. Again, the Father is never called the truth; nor could He be, because the truth is the full bringing out of what a person or thing is. It is the expression of objects in their reality. It is the full declaration of anything, no matter what — it may be God or man, it may be heaven or hell: but, wherever the thing is set out as it really is, there you have the truth. Christ is the only one who has ever done it objectively. As power the Holy Ghost acts by the word, and there is the link between the word and Spirit of grace. Thus, as you never have Christ really known except by the word of God, so the Holy Ghost is needed to apply that word, and to make it to be an occasion of showing grace to the soul. When you have Christ, you have the truth, and not otherwise.

Now, there may be all measures of difference outside Christ in those who have got the truth. You may have persons who really agree in very little else - they have prejudices, they have prepossessions, they have all kinds of different theories in which they have been brought up. Religious education has an important effect in modifying men's thoughts; yet for all that, if they have Christ, they have got the truth; and what gives a believer confidence, and what we ought to confide in, is that all those who have Christ are saved, and none else. Therefore it is, we see, that, where Christ is really possessed, other things are changed — not all at once, but the Spirit of God can act in living power where Christ is possessed. He may be hindered — and all wrong thoughts of Christ (the truth of God), everything that is not according to Christ, is a hindrance to the Spirit; but still, where Christ is really possessed, the Holy Ghost follows as the seal of redemption. Not only does the Holy Ghost precede, but He follows; and I shall take occasion to open this a little tonight, because it brings out a most important side of the truth, and is little seen.

Christ is never received except where the Spirit of God makes the want of Him felt. There never is, therefore, a reception of Christ simply by the mind. The mind of man always judges. The sinner believing is judged in conscience before God. Now, this is a true test, whether you have got the truth.

Hence where the word by the Holy Ghost, it invariably enters the conscience, and the effect of the word dealing with the conscience is, that the man stands at, the bar of God in his spirit at once. From the time that the word of God really deals with him, he stands before God, and how? As a sinner. A solemn meeting, to be sure! God and the sinner; not yet the Judge seen of all, but the judgment-seat of God in the conscience. The word of God has this effect, it judges. That word only is judge yet in the conscience. The rationalist judges it. The natural man slights it. Even the religious man at some time or another may get into difficulties; he does not understand, he does not like to own his ignorance, and then he judges. It is in this way that souls, presuming to judge, are lost. There is no vital faith where the word of God does not judge, the Spirit using it to bring in a man as guilty before God, and to lead him to repentance.

You observe, in the verses that I have read tonight, we have God commanding men everywhere to repent. It is not merely to believe but to repent; and this is an invariable test of genuine faith that the Holy Ghost produces. An intellectual reception of the truth never brings a soul into the presence of God. It always puts man in the wrong place and God of course also. There is many a sinner who is rather pleased with himself for accepting the truth. *He* sees, and other people do not see. He receives the truth, whilst others are ignorant of it. He is a little vain thereon. He is proud of his knowledge; but as to self-judgment, he has none. The man who gets in the presence of God follows that way no longer. Ah no! he has certainty now. Do not tell me there is no such thing attainable. Are you a heathen? Heathen men, of course, cannot know with certainty, because they have not even the word of God, and may not believe that such a thing exists. Alas! we find that men in Christendom are practically in this day of ours coming to the state in which the heathen were. They, too, are not sure that scripture is the word of God; they have their opinions about it. They think that Moses made mistakes in the Pentateuch. They think that Paul wrote mistakes. They think that Peter and John were only good men who did their best. They judge. They have never been in the presence of God to be self-judged; and the consequence is that all is wrong, and God is an unknown God.

Now, wherever there is a real action by the Holy Ghost, the truth comes into the soul morally. No matter how the process may be carried on, or what the occasion that began to act, the invariable criterion of a work of God is, that there is not merely a reception of the word, but, along with this, a humbling moral effect produced in the soul; there is personal sense of sin in the conscience before God, in short, repentance. And repentance is not merely a change of mind. Do not allow such a definition to possess your minds. I know, of course, what those mean who say so, and perhaps why it is; but mere change of mind is far short of repentance. No doubt always, a mighty change of mind accompanies faith in Christ; there is a complete revolution in the soul; but the change is not intellectual merely, it is moral. The soul is brought to sit in judgment on itself, and to pronounce God's judgment on its ways, taking the place of a sinner, yea of a lost one, before God. Till this is done, there is no divine root. Without it the seed wants life, and will come to nothing.

There is this danger sometimes in revivalistic preaching, if I may say a word on preaching that has been not a little blessed of God: persons are attracted and moved by the good news of pardon, without being truly convinced of their sins. Is this danger met by the common method of being brought in as guilty sinners, and left there? Most preachers were afraid to tell out the fulness of the grace of God, even where they set forth the evil of sin. We should never be afraid to trust the grace of God, provided along with that we insist on the reality of ruin, moral rain, before God. Granted that the grace of God taken up as an intellectual thought or a feeling is a most dangerous thing, and always leads to licentiousness, for it really tends in principle to antinomianism. But it never the case where the soul is judged by the truth — where divine revelation puts the man down and gives God His true place. And

who is it that brings all this to pass? Jesus, who is the truth, and works by the Spirit.

Just look at Him with the woman of Samaria, where you may see this very thing wrought. What did He do first? He give her the deepest impression of grace beyond a Jew and beyond man. Did He not gradually make known the truth of God? Who but a divine person could give the Spirit? or empower His servants to act so in His name? And let me tell any person who doubts this truth, that if Jesus was not God, He was not good. If God, He was assuredly good, specially in deigning to be man on earth. There is nothing that is so morally degrading to a man, and so practically a denial of God, as falsehood; and there is no falsehood worse than to say you are what you are not. Now, Jesus, though the lowliest of men, always gave the impression, when it was a question of His own person, that He was divine. It might not be always the time to say it; but whenever the occasion occurred, not only did the apostles say so — not only did John, for instance, begin his Gospel with, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" — not only did Paul bring it into the very heart of the Epistle to the Romans — but hear what Jesus says Himself: "Before Abraham was, I am." He is the "I AM." There was and is the truth.

There were occasions when He wrought miracles: but miracles are the lowest instead of the highest way of dealing with men. They have their own importance, no doubt; but miracles might be wrought, and the light perceived on the ground of them, and still the man remain far from God. it was at the first Passover which is mentioned in the Gospel of John. Jesus was there at Jerusalem on the feast-day — the first of all the festivals, the foundation of all that followed in the Jewish year. But though He did many miracles, and many people believed on Him because of the miracles, Jesus did not commit Himself unto them; for, as the Spirit says so solemnly, "He know what was in man." What was the effect of this? He did not trust them. It was merely what was in man.

The only thing that Jesus trusts is what is in and of God. This is what appears in the next chapter; this is what He brings out to Nicodemus. Nicodemus came in the confidence of a man, in the desire of a sincere soul, to be instructed by One so capable. He had seen the miracles, but he was rather ashamed to come and be taught by Jesus. He did not wish to be seen. Conscience was at work though in a feeble, way. When men have no conscience, they act boldly. When they have a conscience - about things, they dread the difficulties, they have a certain fear of the opinion of others; but, if in they come, though by night. So it was with Nicodemus. And what did the Lord say? He told him on the very threshold, what He declares for every soul of man, that he must be born again. The sinner needs to be born of God. This is precisely what I am now insisting on, the necessity (not merely of a new walk, but) of a new life from God; and the truth of it I wish to put plainly before you tonight.

I presume that you are all satisfied there must be faith; but without the truth there cannot be faith. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Through faith comes eternal life; but eternal life, you must all acknowledge, is not the gift of man nor within the reach of man until the conscience is exercised by the word of God. But the moment the soul bows to Jesus in self-judgment, not merely as a worker of miracles but as the Son of God, come into this world to do these two great things - first of all, to give me a life that I have not, and, secondly, to take away the sins that I have (to remove all the evil that weighs me down, and to give me the very best that God has for me — eternal life in His own Son), then all is clear. The man is a believer. He has repentance towards God. He hates himself, judges himself, condemns himself out-and-out before God; yet none the less but the more does he look out of himself to the Son of man suffering for man's sins the Son of God given of God's grace. He has faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and he is a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

No doubt after all there may be much infirmity: and he may feel it. Here indeed, I may say, the

special privilege of Christianity comes in. I do not mean only the deep characteristic of known eternal life in the Son of God; but over and above it is power imparted. And this is what saints need to know better. It is not merely the Spirit of God producing a sense of want of life, conviction of sins and of sinfulness before God; this is what precedes the soul's having confidence in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But when the sinner believes the gospel, in his soul bowing to the Son of God, and to the incomparable work of redemption He has wrought, what is the effect? The Holy Ghost seals that soul, As He quickens the sinner, so He seals the saint. This is what is done by the Spirit following faith: He seals, No man is sealed the moment he believes in Jesus: it is always, (be it a brief interval, or longer) after believing, as it is said, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son," — this is not to make them sons — "into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4). "Also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5). And so again in Eph. 1: 13, "In whom, after ye believed," — or if you take it literally, "having believed," it comes to the self-same effect — ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Sealing is always after the soul rests upon the work of Christ finished thing. Hence it was unknown under the Old Testament; and now no man is sealed by the Holy Ghost so long as he has doubts of any kind existing in his soul. It is invariably after a man has submitted himself to the righteousness of God, when he gives himself up as completely lost to find himself saved in virtue of Christ's work, it is then that the Holy Ghost seals him.

Hence we find when the apostle Paul went to Ephesus, his enquiry was — "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts. 19.) We must not suppose that this is a question of miracles, or powers, or tongues, or anything of that kind, though these very signs might follow too. There were miracles wrought by the early Christians, and they had also the gift of tongues; but these were only the external vouchers of the Holy Ghost, who had always wrought whatever was for God's glory in man, but never was communicated in person to the believers till after redemption. When Jesus was on the earth, the Holy Ghost came down and abode upon Him; we can all understand this easily. Jesus was absolutely sinless; He was the Holy One of God. But can the Holy Ghost come and dwell in us? Only by redemption, our sins and iniquities being put away righteously from before the eye of God. When God looks and sees in us, not our sins — this was our part - but the precious blood of Christ, accepted in faith as God's gracious provision for the just pardon of sinners, then the Holy Ghost says (as it were), I can come and dwell in such men as these. Thus does the Spirit of God show His estimate or the work of Christ and acknowledge the man who rests on the blood that cleanses from every sin.

It may be observed here, that the apostle Paul, when he was at Athens, only brought in one side of the word. He did not always preach in the same way the truth of God. When among the Thessalonians, the truth he brought prominently forward was that concerning the kingdom; and this gave a particular character to his work among them. There was, in fact, no company in early times so remarkable for waiting for the Son of God from heaven as the Thessalonian assembly. That was what Paul preached to them, and bright was the effect produced. There were however others at work to mar the good. and the second epistle was written not to correct the first, but to counteract the false notion that certain had foisted in, telling them (and pretending the apostle's authority for it) that the day of the Lord was already come. It was not merely that that day was "at hand," which is a mistake in most versions. Although I have not lived very long, I have lived long enough to see that error almost exploded. I hardly know a single person of learning or ability who does not acknowledge that this is not the true meaning of the word (ἐνέστηκεν); and the power of the Spirit of God has been at work, no doubt, to bring this about. You know there are many who seem to be morbidly sensitive when told of a mistake in the common translation of the Bible; and I sympathise a little with the dislike of hasty or needless change. Nor is it well to hear men talking about "Greek" to people who do not know Greek. Far better to talk about it to those familiar with the language. There they might meet their match; but to

be ever talking of Greek to persons who do not know the language is for them a bad habit, which is no less dangerous for those who are talked to. So you will understand I do not mean to say much on such matters in a general audience; but still it seemed not amiss to refer to the generally owned error in our version of 2 Thessalonians 2: 2.

To a reflecting Christian that fact is very instructive. Never trust a mere man of intellect or learning in the things of God. There are none that make more profound mistakes; and if I were asked where at this present moment the truth of God is least acceptable, I should not point to a village or small town. Rather should I say, Go to a University, visit some great seat of learning, where classical letters and human science predominate: and there you will find God's word comparatively little known or esteemed. Nor is it so much youths in all the fervour of inexperience, but you meet with men heart and soul devoted to profane literature, and in all likelihood the truth of God proportionately slighted and least understood. Certainly it was the case at Athens.

We thus prove the value of the word of God as a living witness. Do you know what it is in conscience to stand before God? The word of God is sent for the express purpose of testing every soul. If the heart be in earnest, I believe it. If I am not in earnest, I presume to judge it, and so my soul will be lost. The word of man flatters our nature and entertains our mind. The word of God tries the reins and the heart, it awakens and searches the conscience, it proves what and where I am, and, what is yet more important, it presents the remedy for my soul's disease. That remedy is Jesus and the resurrection.

For He is not now merely the Messiah. This was what Jews were looking for. They fondly hoped for a wondrous personage to deliver them from their enemies, to set up Jehovah's name in the world, and make His people the greatest on the face of the earth. Need I say that this is not His present object? Not that it will not be done in due season. I quite admit that the Jews will yet be restored and blessed in their land, and that they are to be the heralds of the kingdom of God to every land. I gladly acknowledge that the day is coming when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea; and Scripture is quite plain that the work will be brought about, as far as human instrumentality is concerned, not by the Gentiles but by the Jews. But it is really reserved for the glory of Jesus, who will put down Satan, judge the world, and pour out the Spirit once more on all flesh. When the greatest unbelievers on earth — and the Jews are such — when *they* are brought in, and brought in as a nation, the moral effect will be immense on the world; and the Spirit of God will send them out on their great mission and use them to spread the truth.

Read Psalm 67: "God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations." Who are the "us?" We are very apt, whenever we read the word "us" in the Bible, to think that it means ourselves. But it is not always so. It is well to examine the context and see who are the "us" on solid grounds. The "us" may sometimes mean the Christian. If I read "For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," I say surely the "we" are not the Jews but Christians, for the reference is to heaven. If I hear the Lord say, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also," again I say the "you" are Christians, because it is not the Jews' hope but ours of being taken to heaven. This is not the proper yearning of the Jew, which beyond controversy is that God's unfailing mercy will plant them in their own land and make them a blessing according to the promise to Abraham — and every promise must be fulfilled — that "in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." You may tell me that the seed is Christ. Of course I grant it fully;

but I maintain that there will be a real application of this very promise, in the connection of the Messiah with the Jew, and through the Jew, to all the families in this world. We know this is not the case now, but contrariwise that the Jew is still a Christ-rejecting generation, and that the vast mass of Gentiles has gone into a variety of superstitions. This all confess, being sufficiently sensible of the faults of others. Are we equally sensible of our own? I am sure at the present time we ought to be deeply humbled. I do not say there is no encouragement, nor mean that God is not working mightily at the present moment. But whilst there is going on a gracious work of God in blessing souls, a deadly energy of Satan is also at work, leading men into the darkness of scepticism beyond example, and into superstition of every kind. It is in vain to deny either.

Here, in addressing the Athenians, the apostle took up another point. It was not, as a short time before at Thessalonica, the kingdom — that is, the power of God which is to govern the world by the Lord when He comes from heaven — for it is in that sense scripture often uses the word. Hence when the heathen rulers heard of this new kingdom, they were afraid, as Paul was said by the Jews to be a revolutionist, and that what he advocated was something dangerous to the then powers. The Roman Emperors, we know, were very susceptible on that score. They did not like to hear of a kingdom that might upset their own; and so, naturally, the magistrates were too ready at all times to take up a quarrel of that kind against Paul.

Among the Athenians the apostle preached another thing — Jesus and the resurrection. Thereon we have a remarkable enough effect produced. Although the Athenians were generally reckoned, and certainly were, the most intellectual people on the face of the earth at that time, yet they were so ignorant of divine things — even their educated men were so far from the truth of God — that, when they heard about Jesus and the resurrection, it would appear that they really thought the Resurrection might be another divinity — Jesus one god, and the Resurrection another. They were accustomed, you know, to gods and goddesses; and so they seem to have thought that Jesus was a god, and that the Resurrection was a goddess. They therefore charged the apostle with being a setter forth of strange demons.

Here, then, we see it is not the Messiah coming to reign, but Jesus and the resurrection. For the vision of glory, of manifested glory in the world, the time has not yet come. No; it is the same person, but He was refused. He is despised and rejected, and most of all by the Jews. It was they who led the Gentiles on to put Him to death. The resurrection and the resurrection alone, is that which ushers in the blessed and wondrous development of divine truth we commonly call Christianity. It is based on the death of Christ, and it is displayed in His resurrection. And then the person! Think of Him that was God, not the man that is become God, but God who became man that He might die for men. What is the effect on us? Uncertainty? Think of WHO He is. Would God send His only-begotten Son into this world to become a man and die as a substitute for sinners, leaving the blessed effect uncertain after such a cost? Even on the ground of reason is there anything so absurd, if you believe there is a God at all? He that is the true God and eternal life came into this world and died; and the object of that death was not a mere exhibition of love, but, on the contrary, that He might for us bear the judgment of God — the judgment of God due to us as hell-deserving sinners — the judgment of God on Him as the sacrifice for sin. Is it not clear that this, and this alone, explains the death of the Lord Jesus Christ? Could anything in fact be less trustworthy, if you leave out the atonement and make it merely to be love? Why, now and then a mere man has died for a friend; and many a believer has died the most cruel death for the truth, full of joy, full of confidence. Did such an one cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Certainly not. Christ did, and they in no case.

Can you answer, why He and not they? Assuredly there is in Christ's death revealed an element of the deepest kind — and indeed what alone gives the key to His death — God's judgment, that made Him, even in the anticipation of it, sweat great drops of blood. Never was there such a scene as Gethsemane, except the cross. I repeat that the element was God Himself judging — in Christ atoningly judging the sins of sinners.

As a consequence of His expiation, there is for the believer a complete deliverance — an absolute bearing away of all that was against him. And now, it is not merely that I am entitled to come and rest on the Son of God, but I am sinning against Him if I do not; I am dishonouring Him if I delay. I am forgetful alike of Him and of myself; I am making light both of my sins and of the precious blood of Christ, if I do not own what that blessed One has perfectly removed as far as cast is from the west — yea, so that my sins are thrown into the depths of the sea, and God Himself remembers them no more. Why does God use such strong expressions of grace, and how is it that believers can think it an uncertain thing whether or not their sins are blotted out? You know very well whether you have bowed to God as a sinner — whether, no longer ashamed of Christ, you have mourned over your sins in the presence of God; and whether, in the face of every sin, and because of it all, you are resting only on Christ. If it be so, are you to go on hanging your head as a bulrush?

Nay, look not merely at Christ's death. If I have no more than the death of Christ, uncertainty is but natural. I am, as it were, encompassed in the gloom that hung over the cross. And what a scene of desolation was that! All had left Him now. The very devil had gone away. Christ had been forsaken by every one — even by God, as He tells us Himself. And this was just because sin was there; so that, if sin had always been laid upon Jesus, He must have been forsaken of God always. Does not the life of Jesus tell me the contrary? Even of One that walked in the perfect sunshine of God's favour? It was not that God did not delight in His Son at the very moment that He forsook Him. Never was perfection so complete in Christ as when He was forsaken of God. But it was for the first time submission to His judgment of sin, no longer the enjoyment of His communion in love. He was always perfect, but then was the depth of perfection in His suffering when made sin for us.

Made sin! Yes! He was forsaken of God then; but behold the very same God that smote Him on the cross raising Him again. In this was there a make-believe that He felt so much about sin? Ah no! Never was there such a reality as the cross. The sins of men that were laid upon Him were real: it was real suffering on His part to bear them; and it was real judgment of God that fell upon Him. And as real as was our guilt, God's judgment, and Christ's suffering, so real is the resurrection. Hence all is clear now; and the same God who bruised Him for our sins took care that none should be laid in that grave save the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of sinners; and what then? God has raised Him up, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places. So that a Man now is at the head of the universe of God, and sovereign grace flows out to sinners.

People talk, as we all know, about advance, and the progress of man. But what is it all worth? It is a false start and avails nothing. Why, they tell you that man grew out of the monkey, and that the monkey grew out of a seaweed; but how the protoplasm came into being they cannot say. Can any thing surpass the absurdity of the theories and speculations of so-called men of science? I scarcely know anything more degrading than the thought that man grew out of aught else. As if man even in his fallen condition, had not the image of God in him! They know nothing at all, these scientific men, of the Christ of God; nay, what do they know about any one thing? They have no divine truth. They can give you an account of many phenomena, they can observe and register facts; but what a miserable condition is theirs, if they know nothing about the reality of their own moral condition and of Him who is above them! They know aright neither their own beginning nor their end. If so, is it not an awful

picture of the state of men?

What more lamentable a fact than this, that in the 19th century of redemption, people should admire these will-o-the-wisp speculations, not merely irrational but degrading; not merely degrading, but denying all that is blessed in God and man! Such is their pride that they gainsay not only the faith but even the creation, though only the Bible indeed taught it. In this they deny all that is most blessed and glorious, and, above all, the blessed Person who went down into the midst of the consequences of evil and of sin, and who, in our nature, is now risen and exalted to the right hand of God — placing man above the angels, yea, the Son of man who is the object of worship for the angels of God. I admit that, if He had not been God, He could not have been there; but still He is man. He that has the sceptre of the universe is a man. He is God of course; but while He is God, and was God, and through eternity will be God, yet will He never cease to be man.

The resurrection of Christ proves two things. The apostle here uses it to show that Christ is soon going to judge the earth: this world is going to be judged; for God has given a proof of it in that He raised up that Man from the dead, whom the world of Gentiles and Jews crucified. Now, the reason why people slighted of old and still deny the Lord is because He became a man. Had He manifested Himself in His divine glory alone, do you think they would have despised Him? Certainly not. He had only to show Himself for a moment, and where was the creature that would insult Him? Look at Him even when He became a man: they asked once for Jesus, and what ensued? He had only to say it was Himself, when they all fell back upon the ground. It was a mere sample of what He could do. He was there proved a willing captive, later a willing victim. They could not have taken Him against His will. One of His followers, too fond of hasty measures, smote the ear of the High Priest's servant with his sword. Jesus checked him, and putting forth His hand healed the wound. No, beloved friends, He came to die — He came to suffer for sinners. He could have commanded twelve legions of angels, as He could have done without any aid; but He came to die. He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

I ask you, then, who believe in Christ, do you stand clear before God? If not, why not? If you are a believer in Jesus and the resurrection, have you a single sin left behind? What did He die for? If He left one sin, what was the good of His dying for sins? If He removed sins, did He leave any? If He has taken your sins, who can charge you with sin? I pray you then, think as believers, feel as believers, act as believers. Yield not to the thoughts of man. You will never get a true direction from your own heart. All the truth comes from the word of God. Leave to Christ all your sins, confessing them, but believing by the Holy Ghost in the efficacy of His work. What we have to do is to judge our own thoughts, and refuse the words of other men; then by grace we are kept stable in the truth of God; we are put in our true place according to Christ and the value of His death; we suspect ourselves, we distrust men, we confide in God. And so it is said that He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. Such to faith is the effect of the resurrection.

Naturally God is one to dread, because we have a bad conscience; we know that we have grieved Him habitually and deeply dishonoured Him. Yes, but what did He give Jesus for, and for what has He given me His truth? It was not merely an infinite work of grace done for people in heaven. No, it was to send a message of grace to men in the world, to every creature. When law was given, it was to one nation; but when the gospel was sent, it was to "every creature." As long as law was the rule of man — the law of condemnation and death, it was God tested in one people. But the moment He was giving eternal life and the forgiveness of sins through His own Son, it was preached to the whole creation, to every nation, kindred, and tongue.

Is not all this just like God? The law was addressed to the nation of the Jews as a test of their obedience, as our first parents were tried in the garden of Eden. There was a single tree in the midst of the garden, and this tree was made the test of their obeying God. It was not at all a matter of moral good or evil, so far as the mere fruit of the tree was concerned. It was a question of owning God's authority, of respecting His prohibition; and what Satan put into the heart of Eve was the thought, "God keeps back something good there: I would rather have that tree than anything else in the garden." And everywhere it is so: man distrusts God thoroughly. But the gift of Christ is God giving His best to die for our sins, and to rise for our justifying. Thus the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ ushers in the gospel. If the gospel is true, God, instead of being my enemy, is my truest friend. There is no love to be compared with His. Can man have such a friend as He is who gave His own Son to die for sinners? This is mercy — infinite and for ever.

Man is incapable of this. Man must have a motive, and a motive of love, in order to do anything that is good; and no one loves till he knows God and is born of Him, as we learn from 1 John 4: 7, 8. But look at God. He is the only One capable of giving in love His Son to die for His enemies. This is the gospel. The consequence is that the truth here announced sets aside the lie of Satan and gives God His true character. No one loves me like God, in spite of all my sins; but what dishonour of His love, if I doubt it? It is remarkable the effect its assurance produces. You have, perhaps, never weighed it well. Do you remember the lines of the hymn?-

Since the bright earnest of His love,
So brightens all this dreary plain.

We used to sing these lines once, but now we cannot do so; and I am rather glad to find it, because it is a proof, in its way, of making progress. For the human recollection of old hymns or of anything human acts as a sort of indicator whether you are going on in the right path or not — whether the truth of God is causing you to judge the words of men. You know, of course, that these hymns, excellent though many of them are, beyond doubt, are after all only human. I have no doubt the Spirit of God had to do with the composition of many; just as His grace helps us now with every prayer we offer, and every discourse we deliver. Still they were not inspired and should be corrected as we receive light.

Here then we have the wonderful way of God, by the redeeming work of His Son, that enables the soul, through receiving the truth that is presented, to take the place of being thoroughly clean, and for ever freed from guilt before God, and this on the testimony of God Himself. Through the blessed work wrought in Christ's death the whole weight and burden of sin is removed. And this is proclaimed by the resurrection.

Herein is the proof that the world is going to be judged, because He is risen from the dead. It was because the blessed One became a man, that He was rejected and despised; and it is because He is man that many pretend He is only man. But this unbelief is the same spirit as animated those who put Jesus to death upon the cross. The feeling that takes advantage of His being man to deny His being God is the same as that which led the Jews to crucify Him - the same enmity from the same fatal unbelief. It is man opposed to God. But if the world slew, God raised Him up again from the dead; and therein gives the proof not only that the believer is justified, but that Jesus will judge the world.

Supposing, then, you have as a Christian been enabled to receive the person of Christ, I ask you what about His death? What about His resurrection? Do you believe that God has raised Him from the dead? and if you believe, where are your sins? Do not tell me that your sins are still resting on your conscience — that your sins are still bound up with you. Believer, what did Christ die for? and what

has God declared in the gospel?

Forgive me if I come back upon the gospel. I am deeply anxious that you should have the truth strongly and plainly before you. I do not expect souls to be able to run the race that God calls them to — I do not call on them to worship God in spirit and in truth — till they are consciously and perfectly clear in His sight.

Take, for instance, that verse I have already referred to about the earnest of His love. Could one sing it now? No; because the fulness of His love is what He has shown us already. Men say "the earnest of the love" of God. But we have the Holy Ghost given to us now as "the earnest of the inheritance" that is to be. As for the inheritance, we are going to be put, along with Christ at His coming, over the universe, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ — the bride of the Bridegroom, the Eve of the heavenly Adam. Every member belonging to His body, and consequently all christians, will be exalted manifestly overall things; the church will share that authority with Christ. Now the Holy Ghost is given to us as an earnest of the inheritance, but He is never said to be the earnest of God's love. The earnest of His love would imply that I only get a little of His love now, and am to have a great deal more when in heaven. The love of God fully rests on the believer already. "The love wherewith Thou lovedst Me:" is this an "earnest?" Is it not the fulness of His love? It is what the christian possesses; and consequently, says St. Paul, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." *He* does not say the earnest of His love. Therefore we ought not to sing the hymn as it used to stand.

In this way you may see it is a great thing to bring everything to the test of His word, and to judge accordingly, though the poet may murmur.

Again, the law dealt with men as they were living in the world; but the truth of christianity is that I died with Christ, already baptized to His death. Not that I am dying or that I am to die — but that I died with Christ. Do you believe this? Do you know yourself dead with Him? This is what Christ brings the saint to from the first; less than this is not the meaning of baptism. Theology says that baptism is a sign, if not means, of giving life to people who have it not. It really is the very opposite. When a man came out from the world to take his stand on the truth of a Christ who died, he in his baptism says, Christ the Lord, who was rejected by the world, is my portion. It is not a living Christ reigning here below, but a dead and risen Christ. And this is the very point of the apostle Paul in the sixth chapter of Romans, when he says — "So many of us as were baptised were baptised" — unto what? His life? Not at all — "unto His death," And this is very important, as He insists that we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. What a blessing that it is no longer a mere struggle against sin or flesh! As believers we died with Christ; even if Jews before, we are made dead by His cross, because God identifies us with Christ who died and rose again. So that a christian starts with the death of Christ.

That is the reason why, in the two so-called christian sacraments, the grand point of them both is the death of Christ. This is what we ought always to remember. It is not a vow or vaunt of man, though infinite things flow from it; but God's weapon is Christ's death. There I am nothing and can do nothing; let me rest by faith in the infinite worth and efficacy of Jesus who died and rose for me.

Besides being dead, we are risen with Christ. I do not enter upon this now; but I just say this little word further, that the resurrection of Christ is the witness that Christ is above the world; and that He who is ordained Judge of quick and dead, and who assuredly will judge the world, is a risen man. It is not God, as God, who will undertake judgment, but a man, who is to judge mankind. It is the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus is a risen man.

But there is more. For He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our

justification. The same resurrection of Jesus, which is proof to the world of coming judgment, proves to the christian that he is already justified and blessed. The christian is already justified; the world will be judged. The resurrection of Christ proclaims both. It tells the world, You cast Jesus out, but could not hinder His resurrection. Submit you must to this blessed Son of God and of man. He is now exalted, and every knee shall bow to Him.

I remember being horrified some years ago in reading a book by one who has lately passed away from his sins, wherein he criticised one of your philosophers — the critic himself, I am sorry to say, a native of this part of the country. That man dared to say, "If the being that is called God should sentence me to that place which they call hell, there is one thing I will never do — I will never worship Him." I think I never read anything so frantically blasphemous. Alas! beloved friends, that is exactly what he must do. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess; and that, too, not merely of things in heaven (though it is not "things," things having neither knees nor tongues, but beings) — "beings" in heaven and on earth and under the earth. Think of that. "Under the earth" means the lost; but whether they are lost men or lost spirits, they shall all confess Him Lord to the glory of God the Father.

But no salvation then. Now is the day of salvation — now only. Oh! lose not a moment. Now is your time, and God's time. Now is the time to make the choice, or rather bow to grace and be saved. There is nobody saved when judgment comes; and, beloved friends, there is nobody judged in the day of grace. It is now rather self-judgment; it is really God bringing one by repentance to, judge himself; so that one anticipates, if I may say so, the day of judgment. One takes the place of a guilty criminal when one confesses his sins before God. There is nothing does a person more good than to feel his sins — except, after that, to know that they are all gone through the death of Christ in the grace of God.

I believe in immediate conversion; but no one can have a genuine work in his soul who has not felt his sins in the presence of God; and, therefore, do not be in too great a hurry when converted. Do not be too anxious to get the soul into peace. It would be a good thing to get people into sense of misery, it appears to me, that they may duly feel their sins. Many of those who during revivals seem to get peace suddenly have had, long before that, a deep sense of sin in their souls; perhaps half of the people who are said to be converted at revival times were converted before. They date their conversion from the time they found peace; but it ought to be dated from the time they became miserable. Christ is the way into peace, but it is through faith and repentance. Believe me, that peace is more valued where there has been the sense of previous war — where the soul has felt and judged its enmity against God.

I do not wish to accumulate words as to this, nor to enter into many inviting topics that crowd upon one now. But if it be a solemn thing, I say again, to think that every knee must bow to Jesus in the day of His coming, is it not a joy that, when people bow now to Christ and accept His gospel, they are saved? When forced to bow in the day of God by power, they will not be saved. When it is power that compels them, divine power, before the judgment-seat of Christ, there will be no salvation. There is judgment then. If you have bowed now to Jesus, may it be simply and thoroughly! Thus only can there be settled peace with God, and that, not because you deserve heaven, but, on the contrary, because Christ wrought such a peace for you that deserved hell thoroughly.

God set forth these things in the very beginning, when He said to Moses — "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." It was not when the Israelites saw the blood, but when they rested on the blood because it was God who saw the blood. This is true faith — rest on Christ and His blood before God. If the look to your own feelings you will never have rest. God will give you plenty to draw out your feelings and put you to the proof; but all is founded on this - on your having the favour of God as a believer in Christ His Son. How would you like one of your children to come and ask you, Father, am

I really your child? You would say, An enemy has done this. And so it is with those who say that people cannot know they are saved — cannot know that God is their Father. It is heathenism under the profession of Christ. They who say so know not what they do. They are certainly far from intelligence in the things of God. They do not know what His feelings are toward His children, be they ever so ignorant and lowly.

No, beloved friends, rest with unfeigned confidence in the salvation that the Spirit of God attests in the word. Certainly if hopes should be founded upon myself, I ought to have none at all. If I am founding it on the church or on men, I deserve not to have any blessing. But the question is, Did Christ work out salvation for me? does Christ deserve it? And I tell you, before God, He did accomplish redemption, and He loves to send away in peace every soul that trusts in Him and His cross. The man who has not the Son of God is not a child of God, because there is no life, no salvation, apart from Christ; and as reconciliation to God is by His death, so salvation is declared in His resurrection life. May He be your portion now and ever. Amen!