

"We have this treasure."

2 Corinthians 4, 5.

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(B.T. Vol. 2, p. 79-80.)

It is wonderful the *liberty* the Holy Ghost gives in the soul. Not that we have no conflict — we have; but we have to maintain it in the power of the Holy Ghost. We possess this treasure, and we have delight in it. We not only know that we are saved, but we enjoy it. It was the desire of the apostle to be in full possession of what he now knew by faith, but was not fully brought into the possession of. He had the treasure, but not *in glory*. Therefore he says, "we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven." He was not groaning because of the weariness of the way, the trials and difficulties here; but he had such a consciousness of the blessedness of the treasure, that he groaned to possess it unhindered in the presence of God.

It is good to have the joy now, but there is always a tendency to confidence in the flesh. The spring of all this liberty, and joy, and blessing, is that we have seen Christ. We have seen Him in *glory*. The eye of faith has rested on Him. We could not have this joy without the certainty of redemption accomplished, which we have in the man Christ Jesus, being accepted in glory.

The sufferings of Christ touch the *affections*, but do not give this joy. An attachment is formed for God, and he would not go to another; but this is not all He gives us. We must be able to say, 'I have got redemption — all my sin is gone — all that was against me is taken away through the One who *died, and is received into glory*,' in order to have this joy and longing for the glory as the result. It is all contrary to the life of the flesh. Where the life of the flesh ends, the life of the Spirit begins, and practically we have power in the life of the Spirit in proportion as the flesh is dead. CHRIST BEFORE THE SOUL is the key to these chapters and those that precede.

In 2 Cor. 1 he says, "we had the sentence of death in ourselves" — no trust in natural life. All that was of the first Adam gone, dead, and therefore nothing would touch the ground of his confidence "in God which raiseth the dead." That confidence clearly sets aside fear of things around. If dead to the law and dead to Satan, what power has he over a dead man? The principle of power is that we are dead. Faith acts on this.

2 Cor. 4. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the *face of Jesus Christ*." Then he says, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." What treasure? Christ. Paul has seen the one who has put away his sin — who is his righteousness — who is in glory. He sees Him, and he says, '*that is what I want*.' In seeing Him I see one who has the power of life, who has passed through death and overcome it. I have this one — Christ. This is the treasure. I have it in an earthen vessel; but *I have it*. John says, "the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life," etc. There is Christ, this eternal life. I have Him in that glory known to faith. I shall have this life, the full fruit of eternal redemption in glory. Abraham believed that God was able to perform; but we believe that the Father raised Christ from the dead. It is done, and His being there in glory is the proof that all is done.

Our standing there in the presence of God is the fruit of the work being finished. "He has appeared *once* to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." He has brought me *to God*. Has He brought me in my sins? No. I should not be there at all if not cleansed. "He was made sin for us." "He hath

appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." *There* is the resting-place of the soul. Then, in this chapter, *He* (Christ) is presented as the power of life. I have the treasure in "an earthen vessel." It is a vessel that hinders, for it is earthen; but the faith that sees the treasure has put us in possession of life. If I have life, it is because I have Christ. "He that hath the Son, hath life." "In Him was life." "He is our life," and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."

Another view of it is Christ, the life down here. When I look at Him down here, I can say, "There is my life." If I look at myself, I see the life mixed up with much that ought not to be; but when I look at Jesus, what obedience! what patience! what graciousness! and I say, That is my life! I can bless God for giving me such a life. He was perfect in everything. What rest it gives to the spirit to be able to say in beholding all that perfection in Him, "That is mine!"

But now, when I think of *power*, I must look up to Christ in glory for it. If this earthly tabernacle were dissolved, "we have a building of God," etc. The essence of the character of life is Christ in glory. In Rom. 1 He is declared to be "the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The principle of the power was seen in His being raised from the dead. We have a title in Him to say always, we are dead. Therefore it is "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." When we come to live practically in this, way, it is always "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." We cannot manifest this life of Christ practically, but as we are reckoning ourselves *dead*. If I walk by faith, I am bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus. If I walk by sight, Christ is not my object, or my power. "We are delivered unto death." (2 Cor. 4: 11.) Sometimes it is necessary we should pass through trouble to break down the flesh, which cannot live by faith. Paul had to go through trial, but through it all, he was beholding by faith the treasure. "The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." There is the full revelation of Christ, known to faith, and the certainty that when I see Him I shall be like Him. He is my righteousness now, and when I see Him in glory, I shall be like Him — and this I groan for, and earnestly desire.

Does not His love refresh my spirit now? — does not His love restore my soul (happier not so to need it)? There is no cloud, no fear of judgment, but certainty of being clothed, and therefore there is the earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with the house which is from heaven. So strong was the desire for this, that he did not even think of dying — "not for that we would be unclothed," etc.

What is the secret of this? He had not only seen life in Christ, but Christ Himself, and he saw that this life could cause that "mortality should be swallowed up of life." He had faith in that power of life in Christ that it could effect this — death would slip away and not be. Do you believe in this power of life? As long as there is a soul to gather in, His long-suffering continues, but the power exists. Then the apostle goes on to speak of dying. What can death do? If I die before Christ comes, I am in His presence. I shall only depart from this mortal body to be with Him. "Therefore we are always confident," etc.

"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we maybe agreeable to Him." "For we must all appear (or be manifested) before the judgment seat of Christ."

How are we all to be manifested? All will give an account of themselves, (the saints when they are caught up to be with the Lord, the wicked at the end of the millennium.) The saints give account of themselves *in glory*. What will be to be judged in the saint? He is identified with the very principle that will judge, if he is the righteousness of God. What was there to judge? *Conscience* is not awakened by it at all for the believer, for that is purged; but it does awaken something. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." There is not only righteousness, but love. He sees the terror of

judgment. The sight of the righteousness that judges is the occasion why he sets about preaching to others. It puts love in activity, and then he adds another thing: "We *are* manifest unto God," not we *shall* be. I stand in the presence of the glory now, and whatever does not suit that glory, is judged now. It acts on the conscience in the way of self-judgment. We want this light, but we must have perfect confidence in God, for there can be no happy play of the affections, if there is not this confidence. We cannot have fellowship with a person, if we think He is going to condemn us; but "our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." We cannot have confidence, if we have not a perfect conscience. (Heb. 9, 10.) This we have by Christ our righteousness, He having obtained eternal redemption for us. What there is a memorial of now in God's presence, is, that my sins are put away by that one perfect sacrifice. I have a righteousness perfect, and so infinite that I can never get out of it.

CHRIST is the centre of everything for the heart.

When I think of the exceeding and eternal weight of glory, it may seem too much for me; but when I see the Lamb there, as the Light thereof, it puts my affections in play. It is the Lamb that was slain for me — the Lamb that took away my sins.

There is grace needed every day for us passing through the wilderness, but not for us to rise up to righteousness, as if we had it not, but to walk according to it. Christ takes knowledge of our wants. Thus there are two parts of His present blessing for us; *Himself* the object for our affections, and His constant supply for our daily need. We have the righteousness, and we wait for the hope of it, the glorious hope which is suitable to the righteousness of God. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Scripture Queries

Q. Heb. 10: 5. D. S. invites remark on current lowerings of the holy Person of our Lord, and the attempt of some unhappy men in our day, as in times gone by, to insinuate that because He was truly and perfectly a man, His body was a dying body like any other's, and Himself all His life under the curse of God, not merely made a curse on the cross.

A. I agree with our brother that such views are the fruit of the enemy's effort to dishonour the Son of God on the side of His humanity; that *capable of dying* the Lord was, and that as a fact, (the blessed foundation of all our peace and hopes, as well as the vindication of God's grace and truth in dealing with men,) He died, as every believer knows and confesses; but that this is quite distinct from being, like a sinful man, *per se* under a necessity of dying; and that, whatever the importance to us, and the divine perfection of His ways of goodness and holy suffering during His life, never till the cross did He suffer atoningly, never was He forsaken of God but there and then. Ignorance is one thing, and, more or less, is our common lot; opposition to fully declared light of God, is quite another. Thus, some have even held that our Lord went into the hell of the damned to suffer there, else His work had not been complete. But it would be a very different thing, now that the truth as to atonement is better understood, for people to systematize crotchets like this. Such antagonism to truth is the enemy's work, and tends to heresy. Though an old and abused form, it is none the less of value to bear in mind that the true faith is that we worship.