

Gospel Words - Third Series.

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A Series of 4pp. Gospel Tracts by W.K. for distribution after preaching.

1 God created

Gen. 1

Gospel Words, 3rd Series. No 1.

He Who "in the beginning" created the universe is also the source of spiritual life, of a divine nature as in 2 Peter 1. Every creature above or beneath is the fruit of His will and power, He sovereign and good, they dependent and subject responsibly if not in fact, for self-will, sin, entered both heaven and earth. As of old, so now, all blessing is in the Son, in Whom life was and is. The Spirit of God took His part then as He does today according to the scriptures. From above is every good giving and every perfect gift, from Him with Whom can be no variation nor shadow of turning. Hence, as sin completed brings forth death, He was pleased to bring forth believers by word of truth that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. There is for a fallen creature no holiness possible, no walk acceptable to God, save through faith in virtue of life above the creature; and this is now set in the clearest light of God's word. "He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God, the life he hath not." Our Lord here below had presented the matter so fully that mistake is inexcusable. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5: 24, R. V.).

This is grace, which the sinner needs to save him, the believer knows it in Christ. But, even as to nature, how the Bible opens as becomes a revelation from God! There is no discussion, no reasoning to prove the being of God, no unfolding of His attributes. He acts in power, and speaks with authority, as the true God. He is good, does good, and pronounces on good, as One that has pleasure in it. If from the world's creation His invisible things, His everlasting power and divinity, are clearly seen, being apprehended through the things that are made, how much more does revelation make known? Science

is here blank ignorance, it knows not and never can know anything of origins. Its field is the investigation of phenomena, and it rises by generalisation to the fixed laws which govern what exists in nature. No doubt it may advance, to a fuller degree and a more exact distribution, by a better knowledge. But from the beginning there was a reality in God's creation to be investigated; and man, whatever his hostile will to hide and lose himself in second causes, cannot escape the conviction that there must be a first cause, God the Creator. He it is Who made known His ways to Moses, His doings to the sons of Israel. He it is Who later revealed *Himself* in Jesus, His Son, His Only-begotten, in Whom is life eternal for the believer, without Whom abides the wrath of God for him that disbelieves. To reject the grace of God in Christ is to remain in unremoved guilt and death, with a fearful expectation of judgment to come.

Only the fool has said in his heart, No God; he is fool morally and in the worst sense. Reasoning, if sound, may argue that so this or that *must be*; revelation says that so *it is*. Nothing is so simple, satisfactory, and deep as the truth. This alone in grace meets man's ignorance and his need: the truth answers both, now and for ever. Believers are entitled to say, We know, and this on God's testimony, as sure as it is clear, forming the consciousness of the new man by God's Spirit.

God, and God only, has self-being. He is the "I am," and so speaks of Himself. He is the Most High, the Almighty, and the Eternal, and thus made His name known in due time; and He alone can rightly say "I will." So said the Son when incarnate here below; which could not be, if He were not one with the Father, as truly God, and therefore as competent by the sacrifice of Himself to save righteously as to create.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here we are not told of all the beings created at the first, for elsewhere we read of the angels of His might. Nor have we particulars first of the states, and then of the denizens, of the earth, before man was created under the new conditions of the six days followed by the sabbath. Previously we have two revealed facts: creative energy originating the universe (Gen. 1: 1); a subsequent state of utter confusion, into which (not the heavens, but) the earth was thrown (Gen. 1: 2), before that reconstitution which made it the suited sphere for the moral dealings of God with mankind, and the display of His own grace in Christ. Then Adam's transgression wrought ruin to himself, the race, and the earth; but God will have His eventual triumph over evil power, as well as weakness, through His own Son, the Word made flesh. For He was the perfect pattern of obedience, in life and death the overcomer of Satan, the accomplisher of redemption already by His blood, about to come again to effect redemption by power, not only for those that are His for heaven and earth, but for all the creation itself, enthralled even yet by reason of the first man's fall, to be delivered for glory by the Second. The Holy Spirit will not restore all, whatever His blessed work in that day, it is an honour reserved for Him Who suffered on the cross: Jesus is Heir of all things.

God thought fit to make and try man, and, as the needed measure with the fallen race, to wash away his corruption and violence in the waters of the deluge. Here He called out Abram and his seed to a land they shall yet truly and for ever enjoy. Here He tested Israel by the law, and gave them priests, prophets, and kings till there was no remedy. Here, as sin had entered by the first man, He sent His Son, a man Christ Jesus, to vanquish in every way the enemy of God and man, and to deliver by His death and resurrection such of Satan's victims as believe. Here therefore was displayed God's moral glory in the humiliation, obedience, and cross of the Son of Man. Here consequently shall His glory be manifested, in Christ and all that are His above and below, to the blessing of the universe, when Jehovah reigns and the earth rejoices, set free from thralldom to Satan and his blinded instruments. No doubt the glory above is higher than what the earth shall enjoy, and those who suffered with Christ on earth shall be glorified with Him on high.

See then, my reader, that as you have heard the word of truth, you believe it; for it is the gospel of salvation to all that receive the Saviour on God's word. If he that disregarded Moses' law died without mercy on the word of two or three witnesses of how much worse punishment shall he be judged worthy that trod underfoot the Son and counted the blood of the covenant a common thing?

2 God said

Gen. 1.

(B.T. Vol. 19, p. 346-348. Gospel No. 3: 2.)

Great as creation is, God's word embraces far more and deeper things. "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." It is therefore worthy of all acceptance, whatever He may say and whatever the theme. Thereby is revealed the truth by Him Who knows it perfectly.

In Heb. 11: 3 we read, "By faith we understand that the worlds, have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear" (R.V.) Evolution is an hypothesis which leaves out God and denies creation. It is a mere effort of imagination to account for the universe, and an effort that set., aside that definite and universally observed fact which underlies all natural science, the permanence of species.. So the ancients, in the West as well as the East, suggested cosmogonies no less fanciful. But the word of God is now scripture, which alone lets us hear what is worthy of God and satisfactory to man. "He spake, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast." Details are only revealed when man was about to be created. For scripture is a moral book; and God's good pleasure is in men. Hence, when the "days" begin, how often we read in Gen. 1 "God said."

Alas! sin soon followed. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned" (Rom. 5: 12). As man thus universally failed in uprightness and fell under death, it became thenceforth, if he were not to be abandoned to ruin and despair, a question of divine righteousness and of life superior to death. And no sooner did God appear in judgment of the evil than He spoke of the Saviour, the Second Man, the woman's Seed; Who, Himself bruised, should bruise the serpent's head. This was what "God said" to meet the fallen. And faith received it. So we learn in Abel; so the elders had witness borne to them. They believed God's word; they looked for a deliverer from sin and Satan. It was plain that He Who had authority had power. They in their way saw, as He saw fully, that every thing He had made was very good. They heard that Adam and Eve had violated the LORD God's commandment. But they also learnt that, if they listened to the evil tempter and transgressed, He did not leave them to perish, even though, in consequence of their sin, "He drove out the man."

The Saviour did not come yet, nor for ages afterwards; but the word of God about Him was given at once. "The LORD God said," even when pronouncing sentence on the serpent, that the mysterious Seed of the woman should crush the evil power which had misled man to sin and death. Man never thought of such a consummation, still less could he accomplish it. Nay, his proud unbelief refuses the blessing when accomplished, brought to his door, and proclaimed in his ears. It is of God's grace, the work of His righteousness, and revealed by His word; but man, being guilty, distrusts His good and holy benefactor, dreads in a measure His judgment, yet believes not His mercy in a Saviour, still less that (through His death for sin) it is God's righteousness unto all, and upon all them that believe. Even those who claimed to be God's people and were not idolaters, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

Faith alone and always received the blessing; and faith is of hearing, and hearing by the word of

God. From the beginning it was so, and so it is still. The word of faith is what the apostle preached. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10.)

So ever since the fall every believer looked for the One that was coming, the woman's Seed. They did not know much of Him. It was not yet said that He was to be called Jesus, nor that God would raise Him from the dead. But they heard from God that He, the Seed of the Woman, should bruise the Serpent's head: a work altogether beyond man as such. In due time God Who said thus much said more; but the little He said from the first, faith received; and those who believed were blessed. God in the blood of Jesus showed His righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime in the forbearance of God. Thus was His grace in all past ages vindicated by the same death of Christ, which is the ground of the gospel now sent to every creature under heaven. Those who received what God said, be it less or more, of the coining Saviour got the everlasting profit all through, even as Abel had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God testifying on the ground of His gifts. By faith he offered unto God a sacrifice according to His mind. He believed in the bruised Seed of the woman, and brought to Jehovah a sacrifice on which death passed; whereas Cain never rose above the reasoning of nature or the resource of his own wretched self

Even so is it with the mass now. They trust in themselves or in men like themselves. They confide in human things and sayings. They venerate shadows and shows. They believe in ordinances. They are puffed up by sights and sounds, by ceremonies, processions, and the like. But they hear not Christ's words and believe not Him that sent Christ. They count it presumption for any to have everlasting life, delusion that a believer comes not into judgment, and mystical madness that he has passed out of death into life. The believer trusts God in Christ for eternal life. Self and its works, the church and its ordinances, are the refuge of the fearful and unbelieving, not God's love nor Christ's work as revealed by the Spirit in His word. There is neither repentance nor faith. Whatever good works, or the church, may be for the faithful, it is a snare for the sinner to trust them for salvation.

Development is as false to God's word, as evolution is to His creation. They are the extremes of superstition and of scepticism, alike frigid zones where life and light are unknown. The truth is inseparable from the Son of God; it was manifested in Him, Christ Jesus, a Man; and no lie is of the truth, no matter how long or widely held. Hence we are begotten again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God which liveth and abideth (1 Peter 1: 23); and by the same word we grow unto salvation. For if we receive the end of our faith, salvation of souls, we are guarded by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, when our bodies will be saved as our souls now are.

Hence we are told (James 1: 18) that God of His own will begat us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruit of His creatures. By-and-by new heavens and a new earth will display the glory of Him Who is the Father of lights, from Whom every good giving and every perfect gift come down. Believers are now a sort of first-fruit of it, the product and witness of His grace. His will working by His word is the source of the everlasting boon; as our will issues in lust, sin, and death.

But the word cleanses too, as the Lord told His disciples (John 15) that they were already clean because of the word which He spoke to them. Of this water is the well-known symbol, and the Spirit makes it living. Hence the Lord in John 3 explains new birth to be born of water and the Spirit. It is receiving Christ's testimony; and he that has received it has set to his seal that God is true: the blessed reversal of Satan's success at the beginning, when distrust of God entered the heart. Thus is the heart

purified by faith (Acts 15: 9).

Assuredly this is not all. For Jesus, the Son of God, came by water and blood: both flowed from His pierced side; and he who believes receives the virtue of both. Purification is by His death, and expiation too; as it is the Holy Spirit Who bears witness in the word of God. Sins are judged and confessed, alike hated and forsaken; the blood of Christ that cleanseth from every sin, and not the guilt of the believer, is before God. Faith rests on the perfect and efficacious death of the Saviour. And he that believes the word of God, His witness, has peace with God and eternal life in His Son.

3 Adam

Gospel Words, 3rd Series. No. 3.

In Rom. 5: 14 Adam is said to be a figure or type of Him that was to come. Such he is strikingly and, as with Aaron in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in contrast even more than resemblance.

Made in God's image, after His likeness, Adam had from God, dominion over bird of the heavens, and fish of the sea, over cattle, over all the earth, and over every living thing that moveth upon it. He, the only one of all here below, became living soul by Jehovah Elohim (the LORD God) breathing into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen. 2: 7). Therefore was his soul alone immortal; and his spirit, instead of going downward to the earth like a beast's, went upward to God that gave it (Eccles. 3: 21, Eccles. 12: 7). Therefore shall each one give account of himself to God, and all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done through the body according to what he did, whether good or bad (Rom. 14: 12, 2 Cor. 5: 10).

For Adam, not only responsible as he could not but be, soon became an object of judgment. Surrounded by every natural good, he was subjected to the simplest and least irksome of divine commands — to abstain from the fruit of a single tree, the test of his obedience. This he violated at the first temptation of the enemy, following his wife into evil instead of guiding her in good. Hence, as disobedient, he was driven out of Paradise under sentence of death, and when thus fallen became father of the race.

But the good, holy, and righteous LORD God sought Adam the very day he sinned, drew the guilty pair from their hiding-place, and, after bringing home their guilt respectively, in His judgment of the serpent revealed the triumph of His grace in the woman's Seed, the Second Man, and Last Adam (Gen. 3: 15).

And how blessed the contrast of Him Who was thus set forth from that early day, the one Object of faith and hope! For the Son of God is come and hath given us who believe understanding, that we may know Him that is true. Old Testament, no less than New, bears witness to His glory and His humiliation, His pouring out His soul unto death and His exaltation at God's right hand, as eventually and visibly over (not Israel only but) all peoples, nations, and languages, yea, all creation.

Meanwhile, as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned, so the grace of Christ brought in transcendent blessing, presented unto all men in the gracious appeal of the gospel, and taking effect "upon all that believe" (Rom. 3). For as through one offence the bearing was unto all men for condemnation, so through one righteousness the bearing is unto all men for justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of One shall the many be constituted righteous (Rom. 5: 12-19), Even the incredulous Jew could not consistently resist the truth of the gospel, if he held to the authority of the law. For he could not deny that Adam's trespass involved the race in sin and

condemnation. Was it not then worthy of God to bring in for the race a still better, richer, and more enduring good through the one Man, His own Son? And as the blessing is of God's grace unto all, so it is by faith and is preached to all, instead of depending on the law given to Israel. The gospel is universal in its appeal, yet takes effect only in those that believe, but equally in all believers be they Gentiles or Jews.

Adam, innocent, stood only on his obedience; but, swayed by his wife who was deceived by the tempter, he too disobeyed. He sought to be as God, knowing good and evil, and fell. Christ, on the contrary, Who was God, came in flesh to glorify God and save sinners, carrying out His obedience, as Adam his disobedience, unto death. And this He did perfectly and suffering to the utmost in the difficulties and ruin which man's sin had made, as Adam fell tried in the least degree with all circumstances in his favour. Wherefore also God highly exalted Christ, and sends out the glad tidings to all creation. And thus did Christ vindicate God's love, while Adam acted upon Satan's lie which defamed it, as if He kept back a little thing which would do His creatures great good. For that little thing, the forbidden fruit of the tree, Adam gave up God; Who so loved the world as to give His best, His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life.

Further, if Adam believed the enemy that gainsaid God's warning of death, Christ went down under the death of the cross, and (what was infinitely more) under the judgment of our iniquities, which Jehovah laid on His holy head as a sacrifice (Isa. 53). Thus was God's truth vindicated in a way worthy of Himself and of His Son. That He is light was thereby proved; that He is love, no less; both beyond dispute in the gift of His Son to die for the guilty according to His word. All the cost was God's, all the suffering was His Son's: when Man, on behalf of men, with all the value of a divine Person and, for those that believe, its infinite transferable efficacy with God.

And thus as Adam only became a father when fallen, Jesus stands risen from the dead, after having once suffered for sins, Just for unjust, the life-giving Spirit. He comes, as He said Himself, that His disciples might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. It is the life of Him Who bore their sins in His own body on the tree; it is now the life of Him risen when the debt was paid, and the judgment borne. Thus the believer has eternal life, and comes not into judgment, but has passed as his settled state from death into life.

Is it thus with you, whoever you may be, as you read these lines? If you hear His word and believe Him Who sent His Son Jesus, you are entitled to this as the portion which God's grace is now giving to the believer in His name. Beware of the tempter, a liar and murderer from the beginning. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. And the Holy Spirit is now bearing witness to Him. The church is responsibly, and ought to be, the pillar and basement of the truth; the Jew is not, nor still less the philosopher; but that assembly of a living God which owes its being and blessing to His grace, and is bound to confess Him Lord and Saviour. "Hear Him." Moses cannot save, nor Elijah; Jesus only. Believing in Jesus is of the Holy Spirit and to the glory of God the Father "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father who sent Him " (1 John 5: 23). "Whosoever denieth the Son hath not the Father, he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (1 John 2: 23). For indeed Jesus is the Good Shepherd that laid down His life for the sheep, and this in a way beyond all creature thought, after suffering all that man could do unrighteously in His faithfulness to God, suffering atoningly, He alone, from God in His love to lost man.

"Be it known unto you therefore, [men-] brethren, that through Him is preached unto you remission of sins. And in virtue of Him, everyone that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore lest that come upon you which is spoken of in

the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though one declare it unto you" (Acts 13: 38-41).

4 The two Trees

Gen. 2: 9.

(B.T. Vol. 19, p. 375-376. Gospel No. 3: 4.)

Scarce any fact of paradise seems less understood than that recorded in the latter half of Gen. 2: 9, none supposed to be more distinctly an early myth. Yet were these two trees, singled out from the rest, a positive fact suited to that day of primeval innocence, and to no other; but embodying divine principles of the deepest and most enduring value for all time; and this without applying force to either, or indulging in imagination of any kind, but in subjection to the indications of the inspired record itself. And the truth conveyed intimately concerns every soul of man.

The first thing to note is that "the tree of life" in the midst of the garden was absolutely distinct from that "of knowledge of good and evil." To eat of the latter was forbidden on pain of certain death (ver. 17). Only when the man did eat of the prohibited tree, the LORD God took care that he should not take also of the tree of life (Gen. 3: 22), It would have been the perpetuated life of sinful man: a calamity, and violation of all order, not a blessing. Apart from that transgression, the tree of life was open to him, and expressly outside the tree of knowledge.

Clearly then the first tree points out the channel of life for man unfallen, the provision of God for Adam in paradise freely given and quite independently of the second tree: so true is this that man forfeited his title to partake of the one tree when he ate of the other. Man was responsible not to eat of the tree of knowledge; if he abstained, he was free to eat of the tree of life. When guilty and fallen, he was debarred, and driven out, with a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life (Gen. 3: 24).

Now the constant effort of man, especially of religious man, is as it were to identify the two trees; that is, to suspend life on the fulfilment of responsibility: a notion which flies in the face of the facts, when man was innocent, and still more manifestly false, when man was a sinner, and expressly excluded from the tree of life. The original relationship was lost through transgression. The only natural religion that ever had or could have reality had ceased to be. All henceforth turned on what God is to man in saving mercy. Man in the most favourable circumstances had wholly failed toward God. Sin morally compelled God to be a judge. Love, divine grace, made Him a Saviour. Even so it was to lie only in and through His Son, His deigning to become man, and His going down into death and judgment for the guilty. The Father hath sent the Son as Saviour of the world (1 John 4: 14); the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19: 10).

But consider the intermediate dealings of God before the Advent. The Epistle to the Galatians lays great stress on the promises as given, a covenant previously confirmed by God, 430 years before the law. They, too, were thereby so arranged that the one could not annul, still less be confounded with, the other. Now the promises answered to the tree of life, as the law to the tree of knowing good and evil. The promises were the unconditional and pledged grace of God, designedly long before, and absolutely distinct from, the law, which expressed His righteous demand from man on the ground of his responsibility. If Israel, if any, pretended to stand on that ground before God, the ten words were His terms. Such terms can only be a ministry of death and condemnation to sinful creatures, as Israel were, as all mankind are. The fatal mistake then as always is to seek life by meeting man's responsibility.

Israel took that ground and failed utterly, as all sinners must who go the same path. Scripture records the failure in the O.T. and explains it in the N.T., that men now may profit by that solemn lesson of old and betake themselves only to God's grace in Christ.

For Christ alone has solved the problem; and this by accepting the full responsibility of man and bearing the consequences of sin and our sins in death, yea, death of the cross; so that, after glorifying God perfectly, He is risen from the dead, a life-giving Spirit to all believers. Thus there is no condemnation to those that are in Him, in Whom the two trees are thus brought into blessed harmony for our salvation unto God's glory.

As responsible men, we are ungodly and powerless, as the apostle asserts beyond dispute. So the Lord treats even the Jews as "lost," which closes the question of that responsibility. What more presumptuous in our sinful state of fallen nature than to seek life by pretending to fulfil our duty as men? Even to innocent man, as Gen. 2 teaches, life and responsibility were set expressly and altogether apart. But as Christ gives life freely to believers in His name, so is He propitiation by His death for their sins. For both were absolutely needed, if we were to be made meet for sharing the portion of the saints in light; and both are now given of God through faith to every believer, who has eternal life in the Son and through His blood redemption, the forgiveness of our offences. Not that a new responsibility is lacking, but it is the responsibility of a child of God. So Himself said "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14: 19); and previously that He gives His sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, and none shall snatch them out of His hand (John 10: 28), yea the Father's hand also securing them (29). Can any assurance be conceived plainer or stronger?

Thus in Christ alone, by His sacrifice and the sovereign gift of life, we have the principle of two trees, and this in fulness of blessing for all that believe; whereas the unbeliever, despising the word, and as self-confident as he is weak and sinful, repeats the error of Adam and Israel to his ruin. As Christians we have the treasure of Christ in our earthen vessel; and are responsible to be always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus, the new nature, may be manifested in our body.

5 Woman

Gen. 2.

(B.T. Vol. 20, p. 14-15. Gospel No. 3: 5.)

Alienated as fallen man is from God, nothing is so strange to him as the truth. And no wonder. It brings the true God before him, and reminds him of his departure from God. He is under Satan's lie, and naturally opposes the truth, which he is inclined to treat at best as myth, philosophic or religious. But it is by the word of God's revealed truth, that the Father of lights brought of His own will any forth, that they should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures. His word is truth; and of that word Christ is the great personal object of faith, Who puts every soul that hears the gospel to the test. To this end is He born, and to this end is come into the world, that He should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears His voice, and follows Him Who gives the believer eternal life. "He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John 5: 12). If a man recognised his ruin and guilt before God, how would he not from his heart receive the Saviour!

But, owning neither his own need nor God's grace in Christ, he stumbles at the word, being disobedient, and judges scripture, instead of being judged by it, as all believers are. Such an one sets Gen. 2 against Gen. 1, because through incredulity he sees God in neither, and is unwilling to learn the

truth in each and in both, alike necessary to give us a complete view.

Beyond controversy Gen. 1: 26-28 presents in noble terms the creation of man, the chief of his works here below. Here only did He call Himself into council; as man only He proposed to make in His image after His likeness, assigning dominion over the rest of earth's living creatures. But whatever may be the expression of singular dignity, it is simply mankind's place in creation, notably distinguished, and indisputably the highest, but yet the highest of earthly creatures, "male and female" like the rest of animated nature. It is therefore God, Elohim the Creator simply, of Whom we here read. It could not with propriety be otherwise.

Gen. 2 regards the scene from the point of moral relationship which brings in the name of Him Who governs on earth as revealed to Israel nationally, and so, in the O.T. as a whole, Jehovah, but Jehovah here carefully identified with the Creator, Jehovah Elohim, the LORD God. For there is none other. It is ignorance to account for the different names of God here or elsewhere, and any difference of words, style, etc., by imagining distinct writers, when all is demonstrably due to change of standpoint, and the simple but profound and exquisite accuracy of thought and language in Holy Writ. It is no rival account by another hand, but the same writer guided by the inspiring Spirit to set out man's moral position; the garden of Eden as the scene of his care, and, in the midst of abundance, the prohibition laid on him under penalty of death; the subject beasts, and birds, brought to him and named by him as their, lord; finally a helpmate, in contrast with every other formation, taken out of himself in the wise goodness of Him with Whom we have to do.

All is consistent with the presentation of relationship, beginning with Jehovah Elohim (the LORD God) in Gen. 2: 4, not Creator only but Moral Governor. Hence here, not in Gen. 1, is the garden of delight planted by the LORD God, the testing place of man's obedience. Here only in the midst of the garden we hear of the two trees: one the sovereign gift of life naturally; the other of responsibility. Here only are we told of man formed of the dust of the ground on one hand, and on the other by the LORD God breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. Adam was thus "son of God" (Luke 3: 38), a living soul, not as other creatures by creative power only, but he only by Jehovah Elohim breathing into his nostrils. Nor is the effect lost for the race; for, as Paul quotes to the Athenians, we too are His offspring, as no other earthly creatures are. Therefore is the soul immortal for good or for ill; if saved, it is for ever with Christ; if lost, for everlasting punishment, because He is refused and men die in their sins. Such was man's relationship to Jehovah Elohim; and the test of obedience here therefore follows.

In pointed contrast with the relationship to him of every animal of the field and every bird of the heavens, to which their master gave names by divine authority, no helpmate appeared, till Jehovah Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall on the man. Then He took one of his ribs, and built it into a woman, and brought her to the man (vers. 21, 22). And the man, notwithstanding his deep sleep, recognised her at once as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. "This shall be called Woman (or She-man), because she was taken out of man." It is the strongest possible statement of her peculiar relationship to himself, and as perfectly suiting chap. 2 as it would have been out of place in chap. 1. How sad that men of learning, professed theologians, should be so dull to discern the mind of God in scripture, so ready to plunge into the dark after any Will-o-the-wisp of rationalism to their own loss and the injury of all who follow them!

The apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 11: 8, 9, tersely sums up the truth of the case as having God's authority: "For man is not of woman, but woman of man; for neither was man created for the woman, but woman for the man." Those who venture to dispute the fact must one day learn what it is to give God the lie. It is the ground of the sanctity of marriage, one woman for one man: such was the order from the

beginning of Him Who made her, as He did, of man, and so to be one flesh, alas! too soon forgotten by men generally and even by Israel. But there it was indelibly written to instruct the faithful and shame the rebellious.

And is it nothing for souls that the same apostle in Eph. 5: 25-33 refers to this oracle of God? Yes, the first man Adam foreshadows the Second man and last Adam, on Whom fell a deeper sleep, that a heavenly Eve might be formed, even the church for which Christ in His love gave Himself, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. No doubt this mystery is great, but it is no less true and blessed. It is infinite grace, and only possible through the death of Christ, by which a poor sinner is reconciled through faith to God.

Oh, despise not the living and abiding word! Despise not the grace of God which sends you His glad tidings in Christ and in His blood which cleanseth from all sin! It is for you, that, believing on the name of the Son of God, "ye may know that ye have eternal life."

6 The Tempter

Gen. 3: 1.

Gospel Words, 3rd Series. No. 6.

It is to be noticed that, when the enemy assails our first parents, he is left in mysterious obscurity. Yet no believer, no serious mind, can doubt, that under the form of a serpent, Satan was at work to deceive and destroy, whatever the misused ingenuity of unbelief may reason to confuse the unwary and credulous. To the first book of the O. T. the last book of the N. T. answers here as elsewhere with singular force, and identifies him from first to last as "the old serpent, that is called Devil (slanderer) and Satan" (the adversary), Rev. 12: 9, Rev. 20: 2. Nor are we left to this symbolic prophecy alone; for the apostle Paul, in 2 Cor. 11: 3, had given no uncertain sound about this evil one long before. If the serpent lured man into his lie against God, grace revealed the woman's Seed, bruised indeed yet bruising the head of the enemy, the Deliverer not only of all that believe but of all creation also (Rom. 8). The Second man will surely triumph.

Along with the restless seduction of man into sin, Satan is shown us in the ancient book of Job and with striking clearness, as the accuser of the saint, in the presence of Jehovah (Job 1: 9, 10; Job 2: 4, 5), with permitted power to afflict and within certain limits even to destroy the body, though not Job's life.

But the issue for God and those that are His by faith is in every case his defeat eventually, in no case apart from the grace of the Lord Jesus. For there is found the personal antagonism. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3: 8). He may thwart God in each object and plan of His, he may traduce the believer, and for a while seem ever so successful; but he is doomed, as also all who trust him against God and His Anointed, to utter defeat and everlasting ruin.

Under the legal system, as God was hidden, so was the enemy. David first brought out into relief the type of His kingdom; and there we first hear of Satan (1 Chr. 21: 1). Numbering the people in the pride of a national ruler was abandoning dependence on Jehovah and a denial of his own early faith; and the chastening was seventy thousand men of Israel mowed down by pestilence.

In Ps. 109 we see Judas, the leader of the Christ-rejecting Jews against Jesus. Nor was it only a wicked man set over him, but Satan standing at his right hand: the plain prediction of the traitor's deed under the devil's instigation, as the psalm that follows is of Jehovah's exalting the Holy One to sit at His right hand till the word is given to judge. It is the same opposition, seemingly carrying its evil way, but only accomplishing the good counsels of God in honour of His Son.

Zech. 3 has no other voice, though speaking of Messiah's people. Did not their guilt and defilement give title to Satan against the high priest who represented them? Unquestionably and irremediably, had not Messiah been stricken for the transgressions of the people, and bruised for their iniquities. Righteously therefore can Jehovah that has chosen Jerusalem rebuke Satan, and say, Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Righteously can He cause the iniquity to pass from their representative and clothe him with rich apparel, and set a fair mitre on his head.

In the N.T. the Tempter confronts the Son of God, and in ways more consummately subtle and complete to draw Him out of dependence on God. The last three-fold effort is recorded for our instruction and thanksgiving: the natural, the worldly, the religious temptations utterly foiled by Him Who stands obediently in the truth, as Satan did not because there is no truth in him. The strong one, however fully armed, here found One stronger, Who overcame him, and took his panoply and divided his spoils. But again he appeared as the prince of the world; and as he could not mislead the Messiah out of the path of subjection, he drew the world, the Jews most of all guilty, to kill Him in it: yet this was his own suicidal guilt, as Christ's death was the glorifying of God about sin, and the reconciliation of all that believe, and indeed of all creation, save of course those that reject Him.

But the N.T. is no less clear that the devil and his angels, till judgment is executed, are incessant in their efforts to corrupt and destroy, to accuse the saints and to deceive the whole habitable earth. He works through the world and the flesh; but his own special field is through falsehood, and his direct enmity is against the grace, truth, and glory of His destined Conqueror. Hence the demons whom he commands trembled before the Lord Jesus in terror of His casting them into the abyss, or bottomless pit, where Satan is to be bound when Christ comes in His kingdom. Till then Satan acts as a devouring lion or a beguiler in a serpent-like craftiness, fashioning himself into an angel of light or kindling the fires of persecution, where he fails with his lies. Fallen angels there are already consigned to everlasting bonds under gloom for judgment of the great day. These so audaciously broke through God's order before the deluge that He has imprisoned them ever since; and they ought not to be confounded with those that are still allowed for a season to tempt mankind, and have access to the heavenly places as well as the earth till judgment befalls them. For their leader is the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience; as our wrestling if Christians is declared to be against the principalities, against the powers against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heaven, lies (or heavenly places). And this conflict will never cease while the church is on earth. But Rev. 12 tells us that they are to be cast out of the heaven, at a day still future, with new and marked consequences for a short time on earth, before the binding in the abyss for a thousand years, followed soon after by casting them into the lake of fire.

O my fellow sinner, heed the voice of the Son of God, that you may receive the remission of your sins and eternal life. He died for sins, and has authority now and on earth to give you remission. In Him was life, and He gives life, His own eternal life, to every one that believes. There is no other way; for He is the way, the truth, and the life. You are a son of disobedience, and by nature a child of wrath. Be not deceived longer by Satan, who cheats into thinking yourself strong and free, whereas you are without strength and his slave already. Christ only can save you; and He is as able as He is willing; and God has His pleasure in it, for He loves the Son and pities you. Satan can easily and will surely keep

you to be his companion in punishment, as now his servant in sin. Whosoever believeth on Christ shall not be ashamed.

7 Eve Tempted

Gen. 3: 1-5.

Gospel Words, 3rd Series. No. 7.

The subtlety of the enemy displays itself throughout. The weaker vessel is deceived, being drawn away by plausible appearances. How like our life! What a light is thrown on facts of every day, with their bitter results through unbelief and impenitence! For God is forgotten, and objects in the scene that now is take His place. Such is Satan's aim till the soul be betrayed into open ungodliness and despair, which hardens an act into a habit away from God.

Here, as the beginning of moral evil on earth, the Holy Spirit relates the fact, in its detail of instruction for every child of Adam, with the grand yet deep simplicity of these early books of inspiration.

"And he said, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (vers. 1) "It was but a question of what God had said. But where this is allowed, He is dishonoured, and a breach is made in the line of defence for the enemy to enter. To doubt God's word is the beginning of the worst evil, it is to sit in judgment on Himself; whereas He only can and ought to judge, and this He does now by His word, as indeed the Lord says will be at the last day. How presumptuous then for man to judge Him!" A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father where is mine honour? and if I be a master where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 1: 6). Under the seeming modesty of a query Satan was undermining the prime duty of a creature! And what did he seek in particular thereby? To insinuate a doubt of His goodness. What! May you not eat of all the trees? Is it possible that you are forbidden any? How can God love you and withhold a single good thing from you? Surely there must be some mistake. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Is it so?

It is written, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Eve on the contrary listened and parleyed. The mischief was begun. As the serpent had substituted the more distant and abstract "God" of creation for the Creator in moral relationship with man (Jehovah God), she fell into the trap, and discussed the question raised only to excite desire for what he had prohibited. A rebel himself, he maliciously likes to thwart the Highest and have companions in his sin and misery. Yielding to him, instead of turning away at once, Eve drops notice of the relationship Jehovah had deigned to establish, and becomes a prey while she continues her converse. "And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but of the fruit which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (vers. 2, 3).

Had she held fast the sense of her responsibility to obey, she would have resented the question, rather than answered it. And her answer lets us see that the evil intent of Satan did not fail of its effect. She adds to the prohibition, and takes from the penalty. Jehovah had not said a word about touching the forbidden fruit, but had in the most assured terms threatened death in the day of eating it. Exaggeration of truth is no more the truth than diminution of it; either enfeebles, and both are Satan's work. By the truth we are sanctified; and His word is truth.

But knowledge is not truth received in the love of it from God. Eve well knew and could tell the tempter the liberty given as to all other fruit, and the penalty for partaking of the one forbidden tree.

Yet she ventured to hear what the serpent had to say when there was already the proof that he was by his question impugning divine goodness. Did not He delight in their happiness? From Whom came their most bountiful provision? Was she cherishing dependence on Him, or confidence in Him? How worthless is knowledge which issues not in grateful praise and simple-hearted obedience! Still more, if it leave one free to distrust Him! Alas! unbelief has grown apace since Eve.

Emboldened by his crafty success the enemy advances. "And the serpent said to the woman, Ye will not surely die; but God knoweth that, in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes will be opened and ye will be as God, knowing good and evil" (vers. 4, 5). It is no longer insinuation against His good will, but open assault on His truth. And it is the same lie which beguiles mankind ever since. Death is hidden diligently from men's eyes; and when it cannot be, its import is explained away. People are willingly ignorant, and are earnest only to enjoy the present. Let us eat and drink, and tomorrow go here or there and get gain. Ah! ye know not what will be on the morrow; but certain it is, now that man is fallen, it is appointed to men once to die and after this judgment. But men lend a ready ear to him who deceived Eve, and, though unable to deny, believe it not: else that dark shadow would paralyse their pursuits and poison their pleasures. For the sting of death is sin, of which all are guilty; and into judgment for all their sins must come those who believe not in the Lord Jesus for remission.

Further, the serpent held out as a bribe the good of evil. In eating the forbidden fruit, your eyes will be opened, and ye will be as God, knowing good and evil. God is jealous; I am your friend. He would keep you ignorant and in leading strings. Take my advice: be independent and know for yourselves as He does. As he veiled the doom of transgression, so did he set off the bribe in glowing colours; and as Eve stayed to listen, she was tainted with his pestilent breath. She received the lying foe as her best friend when his slander of the living and true God entered her heart. Open sin and ruin followed without delay.

The remedy is not in man, but from God in Christ for him, yea, for the most guilty if he repent and believe the gospel. Nor did the law work out deliverance, but on the contrary wrath. The Lord Jesus is the only Deliverer, as indeed this very Gen. 3 foreshows. He vindicated God and vanquished Satan in every respect in which the first man failed. His coming, the gift of Him displayed God's immense love to the world, His death for sin was the irrefragable proof of God's truth no less than of His love; and His personal glory, yet becoming a man to be made sin for us, told out God's majesty as well as His love and truth. O what a contrast with those who, being only human, sought to be as God, and, coveting independence, became Satan's slaves! But thanks be to God Who through Him dead and risen gives the victory to us, even to all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is His voice that speaks from heaven, as of old He warned on earth. See that ye refuse not Him that speaks. For our God, whatever His love, is also a consuming fire.

8 The Fall of Man

Gen. 3: 6.

(B.T. Vol. 20, p. 56-57. Gospel No. 3: 8.)

The woman then was beguiled, quite beguiled as we are told in 1 Tim. 2: 14, and so became involved in transgression; but what of man? Of him we hear not a word in the colloquy of the serpent and Eve. The same N.T. authority assures us that *he* was not deceived: with his eyes open, he transgressed, swayed by his affection for his wife. It was deliberate disobedience on his part, not here thoughtlessness, or deceived as the weaker vessel by a mightier and subtle rebel; for both and their

posterity it was ruin and death, to man irreparable.

Let us then weigh the simple words in which God brings the solemn fact before us. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (ver. 6).

Eve by continuing to hear the tempter's words more and more lost the authority of God's word, which at first she knew clearly and felt to be paramount. But as she listened to one whose object was to draw her away from God and ensnare her into transgression, she became by degrees less sensitive as to God's honour and Satan's crafty malice. Was it so that after all God did not love man perfectly but reserved good from him? Perhaps too they might take this fruit, fair and excellent as it looked like other fruits in Paradise, without a blow so dreadful as death. God would not surely be so stern about so small a matter, He that gave them all else! And was it not strange that they (related so nearly to Himself, His offspring, Whose breath was their life-breath, made in His image, after His likeness) should be refused the knowledge of good and evil, to become so far like Himself—was it worthy of Him? Alas! Eve, when tempted was at length drawn away by lust, by the desire to have what God forbid, and was enticed. She used her eyes against the word, and saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes. Emboldened thus she reflected that the tree was desirable to make wise; and so the lust, having conceived, bears sin, as the sin, when fully completed, brings forth death. Compare James 1: 11, 15; 1 John 2: 16.

The woman had weakly fallen; but the stronger vessel, the man! He well knew the prohibition of the LORD God; he had the fatal yielding of Eve to warn him, if this could be needed; yet he dared to follow her into evil, from which he should have sought to shield her and confirm her soul in allegiance to God; and he too rebelled at her solicitation. All was lost in the fallen head of creation. What dishonour to God! what malignant joy to the enemy! what a root of evil to man! "By one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned" (Rom. 5: 12, R.V.).

The ruin was complete. Distrust of God's love, unbelief of His truth, slight of His glory in seizing it, introduced open self-will and transgression. And so it has been since with ever increasing corruption. For Adam was head of the human race and involved his posterity in his own evil. He became a father only after he was a sinner.

It was not so with those who in a higher sphere rebelled against God without a tempter. They each and all departed from God, though they excel in strength. They therefore are left to suffer the due reward of their deeds. But man, in his weakness and exposure to the subtle foe, is the object of God's richest mercy, and gives occasion for the display of His glory in nature and character, in His ways and counsels, as no other creature does or could enjoy; but this positively and perfectly in Christ alone, the Second Man.

Thus it comes out in His headship to the praise of God's grace. For if through the disobedience of the one man the many (or Adam's family) were constituted sinners, so also shall the many (or Christ's family) be constituted righteous. The head according to God determines the condition of the family. We belonged to the one naturally; we belong to the other by grace through faith. No Jew could deny that so in fact the headship of sin and sorrow was with the human race: how could he question that the headship of blessing was just and worthy of God? If Adam sunk his family into that sad estate, why should not Christ raise those who believe into the good portion which He deserves?

But it is not only that the gospel is thus indicated: no otherwise can the sinner be saved consistently

with God and His word. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." If this was true beyond question of Israel, is it not quite as manifestly of men in general? How blessed then that God has given His Son to be a man, a Saviour, a new head for all that believe! This as a whole scripture testifies from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. Salvation is in Another, not in the guilty; it is in Christ. And salvation is in no other; for neither is there any other, or a different, name under heaven that is given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Christ glorified God in death as a sacrifice for sin, so as to atone for all that believe in Him; as Adam by his transgression dishonoured God and brought death on himself and his race. It was when Christ carried obedience to the death of the cross, that He, risen from the dead, was proclaimed the new head: God was glorified in Him as to our disobedience and its consequences, and not only in His unbroken life of obedience. He from the highest glory took the lowest place of a slave, and endured the most ignominious death, that of the cross. O what a contrast with the man of dust who sought to be as God and disobeyed unto death!

As the work of Christ was morally glorious in the highest degree, so is it efficacious and unfailing for all that believe, even though ruined in Adam and adding their own sins. But where sin abounded, grace far exceeded; that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

9 Naked

Gen. 3: 7.

(B.T. Vol. 20, p. 74-76. Gospel No. 3: 9.)

Here was the immediate effect of sin in our first parents:- "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons," or girdles. There was the sense of shame as well of guilt, and they sought to hide it from themselves and from each other.

It is all in vain. Conscience was at work, but not before God or toward Him: else had they cried to Him in self-judgment and sorrowful confession of the evil they had done. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done that which is evil in thy sight," said the penitent king. Yet it might be said that his iniquity was grievous wrong to a devoted servant and his wife, hitherto blameless. Adulterous seduction of the woman! Planned death for the man! What could be worse offences against one's neighbour? But the contrite heart, even in such a case, justly feels that, whatever the crime before man, sin is against God so as to eclipse all else.

Unabashed innocence was gone. Adam and Eve, once guilty, felt the shame of sin; and their first effort was to cover their persons as they could. They knew that they were naked, when they had disobeyed God. But fig leaves cannot cover sin; and they knew this too, when they heard the voice of the LORD God the same day. For sin is against Him, and His voice when heard awakens terror in the guilty.

How good for such (and we all are, or have been, such) to know David's "instruction" in Ps. 32. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." What a blessing when God covers sin by Christ's sacrifice! Without this all else is vain. For, being sinners, we must come as sinners before God, Who refuses any other approach to Him in the first place. How perverse is unbelief! Men

strive to come as saints, which they are not, and refuse to come as sinners, which they are and nothing else. Why do they thus evade the truth to their own hurt as well as God's dishonour? Because they have no confidence in His grace., But His grace brings salvation, for it is possible only through Another. Heaven is through Christ alone, and consequently it is by faith. For faith receives the testimony or witness God has borne concerning His Son. And the witness is this that God gives the believer eternal life, and this life is in His Son. So absolutely true is this, that it is added: "he that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5: 10-12.

The work of Christ, as the fruit of God's grace, takes guile from the spirit. His blood purges the conscience. The useless apron or girdle, the filthy garment, is taken away; "the best robe" is put on. Shame gives place to uprightness, and perfect love casts out fear. Such are the riches of God's grace to him who believes in Christ. The pretension to work for pardon, peace, cleansing, or life, denies the guilt and ruin of the sinner. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (Rom. 4: 4, 5). The ungodly, the sinner, deserves judgment, which is perdition, by his works; but the gospel is sent to him as a lost one, that believing he may be justified and saved. What grace! Yet is it God's righteousness, Who gives the believer what Christ's work deserves; and thus only in the cross of Christ, where man's evil came out to the uttermost, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

See to it then that you rest on Christ only according to God's word. Without Him faith were as vain, as baptism, to say nothing of works. Else when clothed, as the apostle says (2 Cor. 5: 3), you will be found naked. For all must rise, unjust as well as just. And the clothing of the resurrection body will not hide but disclose the real condition. Christ alone meets the nakedness of the sinner; He washes, cleanses, and clothes for the eye of God. Without Christ, even when clothed, you will be found naked: a paradox in natural things; a certain truth spiritually. For in that day there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known.

10 Where art thou?

Gen. 3: 8, 9.

(B.T. Vol. 20, p. 91-92. Gospel No. 3: 10.)

The word of God is truth, where and when ever written, be the matter in hand what it may. How solemn when He, from Whom no appeal can be, is personally addressing man! So it was here when man had just fallen. "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where [art] thou?" (vers. 8, 9).

Man was gone from God; and it was now manifest and undeniable. Even before Jehovah Elohim called Adam and Eve into His presence, the fall was working its evil consequences. They were ashamed for the first time, and they sought to hide their shame from themselves and from one another. When they heard the voice of the LORD God, terror was added exceedingly, yet in vain; for how can man escape if summoned there?

Before the fall, how delightful was His gracious presence, Who planted the garden in Eden, and

therein put the man He had formed! And out of the ground made Jehovah Elohim to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, besides the two trees in the midst of the garden, the silent witnesses of truth beyond all the others. A river too for watering the garden was not wanting, which after that parted and became four beads. Into this garden then did the LORD God put the man to dress and keep it. More than this He brought every animal of the field and every fowl of the heavens to the man, to see what he would call them; and whatever man called each became its name, But more than all this (the sign of his being the possessor and lord of the lower creation) was the deep interest of Jehovah Elohim in building woman out of the man, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, to be his wife.

But sin now made God's presence most alarming. Man's conscience was bad; and the divine presence, instead of awakening love and gratitude, terrified them to the utmost. The fig leaves failed. Adam and his wife hid themselves among the trees of the garden. The summons told the sad truth: "Where art thou?" Gone from God! Till man sinned, there was no question of judgment. Sin made it necessary for God to judge him. From this man shrinks; his guilt cannot be hidden, and God must judge.

What has man done since? What have you done, dear reader? Added sin to sin. So the Psalmist, writing some thousands of years after, confesses that men are all gone out of the way; and this not of heathen merely who knew not God, but of those that knew Him and His law; for whatsoever the law saith, it speaketh to those that are under the law. But now God commands men that they should all everywhere repent, inasmuch as He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world, or habitable earth, in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained; whereof He has given assurance to all men in that He raised Him from the dead.

Oh, hear His call, while it is called Today. For this is the day of grace. As God came in quest of man who hid away from Him, convicted him of his sins, yet revealed the Seed of the woman to crush the great enemy of God and man; so Christ has already come, been made sin on the cross, was there and then once offered to bear sins in His own body on the tree. To Him does God direct the eye of faith. He is the one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. He is the unfailing Saviour, being God as well as man. He suffered once for all for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God. And "be it known to you therefore, through this Man is preached [not promised merely, but preached] unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe [to none other is it pledged] are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13: 38, 39).

You are not only gone from God but lost as you are. For when God in Christ came into the world to reconcile men to God, they would not have Him but cast Him out of His own world; they crucified and slew Him, Such is man's position after all God's dealings: he is lost. But the gospel, which says so, makes known God's salvation in Christ without money or price on man's part, as in truth it cost God everything, His message therefore is that, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up [and so He has been], that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Do you think that this is too easy a way to be saved, too uncertain for you to trust? Alas! the thought betrays your unbelief. For no way was so hard, even for God, as to give His own Son that you might live through Him, and that He might die in propitiation for your sins. And the only certainty a soul on earth can have is from receiving God's witness concerning His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he hath

not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning His Son. And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life (1 John 5).

11 Convicted

Gen. 3: 12, 13.

(B.T. Vol. 20, p. 105-106. Gospel No. 3: 11.)

The chapter tells how Adam and Eve fell into transgression, with mutual shame, and with undisguised alarm at the presence of God. There was no Sinai smoking as a whole, because Jehovah came down in fire; neither did smoke ascend like that of a furnace; nor did the earth quake; nor the trumpet sound loud exceedingly. His voice without a reproach or a menace struck the guilty pair with terror; and they hid themselves from before Him among the trees of the garden. Compelled to answer His call, the man owned, not his sin, but his fear because he was naked; but he could not escape the searching question, "Who told thee that thou art naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee not to eat?"

Truly the word of God is living and energetic, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to discern thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature unapparent before Him; but all things are naked and laid bare to His eyes with Whom we have to do. As yet there is not a trace of repentance, but hardness of heart and self-justification. Had there been the least self-judgment, any real sense of dishonour done to the LORD God, they had confessed their sin in listening to the tempter, and humbled themselves at once instead of covering their nakedness in their own way. And when they heard His voice, they would have gone to Him though with bitter sorrow, instead of simply biding from Him in conscious guilt. Each would have said, "Behold, I am vile: what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." "Now mine eye hath seen Thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes."

Far otherwise was it as yet with our first parents. "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (vers. 11, 12). What glaring disrespect and ingratitude to God! What utter lack of affection and compassionate care for his wife, whom he ought to have led and shielded if he could from evil, instead of following her into it! What unworthy and impudent reflection on Him Who gave the woman as a helpmeet for his good, not as an excuse for disobeying God! To hear Him was his first and known duty, even before she was made. Both the man and the woman knew the prohibition of the LORD God; both were fully aware of the penalty of disobeying; and both consciously rebelled, though separately, she quite deceived, he not so yet persuaded by her, preferring the creature to the Creator Who had set them blessed in responsibility to Himself.

It is hard to conceive aught lower, and withal more insolent, than the answer of the man:- "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." On the surface the words might be true; morally they were false, unworthy, and irreverent, yea blasphemous. Adam was so debased by sin as to seek to excuse himself by the woman's fault, and even to throw the blame on the LORD God; the woman only pleaded the serpent's craft. Neither felt or confessed personal wrong any more than disloyalty to God. The excuses only proved their guilt, and could not but be their conviction. Thus Adam was condemned expressly because he hearkened to his wife's voice (ver. 17);

and enmity was put between the serpent and the woman, who had sorrow multiplied instead of the pleasure she sought.

So it is with their offspring to this day. Sin brings in moral ruin; guilt leads to guile. Man without exception ever since is wilful and ungodly. There is no good but always worse evil from palliation or blaming others, as all are prone to do. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks; and as if is corrupted through sin, out of that treasure the wicked man brings forth wicked things.

Thenceforward the sole hope for fallen man lay in God; and God's sole available and effectual good for man was in sending His only-begotten Son to become not man only but a sacrifice for the sinful. And so the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of all that believe in Him, as the scriptures abundantly testify: the Saviour of the lost, not the poor notion of a reinstatement of the race in what the first man ruined, but the blessing of the believer with all that God counts worthy of the Second man, His own Son, and of His redemption. What a blessed refutation of "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me"! God so loved, not His children, nor His people, but "the world," the Christ-rejecting Satan-serving world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

As this is the greatest blessing God could give, not pardon only, nor even peace, but eternal life; so His Son, in Whom that life is, becomes the test of every sinner here below, small or great, civilised or barbarian, wise or unintelligent. All are alike sinners: there is no difference in that awful fact, though some are bolder than the rest. It is appointed to men once to die, and, after this, judgment. Impossible for any one to escape either by any resources of his own or by other men. But Christ, sent of God to that end, went down into death and bore the judgment from God, as propitiation for sins; so that, when He shall appear a second time, it will be to those that wait for Him apart from sin for salvation. So perfectly did He on the cross bear the sins of believers that none of them, as He said (John 5), comes into judgment.

Therefore does God call on you now, if you have not already obeyed His call, to receive life eternal and salvation in His Son. To receive Him is to receive, not only what you need and can find nowhere else, but all the blessing God loves to bestow. Seek not to extenuate your case like Adam and Eve. Hide not away from Him Who, knowing all your sins, pities you no less than them, and now sends you the gospel in all its fulness, as could only be when Christ came, and died atoningly, and rose triumphant. It is therefore now not only the grace but the righteousness of God. Through Christ's work He is just and the justifier of the believer. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He that believes on Him is not judged: he that believes not has been judged already, because he has not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness more than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hates the light and comes not to the light, lest his works should be convicted; but he that does the truth comes to the light that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God (John 3).

12 The woman's Seed

The Serpent and the Woman's Seed.

Gen. 3: 14, 15.

(B.T. Vol. 20, p. 127-128. Gospel No. 3: 12.)

Of the man and the woman the LORD God inquired; not of the serpent, a known and old rebel. On

him judgment was summarily pronounced, but governmental, in accordance with the O.T., rather than everlasting, which was reserved for Christ and the N.T. "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field. On thy belly shalt thou go and eat dust all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it (he) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (vers. 14, 15).

What can be more striking or instructive? It is in judging the enemy that the revelation of grace is made, not in what was said subsequently to the woman (ver. 16) or to Adam (vers. 17-19). This was not only just but for the divine glory in Christ. What could morally warrant promise to fallen man or woman? Their transgression just perpetrated called for judgment, and the LORD God did not fail to declare it. He is not slack to reprove sin or to vindicate His majesty. Both are evident here in His own words at the beginning; still more, and perfectly, in the completion of the ages, when Christ has been manifested for putting away of sin by His sacrifice. Never before had sin been adequately judged, never before had God been absolutely glorified about sin. And the salvation which results to the believer is according to the perfection of Christ's atoning work and of God's glorification thereby (13: 31, John 17: 4, 5 26).

All the pretensions of sinful man are thus swept away and annihilated. No room is left for the dream of man's amelioration. Not so is God vindicated or sin judged or the sinner saved. There is no restoration of the first man, but the revelation of the Second; no promise to the fallen head, but the assurance of the Last Adam, a life-giving Spirit, the woman's Seed, to crush Satan. In Him and His cross meet, as nowhere else, truth and love, righteousness and grace, man to the last degree obedient and submissive, holy yet suffering, and suffering not only for righteousness and truth as well as love beyond all that ever were, but for sins — He alone, when man and Satan had done their worst, suffering for sin from God, His God. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? But Thou art holy that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Ps. 22: 1, 3).

God answered Him, not merely by receiving His spirit committed into His Father's hands but by resurrection from among the dead and seating Him at His own right hand in heaven. We answer it too in our measure by believing in His name and confessing that it was for sin, yea for our sins, He the sin-bearer on the tree was thus abandoned of God, that sin might be judged, and we who believe be completely cleansed, and the glad tidings of repentance and remission of sins be preached in His name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem, the city of all the world most guilty of His crucifixion.

Undoubtedly the blessing of divine grace was *for* Adam or any of his race, sinful though they were, if they believed; but the utmost care was taken that none could say truthfully that it was a promise to Adam. On the ground of the first man there was sin and ruin and death. Innocence lost is irreparable. There is no possible return to what was lost, any more than ground for hope that fallen man would do better than man innocent.

It is in this judgment on the Serpent that the LORD God pointed out the only hope and the full assurance of victory over the foe. It is wholly and exclusively in the woman's Seed. Christ is Satan's conqueror, Christ is the Saviour of man. It was not yet the due moment to make Him known as the Son of God, as God, yea as Jehovah. All this and more we find in the course of O.T. revelation; and all is most clearly revealed in the N.T., each aspect of His glory just as it was needed and fitting.

Here we may readily see His deep grace, His wisdom, His holiness; yet the simple truth, that the vindicator of God, the avenger of man, and the destroyer of Satan, would be the woman's Seed, not the man's, with a strict propriety that marks out the Lord Jesus from every other born of woman. The responsible man was altogether left out. Weak woman, who had at the beginning listened to the evil

one and drawn her husband after her into transgression, was to be taken up in the pure and rich mercy of God. For in man and by man it was His counsel to bring a new and real and abiding glory to His name, and thus only to save the lost and defeat Satan.

There is indeed a true and essential work in the conscience, heart, and ways of every soul that believes unto salvation. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. But, morally speaking, the beginning of all goodness for a sinner is a divinely given sense and confession of his badness; and it is clear that this alone could give not peace, but despair. He is called therefore in the gospel to look out of himself wholly unto Jesus, the woman's Seed, and to rest in the work He wrought for us, in His suffering for sins on the cross. To this scripture pointed throughout, as the N.T. expresses it with the utmost fulness and precision. Even here we have it in the crushing of His heel: a figure, taken from the serpent's habit, to set forth the acuteness of the wound inflicted on the woman's Seed, yet leave room for the contrast of his own crushed head under the risen Conqueror. The type here was but a shadow, as indeed elsewhere, and could not in this case fully announce that the deliverance of the guilty demanded the Saviour's death. But even this lack was supplied in the intimation of the skins wherewith the LORD God immediately after clothed Adam and Eve. It was a covering, not of mere nature like the fig leaves, to which they first had recourse. The divine clothing of the guilty is founded on death, the application of which to Christ is easy and most intelligible.

Such then is the object of faith presented in Scripture. One believes God when he believes in Christ, the woman's Seed. So deep is the glory of His person, that only the Father knows Him fully. Man's mind, presuming to fathom that depth, breaks away into one heterodoxy or another, on the human side especially, but also on the divine. The only safety is to believe God's testimony concerning Him Who is the Son of God and the woman's Seed. This is the mystery of godliness, not only of truth but of godliness: "He Who was manifested in flesh." It is the abandonment of self, of the first man, the confession of our evil, to find the salvation of God in the woman's Seed, and in the Son, not incarnate only, but in the body of His flesh *through death*. Thus only has God reconciled us who believe, once in settled alienation and enemies in mind by wicked works, now children and sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.