

Volume 17--Studies in the Scriptures—No. 10
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THE LORD'S PRAYER.

“And lead us not into temptation” (Matt. 6:13). This petition also begins with the word “And,” requiring us to mark closely its relation to the one preceding. The connection between them may be set forth thus: first, the previous petition concerns the negative side of our justification, while this one has to do with our practical sanctification, for the two blessings must never be severed, thus we see the *balance* of Truth is again perfectly preserved. Second, past sins being pardoned, we should pray fervently for grace to prevent us from repeating them. We cannot rightly desire God to forgive us our sins, unless we sincerely long for grace to abstain from the like for the time to come, and therefore we should make conscience of begging earnestly for strength to avoid a repetition of them. Third, in the fifth petition we pray for the remission of the guilt of sin, here we ask for deliverance from its power. God’s granting of the former request is to encourage faith to ask Him to mortify the flesh and vivify the spirit.

Ere proceeding further it may be best to clear the way by disposing of what is a real difficulty to many. “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man” (James 1:13). There is no more conflict between, “Lead us not into temptation,” and, “neither tempteth He any man,” than there is the slightest opposition between, “God cannot be tempted with evil,” and, “they turned back and tempted God” (Psa. 78:41). God tempts no man means that He infuses evil into none, nor is in anywise a partner with us in our guilt. The criminality of sin is wholly upon ourselves, as James 1:14, 15 makes clear. But men *deny* that it is from their own corrupt natures such and such evils proceed, blaming their temptations—and if they are unable to fix the evil on those temptations, then they seek to excuse themselves by throwing the blame upon God, as Adam did.

It should be pointed out that the word “tempt” has a twofold significance in Scripture, though it is not always easy to determine which of them applies to some particular passages: to try, test, put to the proof; and to solicit to evil. When it is said, “God did tempt Abraham” (Gen. 22:1), it means that He tested him, putting to the proof his faith and fidelity; but when we read that Satan tempted Christ, it signifies that he sought to encompass His downfall—morally impossible though it were. To “tempt” is to make trial of a thing or person: what he is, and what he will do. We may tempt God or put Him to the proof in a way of duty, as when we await the fulfillment of His promise: Malachi 3:10. In Psalm 78:41 Israel tempted God in a way of *sin*: acting in such a manner as to provoke His displeasure.

“And lead us not into temptation.” Note what is clearly *implied* by these words. First, God’s universal providence is owned. All creatures are at the sovereign disposal of their Maker: He has the same absolute control over evil as over good. In this petition an acknowledgment is made that God has the *ordering* of all temptations. Second, His justice and our ill-desert are tacitly avowed. Our wickedness is such that God would be but righteous were He to now allow us to be completely swallowed up in sin and destroyed by Satan. Third, His mercy is recognized. Though we have so grievously provoked Him, yet He has for Christ’s sake remitted our debts, and therefore a plea is made that He will henceforth preserve us. Fourth, our weakness is acknowledged. Because we realize that

we are unable to stand against them in our own strength, we pray, "lead us not into temptation."

How does God lead us into temptation? First, *objectively*: when His providences, though good in themselves, offer occasions (because of our depravity) for sin. If we be self-righteous, He may lead us into circumstances something like Job experienced. If we be self-confident, He may suffer us to be tempted as Peter was. If we be self-complacent, He may bring us into a similar situation to the one Hezekiah encountered (2 Chron. 32). God leads many into poverty, which though a sore trial, is yet, under His blessing, often enriching to the soul. God leads some into prosperity, which is a great snare to many, yet if sanctified by Him enlarges capacity for usefulness. Second, God tempts *permissively*: when He does not restrain the Evil One (which He is under no obligation to do), but suffers him to sift us as wheat—just as a strong wind snaps off dead boughs from living trees. Third, God tempts *judicially*: punishing sins by allowing the Devil to lead men into further sin.

And *why* does God tempt His people, either objectively by His providences, or subjectively and permissively by Satan? For various reasons. First, to discover to us our weakness and our deep need of His grace. God withdraws His sustaining arm from Hezekiah in order, "that he might know all that was in his heart" (2 Chron. 32:31). When God leaves us to ourselves, it is a most painful and humiliating discovery that we make, yet is it needful if we are to pray from the heart, "Hold *Thou* me up, and I shall be safe" (Psa. 119:117). Second, to teach us the need of watchfulness and prayer. Most of us are so stupid and unbelieving that we learn only in the hard school of experience, and even there its lessons have to be *knocked* into us. Little by little we discover how dearly we have to pay for rashness, carelessness, and presumption. Third, to cure our slothfulness. God calls, "Awake thou that sleepest" (Eph. 5:14), but we heed Him not; and therefore He often employs rough servants to rudely arouse us. Fourth, to reveal to us the importance and value of the armour He has appointed. If we *will* go forth to battle without our spiritual panoply, then we must not be surprised at the wounds we receive; but they may make us more careful for the future!

From all that has been said above it should be clear that we are not to pray simply and absolutely against all temptations. Christ Himself was tempted by the Devil, and was definitely led into the wilderness by the Spirit for that very end. All temptations are not evil, either in their nature, design, or outcome. It is from the *evil* of temptations that we pray to be spared (as the next clause in the prayer indicates), yet even that submissively and with qualification. We are to pray that we may not be led into temptation; or if God sees fit that we should be tempted, that we may not yield thereto; or if we yield, that we be not totally overcome. Nor may we pray for a total exemption from trials, but only for a removal of the *judgment* of them. God often permits Satan to assault and harass us in order to humble us, to drive us to Himself, and to glorify Himself by manifesting more fully to us His preserving power. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations: knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2, 3).

In conclusion, a few remarks upon *our responsibility* in connection with temptation. First, it is our bounden duty to avoid those persons and places which would solicit us to evil, as we should also be on the alert for the first signs of Satan's approach: Psalm 19:13; Proverbs 4:14, etc. As an unknown writer has said, "He who carries about with him so much inflammable material, would do well to keep the greatest possible distance

from the fire.” Second, we must steadfastly resist the Devil: 1 Peter 5:8, 9. And that resistance is to be thorough and total: “Take us the foxes, the *little* foxes that spoil the vines” (Song. 2:15)—we must not yield a single inch to our enemy. Third, we are to go to God submissively for grace: the measure He grants us is according to His good pleasure: Philippians 2:13. “We are to endeavour indeed to pray, and use all good means to come out of temptation, but submissively—if the Lord be pleased to continue His exercising of you. Nay, though God should continue the temptation, and for the present not give thee those measures of grace necessary for you, yet you must not murmur, but lie at His feet, for God is *the Lord* of His grace” (Thomas Manton). Thus, this petition is to be presented in subserviency to God’s sovereign will.—A.W.P.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

3. *The Beatitudes: Matt. 5:1-11.*

“Blessed are the Meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (v. 5). There has been considerable difference of opinion as to exactly what meekness consists of. When we wrote upon this verse some twelve years ago, we defined it as *humility*, but it now appears to us that that is inadequate, for there is no single term which is capable of fully expressing all that is included in this virtue. A study of its usage in Scripture reveals, first, that it is linked with and cannot be separated from *lowliness*: “Learn of Me: for I am meek and *lowly* in heart” (Matt. 11:29); “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all *lowliness* and meekness” (Eph 4:1, 2). Second, it is associated with and cannot be divorced from *gentleness*: “I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1); “To speak evil of no man, to be not brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men” (Titus 3:2). Third, “receive with meekness the engrafted Word,” as opposed to, “the *wrath* of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (James 1:20, 21). Fourth, the Divine promise is, “the meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way” (Psa. 25:9), intimating that this grace consists of a *pliant* heart and will.

Additional help in determining for us the meaning and scope of the word “meek,” is to be obtained from duly noting our present verse in the light of the two preceding ones. It is to be kept steadily in mind that in these Beatitudes our Lord is describing the orderly development of God’s work of grace as it is experimentally realized in the soul. First, there is a poverty of spirit: a sense of our insufficiency and nothingness, a realization of our unworthiness and unprofitableness. Next, there is a mourning over our lost condition, sorrowing for the awfulness of our sins against God. And now we have meekness as a bi-product of self-emptying and self-humiliation; or, in other words, there is a broken will and a receptive heart before God. Meekness is not only the antithesis of pride, but of stubbornness, fierceness, vengefulness. It is the taming of the lion, the making of the wolf to lie down as a kid.

Thomas Scott rightly points out that, “There is a *natural* meekness of spirit, springing from love of ease, defect in sensibility and firmness, and the pre-dominance of other passions, which should be carefully distinguished from evangelical meekness. It is timid and pliant, easily deterred from good, and persuaded to evil; it leads to criminality in one extreme, as impetuosity of spirit does in another: it is often found in ungodly men; and it sometimes forms the grand defect in the character of pious persons, as in the case of Eli, and of Jehoshaphat. Divine grace operates in rendering such men more firm, resolute, and vigorous; as it doth in rendering men of an opposite temper, more yielding and quiet. The meekness to which the blessing is annexed, is not constitutional, but *gracious*; and men of the most vehement, impetuous, irascible, and implacable dispositions, by looking to Jesus through the grace of God, learn to curb their temper, to cease from resentment, to avoid giving offense by injurious words and actions, to make concessions and forgive injuries.”

Meekness is the opposite of *self-will* toward God, and of *ill-will* toward men. “The meek are those who quietly submit themselves before God, to His Word, to His rod, who follow His directions and comply with His designs, and are gentle toward men” (Matthew Henry). As pointed out above, this is not constitutional, but gracious—a precious fruit of the Spirit’s working. Godly sorrow softens the heart, so that it is made receptive

to the entrance of the Word. Meekness consists in the spirit being made pliant, tractable, submissive, teachable. Speaking prophetically through Isaiah the Saviour said, "The LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto *the meek*" (61:1), for *they* have bowed to the authority of the Law. And again it is written, "For the LORD taketh pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation" (Psa. 149:4).

A word or two on the *fruits* of meekness. First, *Godwards*. Where this grace is in the ascendant, the enmity of the carnal mind is subdued, and its possessor bears God's chastenings with quietness and patience. Illustrations thereof are seen in the cases of Aaron (Lev. 10:3), Eli (1 Sam. 3:18), and David (Psa. 39:9). Supremely it was exemplified by Christ, who declared, "I am a worm, and no man" (Psa. 22:6), which had reference not only to His being humbled into the dust, but also to the fact that there was nothing in Him which resisted the judgments of God: "The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). He was "led (not dragged), as a lamb to the slaughter": when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He was buffeted, He threatened not. He was the very King of meekness.

Second, *manwards*. Inasmuch as meekness is that spirit which has been schooled to mildness by discipline and suffering, and brought into sweet resignation to the will of God, it causes the believer to bear patiently those insults and injuries which he receives at the hands of his fellows, and makes him ready to accept instruction or admonition from the least of the saints, moving him to think more highly of others than of himself. Meekness enables the Christian to endure provocations without being inflamed by them: he remains cool when others get heated. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness: considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). This means, not with a lordly and domineering attitude, not with a harsh and censorious temper, not with a love of finding fault and desire for inflicting the discipline of the church; but with gentleness, humility, and patience.

But meekness must not be confused with weakness. True meekness is ever manifested by yielding to God's will, yet it will not yield a principle of righteousness or compromise with evil. God-given meekness can also stand up for God-given rights: when God's glory is impeached, we must have a zeal which is as hot as fire. Moses was "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3), yet when he saw the Israelites dancing before the golden calf, in zeal for Jehovah's honour, he broke the two tables of stone, and put to the sword those who had transgressed. Note how firmly and boldly the Apostles stood their ground in Acts 16:35-37. Above all, remember how Christ Himself, in concern for His Father's glory, made a whip of cords and drove the desecrators out of the temple. Meekness restrains from private revenge, but it in nowise conflicts with the requirements of fidelity to God, His cause, and His people.

"For they shall inherit the earth" or "land," for both the Hebrew and Greek words possess this double meaning. This promise is taken from Psalm 37:11 and may be understood in a threefold way. First, *spiritually*, as the second half of that verse intimates: "The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of *peace*." The spirit of meekness is what enables its possessor to get so much enjoyment out of his earthly portion, be it small or large. Delivered from a greedy and grasping disposition, he is satisfied with such things as he has: "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked" (Psa. 37:16). Contentment of mind is one of the fruits of meekness. The haughty and covetous do not "inherit the earth," though they may own

many acres of it. The humble Christian is far happier in a cottage than the wicked in a palace: "Better is little with the fear of the LORD, than great treasure and trouble therewith" (Prov. 15:16).

Second, *literally*. The meek inherit the earth in regard of *right*, being the members of Christ, who is Lord of all. Hence, writing to the saints, Paul said, "For all things are yours whether . . . *the world*, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours" (1 Cor. 3:21, 22). Right or title to the earth is twofold: civil and spiritual. The former is that which holds good—according to their laws and customs—before *men*, and in regard thereof they are called lords of such lands they have a right unto. The latter is that which is approved before *God*. Adam had this spiritual right to the earth before he fell, but by his sin he forfeited it both for himself and his posterity. But Christ has regained it for all the elect, hence the Apostle said, "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:10). Third, *mystically*: Psalm 37:11 is an Old Testament promise with a New Testament meaning: the land of Canaan was a figure of Heaven, of which meekness proves the possessor to be an heir, and for which it is an essential qualification.

From what has been before us let us learn, first, the value of this grace and the need of praying for an increase of the same: "Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgments: seek righteousness, seek *meekness*" (Zeph. 2:3). As a further inducement to this end, mark these precious promises: "The meek shall eat and be satisfied" (Psa. 22:26), "The LORD lifteth up the meek" (Psa. 147:6), "The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD" (Isa. 29:19). Second, see the folly of those who are so diligent in seeking earthly possessions without any regard to Christ. Since all right to the earth was lost by Adam and is only recovered by the Redeemer—until they have part in Him none can with the comfort of a good conscience either purchase or possess any mundane inheritance. Third, let the fact that the meek, through Christ, inherit the earth, serve for a bridle against all inordinate care for the world: since we are members of Christ the supply of every need is certain, and an infinitely better portion is ours than the perishing things of time and sense.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). In the first three Beatitudes we are called upon to witness the heart exercises of those who have been awakened by the Spirit God. First, there is a sense of need, a realization of their nothingness and emptiness. Second, there is a judging of self, a consciousness of their guilt and sorrowing over their lost condition. Third, there is an end of seeking to justify themselves before God, an abandonment of all pretences to personal merit, a taking of their place in the dust before God. And here, in the fourth, the eye of the soul is turned away from self to Another: there is a longing after that which they know they have not got and which they are conscious they urgently need. There has been much needless quibbling as to the precise import of the word, "righteousness," in this verse, and it seems to us that most of the commentators have failed to grasp its fullness.

In many Old Testament passages, "righteousness," is synonymous with "salvation," as will appear from the following: "Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down *righteousness*: let the earth open, and let them bring forth *salvation*, and let righteousness spring up together: I the LORD have created it" (Isa. 45:8). "Hearken unto Me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near *My righteousness*; it shall not be far off, and *My salvation* shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion" (Isa. 46:12-13). "My righteousness is near, My salvation is set forth, and Mine arms shall

judge the people: the isles shall wait upon Me, and on Mine arms shall they trust" (Isa. 51:5). "Thus saith the LORD, keep ye judgment and do justice: for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed" (Isa. 56:1). "He hath clothed me with the garments of *salvation*, He hath covered me with the robe of *righteousness*" (Isa. 61:10). Yet after all, this does not bring us much nearer, in that "salvation" is one of the most comprehensive terms to be found in the Scriptures. Let us, then, seek to define its meaning a little more closely.

Taking it in its widest latitude, to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" means to yearn after God's favour, image, and felicity. "Righteousness" is a term denoting all spiritual blessings: "seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). But more specifically, "righteousness" in our text has reference, first, to the righteousness of faith whereby a sinner is justified freely by Divine grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. As the result of his Surety's obedience being imputed to him, the believer stands *legally righteous* before God. As sinners who have constantly broken the Law in thought, word, and deed, we are utterly destitute of righteousness, "for there is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). But God has provided a perfect righteousness in Christ for all who believe: it is the best "robe" put upon each returning prodigal. The merits of Christ's perfect keeping of the Law is reckoned to the account of every sinner who shelters in Him.

Second, this "righteousness" for which the awakened sinner longs is to be understood of *inward and sanctifying* righteousness, for as we so often point out, justification and sanctification are never to be severed. The one in whom the Spirit graciously works desires not only an *imputed* righteousness, but an *imparted* one too; he not only longs for a restoration to God's favour, but to have God's image renewed in him. For this twofold "righteousness," the convicted "hunger and thirst," expressive of vehement desire, of which the soul is acutely conscious, for as in bodily hunger and thirst there are sharp pangs and an intense longing for their appeasement, so it is with the soul. First, the Spirit brings before the conscience the holy and inexorable requirements of God. Next, He convicts the soul of its destitution and guilt, so that he realizes his abject poverty and lost condition, seeing there is no hope in and from himself. And then He creates a deep hunger and thirst which causes him to look unto and seek relief from Christ, "The Lord our righteousness."

Like the previous ones, this fourth Beatitude describes a *dual* experience: an initial and a continuous, that which begins in the unconverted, but is perpetuated in the saved sinner. There is a repeated exercise of this grace, felt at varying intervals. The one who longed to be saved by Christ, now yearns to be made *like Him*. Looked at in its widest aspect, this hungering and thirsting refers to that panting of the renewed heart after God (Psa. 42:1), that yearning for a closer walk with Him, that longing for more perfect conformity to the image of His Son. It tells of those aspirations of the new nature for Divine blessings which alone can strengthen, sustain and satisfy it. Our text presents such a paradox that it is evident no carnal mind ever invented it. Can one who has been brought into vital union with Him who is the Bread of life and in whom all fullness dwells, be found *still* hungering and thirsting? Yes, such is the experience of the renewed heart. Mark carefully the tense of the verb: it is not, "Blessed are they which have," but, "Blessed are they *which do* hunger and thirst." This has ever been the experience of God's saints: Psalm 82:4; Philippians 3:8, 14.

“They shall be filled.” Like the first part of our text, this also has a double fulfillment: an initial, and a continuous. When God creates a hunger and thirst in the soul, it is that He may satisfy it. When the poor sinner is made to feel his need of Christ, it is that he may be drawn to and led to embrace Him. Like the prodigal who came to the Father as a penitent, the believing sinner now feeds on the One figured by the “fatted calf.” He is made to exclaim, “surely in the Lord have I righteousness.” “They shall be filled” with the peace of God which passeth all understanding. “Filled” with that Divine blessing to which no sorrow is added. “Filled” with praise and thanksgiving unto Him who has wrought all our works in us. “Filled” with that which this poor world can neither give nor take away. “Filled” by the goodness and mercy of God, till their cup runneth over. And yet, all that is enjoyed now is but a little foretaste of what God has prepared for them that love Him: in the Day to come we shall be “filled” with Divine holiness, for we shall be made “like Him” (1 John 3:2). Then shall we be done with sin forever: then shall we “hunger *no more*, neither thirst *anymore*” (Rev. 7:16).

As this fourth Beatitude has been such a storehouse of comfort to many a tried and troubled believer, let us point out the use which may be made of it by Satan-harassed believers. First, by those whose faith is little and weak. There are not a few in God’s family who sincerely long to please Him in all things and to live in no sin against their conscience, and yet they find in themselves so much distrust and despair of God’s mercy that they are conscious of much more doubting than faith—so that they are brought to seriously question their election and state before God. Here, then, is Divine consolation for them: if they genuinely hunger and thirst after righteousness, Christ Himself pronounces them *blessed*. Those who are displeased with their unbelief, who truly desire to be purged from distrust, who long and pray for increased faith and assurance—evidencing their sincerity by diligently using all proper means—are the subjects of God’s approbation.

Second, by those whose sanctification is so imperfect. Many there be who are most anxious to please God and make conscience of all known sins, yet find in themselves so much darkness of mind, activity of rebellious corruption, forwardness in their affections, perverseness in their wills, yea, a constant proneness to all manner of sins. They can perceive so little of the fruits of sanctification, so little evidence of spiritual life, so few signs of Divine grace at work within, that they often seriously doubt if they have received any grace at all. This is a fearfully heavy burden, and greatly casts down the soul. But here is Divine consolation. Christ pronounces, “Blessed,” *not* those who *are full* of righteousness, but those who “hunger and thirst” *after* it. Those who mourn over their depravity, who grieve over the plague of their hearts, who yearn for conformity to Christ—using the means constantly—are accepted of God in Christ.

Third, by the more extreme case of one who has grievously departed from God and long been a backslider, and now conscious of his wickedness, is in despair. Satan will tell him that his case is hopeless, that he is an apostate, that Hell is prepared for him and he must surely be damned; and the poor soul is ready to believe that such must really be the case. He is destitute of peace, all his evidences are eclipsed, he cannot perceive a ray of hope. Nevertheless, here is Divine comfort. If he truly mourns over his departure from God, hates himself for his backsliding, sorrows over his sins, truly desires to repent of them and longs to be reconciled to God and restored to communion with Him, then he too, is among the blessed: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.”—A.W.P.

THE LIFE OF DAVID.

82. *His Sacred Song.*

The second section of David's song glides so smoothly into the third that there is scarcely a perceptible break between them: in the one he recounts the Lord's gracious deliverances of him from his numerous and relentless enemies—in the other he states the reasons why He had intervened on his behalf. A few more words now on the closing verses of the former: "He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters; He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me" (2 Sam. 22:17, 18). Here he freely ascribes unto God the glory of his deliverances: extolling His goodness, power, faithfulness, and sufficiency. If God be for us, it matters not who be against us. Torrents of evil shall not drown the one whose God sits upon the floods to restrain their fury. He has but to speak and the winds are calmed, the downpour ceases, and the floods subside; true alike physically and morally.

"They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay" (v. 19). This is a parenthetical statement between verses 18 and 20, wherein the writer refers to the determined efforts of his foes to prevent his escape and ensure his destruction. "When David had framed any plan for secreting or securing himself in the day of his calamity, his enemies employed every method of treachery and malice to prevent his success. Thus the men of Keilah were ready to deliver him to Saul (1 Sam. 23:7-12) and the Ziphites repeatedly informed on him (1 Sam. 26:1): and therefore, notwithstanding his own prudence and activity, he would have been cut off if the Lord Himself had not protected him by His own immediate and extraordinary interpositions" (Thomas Scott). "But (blessed "but!"), "The LORD was my stay"—his support, the One on whom he rested—nor was his confidence disappointed. When the Enemy rages most fiercely against us, then is the time to lean most heavily upon the everlasting arms.

"He brought me forth also into a large place: He delivered me, because He delighted in me" (2 Sam. 22:20). It is here that the third division of this inspired song really begins, the main purpose of which is to vindicate David, by showing that he had done nothing to provoke or deserve the fierce attacks which had been made upon him; and to affirm that God had acted in righteousness in favouring him with deliverance. But before taking up this leading thought, let us observe and admire the ways of the Lord. God does not leave His work half done, for after He has defeated the foe, He leads the captive out into liberty. After pining for years in the prison, Joseph was advanced to the palace; from the cave of Adullam David was elevated to the throne. This illustrates and exemplifies a most important and blessed principle in the dealings of God with His people, and when laid hold of by faith and hope it affords unspeakable comfort to the oppressed and despondent.

The prison ever precedes the palace in true spiritual experience, not only at our first awakening, but repeatedly throughout the Christian life. The soul is shut up in confinement, before it is brought forth "into a large place." The spirit of bondage is experienced before we receive the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15). Our frail craft is made to battle long against the angry waves, before the Lord appears for our relief (Matt. 14:22-33). Bear this steadily in mind, dear reader, while you are passing through the day of calamity—"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will *complete it*" (Phil. 1:6). Enlargement of spirit will be the more appreciated after a season of sorrowful confinement. Remember, then, that Joseph

did not die in prison, nor did David *end* his days in the cave of Adullam—"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Sometimes we are granted a foretaste of that joy even in this vale of tears; but even if we are not, all weeping shall end when the night is over.

Once again we would remind ourselves that the *antitypical David* must be kept before us as we pass from verse to verse of this song, for the experiences of the members are identical with those which were endured by the Head of the mystical Body. Christ, too, could say, "They prevented Me in the day of My calamity: but the Lord was My stay" (2 Sam. 22:19). Never forget that the Redeemer Himself passed through a day of calamity: why, then, should the redeemed think it a strange thing if they, too, encounter the same? *He* was beset by merciless foes: His liberty was taken away when they arrested Him. He was buffeted and scourged—sufficient, then, for the disciple to be as his Master. O that we also may be able to say with Him, "but the Lord was My stay." Yet, He, too, could say, "He brought Me forth also into a large place: He delivered Me, because He delighted in Me" (v. 20). Yes, He was delivered from the grave, removed from this earth, and given the position of honour and glory at God's right hand; and this, because God delighted in Him: Isaiah 42:1.

Nevertheless, it is a great mistake to confine our attention, as some have done, to the antitypical David in this passage. For example, in his comments upon this portion of David's song, C.H. Macintosh said, "These verses (21-25) prove that in this entire song, we have a greater than David. David could not say, 'The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands did He recompense me.' How different is this language from that of the 51st Psalm. There it is, 'Have mercy upon me according to Thy lovingkindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies.' This was suitable language for a fallen sinner, as David felt himself to be. He dare not speak of his righteousness, which was as filthy rags; and as to his recompense, he felt that the Lake of Fire was all that he could in justice claim upon the ground of what he was. Hence, therefore, the language of our chapter is the language of Christ, who *alone* could use it" (The Life and Times of David, King of Israel).

Such confusion of thought is really inexcusable in one who posed as a teacher of preachers, and who was so fond of criticizing and condemning the expositions of servants of God which issued from pulpits in what he dubbed the "sects" and "systems" of Christendom. One might just as well affirm that, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7) is "the language of Christ, who alone could use it." And then add, "how different is the language of Paul in Philippians 3": "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ; and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ" (vv. 7-9). The simple fact is that the Apostle was speaking from two radically different viewpoints in those respective passages: in Philippians 3 he defines the ground of his acceptance before God, whereas in 2 Timothy 4 he refers to his ministerial fidelity. It was thus with David: in Psalm 51 he states the basis on which he sought God's forgiveness—in 2 Samuel 22:21-25 he relates his innocence in connection with his enemies.

We hardly expect one who belonged to the religious school that Mr. Mackintosh did, to be capable of drawing theological distinctions, but we *are* surprised to find such an able exegete as Alexander Maclaren erring on this same point. He, too, failed to grasp the Psalmist's scope or object in the passage which we are now considering, as is clear from his remarks thereon in his otherwise helpful work on "The life of David as reflected in his Psalms." It was his mistaking of the purport of these verses (20-25—repeated in substance in Psa. 18:19-24) which caused him to argue that this song (and Psalm) must have been written before his awful sin in connection with Uriah: "The marked assertion of his own purity, as well as the triumphant tone of the whole, neither of which characteristics correspond to the sad and shaded years after his fall, point in the same direction" (p. 154).

"He brought me forth also into a large place: He delivered me, because He delighted in me" (2 Sam. 22:20). The "large place" is in designed contrast from the cramped confinement of the caves in which David had been obliged to dwell when his enemies were so hotly pursuing him: it may also refer to the vast extent of his dominions and the great riches he was blest with. God not only preserved, but prospered him, granting him liberty and enlargement. The Lord not only displayed His power on behalf of His servant, but also manifested His particular favour toward him: this is intimated in, "He delivered me, because He delighted in me," which signifies that God acted not from His general providence, but from His covenant love. Should it be asked, How would David know this? The answer is, by the communications of Divine grace and comfort in his soul which accompanied the deliverances, and by the communion he had with God in them.

"The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me" (v. 21). It seems strange that these words have perplexed anyone with a spiritual mind, for if they be not strained beyond their original and obvious intention, there is nothing in them to occasion any difficulty. Let them be read in the light of their context, and they are plain and simple. David was alluding to God's delivering of him from Goliath and Saul, and from others of his foes: what had been his conduct toward *them*? Had he committed any serious crimes which warranted their hostility? Had he grievously wronged any of them? Had they justly or unjustly sought his life? His own brother preferred a charge against him (1 Sam. 17:28) just before he engaged Goliath, and from several of the Psalms there seems to be good ground for concluding that Saul accused him of pride, covetousness and treachery. But what real basis was there for such? Read the record of David's life, and where is there a hint that he coveted the throne or hated Saul?

No, the fact of the matter is that David was entirely innocent of any evil designs against any of those who persecuted him. Further proof of this is found in one of his prayers to God: "Let not them that are mine enemies *wrongfully* rejoice over me, neither let them wink with the eye that hate me *without* a cause" (Psa. 35:19). It was because he had neither given his enemies just cause for their persecution, and because so far from retaliating, he had borne them no malice, that he enjoyed the testimony of a good conscience. David's character had been grievously aspersed and many hideous things laid to his charge—but his conduct had been upright and conscientious to an uncommon degree. "In all his persecutions by Saul, he would not injure him or his party; nay, he employed every opportunity to serve the cause of Israel, though rewarded by envy, treachery, and ingratitude" (Thomas Scott). When maligned and oppressed by men, it is an inestimable

consolation to have the assurance of our own hearts of our innocence and integrity, and therefore we should spare no pains in exercising ourselves “to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and men” (Acts 24:16).

In saying, “The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness,” David enunciated one of the principles operative in the Divine government of this world. “Albeit that the dispensations of Divine grace are to the fullest degree sovereign and irrespective of human merit, yet in the dealings of Providence there is often discernible a rule of justice by which the injured are at length avenged and the righteous ultimately delivered” (C. H. Spurgeon). That statement manifests an intelligent grasp of the viewpoint from which David was writing, namely, the *governmental ways of God* in time, and not the ground upon which He saves eternally. These declarations of the Psalmist had nothing whatever to do with his justification in the high court of Heaven, but concerned the innocency and integrity of his conduct toward his enemies on earth, because of which God delivered him from them.

“For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God” (2 Sam. 22:22). We regard David as continuing to refer unto how he had conducted himself during the time that his life had been in danger. Certainly his language here is not to be taken absolutely, nor even as a relative declaration upon his life as a whole. Notwithstanding the provocations he received from Saul, and later from Absalom—and notwithstanding the efforts which we doubt not Satan made at such seasons to make him question God’s goodness and faithfulness, tempting him to cast off allegiance to Him—David persevered in the paths of righteousness and refused to apostatise. The Psalms written by him at these trying periods of his life make it unmistakably clear that David’s piety waned not, despite the most aggravating circumstances.

“For all His judgments were before me: and as for His statutes, I did not depart from them” (v. 23). “His conscience witnessed to him that he had ever made the Word of God his rule, and had kept to it. Wherever he was, God’s judgments were before him, and his guide; whithersoever he went, he took his religion along with him; and though he was forced to depart from his country, and sent, as it were, to serve other gods, yet, as for God’s statutes, he did not depart from them, but kept the way of the Lord and walked in it” (Matthew Henry). This was sure evidence of the genuineness of his piety. It is comparatively easy to discharge the external duties of religion while we are at home, surrounded by those like-minded, but the real test of our sincerity comes when we go abroad and sojourn among a people who make no profession. David not only worshipped God while he abode at Jerusalem, but also while he tarried in the land of the Philistines.

“I was *also* upright before *Him*, and have kept myself from mine iniquity” (v. 24). This declaration manifestly clinches the interpretation we have made of the preceding verses: in them he had referred solely to his conduct unto his *enemies*, which conduct has been strictly regulated by the Divine statutes: particularly had he heeded “thou shalt not kill” when Saul was entirely at his mercy. Now he appeals to God Himself, and declares that in *His* sight, *too*, he had acted blamelessly toward his foes. “Sincerity is here claimed; sincerity, such as would be accounted genuine before the bar of God. Whatever evil men might think of him, David felt that he had the good opinion of God” (C. H. Spurgeon). Various explanations have been given of “mine iniquity,” but in the light of the context, we regard the reference as being to David’s refusal to slay Saul when in his power.

“Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in His eye sight” (v. 25). They greatly err who suppose that David here gave vent to a boastful spirit: he was pleading his innocency before the bar of *human* equity. A man is not guilty of pride in knowing that he is truthful, honest, merciful; no, nor when he believes that God rewards him in providence because of these virtues, for such is a most evident matter of fact. Yea, so patent is this, that many of the ungodly recognize that honesty is the best policy for this life. It *would be* self-righteousness to transfer such thoughts from the realm of providential government into the spiritual and everlasting kingdom, for *there* grace reigns not only supreme, but alone, in the distribution of Divine favours. A godly man with a clear conscience, who knows himself to be upright, is not required to deny his consciousness, and hypocritically make himself out to be worse than he is.

Having shown how the above verses may be understood, relatively, of David himself, let us very briefly point out how they applied to Christ without any qualification. “I have kept the ways of the Lord”: when tempted to forsake them, He indignantly cried, “get thee hence Satan.” “And have not wickedly departed from My God”: “Which of you convinceth Me of sin?” (John 8:46), was His challenge to His enemies. “For all His judgments were before Me”: “I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me” (John 17:8), He affirmed. “I was also upright before Him”: “I do always those things that please Him” (John 8:29), was His declaration. “And have kept Myself from Mine iniquity”: so far from slaying those who came to arrest, He healed one of them (Luke 22:51). “Therefore the Lord hath recompensed Me according to My righteousness”: “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows” (Psa. 45:7) is the Spirit’s confirmation.

“With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful, and with the upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright . . . But Thine eyes are upon the haughty, that Thou mayest bring them down” (2 Sam. 22:26-28). These verses announced a general principle in God’s government of this world: we say “general,” for God exercises His sovereign discretion in the actual application of it. On the one hand we are told that some of the Old Testament heroes of faith, “quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword,” etc., yet we also read, “others had trial of cruel mockings . . . were stoned,” etc. (Heb. 11:34, 36). The Baptist was beheaded and Stephen stoned, yet Peter and Paul were miraculously delivered from their enemies.—A.W.P.

THE DIVINE COVENANTS.

7. *The Messianic.*

“Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant” (Heb. 12:24). From the contents or blessings of the Covenant we turn now to consider the *measures and means* which were to give effect unto their actual communication. First and foremost among these is *the Mediator*—a word denoting one who goes between two parties to arrange any matters of importance in which they may have a common interest, or to settle any differences with a view to their permanent reconciliation. It is in the latter sense the term is used in such connections as the present. What the precise work of the Mediator is, what He does in order to the efficiency of His intervention, depends, of course, on the relation of the parties towards each other, and the matters of disagreement which have separated them. Now the character of that Covenant of which Christ is the Mediator enables us to form a definite conception of the nature and extent of His mediation.

The Messianic Covenant is a dispensation of free promises of grace and mercy to guilty and condemned sinners. Should it be asked, Wherein lay the *need for a Mediator* in connection with such gracious promises? Might they not have been given and fulfilled without requiring the intervention of a middle party? It would be sufficient answer to say that this question relates to the realm of fact and not of supposition. It is not at all a matter of what God might or might not, could or could not do, but what He *has* done; it has pleased Him to appoint a Mediator. It has seemed most meet unto God, out of a regard to what is due unto Himself, to determine that His blessings shall be dispensed under certain definite conditions, and therefore it is for us to humbly acquiesce and gratefully accept what is graciously offered us, on the terms on which that offer is made. Nevertheless, it has pleased God to intimate sufficiently as to demonstrate unto us His matchless wisdom in such a constitution of things as the Mediatorship of Christ discloses.

First, *sin is an evil* so offensive and malignant, and attended with consequences so sweeping and disastrous, as to necessitate (under the *regime* Divinely appointed) a separation between God and those who commit it—a separation which can only be removed by means which shall leave the character and government of God uncompromised, and shall effectually stay the ravages of so fearful a plague. To represent the Most High as simply a loving Father to His creatures is not only extremely partial, but altogether an erroneous view of His relations to us. His love is indeed the originating impulse of all the blessings of the Covenant. But God is also a moral Governor, a righteous King, whose character is reflected in the government which He exercises, and therefore does He manifest His holy hatred of sin and justly punishes it. Hence it is that when He seeks the return of sinners unto Himself it is by a system of mediation which vindicates His perfections and magnifies His Law.

Second, *sinners themselves need a Mediator*. They are *enemies*: not such as those who have indeed wandered from God, but are still influenced by some lingering affection for Him and would be glad to return if they only knew how; they are sinners not through inadvertence, but transgressors of settled purpose and from the heart. The holiness of God, just in proportion as they obtain glimpses of it, is hated by them. They choose the evil and loathe the good: they love darkness rather than light. They do not like to retain the knowledge of God in their minds, but do all they can to dismiss Him from their thoughts. It is neither carelessness nor involuntary ignorance which occasions this feeling, but positive hostility—the carnal mind is enmity against God. When confronted with the Truth

and made to feel they are under the Divine condemnation, they regard God as their worst Enemy, committed to their punishment, and are conscious of feelings of aversion, which nothing can allay but such views of God as mediation unfolds.

Nor is this all. We require someone to undertake for us who shall not only have power to bring us to a state of subjection and obedience, but to take care of our interests: to tend us and bear with us under our manifold infirmities. Our very consciousness testifies to the need of this. Our helplessness is painfully felt from the moment we are awakened to perceive the reality of our awful condition. And even though provision has been made for our access to God, and we are freely invited to avail ourselves of the same, yet so awe-inspiring are the views we must have of the Divine character that we instinctively shrink from His ineffable purity, and confidence fails us. We are unmistakably aware that even in our sincerest approach to the thrice holy God we have need of someone to intervene between us: some "Daysman" (as Job expressed it) who can lay His hand upon us both.

Third, *Christ Himself* is thereby greatly glorified. This is the supreme end in the Divine administration, for *He* is the Alpha and the Omega in all the counsels of God. It is entirely useless to speculate as to what might have been the particular status of Christ or what office He had filled, if sin had never defiled the universe. Evil *has* entered, entered by the permission of God, and that for His own wise reasons. That the entrance of sin into our world has provided opportunity for God to display His incomparable wisdom, and that it has been overruled to the magnifying of His dear Son, needs no laboured effort of ours to show. The perfect love of Christ to the Father, evidenced by His voluntary self-abasement and obedience unto death, shines forth in meridian splendour. The grand reward He has received for His stupendous undertaking, and the revenue of praise which He receives from those on whose behalf He suffered, affords full compensation. On His head are "many crowns" (Rev. 19:12)—in virtue of His mediatorial office.

No formal mention of mediation was contained in the earliest covenants, though by implication they involved the idea of it. The covenants made during the infancy of our race were but partial disclosures of the scheme of mercy, bringing to light particular features of God's gracious purposes, adapted to the times when they were respectively given. Yet the germ of the truth respecting mediation was in both the Noahaic and Abrahamic covenants, for the sacrifices which accompanied them bespoke a special intervention as the appointed means of ratifying the promises they contained. The promise (to Abraham) of a Seed in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, and (to David) of a righteous King under whose government the people of God should dwell in safety, only needed that expansion of meaning which was subsequently given, to realize all that the most effective mediation comprehends.

In the Siniatic covenant, though, this grand truth came out much more distinctly. When on the Mount, God drew near to the people and spake to them out of the thick cloud, they said to Moses, "Behold, the LORD our God hath showed us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore, then shall we die. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God, speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go *thou* near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God

shall speak unto *thee*; and we will hear and do it" (Deut. 5:24-27). Thus, at the request of the people, Moses became their *mediator*: an arrangement which the Lord approved of as wise and beneficial (v. 28).

It is quite apparent that the visible manifestation of God amidst the fire of Sinai and the awful utterances which struck upon their ears, were the things which influenced the great majority of the people in preferring their request: they were too destitute of spiritual apprehension to be capable of looking beyond what met their physical senses. Yet who can doubt that there were some, at least, of the people, sufficiently enlightened to feel most painfully their unfitness for any direct intercourse with God, and to whom the intervention of a mediator was a matter of felt necessity in order to the creation of confidence in their worship. To elicit that very feeling on the part of the godly remnant, was one end of the Divine manifestation at Horeb, for the Divine statement in reply to their request involved the assurance that they were right in entertaining this conviction, and accordingly God promised to raise up a Prophet from amongst them like unto Moses, through whom all future intercourse with God should be conducted (Deut. 18:15-18).

It is apparent, then, that the appointment of a Mediator is indispensable to the existence of any spiritual intercourse between a holy God and sinful men. The true reason for this springs from the nature of sin, viewed in connection with the relation which the Most High sustains to our guilty race. Accurate conceptions of what that relation involves, and of what sin is in itself and in its effects, will go far to determine the character of the Mediator's work as made known in Scripture, on the complete accomplishment of which the success of His mediation depends. Mistakes on these points vitiate our entire views of the Gospel. The *terms on which Divine* intercourse with sinners is possible is a matter of vital importance. That awful breach could not be healed by anything done by the offenders: the righteousness of God's character and government must be vindicated and the Law honoured before grace is conferred and true fellowship with God established—to effect this was the object of the work committed to Christ.

When Scripture refers to Christ as *the Mediator*, that term is comprehensive of the entire work of mediation in all its departments, which, as the spiritual Deliverer of His people, He voluntarily undertook. We may dwell upon the different offices He sustains; we may delineate and illustrate the character and results of His actings in those offices separately; but His mediation embraces them *all*. Mediation is not something additional to what He does in the several capacities in which He is held forth in Scripture, but rather is it a term which, in the fullness of its meaning, includes them all; His prophetic, priestly, and regal offices are all essential to His mediation. Thus, in giving a brief exposition of His mediation, all that is necessary to our present design is to present a mere outline of the particulars. We cannot continue indefinitely this already lengthy series of articles, so must now content ourselves with a succinct statement, which will afford a comprehensive view of the true state of the case.

First, Christ, as Mediator, is the supreme *Prophet*. Although in one aspect, His priestly work is the foundation of all His other dealings as Mediator, yet since it is with His prophetic office that we first come into contact, we begin here. As Prophet, Christ is the great Revealer of the character and will of God. In His earliest instruction—the Sermon on the Mount—He explained and vindicated the revelation previously given, but which through the errors of blind guides had been perverted. In addition, He furnished in His own mission the supreme manifestation of God's love and grace; He revealed, too, the

true nature of that salvation which fallen men needed, the character of that change which the Holy Spirit must effect in them, the certainty of a future life of bliss or woe, according to present character, and the solemnities of that judgment with which the present order of things shall close. To His Apostles He assigned the duty, under His own superintendence, of amplifying what He had in substance taught.

Christ, too, is the source of *all inward illumination*, whereby the Truth is, in any case, practically apprehended and savingly believed: "No man knoweth . . . who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him" (Luke 10:22), is His own statement. A clear and Scriptural knowledge of the Truth is obtained only by Divine teaching. Nor does this arise from any deficiency in the Truth itself; the hindrance lies in the mind and heart of the sinner. There is a moral blindness, an aversion to holy Truth, which no means—be they perfectly adapted to the object in view—can ever remove. The fallen sinner is so utterly depraved, so opposed to the Divine requirements, that he has neither will nor desire to apprehend what is holy; and none but the Spirit of Christ can effect a cure. It is the province of Christ, as the great Prophet of the Church, to heal this diseased state: *He* enables the mind to understand and the heart to receive the Truth.

Second, Christ, as Mediator, is the great *High Priest*, an office which involved the making of expiation and intercession. To these two particulars the Levitical dispensation bore a continuous and ample testimony: the numerous sacrifices, and the annual intervention of the high priest under the Law were types—dim figures of what was to be realized in Him who was to come. The true meaning of those sacrifices may be gathered from the distinct explanations which accompanied them. They were substitutionary satisfactions for the soul that sinned, for it is "the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." They were designed to teach the people the idea of the necessity for expiation for sin, and the intercession for them before God, founded on these sacrifices, completed the truth intended to be taught: they clearly intimated the arrangement by which alone their sins could be remitted, and the blessings which they need obtain. And Christ, by His life and death, provided the substance or reality.

The views of the priestly work of Christ supplied by the types under the old economy receive full confirmation in the testimony of the Apostles. In their teaching there is no uncertain sound on this subject. As samples we cite the following: "A merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" . . . "But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 2:17; 7:24, 25 and cf. Rev. 1:5, 6). As the personally sinless One, Christ was (legally) made sin for His people, that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Such is the very essence of the Gospel, and they who deny it, place themselves outside the pale of Divine mercy.

Third, Christ, as Mediator, is *the King* of Zion. Under the Davidic Covenant not only was this prefigured in the sovereignty conferred upon the man after God's own heart, but definite promises were given of the raising up of a righteous King, under whose government truth and peace should abound: and it is in Christ that they receive their perfect fulfillment. The New Testament represents His exaltation and the authority with which He is now invested as the designed recompense of the work which He accomplished: see Ephesians 1:19-23; Philippians 2:8-11.

It was part of the Divine arrangement that the administration of the economy of grace should be committed to Him by whose sufferings and death the foundation has been laid for a true intercourse between God and sinful men. The supreme object for conferring the regal dignity upon the Messiah was His own vindication and glory, but the subordinate design was that He should give practical effect to the Divine purpose in the actual saving of all God's elect. The very nature of that purpose serves to determine the character and extent of the work committed to Him. That purpose respects the spiritual deliverance of God's people, scattered throughout the world, and therefore is it a work effected against every conceivable opposition. The rule of the Messiah is supreme and universal, for nothing short of that is adequate to the occasion. "Who is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of God: angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 Peter 3:22). It is by the discharge of these three offices Christ effectually performs His work of mediation.—A.W.P.

A FOURFOLD SALVATION.

Third, *by bitter disappointments*. God has plainly warned us that “all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and there is no profit under the sun” (Eccl. 2:11), and that by one who was permitted to gratify the physical senses as none other ever has been. Yet we do not take this warning to heart, for we do not really believe it. On the contrary, we persuade ourselves that satisfaction *is to be found* in things under the sun, that the creature *can* give contentment to our hearts. As well attempt to fill a circle with a square! The heart was made *for God* and He alone can meet its needs. But by nature we are idolaters, putting *things* in His place. Those things we invest with qualities they possess not, and sooner or later our delusions are rudely exposed to us, and we discover that the images in our minds are only dreams—that golden idol is but clay after all.

God may order His providences that our earthly nest is destroyed. The winds of adversity compel us to leave the downy bed of carnal ease and luxuriation. Grievous losses are experienced in some form or other. Trusted friends prove fickle and in the hour of need fail us. The family circle, which had so long sheltered us and where peace and happiness were found, is broken up by the grim hand of death. Health fails and weary nights are our portion. These trying experiences, these bitter disappointments, are another of the means which our gracious God employs to save us from the pleasure and pollution of sin. By them He discovers to us the vanity and vexation of the creature. By them He weans us more completely from the world. By them He teaches us that the objects in which we sought refreshment are but “broken cisterns,” and this that we may turn to *Christ* and draw from Him who is the living water, the One who alone can supply true satisfaction of soul.

It is in this way we are experimentally taught to look off from the present to the future, for our rest is not here. “For we are *saved by hope*: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Rom. 8:24). Let it be duly noted that this comes immediately after “we ourselves groan within ourselves.” Thus to be “saved by hope” respects our present salvation from the power of sin. Complete salvation is now the Christian’s only in title and expectation. It is not here said that we, “*shall* be saved by hope,” but we *are* saved by hope—that hope which looks for the fulfilling of God’s promises. Hope has to do with a future good, with something which as yet “is seen not”: we “hope” not for something which is already enjoyed. Herein hope differs from faith. Faith, as it is an assent, is in the mind; but hope is seated in the affections, stirred by the desirability of the things promised.

And, my reader, the bitter disappointments of life are nothing but a dark background upon which hope may shine forth the more brightly. Christ does not immediately take to Heaven the one who puts his trust in Him. No, He keeps him here upon earth for a while to be exercised and tried. While he is awaiting his complete blessedness there is such a difference between him and it and he encounters many difficulties and trials. Not having yet received his inheritance there is need and occasion of hope, for only by its exercise can things future be sought after. The stronger our hope, the more earnestly shall we be engaged in the pursuit of it. We have to be weaned from present things in order for the heart to be fixed upon a future good.

Fourth, *by the gift of the Spirit* and His operations within us. God’s great gift of Christ for us is matched by the gift of the Spirit in us, for we owe as much to the One as we do to the Other. The new nature in the Christian is powerless apart from the Spirit’s daily

renewing. It is by His gracious operations that we have made known to us the nature and extent of sin, are made to strive against it, are brought to grieve over it. It is by the Spirit that faith, hope and prayer are kept alive within the soul. It is by the Spirit we are moved to use the means of grace which God has appointed for our spiritual preservation and growth. It is by the Spirit that sin is prevented from having complete dominion over us, for as the result of His indwelling us there is something else besides sin in the believer's heart and life, namely, the fruits of holiness and righteousness.

To sum up this aspect of our subject—salvation from the power of indwelling sin is not the taking of the evil nature out of the believer in this life, nor by effecting any improvement in it: “that which is born of the flesh is flesh” (John 3:6), and it remains so, unchanged to the end. Nor is it by the Spirit so subduing indwelling sin that it is rendered less active, for the flesh not merely lusts, but “lusteth (ceaselessly) against the spirit”: it never sleeps, not even when our bodies do, as our dreams evidence. No, and in some form or other, the flesh is constantly producing its evil works. It may not be in external acts, seen by the eyes of our fellows, but certainly so internally, in things seen by God—such as covetousness, discontent, pride, unbelief, self-will, ill-will towards others, and a hundred other evils. No, none is saved from *sinning* in this life.

Present salvation from the power of sin consists in, first, delivering us from the love of it, which though begun at our regeneration is continued throughout our practical sanctification. Second, from its *blinding delusiveness*, so that it can no more deceive as once it did. Third, from our *excusing* it: “that which I do, I allow *not*” (Rom. 7:15). This is one of the surest marks of regeneration. In the fullest sense of the word, the believer “allows” it *not* before he sins, for every real Christian, when in his right mind, desires to be wholly kept from sinning. He “allows” it *not* fully *when doing it*, for in the actual committing thereof there is an inward reserve—the new nature consents not. He “allows” it *not* afterwards, as Psalm 51 evidences so plainly of the case of David.

The force of this word “allow” in Romans 7:15 may be seen from “truly ye bear witness that *ye* allow the deeds of your fathers: for they killed them (the Prophets) and ye build their sepulchres” (Luke 11:48). So far from those Jews being ashamed of their fathers and abhorring their wicked conduct, they erected a monument to their honour. Thus, to “allow” is the opposite of to be ashamed of and sorrow over: it is to condone and vindicate. Therefore, when it is said that the believer “allows *not*” the evil of which he is guilty, it means that he seeks not to justify himself or throw the blame on someone else, as both Adam and Eve did. That the Christian allows *not* sin is evident by his shame over it, his sorrow for it, his confession of it, his loathing himself because of it, his renewed resolution to forsake it.

IV. *Salvation from the Presence of Sin.*

We now turn to that aspect of our subject which has to do solely with the future. Sin is yet to be completely eradicated from the believer's being so that he shall appear before God without any spot or blemish. True, this is his legal status even now, yet it has not become so in his state or experience. As God views the believer in Christ, he appears before Him in all the excellency of his Sponsor; but as God views him as he yet is in *himself* (and that He *does* do so is proved by His chastenings), He beholds all the ruin which the Fall has wrought in him. But this will not always be the case: no, blessed be His name, the Lord is reserving the best wine for the last. And even now we have tasted that

He is gracious, but the fullness of His grace will only be entered into and enjoyed by us after this world is left behind.

Those Scriptures which present our salvation as a *future prospect* are all concerned with our final deliverance from the very presence of sin. To this Paul referred when he said, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11)—not our salvation from the pleasure, the penalty, or the power of sin, but from its very presence. "For our citizenship is in Heaven: from whence we also look for *the Saviour*, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). Yes, it is the "Saviour" we await, for it is at His return that the whole election of grace shall enter into their full salvation; as it is written, "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto *salvation*" (Heb. 9:28). In like manner, when another Apostle declares, "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5), he had reference to this grand consummation of the believer's salvation, when we shall be forever rid of the very presence of sin.

Our salvation from the pleasure of sin is effected by Christ's taking up His abode in our hearts: "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Our salvation from the penalty of sin was secured by Christ's sufferings on the Cross where He endured the punishment due our iniquities. Our salvation from the power of sin is obtained by the gracious operations of the Spirit which Christ sends to His people—therefore is He designated "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8:9 and cf. Gal. 4:6). Our salvation from the presence of sin will be accomplished at Christ's second advent: "for our citizenship is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20, 21). And again we are told, "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). It is all of *Christ* from beginning to end.

Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God, reflecting the moral perfections of his Maker. But sin came in and he fell from his pristine glory, and by that Fall God's image in him was broken and His likeness marred. But in the redeemed that image is to be restored, yea, they are to be granted a far higher honour than what was bestowed upon the first Adam: they are to be made like the *last* Adam. It is written, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). This blessed purpose of God in our predestination will not be fully realized until the second coming of our Lord: then it will be that His people shall be completely emancipated from the thralldom and corruption of sin. Then shall Christ "present it to Himself a *glorious* Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). Salvation from the pleasure or love of sin takes place at our regeneration; salvation from the penalty or punishment of sin occurs at our *justification*; salvation from the power or dominion of sin is accomplished during our practical *sanctification*; salvation from the presence or inbeing of sin is consummated at our *glorification*: "Whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). Not so much is revealed in Scripture on this fourth aspect of our subject, for God's Word was not given us to gratify curiosity. Yet sufficient light is made known to feed faith, strengthen hope, draw out love, and make us "run with patience the race that is set before us." In our present state we are incapable of forming any real conception of the bliss awaiting us: yet as Israel's spies brought back the

bunch of "the grapes of Eschol" as a sample of the good things to be found in the land of Canaan, so the Christian is granted a foretaste and earnest of his inheritance on High.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). It is to the image of a *glorified* Christ that we are predestinated to be conformed. Behold Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, when a foreview of His glory was granted the favoured disciples. Such is the dazzling splendour of His person that Saul of Tarsus was temporarily blinded by a glimpse of it, and the beloved John in the isle of Patmos "fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. 1:17), when he beheld Him. That which awaits us can best be estimated as it is contemplated in the light of God's wondrous *love*. The portion which Christ Himself has received is the expression of God's love for Him; and as the Saviour has assured His people concerning His Father's love unto them, "and hast loved them as Thou lovest Me" (John 17:23), and therefore, as He promised, "where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

But is not the believer forever done with sin at *death*? Yes, thank God, such is the case; yet that is not his *glorification* for his body goes to corruption, and that is the effect of sin. It is written of the believer's body, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Nevertheless, at death itself the Christian's soul is entirely freed from the presence of sin. This is clear from, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). What is signified by "that they may rest from their labours?" Why, something more blessed than ceasing from earning their daily bread by the sweat of their brows, for that will be true of the unsaved also. Those who die in the Lord rest from their "labours" *with sin*: their painful conflicts with indwelling corruption, Satan, and the world. The fight which faith now wages is then ended and full relief from sin is theirs forever.

The fourfold salvation from sin of the Christian was strikingly typified in God's dealings with the Nation of Israel of old. First we have a vivid portrayal of their deliverance from the *pleasure* or love of sin: "And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning" (Exo. 2:23, 24). What a contrast does that present from what we read of in the closing chapters of Genesis! There we hear the king of Egypt saying to Joseph, "The land of Egypt is before thee: in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen" (47:6). Accordingly we are told, "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew and multiplied exceedingly" (47:27). Now Egypt is the Old Testament symbol of the world, as a system opposed to God. And it was there, in the "best part" of it, the descendants of Abraham had settled. But the Lord had designs of mercy and something far better for them: yet before they could appreciate Canaan they had to be weaned from Egypt. Hence we find them in cruel bondage there, smarting under the lash of the taskmasters. In this way they were made to loathe Egypt and long for deliverance therefrom. The theme of Exodus is *redemption*: how striking, then, to see that God *begins* His work of redemption by making His people to groan and cry out under their bondage! The portion Christ bestows is not welcome till we are made sick of this world.

Second, in Exodus 12 we have a picture of God's people being delivered from the *penalty* of sin. On the Passover night the angel of death came and slew all the firstborn of the Egyptians. But why spare the firstborn of the Israelites? Not because they were guiltless before God, for all had sinned and come short of His glory. The Israelites, equally with the Egyptians, were guilty in His sight and deserving of unsparing judgment. It was at this very point that the grace of God came in and met their need. Another was slain in their place and died in their stead. An innocent victim was killed and its blood shed, pointing to the coming of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The head of each Israelite household sprinkled the lamb's blood on the lintel and posts of his door and hence the firstborn in it was spared from the avenging angel. God promised, "when I see the blood I will pass over you" (Exo. 12:13). Thus Israel was saved from the penalty of sin by means of the lamb dying in their stead.

Third, Israel's wilderness journey adumbrated the believer's salvation from the *power* of sin. Israel did not enter Canaan immediately upon their exodus from Egypt: they had to face the temptations and trials of the desert where they spent not less than forty years. But what a gracious and full provision did God make for His people! Manna was given them daily from heaven—a figure of that food which God's Word now supplies for our spiritual nourishment. Water was given from the smitten rock—emblematic of the Holy Spirit sent by the smitten Christ to dwell within us: John 7:38, 39. A cloud and a pillar of fire guided them by day and guarded them by night, reminding us of how God directs our steps and shields us from our foes. Best of all, Moses, their great leader, was with them, counseling, admonishing, and interceding for them—figure of the Captain of our salvation: "Lo I am with you alway."

Fourth, the actual entrance of Israel into the promised land foreshadowed the believer's *glorification*, when he enters into the full enjoyment of that possession which Christ has purchased for him. The experiences Israel met with in Canaan have a double typical significance. From one viewpoint they presaged the conflict which faith encounters while the believer is left upon earth, for as the Hebrews had to overcome the original inhabitants of Canaan before they could enjoy their portion, so faith has to surmount many obstacles if it is to "possess its possessions," The land of milk and honey into which Israel entered after the bondage of Egypt and the hardships of the wilderness which were left behind—were manifestly a figure of the Christian's portion in Heaven after he is forever done with sin in this world.

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). First save them from the pleasure or love of sin by bestowing a nature which hates it: this is the great *miracle* of grace. Second, save them from the penalty or punishment of sin, by remitting all its guilt: this is the grand *marvel* of grace. Third save them from the power or dominion of sin, by the workings of His Spirit: this reveals the wondrous *might* of grace. Fourth, save them from the presence or inbeing of sin: this will demonstrate the glorious *magnitude* of grace. May it please the Lord to bless these elementary but most important articles to many of His little ones, and make their "big" brothers and sisters smaller in their own esteem.—A.W.P.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

6. *Its Nature.*

We began this article last month by calling attention to the fact that the only reason why any God-fearing soul believes in the doctrine of election is because he finds it clearly and prominently revealed in His Word, and hence it follows that our only source of information thereon is the Word itself. Yet, what has just been said is much too general to be of specific help to the earnest inquirer. In turning to the Scriptures for light upon the mystery of election, it is most essential that we should bear in mind that Christ is the key to every part of them: "In the volume of the Book it is written of Me," He declares, and therefore if we attempt to study this subject apart from Him, we are certain to err. In preceding months we have shown evidence that Christ is the Grand Original of election, and it is from that starting point we must proceed if we are to make any right advance.

What has just been pointed out holds good not only in the general, but in the particular: for instance, in connection with that special branch of our subject which was principally before us in last month's issue, we will now follow up from this particular viewpoint. If we go right back to the beginning itself then it will appear that God was pleased, and so resolved, to go forth into creature communion, which is to say that He determined to bring into existence creatures who should enjoy fellowship with Himself. His own glory was alone the supreme end in this determination, for, "the Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. 16:4). We repeat that His own glory was the sole and sufficient motive which induced God to create at all: "Who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:35, 36).

The principal glory which God designed to Himself in election was the manifestation of *the glory of His grace*. This is irrefutably established by, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children through (Greek) Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will: to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:5, 6). Grace is one of those illustrious perfections in the Divine character, which is glorious in itself, and had ever remained so though no creature had been formed; but God has so displayed this attribute in election that His people will praise and render glory to it throughout the endless ages yet to be. God showed His holiness in the giving of the Law, His power in the making of the world, His justice in casting the wicked into Hell—but His grace shines forth especially in predestination and what His elect are predestinated unto. So, too, when it is said of God, "that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, He had afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. 9:3), the prime reference is to His *grace* as Ephesians 1:7 shows.

The second Person in the Trinity was predestinated to be God-man, being first decreed, for we are "chosen in Him" (Eph. 1:4), which presupposes Him to be chosen first, as the soil in which we are set. We are predestinated unto the adoption of children, yet it is "through Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1:5). So we read, "Who verily was foreordained (*as* "Christ"—see previous verse) before the foundation of the world" (1Peter 1:20). As we shall show in a later article (D.V.), that expression, "before the foundation of the world" is not merely a note of time, but chiefly one of eminence or preference, that God had *Christ* in His view before His intention to create the world for Him and His people. Now we have shown in a previous article that Christ was ordained to be God-man for much

higher ends than our salvation, namely, for God's own self to delight in, to behold the perfect Image of Himself in a creature, by that union to communicate Himself to that Man in a manner and degree not possible to any mere creature as such.

Together with the Son's being predestinated to be God-man, there falls unto His glorious Person, as His inheritance, to be the sovereign end of all things else which God should make and the end of whatever of His intelligent creatures He should be pleased to choose unto glory. This is clear from "For all things are yours . . . and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21-23), which is spoken of in reference of endship. As you, the saints, are the end for which all things were ordained, so Christ is the end of you, and Christ is God's *end or design* in acting. We say that Christ is "the sovereign end," and not the supreme end, for God Himself is above and over all; but Christ is the sovereign end unto all creation, having joint-authority with God, under God. So it is declared that, "by Him," and "for Him," were all things created (Col. 1:16), as it is said of God in Romans 11:36. Thus this sovereign end in creation fell to Him as the inheritance of the Mediator: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (John 3:35).

In the predestination of the Son of man unto union with the Son of God, the constituting of Him through that union to be the sovereign end of all things, there was conferred upon the Man Christ Jesus thus exalted the highest possible favour, immeasurably transcending all the grace shown unto the elect any way considered, so that if the election of *us* be to the praise of the glory of God's grace, *His* much more so. More honour has been conferred upon "that holy thing" born of the virgin than upon all the members of His mystical body put together—and it was *grace* pure and simple, sovereign grace, which bestowed it. What was therein His humanity, simply considered, which entitled it to such an exaltation? Nor could there be any desert foreseen which required it, for it must be said of the man Christ Jesus, as of every other creature, "for who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7).

Let it not be forgotten that in decreeing the Son of man into union with the second Person of the Trinity, with all the honour and glory involved therein, that God was perfectly *free*, as in everything else, to have decreed Him or not decreed Him, as He would; yea, had He pleased, He could have appointed the arch-angel rather than the Seed of the woman, to that inestimable privilege. It was, therefore, *free grace* in God which made that decree, and by how much loftier was the dignity conferred upon Christ above His fellows, so much greater was the grace. The predestination of the man Jesus, then, is the highest example of grace, and thus God's greatest end in predestination *to manifest His grace* (from whence election hath its title to be styled "the election of grace": Rom. 11:5) was accomplished in Him above His brethren, that He should be to the praise of the glory of God's grace, far above what we are.

Since in the case of Christ we have both the pattern and example of election—the Grand Original—it is quite evident that grace is *not* to be limited or understood only of the Divine favour toward creatures that are *fallen* and are delivered out of ruin and misery. Grace does not necessarily presuppose sin in the objects it is shown unto, for the highest instance of all, that of the grace bestowed upon the man Christ Jesus, was conferred upon One who had no sin and was incapable of it. Grace is favour shown to the *undeserving*, for the human nature in the God-man merited not the distinction conferred upon it. When extended to fallen creatures, it *is* favour shown to the *ill-deserving* and

Hell-deserving, yet this is not implied in the term itself, as may further be seen in the case of Divine grace being extended to the unfallen angels. Thus, as Christ is the Pattern to whom God has predestinated His people to be conformed, His election of them to everlasting glory was under His view of them as *unfallen*, and not as corrupt creatures.

God having thus absolutely chosen the Son of man and therewith endowed Him with such royalty as to be the sovereign end of all whom He should create or elect to Glory, it therefore follows that those who were chosen of us men were intended by the very ordination of God in our choice *to be for Christ's glory* as the end of our election, as well as for God's own glory. We were not absolutely ordained—as Christ in His unique predestination was in the first design of it—but from the first of ours the intention of God concerning us was that we should *be Christ's* and have our glory from Him who is “the Lord of Glory” (1 Cor. 2:8). Here, as everywhere, Christ has the pre-eminence, for the Person of Christ, God-man, was predestinated for the dignity of Himself, but *we* for the glory of God and of Christ. God the Father, first and alone, designed who the favoured ones should be, yet that there should be an election of any was for Christ's sake, as well as His own.

In our election God had His Son in view as God-man, and in His design of Him as our end, He chose us for His sake, that we might be His “fellows” or companions (Psa. 45:7), that as He was God's delight (Isa. 42:1), so we might be His delight (Prov. 8:31). Thus we were given to Christ first, not as sinners to be saved by Him, but as sinless members to a sinless Head, as a gift to His Person, for His honour and pleasure, and to be partakers of a supernatural glory with Him and from Him. “And the glory which Thou gavest Me (as the God-man) I have given them,” as concurring with election of them and Thy giving of them to Me to be Mine. Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me, (i.e. with an everlasting love in election), yea, Thou gavest them to Me for My glory as their end, and for which chiefly Thou lovest them (John 17:22, 23).

And what immediately follows in John 17? This, “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world” (v. 24). Christ was loved in His election from everlasting, and out of God's love for Him His people were given to Him—with what intent? Even to behold, admire, and adore Him in His Person and glory, as being that very thing they were ordained for, more than for their own glory, for *their* glory arises from beholding *His* (2 Cor. 3:18). And what is this glory which Christ was ordained unto? The glory of His *Person* first absolutely decreed Him, which is the height of His glory in Heaven, where it is we are ordained to behold it. And observe how He here (John 17:24) reveals the main motive to God in this: “*for* thou lovedst *Me*”—Christ's being chosen first in the intention of God, the members were chosen and given to Him so that they should redound to His glory.

We being chosen for Christ's glory as our end, and for His sake, as well as to the glory of God's grace towards us, God did ordain a *double relation* of Christ unto us for His glory, in addition unto that absolute glory of His Person. First the relation of an “Head,” wherein we were given to Him as members of His body, and as a Spouse unto her Husband to be her Head. Second, the relation of a “Saviour” and Redeemer, which is in addition to His headship; and both of these for the further glory of Christ, and also for the demonstration of God's grace towards us. These two relations are quite distinct and must not be confused. “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of

the Church; and He is the Saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23): each of those offices were appointed Him by the good pleasure of God’s will. This same twofold relation of Christ to His people is set forth again in Colossians 1:18-20: this double *official* honour conferred upon Him is further and above the absolute royalties of His *Person* as the God-man.

Now, that twofold relation of Christ to His people has, answerably, a double and distinct aspect and consideration upon us and of us in our election by God, which was not absolute as Christ’s was, but *relative unto* His two principal offices. The first concerns our persons without the consideration of our fall in Adam, whereby we were contemplated in the pure lump of creature-ship as to be created, and in that consideration God ordained us unto ultimate glory, under relation to Christ as an “Head”—whether as members of His body or as His bride, or rather both as He is the Head of the Church; of either or of both which our persons were fully capable of before or *without* any consideration of our fall. Second, of our persons viewed as fallen, as corrupt and sinful, and therefore as objects to be saved and redeemed from the thralldom thereof, under our relation to Him as a “Saviour.”

Each of these relations was for the glory of God’s *grace*. First, in His design to advance us, considered purely as creatures, to an higher glory by His Christ than was attainable by the law of creation. To ordain us unto this glory was pure grace, no less so than to redeem us from sin and misery when fallen; for it was wholly independent of works or merit, even as Christ’s election (which is the pattern of ours) was apart from the consideration of works of any kind: as He declared, “My goodness extendeth not to Thee” (Psa. 16:2). “Although the life-work and death-agony of the Son did reflect unparalleled lustre upon every attribute of God, yet the Most Blessed and Infinitely Happy God stood in no need of the obedience and death of His Son: it was for our sakes that the work of redemption was undertaken” (C. H. Spurgeon). It is to this *original grace* that 2 Timothy 1:9 refers: grace alone moving God to redeem and call us, apart from works, “according to” that mother grace whereby we were ordained to glory from the beginning.

In that original grace lay God’s grand and ultimate design, for it will have its accomplishment last of all, and as the perfection of all. God might immediately, upon our first creation, have taken us up into that glory. But second, for the further magnifying of Christ and the ampler demonstration of His grace—to extend it to its utmost reach: as the word in the Hebrew is “draw out at length Thy lovingkindness” (Psa. 36:10)—He was not pleased to bring us unto the full possession of our inheritance in beholding the personal glory of Christ our Head; but permissively ordained that we should fall into sin, and therefore decreed to create us in a mutable condition (as the law of creation required), which made way for the abounding of His grace (Rom. 5:15). This is confirmed by, “But God who is rich in mercy (a term which denotes our *ill-desert*), for His great love wherewith He loved us” (Eph. 2:4): first God loved us, viewed as sinless creatures; and this became the foundation of “mercy” to us considered as sinners.

It was upon this Divine determination that the elect should not immediately upon their creation enter into the glory unto which they were ordained, but should first be suffered to fall into sin and wretchedness and then be delivered out of the same, that Christ had for His great and further glory the office of Redeemer and Saviour superadded to His election of Headship. It is our being sinful and miserable which occupies our present and immediate concern, as that which we are most solicitous about while left in this world,

and therefore it is that the Scriptures do principally set forth Christ as Redeemer and *Saviour*. We say “principally,” for as we have seen they are by no means silent upon the higher glory of His *Headship*; yea, sufficient is said thereon to draw out our thoughts, affections and hopes unto the beholding Him in His grandest glory.

In bringing to a close this outline of the Divine order of Christ’s election, and of ours, as it is represented in Scripture, let it be pointed out that we are not to suppose an interval of time between God’s foreordination of Christ as Head and of Him as Saviour, for all was simultaneous in the mind of God. The distinction is in the order of nature, and for our better understanding thereof. Christ could not be the “Head” without the correlate of His mystical “body,” as He could not be our “Saviour” except we had fallen. “Behold My Servant, whom I uphold: Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth” (Isa. 42:1): Christ was first God’s Elect and Delight and then His Servant—upheld by Him in the work of redeeming. Absolutely and primarily Christ as God-man was ordained for Himself, for His own glory; relatively and secondarily, He was chosen for us and our salvation.

The glory of the Person of the God-man, absolutely considered, was the primo-primitive design of God—that upon which He set His heart. Next unto this was His ordination of Christ to be an Head unto us and we a body to Him, that by our union to Him as our Head, He was the sufficient and efficient Author of such blessings as our becoming immutably holy, of sonship from His Sonship, and the gracious acceptance of our persons in Him as the chief Beloved, and heirs of the same glory with Him—all of which we were capable of in God’s considering us as pure creatures through our union with Christ, and needed not His death to have purchased them for us, being quite distinct from the blessing of redemption as Ephesians 1:7 (following vv. 3-6) clearly enough shows. As this was the first in God’s design, so it is the last in execution, being greater than all “salvation” blessings, the crown of all, when we shall be “forever with the Lord.”

Descending to a much lower level, let it be pointed out that most certainly the holy angels could not be regarded in the corrupt mass when they were chosen, since they never fell; therefore it is most reasonable to suppose we were regarded by God as in the same pure mass of creature-ship, when He elected us. Thus it was with the human nature of Christ, which is the object of election, for it never fell in Adam, nor ever came into a corrupt state, it was “chosen out of the people” (Psa. 89:19), and consequently the people out of which it was chosen must be considered as yet *unfallen*. This alone agrees with the type of Eve (the Church) being given to Adam (Christ) *before* sin entered. So God’s double ordination of the elect to glory and then to salvation (in view of the Fall) agrees with the double ordination of the non-elect: preterition as creatures and condemnation as sinners.—A.W.P.

N.B. For most of the above we are indebted to Thomas Goodwin. In some places we have purposely repeated ourselves in the two parts of this article, as much of the ground gone over is entirely new to most of our readers.

THE UNBELIEF OF THOMAS.

It is remarkable that one of the disciples should have been absent from the assembly on such an interesting occasion as the appearing of Christ in its midst after His resurrection (John 20). What was the cause of his absence would be worse than useless to conjecture. But the intention of Providence in it is obvious. It was to display the natural unbelief, as to the things of God, that is in the heart of man; as to teach us the kind of evidence that God accounts sufficient for His saving truth. Why was one of the disciples absent? Why was this disciple, Thomas? The narrative itself affords an answer to both questions. God's Providence intended to give us a specimen unbelief even in His own people. Thomas was peculiarly incredulous, therefore he was the person fitted to act the part designed for him on this occasion. If *Thomas* was afterwards convinced, there is no room left for captiousness to allege that the fact of Christ's resurrection was received by the disciples on slight grounds, without sufficient evidence and caution.

The unbelief of Thomas was unreasonable and sinful in a degree beyond expression. Why did he not believe the united testimony of the other Apostles? He should have received the testimony of any one of them. Unbelief justly exposed him to eternal condemnation. Has Thomas a license for unbelief, more than any other of the human race? Must he not be liable to condemnation on the same ground with the rest of mankind? Must he be satisfied in his own whims with respect to the evidence of this fact? Can he say with innocence, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe"? Did ever any infidel express a more unreasonable demand for the evidence of Christ's resurrection, and the truth of the Christian religion? The demands of skeptics are moderate and sober, compared to this intemperance of unbelief. The most unreasonable of them demand only that a particular revelation of the Gospel should be made to every man. This falls far short of the extravagance and unreasonableness of the unbelief of Thomas.

But there is wisdom in this madness. If Thomas is unreasonable, God uses his unreasonableness to effect a great purpose. By this means, in the satisfaction given to Thomas, we have the fact of the resurrection established on evidence beyond all suspicion. The possibility of delusion is removed; and the reality that it *was* Jesus whom the Apostles saw, rests not merely on the testimony of their eyes, but of the hands of the most unreasonable unbeliever that ever was in the world. Of all the infidels that ever existed, Thomas was the most extravagant. Voltaire and Hume are men of moderation, compared to this prince of infidels. Nothing will satisfy this philosopher but the handling of the prints of the nails in his Master. Was it not possible that the risen body of Jesus should have had *no scars*? Was not *this* the most likely thing to be expected? That Almighty power which could raise Him, could raise Him without a mark of His crucifixion. But Thomas was in all respects unreasonable; that through this, Jesus might exhibit Himself with evidence of His resurrection, that the most extravagant incredulity could presume to demand.

By this providential fact the Lord teaches us that His own disciples believe in Him, *not* because they are naturally more teachable, or less incredulous than others. It is God only who overcomes their unbelief. They are not only by nature the children of wrath, even as others; but after they are brought to faith and life, the only security of their perseverance is the favour and love of God in Christ. They are kept by faith, and that faith is not of themselves, but is the gift of God. The strongest of all the disciples of Christ would not abide in the faith for a single day, if, like Peter, or like Thomas, they were to be given

up to their own natural unbelief. But if the strongest would not stand in their strength, the feeblest will not be plucked from the hand of the heavenly Father. After the fearful example of Peter and of Thomas, let no disciple of Christ trust in his own steadfastness. We are strong only when, seeing our own weakness, we have our strength in the Rock of our salvation. The world in general, and philosophers in particular, look upon Christians as a weak-minded people, who are prone to believe without sufficient evidence. The man of science, even when he can find no fault with the man of God, still thinks himself justifiable in considering him as utterly below himself in mental powers. He thinks there must be a soft place in his head somewhere. The best thing that he can find to say is that he is "an amiable enthusiast." The truth, however, is far otherwise. Whether the believer is a man of strength of intellect, or feeble in mind, he would be equally an unbeliever with the most talented of his enemies, were he left to himself. Yea, the weakest would likely be the most presumptuous, and rash, and blasphemous, in the extravagance of their complaints against the Gospel. Thomas would not be behind Paine in the rashness of his demands and assertions. The Christian is made a little child by the Word and Spirit of God; but by nature he receives not the things of the Spirit, for they are to him, as well as to others, foolishness, until his eyes are opened to discover them.

It is a matter of fact, worthy of particular attention, that the simplest of the men of God make a more correct and a more scientific estimate of the philosopher, than the philosopher can make of him. The philosopher, with all his knowledge, knows not *God* by his philosophy. He knows not, then, the correct and enlightened views of the man of God on the highest of all sciences. The philosopher, not appreciating the value of the soul, nor the amount of the unspeakable glory of the heavenly inheritance, as well as of the danger of overlooking condemnation, sees not the wisdom of the conduct of the man of God. He has no way to judge of him but by himself; and, therefore, as he himself is wise, the other must be a fool. The pleasure of knowledge, and the glory of fame are, with the philosopher, the very essence of the happiness of the third Heaven. In all this, the man of God, even the weakest of them, can enter into the feelings and sentiments of the men of science; for, by nature, he is such a one himself. And he still finds, in his very best moments, that should he lose sight of Heaven, and be left of God, he would make his paradise with the philosophers, or at least, according to his taste with some group of those who are, in different ways, in pursuit of earthly joys.

The Christian is not amazed that men seek the praise of men more than that of God; and that they pursue the things of this world rather than the things of God. He is rather amazed that God has turned *himself* out of this course, and enables him to resist the temptations which he daily meets in the world. To him there is no mystery in the character and choice of the philosopher, of the sensualist, of the men of the world. In them he sees himself as he is by nature. It is with new eyes that he sees spiritual things in a correct manner. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man" (1 Cor. 2:14, 15). The Christian is the true philosopher. He not only has knowledge of the most sublime of all the sciences, of which the wise men of this world are as destitute as the wild ass of the wilderness, but he has that discernment of human views and character which human wisdom never has attained. The Christian knows the philosopher better than the philosopher knows himself. Of all the sciences, the science of mind is the most sublime;

Christians have a knowledge of the mind of man which no mere philosopher can obtain by his art. The philosopher gives an account of himself and of others, and of his own notions and views, which every Christian can detect as delusive and unreal.

In this providential fact, we see the forbearance and condescension of Christ to His people, even when they are unreasonable. He graciously removes the doubts of Thomas, though He might justly have left him to perish in his presumptuous unbelief. From this we may be assured, that, in one way or other, the Lord will remove the doubts of His people with respect to the evidence of the Gospel. If He will not give them that evidence which extravagance may rashly demand, He will keep them from such extravagance, or remove their doubts by opening their eyes to understand the proper evidence. This will be the same thing with presenting to their view and to their touch His hands and His side. He will assuredly overcome the unbelief and hardness of heart of the most obstinate of His chosen ones. If He were not provoked to give up on Thomas, His patience cannot meet with a more extravagant case of incredulity. He could call a Saul of Tarsus in the midst of his furious enmity to Him, and He did overcome the unbelief of the incredulous and obstinate Thomas. What a consolation is this to the believer! What thoughts of unbelief arise in the heart!

And how Satan could perplex the mind of the highest saint on earth—none but the believer can have any conception. If we were for a few minutes, from a state of the most assured faith, to be given into the hands of Satan to sift us as wheat, how would our faith fail us! Who knows what effect the fiery darts of the wicked one would have upon our minds, if they were not quenched? And quenched they cannot be but on the shield of faith; and in the case supposed God permits that faith to fail. What, then, will support us? How shall we without dismay look into an eternal world? But though God may for a moment suffer us to be tried by the tempter, He will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. Our constant prayer to God ought to be that He would not give us into the hands of Satan, or that He will continue to give us the shield of faith. In matters of so great moment, the mind, particularly at death, naturally looks for and wishes every evidence of the truth, and sometimes demands unreasonable evidence. Nothing but the blood of Christ should be before our eyes: and we should always remember that we glorify God, not by doubting, but by believing His Word.

Were not the Lord Jesus present with His people in the time of their trial, and especially at the time of their death, nothing could deliver them from horror. That they are not only saved from fear, but enabled to rejoice and triumph in death, is the surest evidence that the Gospel is true. It is not surprising that persons ignorant of the character of God, or their own character, and of the consequences of sin, should be stupidly unconcerned at death. But the Christian knows too much to be kept from the very agonies of Hell, if he has not the life of Heaven when he passes through the valley and shadow of death. In the removal of the doubts of reason, let us gain confidence that the Lord will not forsake us in the time of our need. To a Christian, who is deeply acquainted with his own weakness, Hell itself is not a greater object of horror than to be given up without assistance from God—to wrestle and combat with the prince of this world at the hour of death.

It is remarkable that the Lord, though He complied with the unreasonable demand for evidence in the case of Thomas, yet He would not listen to the request of the rich man in Hell, for the conviction of his relatives on earth: "Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, fa-

ther, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Did Abraham yield to the proposal, and admire the plan? No. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16). Our skeptics are still calling for more or better evidence. If the Gospel is true, they allege, it should have evidence against which no man could find objection. Let them alone. Press on them the evidence that God has given of the truth of His Gospel. If they believe not this, it will be found in the day of judgment that they have not rejected it from its insufficiency, but from their own enmity to the truth. Testimony is a sufficient ground of evidence; and if they reject the testimony of God by His Apostles, they will justly perish.

And the same thing will hold true with respect to the denial of the testimony of God with regard to any particular doctrine, and any particular part. The enemies of the doctrine, or fact recorded, will allege a want of proof; and, on the authority of philosophical doctrines, will take on them to modify the testimony of God. They make the dogmas of human science an authority paramount to the testimony of God in the Scriptures. This is the boldness, the blasphemy of infidelity. If God has given His testimony on any part, it is evidence paramount in authority to every other. To prove the truth alleged on such authority, nothing is necessary but to show that it is the result of the fair exposition of the laws of language. Let God be true, and let all men be liars. Against the testimony of God the philosopher is not to be heard more than a convicted perjurer. Our Lord, even though, for His own wise purposes, indulged Thomas, yet did not approve of his unbelief, nor of his demand. He did not ascribe his incredulity to greater talents, or greater caution, or greater concern about the truth, than were discovered by his brethren. On the contrary, He shows that they rather are blessed who will believe *without* such evidence as Thomas demanded. There are two extremes, equally to be avoided, into which men are prone to fall. Some believe without evidence, believe against all evidence, believe what all evidence, capable of being submitted to the mind of man, shows to be absurd and impossible. On the other hand, there are some who unreasonably refuse evidence that is sufficient, evidence which God has pronounced sufficient, and look on themselves as manifesting greater intellect or wisdom, in demanding evidence of another kind, which God has not appointed. "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"—Alexander Carson.