

Studies in the Scriptures
November, 1936
The Spirit Transforming.

Just as there are certain verses in the Old Testament and the Gospels which give us a miniature of the redemptive work of Christ for God's people—such, for example, as Isaiah 53:5 and John 3:16—so in the Epistles there are some condensed doctrinal declarations which express in a few words the entire work of the Spirit in reforming, conforming, and transforming believers. 2 Corinthians 3:18 is a case in point: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This important passage supplies a brief but blessed summary of the progressive work of grace which is wrought in the Christian by the indwelling Spirit. It focuses to a single point the different rays which are emitted by the various graces which He communicates to them, namely, that wherein the saint is slowly but surely conformed unto and transfigured into the very image of the Lord.

There are many parts in and aspects of the Spirit's work in reforming, conforming and transforming the believer, but they are here epitomised in one brief but most comprehensive statement, which we now propose to examine and expound. As an aid to this, let us proceed to ask our verse a number of questions. First, exactly what is meant by "the glory of the Lord," into "the same image" of which all believers "are changed"?—*are*—not, "shall be." Second, what is "the glass" in which we are beholding this glory? Third, what is denoted in the we are "changed into the same image from glory to glory." Fourth, what is the force of "we all with open face" are beholding this glory? Finally, how does the Spirit of the Lord effect this great change in believers? Are they entirely passive therein, or is there an active co-operation on their part?

Perhaps it will help the reader most if we first give brief answers to these questions and then supply amplifications of the same in what follows. The "glory of the Lord" here signifies His moral perfections, the excellencies of His character. The "glass" in which His glory is revealed and in which those with anointed eyes may behold it, is the Holy Scripture. Our being "changed into the same image" has reference to our salvation, viewed from the experimental side; that it is here said to be "from glory to glory" intimates it is a gradual and progressive work. Our beholding that glory with "open face" means that the veil of darkness, of prejudice, of "enmity," which was over our depraved hearts by nature, has been removed, so that in God's light we now see light. The Spirit effects this great change both immediately and mediately, that is, by His direct actions upon the soul and also by blessing to us our use of the appointed means of grace.

"The glory of the Lord." This we have defined as His moral perfections, the excellencies of His character. The best theologians have classified God's attributes under two heads: incommunicable and communicable. There are certain perfections of the Divine Being which are peculiar to Himself, which in their very nature cannot be transmitted to the creature: these are His eternity, His immutability, His omnipotence, His omniscience, His omnipresence. There are other perfections of the Divine Being which He *is* pleased to communicate, in measure, to the unfallen angels and to the redeemed from among men: these are His goodness, His grace, His mercy, His holiness, His righteousness, His wisdom. Now, obviously, it is the latter which the Apostle has before him in 2 Corinthians 3:18, for believers are not, will not, and cannot be changed into the "same image" of the

Lord's omniscience, etc. Compare "we beheld the glory . . . full of *grace and truth*" (John 1:14)—His *moral* perfections.

The "glass" in which the glory of the Lord is revealed and beheld by us is His written Word, as is clear by a comparison with James 1:22-25. Yet let it be carefully borne in mind that the Scriptures have *two* principal parts, being divided into two Testaments. Now the contents of those two Testaments may be summed up, respectively, in the Law and the Gospel. That which is outstanding in the Old Testament is *the Law*; that which is preeminent in the New Testament is *the Gospel*. Thus, in giving an exposition or explanation of the "glass" in which believers behold the Lord's glory, we cannot do better than say, It is in the Law and the Gospel His glory is set before us. It is absolutely essential to insist on this amplification, for a *distinctive* "glory of the Lord" is revealed in each one, and to *both* of them is the Christian conformed (or "changed") by the Spirit.

Should anyone say that we are "reading our own thoughts into" the meaning of the "glass" in which the glory of the Lord is revealed, and object to our insisting this signifies, first *the Law*, we would point out this is fully borne out by the immediate context of 2 Corinthians 3:18, and what is found there *obliges* us to take this view. The Apostle is there comparing and contrasting the two great economies, the Mosaic and the Christian, showing that the preeminence of the one over the other lay in the former being an *external* ministration (the "letter"), whereas the latter is *internal* (the "spirit"), in the heart; nevertheless, he affirms that the former ministration "was *glorious*" (v. 7), and "if the ministration of condemnation be *glorious*" (v. 9), "for even that which is made *glorious*" (v. 10), "if that which was done away was *glorious*" (v. 11)—all being explained by the fact that the glory of the Lord was exhibited therein.

In the "glass" of the Law the Lord gave a most wondrous revelation of His "glory." The Law has been aptly and rightly designated "a transcript of the Divine nature," though (as is to be expected) some of our moderns have taken serious exception to that statement, thereby setting themselves in opposition to the Scriptures. In Romans 8:7 we are told "the carnal mind is enmity against God," and the proof furnished of this declaration is, "*for* it is not subject to *the Law* of God," which, manifestly, is only another way of saying that the Law is a transcript of the very character of God. So again we read, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12): what is that but a summarised description of the Divine perfections! If God Himself is "holy and just and good" and the Law be an immediate reflection of His very nature, then it will itself be "holy and just and good." Again, if God Himself be "love" (1 John 4:8) and the Law is a glass in which His perfections shine, then that which the Law requires, all that is required, will be *love*, and that is exactly the case: Matthew 22:37-39.

What a word is that in Exodus 24:16, "And *the glory of the LORD* abode upon Mount Sinai." Yes, the glory of the Lord was as really and truly manifested at Sinai as it is displayed now at Mount Sion—that man in his present state was unable to appreciate the awe-inspiring display which God there made of His perfections, in nowise alters that fact, for He is a God to be feared as well as loved. In the "glass" of the Law we behold the glory of the Lord's majesty and sovereignty, the glory of His government and authority, the glory of His justice and holiness; yes, and the "glory" of His *goodness* in framing such a Law which requires us to love Him with all our hearts, and for His sake, His creatures, our neighbours as ourselves.

But the “glory of the Lord” is further manifested in the “glass” of the Gospel, in which God has made a fuller and yet more blessed revelation of His moral perfections than He did at Sinai. Now the Gospel necessarily implies or presupposes the following things. First, a broken Law, and its transgressors utterly unable to repair its breach. Second, that God graciously determined to save a people from its curse. Third, that He purposes to do so without making light of sin, without dishonouring the Law, and without compromising His holiness—otherwise, so far from the Gospel being the best news of all, it would herald the supreme calamity. How this is effected, by and through Christ, the Gospel makes known. In His own Son God shines forth in meridian splendour, for Jesus Christ is the brightness of His glory, the express image of His Person. In Christ the veil is rent, the holy of holies is exposed to fullest view, for now we behold “The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

In the Gospel is displayed not only the amazing grace and infinite mercy, but also and mainly the “manifold *wisdom*” of God. Therein we learn how grace is exercised righteously, how mercy is bestowed honourably, how transgressors are pardoned justly. God did not deem it suitable to the honour of His majesty to sovereignly pardon sinners without a satisfaction being offered to Himself, and therefore did He appoint a Mediator to magnify the Law and make it honourable. The great design of the incarnation, life and death of Christ, was to demonstrate in the most public manner that God was worthy of all that love, honour and obedience which the Law required, and that sin was as great an evil as the punishment threatened supposed. The heart of the glorious Gospel of Christ is *the Cross*, and *there* we see all the Divine perfections fully displayed: in the death of the Lord Jesus the Law was magnified, Divine holiness vindicated, sin discountenanced, the sinner saved, grace glorified, and Satan defeated.—A.W.P.

The Epistle to the Hebrews.

107. *Brotherly Love*: 13:1-3.

Brotherly love is that spiritual benevolence and affectionate solicitude which Christians have one toward another, desiring and seeking their highest interests. The varied characteristics of it are beautifully delineated in 1 Corinthians 13. In the opening verse of Hebrews 13 the Apostle exhorts unto the maintenance of the same, "Let brotherly love *continue*." Negatively, that means, Let us be constantly on our guard against those things which are likely to interrupt its flow. Positively, it signifies, Let us be diligent in employing those means which are calculated to keep it in a healthy state. It is along these two lines that our responsibility here is to be discharged, and therefore it is of first importance that due heed be given thereto. We therefore propose to point out some of the main hindrances and obstacles to the continuance of brotherly love, and then mention some of the aids and helps to the furtherance of the same. May the blessed Spirit direct the writer's thoughts and give the reader to lay to heart whatever is of Himself.

The root hindrance to the exercise of brotherly love is *self-love*—to be so occupied with Number One that the interests of others are lost sight of. In Proverbs 30:15 we read, "The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give." This repulsive creature has two forks in her tongue, which she employs for gorging herself in the blood of her unhappy victim. Spiritually the "horseleach" represents self-love, and her two daughters are self-righteousness, and self-pity. As the horseleach is never satisfied, often continuing to gorge itself until it bursts, so self-love is never contented, crying "Give, give." All the blessings and mercies of God are perverted by making them to minister *unto self*. Now the antidote for this evil is for the heart to be engaged with the example which Christ left us. *He* came not to be ministered unto, but to minister *unto others*. He pleased not Himself, but ever "went about doing good." He was tireless in relieving distress and seeking the welfare of all with whom He came into contact. Then "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). If brotherly love is to continue, self must be denied.

Inseparably connected with self-love is *pride*, and the fostering of pride is fatal to the cultivation of brotherly affection. The majority, if not all, of the petty grievances among Christians, are to be traced back to this evil root. "Love suffereth long," but pride is terribly impatient. "Love envieth not," but pride is intensely jealous. "Love seeketh not her own," but pride ever desires gratification. "Love seeketh not her own," but pride demands constant attention from others. "Love beareth all things," but pride is resentful of the slightest injury. "Love endureth all things," but pride is offended if a brother fails to greet him on the street. Pride must be *mortified* if brotherly love is to flourish. Therefore the first injunction of Christ to those who come unto Him for rest is, "Take *My* yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meet and *lowly in heart*."

Another great enemy to brotherly love is *a sectarian spirit*, and this evil is far more widespread than many suppose. Our readers would be surprised if they knew how often a sample copy of this magazine is despised by those who have a reputation for being stalwarts in the Faith and as possessing a relish for spiritual things, yet because this paper is not issued by *their* denomination or "circle of fellowship" it is at once relegated to the waste paper basket. Alas, how frequently is a spirit of partisanship mistaken for brotherly love: so long as a person "believes *our* doctrines" and is willing to "join our church," he is received with open arms. On the other hand, no matter how sound in the Faith a man may be, nor how godly his walk, if he refuses to affiliate himself with some particular

group of professing Christians, he is looked upon with suspicion and given the cold shoulder. But such things ought not to be: they betray a very low state of spirituality.

We are far from advocating the entering into familiar fellowship with every one who claims to be a Christian—Scripture warns us to “lay hands suddenly on no man” (1 Tim. 5:22), for all is not good that glitters; and perhaps there never was a day in which empty profession abounded so much as it does now. Yet there is a happy medium between being taken in by every imposter who comes along, and refusing to believe that there are any genuine saints left upon earth. Surely a tree may be known by its fruits. When we meet with one in whom we can discern the image of Christ, whether that one be a member of our party or not, *there* should our affections be fixed. “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” (Rom. 15:7): it is our bounden duty to love all whom Christ loves. It is utterly vain that we boast of our orthodoxy or of the “light” we have, if brotherly love be not shown by us to the feeblest member of Christ’s body who crosses our path.

There are many other things which are serious obstacles to the maintenance of brotherly love, yet we must not do more than barely mention them. The love of the world; failure to mortify the lusts of the flesh in our souls; being unduly wrapped up in the members of our own family, so that those related to us by the blood of Christ have not that place in our affections which they ought. Ignorance of the directions in which it should be exercised and of the proper duties which it calls for; forgetfulness of the foundation of it, which is a mutual interest in the grace of God, that we are fellow-members of the Household of Faith. A readiness to listen to idle gossip, which in most instances is a “giving place to the Devil,” who accuses the brethren day and night. But there is one other serious hindrance to the continuance of brotherly love which we will notice in a little more detail, namely, *impatience*.

By impatience we mean *a lack of forbearance*. True brotherly love is a reflection of God’s love for us, and *He* loves His people not for their native attractiveness, but for *Christ’s* sake; and therefore does He love them in spite of their ugliness and vileness. God is “longsuffering to usward” (2 Peter 3:9), bearing with our crookedness, pardoning our iniquities, healing our diseases, and His Word to us is, “Be ye therefore followers (emulators) of God, as dear children, and walk in love” (Eph. 5:1-2). We are to love the saints for what we can see *of Christ* in them; yes, *love* them, and for *that* reason—in spite of all their ignorance, perverseness, ill-temper, obstinacy, fretfulness. It is the image of God in them—not their wealth, amiability, social position—which is the magnet that attracts a renewed heart toward them.

“Forbearing one another in love” (Eph. 4:2). False love is glad of any specious excuse for throwing off the garb that sits so loosely and uncomfortably upon it. Ahitophel was glad of a pretext to forsake David, whom he hated in his heart, although with his mouth he continued to show much love. “Forbearing one another in love”: that love which a little silence or neglect can destroy never came from God; that love which a few blasts of malice from the lips of a new acquaintance will wither, is not worth possessing! Remember, dear brother and sister, God suffers our love for one another to be *tried and tested*—as He does our faith—or there would be no need for this exhortation “forbearing one another in love.” The most spiritual Christian on earth is full of infirmities, and the best way of enduring them is to frequently and honestly remind yourself that *you* also are full of faults and failings.

John Owen pointed out that there are certain *occasions* (in addition to the *causes* we have mentioned above) of the decay and loss of brotherly love. “1. Differences in opinion and practice about things in religion [unless these be of a vital nature they should not be allowed to affect our *love* for each other.—A.W.P.] 2. Unsuitableness of natural tempers and inclinations. 3. Readiness to receive a sense of appearing provocations. 4. Different and sometimes inconsistent secular interests. 5. An abuse of spiritual gifts, by pride on the one hand, or envy on the other. 6. Attempts for domination, inconsistent in a fraternity; which are all to be watched against.”

We sincerely trust that the reader is not becoming weary of our lengthy exposition of Hebrews 13:1: the subject of which it treats is of such deep practical importance that we feel one more aspect of it requires to be considered. We shall therefore elaborate a little on some of the sub-headings which Owen mentioned under the *means* of its preservation. First, “An endeavour to grow and thrive in the principle of it, or the power of adopting grace.” The three principle graces—faith, hope, love—can only thrive in a healthy soul. Just so far as personal piety wanes will brotherly love deteriorate. If close personal communion with Christ be neglected, then there can be no real spiritual fellowship with His people. Unless, then, *my* heart be kept warm in the love of God, affection toward my brethren is sure to decay. Second, “A deep sense of the weight or moment of this duty, from the especial instruction and command of Christ.” Only as the heart is deeply impressed by the vital importance of the maintenance of brotherly love will serious and constant efforts be made thereunto.

Third, “Of the trial which is connected thereunto, of the sincerity of our grace and the truth of our sanctification, for ‘by this we know we have passed from death unto life.’” This is indeed a weighty consideration: if Christians were more concerned to obtain *proof* of their regeneration, they would devote far closer attention to the cultivation of brotherly love, which is one of the chief evidences of the new birth (1 John 3:14). If I am at outs with my brethren and am unconcerned about their temporal and eternal interests, then I have no right to regard myself as a child of God. Fourth, “A due consideration of the use, yea, the necessity of this duty to the glory of God, and edification of the church.” The greater concern we *really* have for the manifestative glory of God in this world, the more zealous shall we be in seeking to promote the same by the increase of brotherly love in our self and among the saints: the glory of God and the welfare of His people are inseparably bound together.

Fifth, “Of that breach of union, loss of peace, discord and confusion, which must and will ensue on the neglect of it.” Serious indeed are the consequences of a decay of brotherly love, yea, fatal if the disease be not arrested. Therefore does it behoove each of us to honestly and seriously face the question, How far is *my* lack of brotherly love contributing unto the spiritual decline in Christendom today? Sixth, “Constant watchfulness against all those vicious habits of mind, in self-love, love of the world, which are apt to impair it.” If *that* be faithfully attended to, it will prove one of the most effectual of all the means for the cultivation of this grace. Seventh, “Diligent heed that it be not impaired in its vital acts: such as are patience, forbearance, readiness to forgive, unaptness to believe evil, without which no other duties of it will be long continued.” Eighth, “Fervent prayer for supplies of grace enabling thereunto.”

After the opening exhortation of Hebrews 13—which is fundamental to the discharge of all mutual Christian duties—the Holy Spirit through the Apostle proceeds to point out

some of *the ways in which* the existence and continuance of brotherly love are to be evidenced. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers" (v. 2). Here is the first instance given, among sundry particulars, in which the greatest of all the Christian graces is to be exemplified. The duty which is inculcated is that of *Christian hospitality*. That which was commanded under the old covenant is repeated under the new: "But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Lev. 19:34 and cf. Deut. 10:19, etc.). The Greek word for "entertain" is rendered "lodge" in Acts 10:18, 23, and 28:7.

There was a special urgency for pressing this duty by the Apostles, arising from *the persecution* of the Lord's people in different places, which resulted in their being driven from their own homes and forced to seek a refuge abroad. "At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1)—some traveled as far as "Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch" (Acts 11:19). Therein did they obey the direction of Christ's that "when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another" (Matt. 10:23), removing to other parts where, for the present, peace obtained; for the providence of God so directs things it is very rare that persecution prevails universally—hence some places of quiet retirement are generally available, at least for a season. Yet this being forced to leave their *own* habitations required them to seek refuge among strangers, and this it is which gives point to our present exhortation.

Moreover "at that time there were sundry persons, especially of the converted Hebrews, who went up and down from one city, yea, one nation, unto another, on their own charges, to preach the Gospel. They went forth for the sake of Christ, taking nothing of the Gentiles unto whom they preached (3 John 7); and these were only brethren, and not officers of any church. The reception, entertainment, and assistance of these when they came unto any church or place as strangers, the Apostle celebrates and highly commends in his well-beloved Gaius (3 John 5, 6). Such as these, when they came to them as strangers, the Apostle recommends unto the love and charity of the Hebrews in a peculiar manner. And he who is not ready to receive and entertain such persons, will manifest how little concern he hath in the Gospel or the glory of Christ Himself" (J. Owen).

Though circumstances have altered (for the moment, for none can say how soon the restraining hand of God may be partly withdrawn and His enemies allowed to shed the blood of His people once more—such is even now the case in some parts of the earth), yet the principle of this injunction is still binding on all who bear the name of Christ. Not only are our hearts, but our homes as well, to be opened unto such as are really needy: "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Rom. 12:13). An eminent and spiritual scholar points out that "the original word hath respect not so much to the exercise of the duty itself, as to the disposition, readiness, and frame of mind which is required in it and to it. Hence the Syriac renders it 'the *love* of strangers,' and that properly; but it is of such a love as is *effectual*, and whose proper exercise consists in the entertainment of them, which is the proper effect of love towards them."

In Eastern countries, where they traveled almost barefoot, the washing of the feet (1 Tim. 5:10), as well as the setting before them of food and giving lodgment for the night, would be included. The word for "strangers" is not found in the Greek: literally it reads "of hospitality not be forgetful"—be not unmindful of, grow not slack in, the discharge of

this duty. It is to be observed that one of the necessary qualifications of a bishop is that he must be “a lover of hospitality” (Titus 1:8). Just as worldlings delight in entertaining their relatives and friends, so the Lord’s people should be eager and alert to render loving hospitality to homeless or stranded Christians, and as 1 Peter 4:9 says “use hospitality one to another *without grudging*.” The same applies, of course, to entertaining in our homes travelling servants of God—rather than sending them to some hotel to mingle with the ungodly.

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb. 13:2). The second clause is to be regarded as supplying a *motive* for the discharge of this duty of Christian hospitality. Needless to say these added words do not signify that we may expect, literally, to receive a similar honour, but it is mentioned for the purpose of supplying *encouragement*. The Apostle here reminds us that in former days some had been richly rewarded for their diligent observance of this duty, for they had been granted the holy privilege of receiving angels under the appearance of men. How this consideration enforces our exhortation is apparent: had there not been a readiness of mind unto this, a spirit of real hospitality in their hearts, they had neglected the opportunity with which Divine grace so highly favoured them. Let us, then, seek to cultivate the virtue of generosity: “the liberal deviseth liberal things” (Isa. 32:8).

“For thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb. 13:2). The special reference, no doubt, is unto the cases of Abraham (Gen. 18:1-3) and of Lot (Gen. 19:1-3). We say “special reference” for the use of the plural “some” is sufficient to bar us from ascribing it to them alone, exclusively of all others. It is quite likely that in those ancient times, when God so much used the ministry of angels unto His saints, that others of them shared the same holy privilege. The real point for us in this allusion is that the Lord will be no man’s debtor, that He honours those who honour Him—whether they honour Him directly, or indirectly in the persons of His people. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:10). This too is recorded for our encouragement and when we have discharged the duty (as opportunity afforded—for God accepts the will for the deed!), if in indigent circumstances we may plead this before Him.

The Scriptures are full of examples where the Spirit has joined together duty and privilege, obedience and reward. Whenever we comply with such commands, we may count upon God recompensing those who exercised kindness unto His people. The cases of Rebekah (Gen. 24:18, 19, 22), of Potiphar (Gen. 39:5), of the Egyptian midwives (Exo. 1:17, 20), of Rahab (Josh. 6:25), of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:15, 23), of the woman of Shunem (2 Kings 4:9, 13, 14), of the inhabitants of Melita (Acts 28:2, 8, 9), all illustrate this. The resulting gains will more than repay any expense we incur in befriending the saints. Beautifully did Calvin point out that “not merely angels, *but Christ Himself*, is received by us, when we receive the poor of the flock in His name.” Solemn beyond words is the warning of Matthew 25:41-43; but inexpressibly blessed is Matthew 25:34-36.

Compassion for the afflicted is the next thing exhorted unto: “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them” (Heb. 13:3). Love to the brethren is to manifest itself in sympathy to sufferers. Most reprehensible and unChristlike is that selfish callousness which says, I have troubles enough of my own without concerning myself over those of

other people. Putting it on its lowest ground, such a spirit ministers no relief: the most effectual method of getting away from our own sorrows is to seek out and relieve others in distress. But nothing has a more beneficial tendency to counteract our innate selfishness than a compliance with such exhortations as the one here before us: to be occupied with the severer afflictions which some of our brethren are experiencing will free our minds from the lighter trials we may be passing through.

“Remember them that are in bonds.” The immediate reference is unto those who had been deprived of their liberty for Christ’s sake, who had been cast into prison. The “remember” signifies far more than to merely *think of* them, including *all the* duties which their situation called for. It means, first, feel for them, take to heart their case, have compassion toward them. Our great High Priest is touched with the feeling of their infirmities (Heb. 4:15), and so must we be. At best their food was coarse, their beds hard, and the ties which bound them to their families had been rudely sundered. Often they lay, cruelly fettered, in a dark and damp dungeon. *They* felt their situation, their confinement, their separation from wife and children; then identify yourself with them and have a feeling sense of what they suffer. “Remember,” too, that for the sovereignty of God, and His restraining hand, *you* would be in the same condition as they!

But more: “remember” them in your prayers. Intercede for them, seeking on their behalf grace from God, that they may meekly acquiesce to His providential dealings, that their sufferings may be sanctified to their souls, that the Most High will so overrule things that this Satanic opposition against some of His saints may yet issue in the extension of His kingdom. Finally, do unto them as you would wish them to do unto you were you in their place. If you can obtain permission, visit them (Matt. 25:36), endeavour to comfort them, so far as practicable relieve their sufferings; and leave no stone unturned to seek their lawful release. Divine providence so regulates things that, as a rule, while some of the saints are in prison, others of them still enjoy their liberty—thus allowing an opportunity for the practical exercise of Christian sympathy.

“And them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” (Heb. 13:3). There is probably a double reference here: first, to those who were not actually in prison, but who had been severely flogged, or were in sore straits because heavy fines had been imposed on them. Second, to the wives and children of those who had been imprisoned, and who would suffer keen adversity now that the breadwinners were removed from them. Such have a very real claim upon the sympathy of those who had escaped the persecutions of the foes of the Gospel. If *you* are not in a financial position to do much for them, then acquaint some of your richer brethren with their case and endeavour to stir them up to supply their needs. “As being yourselves also in the body” is a reminder that it may be *your* turn next to experience such opposition.

John Owen, who lived in particularly stormy times (the days of Bunyan), said, “Whilst God is pleased to give grace and courage unto some to suffer for the Gospel unto bonds, and to others to perform this duty towards them, the church will be no loser by suffering. When some are tried as unto their constancy in bonds, others are tried as unto their sincerity in the discharge of the duties required of them. And usually more fail in neglect of their duty towards sufferers, and so fall from their profession, than do so fail under and on account of their sufferings.” That the Apostle Paul practised what he preached is clear from “Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?” (2 Cor. 11:29). For illustrations of the discharge of these duties see Genesis 14:14, Nehemiah

1:4, Job 29:15, 16, Jeremiah 38:7, etc. For solemn warnings read Job 19:14-16, Proverbs 21:13, Matthew 25:43, James 2:13.

We need hardly to say that *the principles* of Verse 3 are of *general* application at all times and to all cases of suffering Christians. The same is summed up in “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). The sentiment of this verse has been beautifully expressed in the lines of that hymn so precious in its hallowed memories:

“Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.
We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.”

The Lord grant unto both writer and reader more of His grace so that we shall “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Rom. 12:15).—A.W.P.

The Life of David.

59. *His Son Absalom.*

Tamar, David's daughter, as we saw last month, found an asylum in the home of Absalom, following the vile treatment which she had received from Amnon—another of David's sons, but by a different wife. Her brother, we are told, "hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar." Nor did Absalom's enmity abate at all with the passing of time, but merely waited an occasion which he deemed would be most suitable for taking his revenge. This only served to make more apparent his real character. There is an anger which is sinless, as is clear from "When He (Christ) had looked round about on them *with anger*, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts" (Mark 3:5). Yet there is so much of a combustible nature in the flesh of a Christian that he needs to turn into earnest prayer that exhortation, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26).

But the sun *had* gone down upon Absalom's wrath: a deadly fire burned in his heart which two full years had no power to quench, his crafty soul biding its time until a way opened to let out his rage on its victim. Implacable hatred burned in Absalom toward his half-brother as though it had been kindled but yesterday; and now his subtlety devised a sure passage for it. He was most manifestly a child of Satan, and the lusts of his father he was ready to willingly execute. The guide of the "serpent" now ministered unto the fury of the "lion," for those are the two predominant characteristics in the arch-enemy of God and men. This is clear from the tactics he followed with our blessed Lord. First, we see his venomous guile in the Temptation, and then his fiendish cruelty at the Cross. Similarly does he work now, and thus it ever is with those whom he dominates.

"And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baalhazor, which is beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons" (2 Sam. 13:23). Corresponding to the old English custom of "Harvest-home," when a time of feasting and merriment followed the garnering of it, in Palestine the annual occasion of "sheepshearing" was made an event of festive celebration and of the coming together of relatives and friends. This is clear from Genesis 38:12, 13 and 1 Samuel 25:4, 36: for in the one we read, "and Judah was comforted (after the death of his daughter), and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, with his friend," while in the other we are told that "Nabal did shear his sheep ... and, behold, he held *a feast* in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken."

During quite a lengthy interval Absalom had concealed his bitter hatred against his half-brother under an appearance of indifference, for we read that he "spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad" (2 Sam. 13:22). But now Absalom deemed the time ripe for his murder. To cover his base design he invites "all the king's sons" to his feast, which he had purposed should be the place of execution for his unsuspecting victim. Only the last great Day will reveal how often treacherous designs have been cloaked by apparent kindness—Judas betrayed his Master not with a blow, but a kiss! In his long and varied experience the writer has found in every instance that his worst enemies fawned upon and flattered him to his face, and then stabbed him behind his back; yet sufficient for the servant to be as His Lord.

But Absalom went to yet greater pains to hide his base intention. "And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant" (2 Sam. 13:24). That was downright hypoc-

ris, for Absalom could have had no desire that David himself should be on the ground to witness the treachery against his son. Nor was the success of his cunning plot endangered by this specious move, for he had good reason to believe that his father would decline the invitation. Such indeed was the case: "And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee." How that evidenced one of the many noble traits of David's character: his unselfish thoughtfulness of others—his kindly consideration by refusing to put his son to unnecessary expense. "And he pressed him," yet a little later sought to turn the hearts of all Israel against David and wrest the kingdom from his hand! "Howbeit he would not go, but blessed him" (v. 25), that is, pronounced a patriarchal benediction upon him.

"Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us" (v. 26). Here was the real design of Absalom in pressing the king to be present himself at the forthcoming family-union and feast: having considerately declined his son's invitation, it would be doubly difficult to refuse his second request. Yet how this pretended deference unto David's parental authority exhibited the perfidy of Absalom! He was determined to get Amnon into his toils, yet veiled his bloodthirstiness under a pretence of affection and filial respect. "And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?" (v. 26). David was evidently somewhat uneasy or at least wondered what lay behind the outward show of Absalom's friendliness toward Amnon. But "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Prov. 21:1); and so the sequel clearly demonstrated.

"But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him" (2 Sam. 13:27). Absalom prevailed against the king's better judgment. It may be that David yielded to his son's urgency from the fond hope that a full reconciliation would be effected between the two brothers, but whether or not that be the case, we must look higher and behold the over-ruling hand of God accomplishing His own counsel. The Lord had declared that "the sword shall never depart from thine house" and "I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house" (2 Sam. 12:10, 11), and from the execution of that judgment there was no escape. Divine providence so directed things that David, by giving his consent for Amnon to attend the feast, became an unwitting accessory to Amnon's murder. How much heavier did this make the blow to the poor king's heart! Yet how absolutely just were the Divine dealings with him!

"Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant" (2 Sam. 13:28). Birds of a feather flock together: Absalom had succeeded in gathering around him unscrupulous menials who were ready to aid him in any villainy. They knew that the Lord God had commanded "thou shalt *not* kill," yet were they ready to damn their souls in order to please their wicked master. The vilest characters are rarely at a loss to find those who will aid them in the blackest of crimes. The fearful impiety of the reprobate Absalom appears in "when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then kill him; fear not"—either God or man, regardless of consequences. Such reckless abandon marks those who are given up by God.

But let us now observe how *the righteous retribution of God* appears in every detail of this incident. First, as David's murder of Uriah was not a sudden surprisal into evil, but a thing deliberately premeditated in cold blood, so Absalom's removal of Amnon was cal-

lously planned beforehand, as Verse 28 shows. Second, as the slaying of Uriah was a means to an end—that David might obtain Bathsheba; so the killing of Amnon was but a preliminary to Absalom’s design of obtaining the kingdom—by removing his older brother who was heir to the throne. Third, as David did not slay Uriah by his own hand, but made Joab an accomplice, so Absalom involved his servants in the guilt of his crime—instead of striking the fatal blow himself. Fourth, as David made Uriah “drunk” before his death (2 Sam. 11:13), so Amnon was struck down while “his heart was merry with wine”! Who can fail to see the superintending government of God here.

“And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded” (2 Sam. 13:29). How little can we foresee when tragic calamity may smite a family reunion—“thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Prov. 27:1). How lightly we should hold the things of earth, for the most treasured of them are likely to be rudely snatched from us at any moment. The predicted “sword” is now drawn in David’s house, and the rest of his sons knew not how soon *they* might fall victims to Absalom’s bloodthirstiness. Therefore do we read, “Then all the king’s sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled” (2 Sam. 13:29). What an ending to a time of festivity! How vain are the pleasures of this poor world! How slender is the thread upon which hangs the lives even of kings’ sons!

“And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king’s sons, and there is not one of them left” (v. 30). How often the bearers of evil tidings make bad matters worse by excuselessly exaggerating them! Things were now represented unto David as being much blacker than they really were. There is a warning for *us* here: not to credit reports of evil until they are definitely corroborated. “Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent” (v. 31). How ready we are to believe the worst! Poor David was now as sorely afflicted by the false news brought to him as though it had been authentic. But alas, how slow we are to believe the Good News; such is fallen man—ready to receive the most egregious lie, but rejecting the authority of Divine Truth.

“And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David’s brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men the king’s sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar” (v. 32). Jonadab appears to have had knowledge from the beginning that Absalom had definitely purposed to slay his brother, yet had he refrained from informing the king—so that he might use his influence to reconcile the two men, or at least take steps to prevent murder being done. Great indeed was the guilt of Jonadab. But again we perceive Providence overruling things. God sometimes permits the evil plots of men to come to light, so that their intended victims receive timely warnings (Acts 9:23-25), while in other instances He seals the mouths of those possessing such knowledge; and this as best serves His own inexorable designs.

“But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur, and was there three years” (2 Sam. 13:37, 38). By his foul crime the land of Israel had been defiled and his own life forfeited (Num. 35:33). He was now a debtor to that Law of which David was the guardian, for the king held his throne on the terms of reading the Law continually and obeying the same (Deut. 17:18-20). It is true that David had not executed punishment for Amnon’s incest, but he could scarcely expect him to wink at barbarous

fratricide. Nor could this abandoned wretch obtain protection in any of the “cities of refuge,” for they afforded no shelter unto those who were guilty of willful murder. Only one alternative, then, was left him, and that was to flee unto his mother’s people; and there it was that he found asylum.

From the human side of things it seems a great pity that this fugitive from justice did not continue at Geshur, the place of his heathen origin; but the sentimental heart of his father yearned after him: “And the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon” (2 Sam. 13:39). Time is a great healer, and after three years most of David’s horror at Absalom’s sin and grief over Amnon’s death had worn off. “At first he could not find in his heart to do justice on him: now he can almost find in his heart to take him into his favour again. This was David’s infirmity” (M. Henry). One can understand David’s attitude, and his subsequent conduct, from a natural viewpoint; but from the spiritual side it betokened another sad lapse, for Divine holiness requires us to “*Crucify* the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24): yes, dear reader, its “*affections*” as well as its “*lusts*.” The claims of God must prevail over all natural inclinations to the contrary, and when they do not, we have to pay dearly, as David did.

We read nothing of Absalom’s pining for a return unto his father, for he was devoid of even natural affection. Fierce, proud, utterly unscrupulous, he lacked any of the finer qualities of human nature. But “David longed to go forth unto Absalom,” yet it seemed that this son on whom he wasted his affections was irredeemably lost to him. Absalom was guilty of murder and the unchanging Law of God commands, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Gen. 9:6). How, then, was it possible for David to restore his erring son without defying the Divine requirements of *his* maintaining righteous government in Israel? It is to be duly noted that there is no word recorded of David seeking unto the Lord at this time. Ominous silence! The energies of nature now dominated him, and therefore there was no seeking wisdom from above. This it is which casts light upon the dark scenes that follow.

The 14th chapter of 2 Samuel makes known to us how it came to pass that Absalom was brought back again to Jerusalem. The prime mover was Joab, who was what would be termed in present-day language an astute politician—an unprincipled man of subtle expediency. He was the leader of Israel’s armies, and anxious to curry favour both with the king and his heir apparent. He knew that David doted upon Absalom and reasoned that any plausible device to bring him back would be acceptable to the king, and, at the same time, strengthen his own position in the royal favour. But the problem confronting him was, How might mercy rejoice against judgment? He knew too that while there might be a godly remnant who would oppose any open flouting of the Law, yet he counted on the fact that with the generality of Israel Absalom was their idol: see Verse 25.

Joab therefore resorted to an artful subterfuge whereby David might be saved from disgracing the throne and yet at the same time regain his beloved son. He employed a woman to pose as a desolate widow and relate to the king a fictitious story, getting him to commit himself by passing judgment thereon. She is termed a “wise woman” (14:2), but *her* wisdom was the guile of the Serpent. Satan has no initiative, but always imitates, and in the tale told by this tool of Joab we have but a poor parody of the parable given through Nathan. The case she pictured was well calculated to appeal to the king’s suscep-

tibilities, and bring to mind his own sorrow. With artful design she sought to show that under exceptional circumstances *it would be permissible* to dispense with the executing of a murderer, especially when the issue involved the destruction of the last heir of an inheritance.

The story she related was far from being an accurate portrayal of the real facts of the case relating to Absalom. First, Absalom had not slain Amnon during a fit of sudden anger, nor had he murdered him when they were alone together (14:6); instead, he was slain by deliberate malice, and that, in the presence of his brethren. Second, there was no cruel persecution being waged against Absalom by those who coveted his inheritance (v. 7): but the righteous Law of God demanded his death! Third, Absalom was not the only remaining son of David (12:24, 25), so that there was no immediate danger of the royal line becoming extinct, as the woman represented (14:7). These half-lies clearly indicated *the source* of this woman's "wisdom," and had David been in communion with God at the time, he had not been imposed upon or induced to deliver such an unholy judgment.

But apart from these glaring inaccuracies, the tale told by this woman made a touching appeal to the king's sentiments, and prevailed upon him. First, he hastily promised to protect her (v. 10), and then rashly confirmed the same by an oath (v. 11). Then she applied his concession to the case of Absalom and intimated that David was going against the interests of *Israel* (not displeasing *God*, be it noted!) in allowing his son to remain in exile (v. 13). Next she argued that since God in His sovereignty has spared David's life (notwithstanding his murder of Uriah), it could not be wrong for him to show leniency unto Absalom (v. 13). Finally, she heaped flattery upon the king (v. 17). The sequel was that David willingly concluded his oath to this woman *obliged* him to recall Absalom (v. 21), and accordingly he gave orders to Joab for him to be brought back.—A.W.P.

The Divine Covenants.

5. *The Siniatic.*

When God established His covenant with Abraham He said to him, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance" (Gen. 15:13, 14). Accordingly, when the time approached for the execution of judgment on their oppressors, the servitude of Israel had reached its extreme point and the bitterness of their bondage had awakened in their minds an earnest desire for deliverance. Their discipline was an essential part of their preparation for the benefits which God designed to bestow upon them. Contemporaneously with those events, Moses was raised up as the instrument of their deliverance, and was Divinely qualified for the work assigned him.

Moses, acting under Divine directions and by a series of remarkable judgments upon Egypt, extorted from Pharaoh a reluctant permission for their departure from his land, with all their possessions. Those judgments were designed not only to afford a practical confutation of the idolatry of the Egyptians and a retribution for their cruel oppression of God's people, but more particularly an open vindication of the supremacy of Jehovah in the sight of the surrounding nations, and at the same time to influence the hearts of the people themselves so as to induce a heartfelt acknowledgment of God, and a prompt and cheerful obedience to Him. Assuredly, no course could have been more fitted to accomplish those ends. The manifestations of Divine power Israel had witnessed, the marked separation between them and the Egyptians—being preserved from the plagues which smote their oppressors and their miraculous escape from the judgment which overwhelmed the Egyptians at the Red Sea, were well suited to create deep and lasting effects upon them.

Those impressive events all indicated in a manner to which it was impossible that even the blindest among them could have been insensible to God's interposition for their deliverance. They were well calculated to awaken a deep conviction of the Divine presence in their midst in a special manner. Such manifestations of God's power, faithfulness and grace on their behalf ought to have produced in them a ready compliance with every intimation of His holy will. He had dealt with them as He had dealt with no other people. How much they needed those object lessons, and how little they really benefited from them, their future conduct shows.

Their moral conditions the Lord well knew—their faint-heartedness, their perversity, their unbelief. In order to more effectually prepare them for the immediate future, as well as of formally establishing that Covenant by which He indicated the relation which He was graciously pleased to sustain toward them, and the principles by which His future dealings with them would be regulated, He led them through the wilderness and brought them to Sinai. There the Lord granted a fresh manifestation of His glory: amidst thunders and lightnings, flames and smoke. He delivered to them the Ten Words. The object of God in that solemn transaction was clearly intimated in the language He addressed to them immediately before: see Exodus 19:5, 6. But although the law of the Ten Commandments constituted the *leading* feature of the Siniatic Covenant, and gave to the entire transaction its *distinctive* character, we must not conclude that it was limited thereto.

It is true that God added no more to the Ten Commandments at that time, not because there was nothing more to be revealed, but because the people in terror entreated that

Moses might be the medium of all further communications: Deuteronomy 5:24-27. Accordingly we find the Law itself was followed by a number of statutes (Exo. 21 to end of 23), which were in part explanatory of the great principles of the Law, and in part enjoining the ordinances for the regulation of their worship—which later received much enlargement. Both the basic Law and the subsidiary statutes were immediately put on permanent record, and the whole sealed by “the book of the Covenant” being read in the audience of the people and blood being sprinkled on them: Exodus 24:4-8. It was to that solemn ratification of this Covenant which the Apostle makes reference in Hebrews 9:18-20—it was substantially a repetition of the same significant ceremony which attended the establishment of the earlier covenants.

Thus it is clear that while the Ten Commandments was the most prominent and distinctive feature of the Siniatic Covenant, yet it embraced the entire body of the statutes and judgments which God gave Moses for the government of Israel, as well in their civil as in their religious capacity. They formed one code, in which the moral law and the ceremonial law were blended in a way peculiar to the special constitution under which the nation of Israel was placed. Speaking generally, the civil had a religious and the religious a civil aspect, in a sense found nowhere else. All the particulars of that Code were not equally important: some things were vital to it, the violation of which involved the practical renunciation of the Covenant; others were subordinate, enjoined because necessary as means of attaining the grand end in view; yet were they all parts of the one Covenant, demanding a prompt and sincere obedience.

In the above paragraphs we have purposely gone back to the beginning of God’s dealings with Israel as a Nation in order to show once more *how unique* was the Mosaic economy, that there was much connected with it which, in the very nature of the case, *has no parallel* under the present Gospel order of things. The Siniatic Covenant was the foundation of that *political constitution* which the people of Israel enjoyed: in consequence thereof Jehovah sustained a *special* relation to them. He was not only the God of all the earth (Exo. 19:5), but, in a peculiar sense, the King and Legislator of Israel. Any attempt on their part to change the Divinely-instituted system of Law, given for their government, was expressly forbidden: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God” (Deut. 4:2). That Code was complete in itself, that is, as considered in relation to the particular condition of that people for whose government it was intended.

“It is of great importance to the right interpretation of many passages in the Old Testament, that this particular be well understood and kept in view. Jehovah is very frequently represented as the Lord and God of all the ancient Israelites; even when it is manifest that the generality of them were considered as destitute of internal piety, and many of them as enormously wicked. How, then, could He be called *their* Lord and *their* God, in distinction from His relation to Gentiles (whose Creator, Benefactor, and Sovereign He was), except on the ground of the *Siniatic* Covenant? He was *their* Lord as being their Sovereign, whom, by a federal transaction they were bound to obey, in opposition to every political monarch who would at any time presume to govern them by laws of his own. He was *their* God, as the only Object of holy worship; and whom, by the same National Covenant, they had solemnly engaged to serve according to His own rule, in opposition to every Pagan idol.

“But that National relation between Jehovah and Israel being long since dissolved, and the Jew having no prerogative above the Gentile; the nature of the Gospel economy and of the Messiah’s kingdom absolutely forbids our supporting that either Jews or Gentiles are warranted to call the Universal Sovereign *their* Lord or their God, if they do not yield willing obedience to Him and perform *spiritual* worship. It is, therefore, either for want of understanding, or of considering the nature, aspect, and influence of the Sinai Constitution, that many persons dream of the New Covenant in great numbers of places where Moses and the Prophets had no thought of it, but had the Convention at Horeb directly in view. It is owing to the same ignorance, or inadvertency, that others argue from various passages in the Old Testament for justification before God by their own obedience, and against the final perseverance of real saints.

“Again, as none but real Christians are the subjects of our Lord’s kingdom, neither adults nor infants can be members of the Gospel Church in virtue of an *external* covenant or a *relative* holiness. A striking disparity this, between the Jewish and the Christian Church. A barely *relative* sanctity [that is, a sanctity occurring from belonging to the Nation of God’s choice, A.W.P.] supposes its possessors to be the people of God in a merely external sense; such an external people supposes an external covenant, or one that relates to exterior conduct and temporal blessings; and an external covenant supposes an external king. Now an external king is a political sovereign, but *such is not* our Lord Jesus Christ, nor yet the Divine Father.

“Under the Gospel Dispensation, these peculiarities have *no* existence. For Christ has not made an external covenant with any people. He is not the king of any particular nation. He dwells not in a temple made with hands. His throne is in the heavenly sanctuary, nor does He afford His visible presence in any place upon earth. The petition-wall between Jews and Gentiles has long been demolished: and, consequently, our Divine Sovereign does not stand related to any people or to any person so as to confer a relative sanctity, or to produce an *external* holiness.

“The covenant made at Sinai having long been obsolete, all its peculiarities are vanished away: among which, relative sanctity [that is, being accounted externally holy, because belonging to the Nation separated unto God, A.W.P.] made a conspicuous figure. That National Constitution being abolished, Jehovah’s political sovereignty is at an end. The Covenant which is now in force, and the royal relation of our Lord to the Church, are *entirely spiritual*. All that external holiness of persons, of places, and of things, which existed under the old economy, is gone forever; so that if the professors of Christianity do not possess a real, *internal* sanctity, they have none at all. The National confederation at Sinai is expressly contrasted in Holy Scripture with the new covenant (see Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-13), and though the latter manifestly provides for internal holiness, respecting all the covenantees, yet it says not a word about relative sanctity” (Abraham Booth, 1796).

Jehovah, then, was King in Israel: *His* authority was supreme. *He* gave them the land in which they dwelt, settled the conditions on which they held it, made known the laws they were required to obey, and raised up from time to time, as they were demanded, leaders and judges, who for a season exercised, under God, authority over them. *This* is what is signified by the term “theocracy”—a government administered, under certain limitations, directly by God Himself. Such a relation as Jehovah sustained towards Israel, condemning all idolatry and demanding their separation from other nations, largely regu-

lated the legislation under which they were placed. So far as righteousness between man and man was concerned, there was of course much which admitted of a universal application, resting on common and unalterable principles of equity; but there were also many enactments which derived their peculiar complexion from the special circumstances of the Nation. The most cursory examination of the Pentateuch suffices to show this.

The Books of Moses reveal the singular provisions made for a self-sustaining nation, carefully fenced around and protected from moral danger from without, so far as civil arrangements could effect this end. Encouragement was indeed given to such strangers as might, on the renunciation of idolatry, become converts to the faith of Israel, and settle amongst them, though they were not permitted to have any share in the earthly inheritance; but all connection and ensnaring alliances with any people beyond their own confines were rigorously guarded against. The law of jubilee, which secured to each family a perpetual interest in the property belonging to it; the restrictions on marriage; the practical discouragement of commerce; the hindrances placed in the way of aggressive warfare—in the prohibition of cavalry, then the chief strength of armies; were all of a restricted character and illustrated that special exclusiveness of Judaism.

The nature of God's immediate government of Israel involved *a special providence* as essential to its administration. It is true that eternal rewards and punishments were not employed for this purpose, because nations, as such, have no hereafter. In the Judgment men will be dealt with not according to their corporate but in their individual capacity. Yet it must not be inferred that Israel had no knowledge of a future state, for they had; yet that knowledge could not be formally employed to enforce their civil obedience. Social relations are an affair of this world, and the laws which regulate them must find their sanctions in considerations bearing on the mere interests of this present life. Accordingly, God, as the political Head of Israel, by special and extraordinary providences, intimated His approval or displeasure as their conduct called for. Prosperity, peace, and an abundance of material things, were the rewards of national obedience; wars, famines, pestilences, were the punishment of their sin. The whole history of the Nation shows with what uniformity the course of this intimation was pursued toward them.

Such, then, was the nature and design of the Constitution conferred upon Israel; yet it must be remembered that the great benefits it involved were not the fruit of the Sinaitic Covenant. True, their *continued* enjoyment of them depended on their obedience to that covenant, but their *original bestowment* was the effect of the Abrahamic Covenant. Of this fact they were definitely reminded by Moses: "The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the LORD loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn *unto your fathers*" (Deut. 7:7, 8). In keeping therewith we find that when serious crises arose because of their sins, those who interceded before God in their behalf, sought forgiveness on the ground of the promises made *to Abraham*: see Exodus 32:13, Deuteronomy 9:27, 2 Kings 13:23.

By undeserved and sovereign grace the Israelites were chosen to be the people of God, and their obedience was not intended to purchase advantages and immunities not already possessed, but rather *to preserve* to them the possession of what God had already bestowed. This it is which indicated the place which the Moral Law occupied in regard to the Nation at large. It proceeded on the recognition of their *existing relation to God*: He had chosen, redeemed, and made them His people, and now it was their privilege and

duty to live in subjection to Him. It set before them the character and conduct which that existing relation required from them, and on which its perpetuation, with all the advantages connected with it, depended. "And ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be Mine" (Lev. 20:26). At the same time it was the standard to which their political code was adjusted, so far as their circumstances allowed.

The place which the Moral Law occupied, the express terms in which love to God was enforced as its leading principle (Deut. 6:5), and the solemn circumstances under which it was given, were all fitted to teach the people that something more was required from them than a mechanical performance of duties—something in their heart and *inward state*, without which no service they were capable of performing could meet the approval of the Holy One. To suppose that a mere external conformity to the Law was all that was expected from the people, is to overlook the plainest statements and the most obvious facts recorded in the Old Testament. God required truth "in the *inward* parts" (Psa. 51:6), and scores of passages revealed the fact that nothing but a right state of heart toward Him could secure the service He commanded. Nothing but the blindness which sin occasioned could have made the Israelites insensible to this basic truth, otherwise the charges brought against them by Christ had been quite groundless and pointless; it had been meaningless for Him to denounce them for making clean the outside while they were full of corruption within.—A.W.P.

Union and Communion.

9. *Glory*

This present life, with its continual mixture of good and evil, joy and sorrow, with its constant fluctuations and disappointments, naturally prompts a reflecting mind to the belief and hope of a future life that will be more perfect and permanent; yet that is as far as the unaided intellect can project us. A Divine revelation is indispensable if we are to learn *how* Heaven is to be reached, and of *what* its blessedness consists. By the fall of the first Adam paradise was lost, and only through the last Adam can sinners be restored unto God, and only by the supernatural operations of the Spirit can the hearts of depraved men be fitted for and their steps be directed along the sole way which conducts to the mansions in the Father's House. Vain is human reasoning, worthless the efforts of imagination, when it comes to obtaining a knowledge of that antitypical Canaan which flows with spiritual milk and honey. How thankful, then, should we be for the Word of Prophecy and the light it supplies while we are in this dark world.

That blessed light has been enjoyed by God's elect from earliest times. "As for me (said the Psalmist), I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psa. 17:15). Here was the blessed sequel to Jehovah's response unto Moses: "show me Thy glory" had been his request, "thou canst not see My face (in *this* life), for there shall no man see Me, and live" was the Divine response (Exo. 33:18-20). But what is, necessarily, denied the saints now, shall be granted them in the future. While in this world indwelling sin raises an insuperable barrier, incapacitating the soul to discern more than a few broken rays of the Divine splendour. But when we "awake," on the Resurrection-morn, and sin and the grave are left behind, then will the soul be fitted for the beatific vision, for "the pure in heart shall see God" (Matt. 5:8), see Him then as they cannot now.

When David said "I will behold Thy face" he had reference to an *objective* glory, and that, in its most perfect representation; for the "*face*" is the principal part of our persons wherein physical beauty and moral dignity are displayed. When he added "I shall be satisfied with Thy *likeness*," a different concept is before him, another factor is introduced—one which must necessarily enter into the equation of soul *satisfaction*. The most vivid display of the Divine glory, so far from satisfying, will only terrify those who are not *in inward harmony therewith*, as is evident from Revelation 6:16, etc. No sight of God can satisfy any one unless and until his soul be conformed to the Divine image and attuned thereto. Thus we understand the Psalmist to mean, "Hereafter I shall behold the blessed face of God, and be regaled thereby; not only by the vision itself, but because of its transfusing itself upon me, transforming me." It is a Divine glory both revealed and received.

The same wondrous truth is set forth in the New Testament. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed *in us*" (Rom. 8:18); "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). The future glory of the saints, then, is not only a *realm* of light and bliss into which they are yet to be conducted, and an *objective* (outward) splendour which will rejoice their hearts, but it is also a glory to be "revealed *in them*," a "weight of glory" *upon* them. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are *changed into* the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18); the final and perfect degree of this

occurring in their resurrection state, at their glorification. All of this is summed up in "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

There is a most striking and blessed parallel between the last-quoted verse and our opening Scripture. The Psalmist said, "When I awake," the Apostle declares "when He shall appear"—the *same* time-mark or occasion. "I will behold Thy face in righteousness" (i.e., none but a righteous person will enjoy this holy privilege): "*we* shall see Him"—the *same* persons, namely, the "sons of God," of whom it is said in the context "every one that doeth *righteousness* is born of Him" (1 John 2:29)! "I will behold Thy face" says David, "We shall see Him as He is" says John—the *same* blessed Object. "I shall be satisfied with Thy (transforming) likeness....we shall be like He"—the *same* blessed assimilation. What an example of the perfect unity of the Scriptures! What a proof that the Old Testament saints were favoured with the same light as we are!

Yet notwithstanding the revelation God has vouchsafed us of the life to come, how feebly do we grasp that revelation, how dimly do we comprehend its details; how infinitely it transcends the highest conceptions we can form of it. What we now know of God and His Christ is as nothing to what we shall yet know of Him, yea, in comparison with *that* it scarcely deserves to be called "knowledge": "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12). The fact is that mere language cannot convey to us in our present state any adequate idea of the glory which God has provided for His people. But though a full discovery thereof is reserved till the time of actual possession, yet enough is hinted at to nourish our hopes and gladden our hearts. To make this the more evident unto the reader, let us endeavour to amplify our statement by a presentation of some considerations. We may now form some conception of the Church's future glory.

From the contrast pointed by our present afflictions. That the future bliss of believers is exceedingly great is clear from "For our *light* affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). Now we know that the sufferings of God's people in this world are, considered in themselves, *heavy* afflictions, yea, to some of them, grievously heavy. If, then, the trials and sorrows of the most afflicted among the saints are "light" when contrasted with their future happiness, how great must that happiness be! The paucity of human language to express the ineffable joys and pleasures awaiting us at God's right hand, is seen in the piling up of one term upon another: it is a "weight," it is an "exceeding weight," it is a "far more exceeding weight," it is an "eternal weight of glory."

From the reward promised the saints. This is frequently exhibited under the animating figure of the *crowns* bestowed upon the victors in the Grecian games and upon the military conquerors when they arrived back home in triumph. In those games the great men of the times entered as competitors for the glory of victory, and even kings thought themselves honoured by obtaining the prize. The victor was rewarded with a crown of leaves, and was received with unbounded honour by the vast multitudes assembled. Now, after all the self-denials in their training, the unwearied diligence in preparatory exercises, the toils and dangers endured in the arduous struggle, they deemed *this reward* a rich recompense, for it raised them to a pinnacle of glory to be viewed with admiration by all their fellows. Yet, *they* had in view "a corruptible crown," whereas *we* are striving for an "incorruptible" one (1 Cor. 9:24, 25). Their crown was the greatest honour this world could

bestow, and soon faded and withered. But the Christian's crown shall be bestowed *by God*, and bloom with unfading freshness throughout eternity; and its glory will be viewed by all the principalities of Heaven.

From the scattered hints of Scripture. These are numerous: from them we select two: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as *the stars* for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). O ye despised followers of the Lamb, groaning under the reproach of the Cross, lift up your eyes and view this glorious prospect. Behold the heavens studded with their scintillating gems; see those bright orbs darting forth their light; and that is but a faint image of your future glory! "Then shall the righteous shine forth as *the sun* in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13: 43). What object in nature is so glorious as the sun? Who can look on the brightness of his beams? Who can measure the extent and distance of his shining? Such shall be your glory, ye servants of the Lord, who despise the tinsel glory of this world through faith in the Word.

From our relationship to God. We may surely be assisted in estimating the future glory of Christians by the *titles* bestowed upon them from that connection. They are called the children and heirs of God, and it is not possible for the Almighty to invest created beings with a higher honour than that. There is a sense in which both angels and man are, by creation, the sons of God; but it is in a far more intimate and precious sense that believers are called God's *children*. He hath "begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3); "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). We are the children of God, then, as we are *the brethren* of His only begotten Son, and that places us above the highest of the angels. And because we are children, we are the "heirs of God" (Rom. 8:17). O ye tried and troubled saints, who are having such a sore struggle to make ends meet, it shall not always be thus with you. Estimate the inheritance of saints by the riches of God Himself!

From what is said in Ephesians 2:6, 7. "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"—"show" to the heavenly hierarchies. If, then, God intends to make a lavish display of the wealth of His love toward His people, how surpassingly glorious will be such an exhibition! "When the Monarch of the Universe, the God of power and wisdom, declares His purpose of showing how much He loves His people, the utmost stretch of imagination will in vain struggle to form even a slight conception of their glory. All the thrones of Heaven will be filled with wonder, when they behold in their glory 'the men whom their King delights to honour'" (Alex Carson to whom we are also indebted for part of the above).

From the love of Christ for them. Surely that will enable us to form some estimate of the future condition of the saints in glory. Of His immeasurably great love for His people we have the fullest proof in His humiliation and death. Read the history of it, ponder the depths of degradation and ignominy into which the Lord of Glory descended, behold Him despised and rejected of men, an outcast from society, and at last a willing sacrifice for His people's sins, and that, even while they were enemies; and then ask yourself, what is *the extent* of His love? It defies description; it is beyond comprehension. Now if He loved us so while enemies, what will He not confer on us as His friends and brethren! Paul taught us to pray that we "might be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth

and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." If, then, it is a matter of such importance to *know* His love, and if the extent of it is beyond knowledge, what is likely to be the height of glory to which its objects are elevated!

From the reward bestowed on Christ. In John 17:22 we hear Him speak of "the glory which Thou hast given Me." What is the "glory" which the Father bestows upon the Mediator? It is *the Divine reward* for His stupendous achievements. It is that whereby His infinite merits shall be suitably recompensed throughout eternity. And what a glory that must be: answerable to the dignity of His Person, answerable to the revenue of honour and praise which He has brought unto God, commensurate with the unspeakable sacrifice which He made and with the worth of Him that made it! And when *God* gives, He does so in accordance with who He is. O what a "glory," then, must it be with which the Father has rewarded His beloved Son: a transcendent and supernal glory. And that "glory" Christ shares with His redeemed: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have *given them*" (John 17:22). Thus, there is a *union in glory* between the Church and its Head.

This it is which is the most wondrous and blessed aspect of our many-sided subject. This it is which is the grand goal which all the other unions between the Redeemer and the redeemed had in view, namely, an everlasting union in glory. And this it is which best enables us to conceive of and estimate the marvel, the grandeur, the uniqueness, of this glory union, namely, that it is the very glory which the Father had given to the Darling of His bosom, and which Christ will share with those whom He loved with a love that was stronger than death. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of (not simply "glory," but) *the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Thess. 2:13, 14)—*that* was what God had in mind for His people in eternity past: nothing less would satisfy His heart.

Of old it was revealed "the LORD will give grace and glory" (Psa. 84:11). Here upon earth the saints enjoy Christ in a way of real fellowship, but in Heaven they shall enjoy Him in another and higher manner. Here Christ communicates Himself to them in a way of *grace*, so that their present communion with Him and communications from Him are suited to them as they are sinners in themselves. As thus considered, the Redeemer in His infinite goodness holds fellowship with His feeble and constantly-failing people, and as their *Head of grace* He ministers out of His fullness (John 1:16) every needed supply. But in Heaven He will be our *Head of Glory*, communicating to us that which will be suited to our resurrection and sinless state. We shall be as dependent on Him then for glory, as we now are for grace: *all* will be received *from Him*. The elect are "*vessels of mercy*" which God hath "afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. 9:23), and it is out of Christ's fullness they will be *filled*, so as to be perfectly blessed.

It is to be noted that in John 17:22 Christ employed the past tense: "the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given (not "will give") them." This may be understood as follows. First, Christ has given the Church an unimpeachable *title* to the glory which has been bestowed upon Him. He has acquired the right of this glory for His people: "whither the Forerunner is *for us* entered, even Jesus" (Heb. 6:20): thus it is as surely ours now as if we were in actual possession of it. Second, He has given His people the *knowledge* of it: here in John 17:22, and in such declarations as Colossians 3:4, etc.—"When Christ,

who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” The promises Christ has given us in His Gospel are the root of our future blessings, and in those promises we have *a lease* to show for it. Third, He has given us *an earnest* of the same, for by the indwelling Spirit we have received the “firstfruits” of our inheritance. This it was which enabled the Apostle to say I am “a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a *partaker* of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Peter 5:1). Fourth, He gives an actual enjoyment of it to each of the saints as soon as they are absent from the body and present with Himself.

Finally, Christ in this remarkable verse (John 17:22) gives as the reason why He shares with His people the glory which the Father hath bestowed upon Himself: “that they may be one even as We are.” Here our thoughts are directed to such a height that our poor minds turn dizzy. The very reading of those words should fill our hearts with holy amazement, as the actualization of them will fill us with admiration to all eternity. The oneness between the Father and the Son is such that They *partake of the same* ineffable blessedness, Each enjoying it equally with and like the Other. And *that* is the pattern and likeness, by way of similitude, of the glory union between the Redeemer and the redeemed! Ours will be like *Theirs*! As the union between the Father and the Son is a real one, a spiritual one, a holy one, an indestructible one, an inexpressibly glorious one, so will be that between Christ and His Church in Heaven.

As we showed in our discussion on Divine union, there is a real union of Persons in the Godhead and a communion amongst Them, for the mutual converse between the eternal Three are recorded again and again. Now just as the essential happiness of the Three in Jehovah consists in the holy fellowship which They have with each other, so it will be by the Church’s heavenly communion with the Father, the Son and the Spirit, in and by the Person of the Mediator, that all true blessedness will be enjoyed by us throughout eternity. Even now the saints are admitted unto access to the Father, by the Spirit, through Christ (Eph. 2:18); yet in our glory union with Christ this will be exalted to a far higher degree and we shall be advanced unto much closer and fuller communion with the triune God. “And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one” (John 17:22).

“I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me” (John 17:23). In these words the nature and blessedness of the glory union between Christ and the Church are further opened to us, its blessedness being indicated by the several effects and fruits which flow from the same. Three of these are here noted. First, as that union will affect believers themselves: they are “made perfect in one” Body. Then will all the redeemed “come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). All differences of opinion, all animosities, all jealousies, shall have vanished forever, and there shall be perfect oneness between them in knowledge, love, and holiness. Second, as this union affects the Church, in connection with the triune God. Being united to Christ, the elect are necessarily united to and interested in all the Persons in Jehovah and as they now have a *grace union* with Them, they shall yet have a *glory union* with Them, which will issue in a communion that will constitute the fullness of their blessedness for ever and ever.

Third, as it affects “the world of the ungodly.” Those who have no part or lot in this glory union shall, nevertheless, be given a glimpse of the same, as Dives (for the augmenting of his torment) was permitted to see “Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom” (Luke 16:23). The sight of Christ’s “Queen,” standing at His right hand (Psa. 45:9 and cf. Matt. 25:34) “in gold of Ophir”—figure of His glory—will be self-convicting to the reprobate that Christ is what He declared Himself to be; and as they behold the honour which God has put upon the Church, it will openly appear that He has loved them as He loved their Head. And for having despised and rejected Christ, and reproached and persecuted His people, they will be filled with confusion and everlasting shame (Dan. 12:2). But the Church shall be filled with joy unspeakable and have everlasting proof of the wondrous love of God for them.—A.W.P.

Humility.

Observe O my soul what an honour God has put upon *this* grace: "Before honour is humility" (Prov. 15:33)! Whom God honours, He humbles first. He gives grace to the humble, because the humble give Him all the glory. The highest throne which He has upon earth is in the humblest heart. To it He vouchsafes His constant presence and makes the greatest communications of His love: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57:15). O what an honour is here promised to the humble! The greatest they can have on this side of Heaven. God will dwell with them; and what a blessing! And His temple shall be in the humble heart. The high and holy One passes by what is in the highest esteem amongst men. He stains the pride of human greatness and goodness. He does not vouchsafe to set up His throne with the princes, nor to give His honour to the learned of the world. But He puts honour upon *the contrite and humble*. He condescends to visit them; yea, He delights to dwell with them, and in them—the Highest above all heavens in the lowest hearts. There He communicates His choicest love and richest favours. O my God! bestow upon me this grace, which in Thy sight is so precious. Humble me, that I may be revived with Thy presence, and refreshed daily with Thy love. Give me more humility, and fit me for nearer fellowship with Thee. Bring down every high thought, and let me find it true, that You resisteth the proud, but giveth more grace unto *the humble*.

Thus the true poverty of spirit is needful, not only to bring the sinner to Christ, but also to preserve the believer in communion with Him; for so long as he walks by faith, every thing will tend to promote this communion. In the daily sense of his wants, he will go to his bountiful Saviour for a supply. In the feeling of his misery, He will depend on his loving Saviour for relief; whereby he will be led to more intercourse with Him. What he finds wrong in himself will bring him to live more by faith, and as faith increases, so will his delight in God. He will grow more sensible of his weakness, and that will make him stronger in the Lord. He will know more of his own heart, which will humble him, and keep him dependent on the grace of Jesus. He will see reason not to lean to his own understanding, but ever to pray, Lord guide me by Thy good Spirit. Viewing spots and blemishes in his best doings, his triumph will be, "I will make mention of Thy righteousness, Lord Jesus, even of Thine *only*" (Psa. 71:16). Thus every thing will humble him, and lead him to live more by faith: by which means he will get faster hold of Christ, live in nearer fellowship, and be receiving out of his fullness "grace for grace"—two graces at once: the blessings needed and thankfulness for them. Hereby a sweet intercourse will be kept open.

To the humble, God delights to give grace, and they delight to return Him His glory. The more He gives, the more glory would they gladly return. And He does give more, and He receives it back again in thanks and praise. Blessed grace! by which this holy fellowship is maintained. Happy humility! by which the heart, being emptied of self, is made capable of receiving the fullness which is of God. Then is the promise fulfilled, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3)—it is theirs now: not only in title, but also in possession, for the kingdom of God is within them and they are partakers *at present* of its blessings and glories as truly, though not so perfectly, as they will be in Heaven. Meditate, O my soul, upon this Divine grace. Thou

seest the necessity of it: O pray earnestly for it, and for more of it. The great idol *self* must be dethroned where God reigns. Thou canst not walk with Him unless thou art humble in heart. And if thou hast been walking with Him, thou wilt be taught to stop, whenever thou beginnest to look at self with admiration. O beg of the Lord, then, to give thee the true Gospel poverty of spirit. It is to be in constant practice, and used for everything; for thou seest how it keeps up fellowship with God, who makes the greatest communications of Himself to the humblest. And the reason is plain; because they return Him all His glory. If therefore thou wouldest have much grace in exercise, pray for much *humility*. O my God! whatever Thou givest, give humility with it, that I may not seek self in it, but Thine honour, nor lay it out upon myself, but to Thy glory. Meek and lowly Jesus, make me like Thyself; keep me learning of Thee, till I am perfectly like Thee. I would come always poor to Thee, to receive of Thy riches, and to receive with them *an humble heart* to praise Thee for them. O let Thy glory be mine end and aim. Let me and mine be Thine: I humbled, Thou exalted. Let Thy graces and gifts bring Thee in a constant revenue of praise. And may Thine increasing goodness be joined with a constant increase of humility, that my heart and all within me may bless and praise Thy holy name, today and forever. Amen.

And let this appear in my whole behaviour *to others*. This is another blessed fruit of humility: it has an influence over the believer's intercourse with mankind, and renders his tempers and manners loving and amiable. Pride was not made for man, and yet it is in all men, and is the chief parent of human woe. It sets people above their place, and makes them think they could support the greatest fortunes, and are able to manage the most difficult affairs. Others, as proud as they, deny them their fancied superiority. Hence come wars and fightings, public and private. The sweet grace of *humility* is sent from Heaven to relieve those distresses; for into whatsoever bosom it enters, it renders men kind to one another, tender-hearted, ready to every good word and work. Thus runs the Divine exhortation, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). This is heart-humility, which the Holy Spirit requires, and which He bestows. He brings His disciples into humble subjection to God, then to one another; which has the most happy effects upon public, social, and private happiness. But would these flourish, if all men were of a meek and quiet spirit! But there is none of this among the unconverted; and, alas, how little is there among believers! How often are they found in the proud spirit of the world! acting contrary to the lowly spirit of Jesus. And yet it is not for want of precepts, nor for want of promised help; but it is because they are not walking by faith, as becometh the Gospel, nor out of love to God's glory studying to recommend humility by their practice.

Observe, O my soul, *the remedy* provided of God for the subduing of all selfish tempers, and pray that it may be effectual in thy life and conversation. Do you think that the Scripture, saith in vain, "The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:5, 6). This Scripture cannot speak in vain; for fallen man is certainly such as he is here described. The spirit that dwelleth in him, in his own nature, lusteth to envy—a passion made up of pride and discontent, offended with God, and displeased with the blessings which He bestows upon men. It is an enemy to the love both of God and man, and transgresses the Law of both tables. Pride brought it into Heaven, and the fallen angels brought it into this world. Ever since it entered by sin, natural corruption

breaks out very much in *envy*. But God giveth more grace to conquer this passion, than sinful nature has to put it forth. He not only gives grace to pardon it, but also more grace to subdue it; so that envy loses its dominion in the reign of grace. We cannot subdue it, any more than we can pardon envy, pride, and such passions; but grace is almighty. What ever so much, use ever so much, God has still more for you. And He gives more, when the creature *is humbled enough* to take it out of the hands of His mercy. Thus he overcomes envy; “for He resisteth the proud”—He is at open war with them, and they with Him.

Pride lifts up the creature against the Creator, and puts it upon seeking happiness out of God; this is resisting His sovereignty, attacking His providence, and opposing His Law. He is concerned to pull such rebels down, and He says their pride goeth before destruction. But “He giveth grace unto *the humble*”: He gives them grace to humble them, and being emptied, He delights to fill them; for then they are disposed to receive His grace and to value it. Whatever God gives, the humble give it back again to Him. They have the blessing, He has the praise: which is the just tribute due to Him for His gifts. And He gives more grace where He can get more glory. Thus He subdues self-conceit, with its various proud workings. And as grace reigns over them, humility prevails; which has a friendly aspect towards mankind. It keeps brotherly love in the heart, and tends mightily to the practice of every social virtue. Humility suffereth long and is kind; humility envieth not; humility vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil.—W. Romaine, 1770.

The Doctrine of Sanctification.

11. *Its Instrument.*

Paul was sent unto the Gentiles “to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are *sanctified by faith* in Me [Jesus]” (Acts 26:18). Two extremes are to be guarded against in connection with the precise relation that faith sustains to the various aspects of salvation: disparaging it, and making too much of it. There are those who expressly deny that faith has any actual part or place in the securing of salvation, declaring that it simply obtains a knowledge and enjoyment of the same. On the other hand, there are some who virtually make a Saviour out of faith, ascribing to it what belongs alone to Christ. But if we adhere closely to Scripture and observe *all* that is said thereon (instead of restricting our attention to a few passages), there is no excuse for falling into either error. We shall therefore make a few remarks with the object of refuting each of them.

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Heb. 11:6). We are saved by faith (Luke 7:50). We are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1). We live by faith (Gal. 2:20). We stand by faith (2 Cor. 1:24). We walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). We obey by faith (Rom. 1:5). Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17). We overcome the world by faith (1 John 5:4). The heart is purified by faith (Acts 15:9). All duties, for their right motive and end, depend upon it. No trials and afflictions can be patiently or profitably borne unless faith be in exercise. Our whole warfare can only be carried on and finished victoriously by faith (1 Tim. 6:12). All the gifts and graces of God are presented in the promises, and they can only be received and enjoyed by us in a way of believing. It is high worship to be strong in faith giving glory to God. In view of all this, we need not be surprised to read that we are “*sanctified by faith.*”

But *in what way* does faith sanctify us? To answer this question properly we must carefully bear in mind the principal aspects of our subject, which have already been considered by us in the previous articles of this series. First, faith has nothing to do with the Father’s setting of us apart and blessing us with all spiritual blessings in Christ before the foundation of the world: it is one of the God-dishonouring and creature-exalting errors of Arminianism to affirm that Christians were elected on the ground that God foresaw they would believe. Second, our faith was in no sense a moving cause to Christ’s becoming the Surety of His people and working out for them a perfect holiness before God. Third, faith has no influence in causing the Holy Spirit to separate the elect from the reprobate, for at the moment He does this they are dead in trespasses and sins, and therefore totally incapable of performing any spiritual acts. Fourth, faith will not contribute anything unto the Christian’s glorification, for *that* is solely the work of God; the subject of it being entirely passive therein.

Thus faith, important though it be, plays only a secondary and subordinate part in sanctification. It is neither the originating, the meritorious, nor the efficient cause of it, but only the *instrument*. Yet faith *is necessary* in order to a saving union with Christ, and until that be effected none of the blessings and benefits which are in Him can be received by us. It seems strange that any who are well versed in the Scriptures and who profess to be subject to their teachings, should question what has just been affirmed. Take such a declaration as “them that believe *to* the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:39). True, we are not saved *for* our believing, yet equally true is it that there is no salvation for any sinner *with-*

without his believing. Every blessing we receive from Christ is in consequence of our being united to Him, and therefore we cannot receive the holiness there is in Him until we are “sanctified by faith.” Furthermore, faith is necessary in order to the reception of the purifying Truth, in order to practical deliverance from the power of sin, and in order to progress or growth in personal holiness.

Before proceeding further let it be pointed out that the faith which the Gospel requires, the faith which savingly unites a sinner to Christ, the faith which issues in sanctification, is very much more than the bare assent to the mind to what is recorded in the Scriptures concerning the Lord Jesus; it is something far different from the mere adoption of certain evangelical opinions regarding the way of salvation. The Day to come will reveal the solemn fact that thousands went down to Hell with their heads filled with orthodox beliefs—which many of them contended for earnestly and propagated zealously, just as the Mohammedan does with the tenets and principles of *his* religion. Saving faith, my reader, is the soul’s surrender to and reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ as a living, loving, all-sufficient Saviour, and that upon the alone but sure testimony of God Himself. When we say “an all-sufficient Saviour” we mean One in whom there is a spotless holiness as well as perfect righteousness for those who come to Him.

Faith lays hold of Christ as He is offered to sinners in the Gospel, and He is there presented not only for justification but also for the sanctification of all who truly believe on Him. The glorious Gospel of grace not only heralds One who delivers from the wrath to come, but as giving title to approach now unto the thrice holy God. Moreover, faith accepts a *whole* Christ: not only as Priest to atone for us, but as King to reign over us. Faith, then, is *the instrument* of our sanctification. Faith is the eye which perceives the gracious provisions which God has made for His people. Faith is the hand which appropriates those provisions. Faith is the mouth which receives all the good that God has stored up for us in Christ. Without faith it is impossible to please God, and without the *exercise* of faith it is impossible to make any real progress in the spiritual life.

Many of the Lord’s people rob themselves of much of their peace and joy by confounding faith with its fruits; they fail to distinguish between the Word of God believed and what follows from believing it aright. Fruit grows on trees, and the tree must exist before there can be fruit. True obedience, acceptable worship, growth in grace, assurance of salvation, are what faith produces, and not what faith itself *is*: they are the effects of faith working, and not definitions of the nature of faith. Faith derives its being from the Word of God, and all its fruits are the result of believing. What God has spoken in His Word demands belief from all to whom the Word comes. Faith and the Word of God, then, are related as the effect and the cause, because “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). When faith comes by the *inward* “hearing,” then we assent to what God has said, and we rely upon His faithfulness to make good what He has promised; until *that* has been effected there can be no fruits of faith.

It is, then, of much importance to correctly define what faith is, for a mistake at this point is not only dishonouring to God, but injurious to the soul and harmful to its peace. Faith is a child-like taking God at His Word and a resting on what He has said. It is a depending on Christ to bestow those blessings and graces which He has promised to those who believe. How is a sin-defiled soul to become a partaker of the cleansing efficacy of the blood of the Lamb? Only by *faith*. The purifying virtue of Christ’s blood, and the administration of the Spirit, for the application to make it effectual unto our souls and con-

sciences, is exhibited in the promises of the Gospel; and the only way to be made a partaker of the good things presented in the promises is by faith. God Himself ordained this instrumental efficacy unto faith in the Everlasting Covenant, and nothing is more honouring to Him than the exercise of real faith.

Returning to our earlier question, In what way does faith sanctify us? We answer, first, *by uniting us to Christ*, the Holy One. Oneness with Christ is the foundation of all the blessings of the Christian, but it is not until he is actually united to Christ by faith that those blessings are really made over to him. Then it is that Christ is “made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30). It is faith which receives Christ’s atonement, for God hath set forth Christ “a propitiation *through faith* in His blood” (Rom. 3:25), and His infinitely meritorious blood not only justifies but sanctifies too. Thus there is no intrinsic virtue in faith itself, instead, its value lies wholly in its being the hand which lays hold of Him who possesses infinite virtue. For this very reason faith excludes all boasting (Rom. 3:27), and therefore any “believing” which produces self-gratification or results in self-satisfaction is most certainly not the faith of the Gospel.

Second, faith sanctifies the believer by enabling him *to enjoy now* what is his in Christ and what will be his in himself in Heaven. Faith sets to its seal that the testimony of God is true when He declares that “we *are* sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10). Faith assures its possessor that though he is still a fallen creature in himself, and as such, a sinner to the end of his earthly course, yet in Christ he is perfectly holy, having the same immaculate standing before God as does his Head and Surety; for “as *He* is, so are *we* in this world” (1 John 4:17). Thus faith is “the evidence of things *not seen*” (Heb. 11:1) by the natural eye, nor felt by the natural senses. Faith projects us out of this scene entirely and carries the heart into Heaven itself—not a natural faith, not a preacher-produced faith, but Gospel faith, imparted by the Holy Spirit.

But let us not be mistaken at this point. The faith of which we are here treating is not blind fanaticism. It does not ignore the presence of indwelling sin. It does not close its eyes to the constant activities of the flesh. It refuses to tone down the vile fruits which the flesh produces, by terming them shortcomings, ignorance, mistakes, etc. No, faith has clear vision and perceives the infinite enormity of all that is opposed to God. Faith is honest and scorns the hypocrisy of calling darkness light. But faith not only sees the total depravity of natural self and the horrible filth which fouls every part of it, but it also views the precious blood which has satisfied every claim of God upon those for whom it was shed, and which cleanses from all sin those who put their trust in it. It is neither fanaticism nor presumption for faith to receive at its face value what God has declared concerning the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice.

Third, faith sanctifies as it *derives grace from* the fullness which there is in Christ. God has constituted the Mediator the Source of all spiritual influences and faith is the instrument by which they are derived from Him. Christ is not only a Head of authority to His Church, but also a Head of influence. “But speaking the truth in love, *may grow up into Him* in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, *maketh increase* of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:15-16). That “effectual working in the measure of every part” is by supplies of grace being received from Christ, and that grace flows through the

appointed channel *of faith*. As the Lord Jesus declared unto the father of the demon-tormented son, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23); and to the two blind beggars who cried unto Him for mercy, "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matt. 9:29). How earnest and importunate should we be, in begging the Lord to graciously strengthen and increase our faith.

It is by faith laying hold upon a full Christ that the empty soul is replenished. All that we need for time as well as eternity is to be found in Him; but the hand of faith must be extended, even though it grasp but the hem of His garment, if virtue is to flow forth from Him into us. As Samson's strength was in his locks, so the Christian's strength is in his Head. This Satan knows full well, and therefore does he labour so hard to keep us from Christ, causing the clouds of unbelief to hide from our view the radiant face of the Sun of righteousness, and getting us so occupied with our miserable selves that we forget the great Physician. As it is by the sap derived from the root which makes the branches fruitful, so it is by the virtue which faith draws from Christ that the believer is made to abound in holiness. Hence the exhortation, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1).

Fourth, faith sanctifies because *it cleanses the soul*. "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by *faith*" (Acts 15:8, 9). It is by faith the heart is "sprinkled from an evil conscience" by the blood of Christ. It is by faith the affections are lifted unto things above, and thereby disentangled from the defiling objects of the world. It is by the exercise of faith that the "inward parts" (Psa. 51:6) are conformed in some measure unto the Rule of righteousness and holiness, for "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6), and "love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Rom. 13:10). It is to be duly noted that in Acts 15:9 the Apostle did not say "there hearts *were* purified by faith"; instead, he used the present tense "purifying," for it is a *continuous process* which lasts as long as the believer is here upon earth. This aspect of our sanctification is not complete till we are released from this world.

Fifth, faith sanctifies because it is by this we *hold communion with Christ*, and communion with Him cannot but nourish the principle of holiness within the regenerate. Thus faith is sanctifying in its own nature, for it is exercised upon spiritual objects. "But we all, with open face beholding (by faith) as in a glass the glory of the Lord, *are changed* into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Faith is a transforming grace because it causes the soul to cleave unto the Divine Transformer. As it was faith which made us to first lay hold of Christ, so it impels us to *continue* coming unto Him; and if the woman who touched the hem of His garment by faith secured the healing of her body, shall not those who cleave to Christ continue obtaining from Him the healing of their spiritual maladies?!

Sixth, faith sanctifies because it *appropriates the commandments* of God and produces obedience. We are sanctified "by the Truth" (John 17:17), yet the Word works not without an act on *our* part as well as of God's. It is naught but blind enthusiasm which supposes that the Scriptures work in us like some magical charm. How solemn is that passage "but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. 4:2). The Word avails us nothing if it be not received into a trustful heart and faith be acted upon it. Therefore do we read, "seeing ye have purified your souls *in obeying* the Truth through the Spirit" (1 Peter 1:22): it is only as the Truth is received

upon the authority of God, given a place in our affections, and yielded to by the will, that our souls are “purified” by it. The more faith causes us to run in the way of God’s commandments, the more is the soul delivered from the defiling effects of self-pleasing.

Seventh, faith sanctifies because it *responds to the various motives* which God has proposed to His people; motives to stir them up unto their utmost endeavours and diligence in using those ways and means which He has appointed for preventing the defilements of sin, and for cleansing the conscience when defilement has been contracted. As faith receives the Word *as God’s*, its Divine authority awes the soul, subdues enmity, and produces submission. The effects of faith are that the soul trembles at the Divine threatenings, yields obedience to the Divine precepts, and gladly embraces the Divine promises. Herein, and in no other way, do we obtain unfailing evidence of the reality and genuineness of our faith. As the specie of a tree is identified by the nature of the fruit which it bears, so the kind of faith we have may be ascertained by the character of the effects which it produces. Some of those effects we have sought to describe in the last few paragraphs.—A.W.P.

