

The Spirit Indwelling.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God *dwell in you*” (Rom. 8:9). Three things are denoted by the Spirit’s “indwelling.” First, *intimacy*. As the inhabitant of a house is more familiar there than elsewhere, so is the Spirit in the hearts of Christ’s redeemed. God the Spirit is omnipresent, being everywhere essentially, being excluded nowhere: “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?” (Psa. 139:7). But as God is said more especially to be there where He *manifests* His power and presence, as Heaven is “His dwelling place,” so it is with His Spirit. He is in believers not simply by the effects of common providence, but by His gracious operations and familiar presence. “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:17). The world of natural men are utter strangers to the Spirit of God, not being acquainted with His sanctifying operations, but He intimately discovers His presence to those who are quickened by Him.

Second, *constancy*: “dwelling” expresses a permanent abode. The Spirit does not affect the regenerate by a transient action only, or come “upon” them occasionally as He did the prophets of old, when He endowed them for some particular service above the measure of their ordinary ability; but He abides in them by working such effects as are lasting. He comes to the believer not as a Visitor, but as an Inhabitant: He is within us “a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). He liveth in the renewed heart, so that by His constant and continual influence He maintains the life of grace in us. By the blessed Spirit Christians are “sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).

Third, *sovereignty*: this is also denoted under the term “dwell”: He is owner of the house, and not an underling. From the fact that the believer’s body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle points out the necessary implication that he is “not his own” (1 Cor. 6:19). Previously he was possessed by another owner, even Satan—the evil spirit says “I will return into *my* house” (Matt. 12:44). But the Spirit has dispossessed him, and the sanctified heart has become *His* “house,” where He commands and governs after His own will. Take again the figure of the sanctuary: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16). A “temple” is a sacred dwelling, employed for the honour and glory of God, where He is to be revered and worshipped, and from which all idols must be excluded.

The indwelling Spirit is *the bond by which believers are united to Christ*. If therefore we find the Holy Spirit abiding in us, we may warrantably conclude we have been “joined to the Lord.” This is plainly set forth in those words of the Saviour’s, “And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one” (John 17:22, 23). The “glory” of Christ’s humanity was its union with the Godhead. How was it united? By the Holy Spirit. This very “glory” Christ has given His people: “I in them,” which He is by the sanctifying Spirit—the bond of our union with Him.

The indwelling Spirit is *the sure mark of the believer’s freedom from the covenant of works*, under which all Christless persons stand; and our title to the special privileges of the new covenant, in which none but Christ’s are interested; which is another way of say-

ing they are “not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). This is plain from the Apostle’s reasoning in Galatians 4:6, 7, “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son.” The spirit of the old covenant was a servile one, a spirit of fear and bondage, and those under the same were not “sons,” but *servants*: but the spirit of the new covenant is a free one, that of *children*, inheriting the blessed promises and royal immunities contained in the charter of grace.

The indwelling Spirit is *the certain pledge and earnest of eternal salvation*. The execution of the eternal decree of God’s electing love—“drawn” (Jer. 31:3), and the application of the virtues and benefits of the death of Christ by the Spirit (Gal. 3:13, 14), must needs be a sure evidence of our personal interest in the Redeemer. This is plain from 1 Peter 1:2: “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”: God’s eternal decree is executed and the blood of Christ is sprinkled upon us, when we receive the Spirit of sanctification. The Spirit’s residing in the Christian is the guarantee and earnest of the eternal inheritance: “Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor. 1:22).

What are the evidences and fruits of the Spirit’s inhabitation? First, wherever the Spirit dwells, He doth in some degree mortify and subdue the evils of the soul in which He resides. “The Spirit [lusteth] against the flesh” (Gal. 5:17), and believers “through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body” (Rom. 8:13). This is one special part of His sanctifying work. Though He kills not sin in believers, He subdues it; though He does not subdue the flesh as that it never troubles or defiles them any more, its dominion is taken away. Perfect freedom from its very presence awaits them in Heaven; but even now, animated by their holy Indweller, Christians deny themselves and use the means of grace which God has appointed for deliverance from the reigning power of sin.

Second, wherever the Spirit dwells, He produces a spirit of prayer and supplication. “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26). The two things are inseparable: wherever He is poured out as the Spirit of *grace*, He is also poured out as the Spirit of *supplication* (Zech. 12:10). He helps Christians *before* they pray by stirring up their spiritual affections and stimulating holy desires. He helps them *in* prayer by teaching them to ask for those things which are according to God’s will. He it is who humbles the pride of their hearts, moves their sluggish wills, and out of weakness makes them strong. He helps them *after* prayer by quickening hope and patience to wait for God’s answers.

Third, wherever the Spirit dwells, He works a heavenly and spiritual frame of mind. “They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:5-6). The workings of every creature follow the being and bent of its nature. If God, Christ, Heaven, engage the thoughts and affections of the soul, the Spirit of God is there. There are times in each Christian’s life when he exclaims, “How precious also are *Thy* thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with Thee” (Psa. 139:17, 18)—such holy contemplation is the very life of the regenerate.

But, says the sincere Christian, If the Spirit of God dwelt in me, could my heart be so

listless and averse to spiritual duties? Answer, the very fact that you are exercised and burdened over this sad state evidences the presence of spiritual life in your soul. Let it be borne in mind that there is a vast difference between spiritual death and spiritual deadness: the former is the condition of the unregenerate, the latter is the disease and complaint of thousands of the regenerate. Note it well that nine times over, David, in a single Psalm, prayed, “Quicken me!” (119). Though it be so *often*, it is not so *always* with thee: there are seasons when the Lord breaks in upon thy heart, enlarges thy affections, and sets thy soul at liberty—clear proof thou art not deserted by the Comforter!—A.W.P.

The Epistle to the Hebrews.

90. Divine Chastisement: 12:9.

The Apostle Paul, did not, like so many of our moderns, hurry through a subject and dismiss an unpleasant theme with a brief sentence or two. No, he could say truthfully, “I kept back *nothing* that was profitable unto you.” His chief concern was not to please, but to *help* his hearers and readers. Well did he know the tendency of the heart to turn away quickly from what is searching and humbling, unto that which is more attractive and consoling. But so far from acceding to this spirit, he devoted as much attention unto exhortation as instruction, unto reproving as comforting, unto duties as expounding promises; while the latter was given its due place, the former was not neglected. It behooves each servant of God to study the methods of the Apostles, and seek wisdom and grace to emulate their practice; only thus will they preserve the balance of Truth, and be delivered from “handling the Word deceitfully” (2 Cor. 4:2).

Some years ago, when the editor was preaching a series of sermons on Hebrews 12:3-11, several members of the congregation intimated they were growing weary of hearing so much upon the subject of Divine chastisement. Alas, the very ones who chafed so much at hearing about God’s rod, have since been smitten the most severely by it. Should any of our present readers feel the same way about the writer’s treatment of this same passage, he would lovingly warn them that, though these articles may seem gloomy and irksome while prosperity be smiling upon them, nevertheless they will be well advised to “hearken and hear *for the time to come*” (Isa. 42:23). The sun will not always be shining upon you, dear reader, and if by grace you now store them up in your memory, they may stand you in good stead when your sky becomes overcast.

Sooner or later, this portion of Holy Writ *will apply* very pertinently unto each of our cases. God “scourgeth *every* son whom He receiveth.” None of the followers of “The Man of sorrows” are exempted from sorrow. It has been truly said that “God had one Son without sin, but none without suffering.” So much depends upon *how* we “endure” suffering: the spirit in which it be received, the graces which are exercised by it, and the improvement which we make of it. Our attitude toward God, and the response which we make unto His disciplinary dealings with us, means that we shall either honour or dishonour Him, and suffer loss or reap gain therefrom. Manifold are our obligations to comport ourselves becomingly when God is pleased to scourge us, and many and varied are the motives and arguments which the Spirit, through the Apostle, here presents to us for this end.

In the verse which is now before us a further reason is given showing the need of the Christian’s duty to meekly bear God’s chastenings. First, the Apostle had reminded the saints of the teaching of Scripture thereon, verse 5: how significant he began with that! Second, he had comforted them with the assurance that the rod is wielded not by wrath, but in tender solicitude, verse 6. Third, he affirmed that God chastens all His children without exception, bastards only escaping, verses 7, 8. Now he reminds us that we had natural parents who corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Our earthly fathers had the right, because of their relationship, to discipline us, and we acquiesced. If, then, it was right and meet for us to submit to their corrections, how much more ought we to be in subjection unto our heavenly Father when He reproves us.

“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?”

(Heb. 12:9). The opening “Furthermore” is really humbling and searching. One would think sufficient had been said in the previous verses to make us submissive under and thankful for the tender discipline of our God. Is it not enough to be told that the Scriptures teach us to expect chastisements, and exhort us not to despise them? Is it not sufficient to be assured that these chastisements proceed from the very heart of our Father, being appointed and regulated by His love? No, a “furthermore” is needed by us! The Holy Spirit deigns to supply further reasons for bringing our unruly hearts into subjection. This should indeed humble us, for the implication is clear that we are *slow* to heed and bow beneath the rod. Yea, is it not sadly true that the older we become, the more need there is for our being chastened?

The writer has been impressed by the fact, both in the study of the Word and his observation of fellow-Christians, that, as a general rule, God uses the rod very little and very lightly upon the babes and younger members of His family, but that He employs it more frequently and severely on mature Christians. We have often heard older saints warning younger brothers and sisters of *their* great danger, yet it is striking to observe that Scripture records not a single instance of a young saint disgracing his profession. Recall the histories of young Joseph, the Hebrew maid in Naaman’s household, David as a stripling engaging Goliath, Daniel’s early days, and his three youthful companions in the furnace; and it will be found that all of them equitted themselves nobly. On the other hand, there are numerous examples where men in middle life and of grey hairs grievously dishonoured their Lord.

It is true that young Christians *are* feeblest, and with rare exceptions, they *know* it; and therefore does God manifest His grace and power upholding them: it is the “lambs” which He carries in His arms! But some older Christians seem far less conscious of their danger, and so God often suffers them to have a fall, that He may stain the pride of their self-glory, and that others may see it is *nothing* in the flesh—standing, rank, age, or attainments—which insures our safety; but that *He* upholds the humble and casts down the proud. David did not fall into his great sin till he had reached the prime of life. Lot did not transgress most grossly till he was an old man. Isaac seems to have become a glutton in his old age, and was as a vessel no longer “meet for the Master’s use,” which rusted out rather than wore out. It was after a life of walking with God, and building the ark, that Noah disgraced himself. The worst sin of Moses was committed not at the beginning but at the end of the wilderness journey. Hezekiah became puffed up with pride near the sunset of his life. What warnings are these!

God thus shows us there is no protection in years. Yea, added years seem to call for increased chastenings. Often there is more grumbling and complaining among the aged pilgrims than the younger ones: it is true their nerves can stand less, but God’s grace is sufficient for worn-out nerves. Often there is more occupation with self and circumstances among the fathers and mothers in Israel, a less talking of Christ and His wondrous love, than there is among the babes. Yes, there is much need for all of us to heed the opening “furthermore” of our text. Every physician will tell us there are some diseases which become more troublesome in middle life, and others which are incident to old age. The same is true of different forms of sinning. If we are more liable to certain sins in our youth, we are in greater danger of others in advanced years. Undoubtedly it is the case that the older we get, the more need there is to heed this “furthermore” which prefaces the call of our being in subjection to the Father of spirits. If we do not need more

grace, certain it is that we need as much grace, when we are grown old as while we are growing up.

The aged meet with as many temptations as do young Christians. They are tempted to live in the past, rather than in the future. They are tempted to take things easier, spiritually as well as temporally, so that it has to be said of some “ye *did* run well”: O to be like Paul, “the aged,” who was in full harness to the end. They are tempted to be unduly occupied with their increasing infirmities; but is it not written “the Spirit also *helpeth* our infirmities”! (Rom. 8:26). Yet, because this is affirmed, we must not think there is no longer need to earnestly *seek* His help. This comforting word is given in order that we *should* frequently and confidently pray for this very thing. If it were not recorded, we might doubt His readiness to do so, and wonder if we were asking “according to His will.” Because *it is* recorded, when feeling our “infirmities” press most heavily upon us, let us cry, “O Holy Spirit of God do as Thou has said, and help us.”

In this connection let us remind ourselves of that verse, “Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed *like the eagle’s*” (Psa. 103:5). The eagle is a bird renowned for its *longevity*, often living to be more than a hundred years old. The eagle is also the high-soaring bird, building its nest on the mountain summit. But *how* is the eagle’s “youth *renewed*”? By a new crop of feathers, by the rejuvenation of its wings. And that is precisely what some middle-aged and elderly Christians need: the rejuvenation of their spiritual wings—the wings of faith, of hope, of zeal, of love for souls, of devotedness to Christ. So many leave their first love, lose the joy of their espousals, and instead of setting before younger Christians a bright example of trustfulness and cheerfulness, they often discourage by gloominess and slothfulness. Thus God’s chastenings increase in severity and frequency!

Dear friend, instead of saying, “The days of my usefulness are over,” rather reason, The night cometh when no man can work, therefore I must make the most of my opportunities while it is yet called day. For your encouragement let it be stated that the most active worker in a church of which the editor was pastor, was seventy-seven years old when he went there, and during his stay of three and a half years she did more for the Lord, and was a greater stimulus to him than any other member of that church. She lived another eight years, and they were, to the very end, filled with devoted service to Christ. We believe that the Lord will yet say of her, as of another woman, “She hath done what she could” (Mark 14:8). O brothers and sisters, especially you who are feeling the weight of years, heed that word, “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9).

“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence” (Heb. 12:9). It is the duty of children to give the reverence of obedience unto the just commands of their parents, and the reverence of submission to their correction when disobedient. As parents have a charge from God to minister correction to their children when it is due—and not spoil them unto their ruin—so children have a command from God to receive parental reproof in a proper spirit, and not to be discontented, stubborn, or rebellious. For a child to be insubordinate under correction evidences a double fault; the very correction shows a fault has been committed, and insubordination under correction is only adding wrong to wrong. “We gave them reverence,” records the attitude of dutiful children toward their sires: they neither ran away from home in a huff, nor became so discouraged as to quit the path of duty.

From this law of the human home, the Apostle points out the humble and submissive conduct which is due unto God when He disciplines His children: "Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits?" (Heb. 12:9). The "much rather" points a contrast suggested by the analogy: that contrast is at least fourfold. First, the former chastening proceeded from those who were our fathers according to the flesh; the other is given by Him who is our heavenly Father. Second, the one was sometimes administered in imperfect knowledge and irritable temper; the other comes from unerring wisdom and untiring love. Third, the one was during but a brief period, when we were children; the other continues throughout the whole of our Christian life. Fourth, the one was designed for our temporal good; the other has in view our spiritual and eternal welfare. Then how much more should we readily submit unto the latter.

"Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits?" By nature we are not in subjection. We are born into this world filled with the spirit of insubordination: as the descendants of our rebellious first parents, we inherit their evil nature. "Man is born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11:12). This is very unpalatable and humbling, but nevertheless it is true. As Isaiah 53:6 tells us, "we have turned every one to *his own way*" and *that* is one of opposition to the revealed will of God. Even at conversion this wild and rebellious nature is not eradicated. A new nature is given, but remnants of the old one lusts against it. It is because of this that discipline and chastisement are needed by us, and the great design of these is to bring us into subjection unto the Father of spirits. To be "in subjection unto the Father" is a phrase of extensive import, and is well that we should understand its various significations.

1. *It denotes an acquiescence in God's sovereign right to do with us as He pleases.* "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it" (Psa. 39:9). It is the duty of saints to be mute under the rod and silent beneath the sharpest afflictions. But this is only possible as we see the hand of God in them. If His hand be not seen in the trial, the heart will do nothing but fret and fume. "And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, *Wherefore* hast thou done *so*? And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for *the LORD* hath bidden him" (2 Sam. 16:10, 11). What an example of complete submission to the sovereign will of the Most High was this! David knew that Shimei could not curse him without God's permission.

"This will set my heart at rest,
What my God appoints is best."

But with rare exceptions many chastenings are needed to bring us to this place, and to keep us there.

2. *It implies a renunciation of self-will.* To be in subjection unto the Father presupposes a surrendering and resigning of ourselves to Him. A blessed illustration of this is found in Leviticus 10:1-3, "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And *Aaron held his peace.*" Consider the circumstances.

Aaron's two sons, most probably intoxicated at the time, were suddenly cut off by Divine judgment. Their father had no warning to prepare him for this trial; yet he "held his peace!" O quarrel not against Jehovah: be clay in the hands of the Potter: take Christ's yoke upon you, and learn of Him who was "meek and lowly in heart."

3. *It signifies an acknowledgment of God's righteousness and wisdom in all His dealings with us.* We must vindicate God. This is what the Psalmist did: "I know, O LORD, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (119:75). Let us see to it that Wisdom is ever justified by her children: let our confession of her be, "Righteous art Thou, O LORD, and upright are Thy judgments" (Psa. 119:137). Whatever be sent, we must vindicate the Sender of all things: the Judge of all the earth cannot do wrong. Stifle, then, the rebellious murmur, What have I done to deserve such treatment by God? and say with the Psalmist, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (103:10). Why, my reader, if God dealt with us only according to the strict rule of His justice, we had been in Hell long ago: "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark ("impute") iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Psa. 130:3).

The Babylonish captivity was the severest affliction which God ever brought upon His earthly people during Old Testament times, yet even then a renewed heart acknowledged God's righteousness in it: "Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before Thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all Thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. *Howbeit* Thou art *just* in all that is brought upon us; for Thou hast done *right*, but we have done wickedly" (Neh. 9:32, 33). God's enemies may talk of His injustice; but let His children proclaim His righteousness. Because God is good, He can do nothing but what is right and good.

4. *It includes a recognition of His care and a sense of His love.* There is a sulking submission, and there is a cheerful submission. There is a fatalistic submission which takes this attitude—this is inevitable, so I must bow to it; and there is a thankful submission, receiving with gratitude whatever God may be pleased to send us. "It is *good* for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes" (Psa. 119:71). The Psalmist viewed his chastisements with the eye of faith, and doing so he perceived the love behind them. Remember that when God brings His people into the wilderness it is that they may learn more of His sufficiency, and that when He casts them into the furnace, it is that they may enjoy more of His presence.

5. *It involves an active performance of His will.* True submission unto the "Father of spirits" is something more than a passive thing. The other meanings of this expression which we have considered above are more or less of a negative character, but there is a positive and active side to it as well, and it is important that this should be recognized by us. To be "in subjection" to God also means that we are to walk in His precepts and run in the way of His commandments. Negatively, we are not to be murmuring rebels; positively, we are to be obedient children. We are required to be submissive unto God's Word, so that our thoughts are formed and our ways regulated by it. There is not only a suffering of God's will, but a *doing* of it—an actual performance of duty. When we utter that petition in the prayer which the Saviour has given us, "Thy will be done," something more is meant than a pious acquiescence unto the pleasure of the Almighty: it also signifies, may Thy will be *performed* by me. Subjection "unto the Father of spirits," then, is

the practical owning of His Lordship.

Two reasons for such subjection are suggested in our text. First, *because the One with whom we have to do is our Father*. O how profoundly thankful we should be that the Lord God stands revealed to us as the “Father”—our Father, because the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and *He* rendered perfect obedience unto Him. It is but right and meet that children should honor their parents by being in complete subjection to them: not to do so is to ignore their relationship, despise their authority, and slight their love. How much more ought we to be in subjection unto our heavenly Father: there is nothing tyrannical about Him: His commandments are not grievous: He has only our good at heart. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1), then let us earnestly endeavour to express our gratitude by dutifully walking before Him as obedient children, and no matter how mysterious may be His dealings with us, say with the Saviour, “The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11).

The particular title of God found in our text calls for a brief comment. It is placed in antithesis from “fathers of our flesh,” which has reference to their begetting of our bodies. True, our bodies also are a real creation on the part of God, yet in connection therewith He is pleased to use human instrumentalities. But in connection with the immaterial part of our beings, God is the immediate and alone Creator of them. As the renowned Owen said, “The soul is immediately created and infused; having no other father but God Himself,” and rightly did that eminent theologian add, “This is the fundamental reason of our perfect subjection unto God in all afflictions, namely, that our very souls are His, the immediate product of His Divine power, and under His rule alone. May He not do as He wills with His own?” The expression “Father of spirits,” refutes, then, the error of traducianists, who suppose that the soul, equally with the body, is transmitted by our parents. In Numbers 16:22 He is called “the God of the spirits of all flesh” which refers to all men naturally; while the “Father of spirits” in our text includes the new nature in the regenerate.

The second reason for our subjection to the Father is, *because this is the secret of true happiness*, which is pointed to in the final words of our text, “and live.” The first meaning of those words is, “and be happy.” This is clear from Deuteronomy 5:33, “Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may *live*, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess”: observe the words “prolong your days” are added to “that ye may live,” which obviously signifies “that ye may be happy”—compare Exodus 10:17, where Pharaoh called the miseries of the plagues “this death.” Life ceases to be *life* when we are wretched. It is the making of God’s will our haven, which secures the true resting-place for the heart. The rebellious are fretful and miserable, but “great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psa. 119:165). “Take My yoke upon you,” said Christ, “and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt. 11:29). Alas, the majority of professing Christians are so little in subjection to God, they have just enough religion to make them miserable.

“Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, *and live*?” (Heb. 12:9). No doubt the final words of this verse point a designed contrast from Deuteronomy 21:18-21, “If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not

hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, *that he die*.” “The increase of spiritual life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, is that whereunto they (the words “and live”) tend” (J. Owen).—A.W.P.

The Life of David.

42. His Concern for God's House.

How often has "success" been the ruination of those who have experienced it! how often has worldly advancement been followed by the deterioration of spirituality! It is good to see that such was far from being the case with David. In the 35th article of this series we called attention to the blessed manner in which David conducted himself after coming to the throne. So far from indulging in ease and self-luxuriation it was now that his best achievements were accomplished. First, he captured the stronghold of Zion; next he vanquished the Philistines; then he provided a restingplace for the holy Ark; and now he evidenced his deep concern to build a temple for the worship of Jehovah. So blessed is each of these incidents, so rich are they in their spiritual and typical import, we proposed to devote an article unto the separate consideration of each of them. By the Lord's gracious enabling we have accomplished our purpose concerning the first three, and now we turn to the fourth.

"And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies" (2 Sam. 7:1). This brings before us a restful interlude in the strenuous and eventful life of our hero. As we have seen in earlier chapters, David had been called upon to gird on the sword again and again; and as we shall see (D.V.) in what follows, considerable fighting yet lay before him. Moreover, little opportunity had been given him in previous years for quietness and repose: during Saul's life and also under the reign of Ishbosheth, David was much harried, and forced to move from place to place; so too in the future, disquieting and distressing experiences lay before him. But here in 2 Samuel 7 a very different picture is set before us: for a brief season the Lord granted His servant rest.

What has been pointed out above finds its counterpart, more or less, in the lives of all Christians. For the most part, their experience both outward and inward closely resembles that of David's. Christians are called upon to wage a warfare against the flesh, the world, and the Devil, to "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). Those inveterate enemies of the new man give him little rest, and often when he has been enabled by Divine grace to achieve a notable victory, he quickly discovers that fresh conflicts await him. Yet, amid his outward troubles and inward strifes, he is occasionally granted a little breathing-spell, and as he sits in his house it can be said of him, "The Lord hath given him rest round about from all his enemies."

As it is in nature, so it is in grace: after the storm comes a peaceful calm. The Lord is very merciful and tender in His dealings with His own. Amid many disheartenings, He grants encouragements along the way. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). After the toil of trying service, He says, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and *rest a while*" (Mark 6:31). After a long stretch of the dreary sands of the wilderness, He brings us to some Elim "where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees" (Exo. 15:27). After some unusually fierce conflict with Satan, the Lord grants a season of peace, and then, as in David's case, we have rest "from all our enemies."

And with what was David's mind employed during the hour of repose? Not upon worldly trifles or fleshly indulgences, but with the honour of God: "That the king said

unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains” (2 Sam. 7:2). This is very blessed and furnishes a true insight to the character of him whom the Lord Himself declared to be “a man after His own heart.” There are few things which afford a surer index to our spirituality—or the lack of it—than how we are engaged in our hours of *leisure*. When the conflict is over, and the sword is laid down, we are very apt to relax and become careless about spiritual concerns. And then it is, while off our guard, that Satan so often succeeds in gaining an advantage over us. Far different was it with him whose history we are here pondering.

“The king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.” Observe, first, that in this season of rest David’s companion was “the prophet.” Let that speak loudly to us! A godly companion is an invaluable aid to the preserving of spirituality when we are enjoying a little rest. Hours of recreation would prove hours of *re-creation* indeed, if they were spent in godly converse with some one who lives near to the Lord. David here supplied proof of his own assertion, “I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts” (Psa. 119:63). A person is not only *known* by the company he or she keeps, but is *molded* thereby: “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Prov. 13:20). Seek as your friends, dear reader, those who are most Christlike in their character and conversation.

Next, observe what it was which occupied David’s heart while he sat in his palace in the company of Nathan the prophet: “See, now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains (2 Sam. 7:2). How, this, too, reveals the beatings of David’s heart! One cannot but contrast what we have here with the haughty words of Nebuchadnezzar: “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of *my* majesty?” (Dan. 4:30). Instead of being occupied with his achievements and self-satisfied with the position which he now occupied, David was concerned about the lowly abode of God’s Ark. Very beautiful indeed is it to see the recently crowned monarch solicitous, not for the honour of his own majesty, but for the glory of Him whom he served.

It is not often that those in high places manifest such interest in spiritual things: would that more of the Lord’s people who are entrusted with a considerable amount of this world’s goods were more exercised in heart over the prospering of His cause. There are not many who make conscience over spending far more upon themselves than they do for furthering the service of God. In this generation, when the pilgrim character of the saints is well-nigh obliterated, when separation from the world is so largely a thing of the past, when self-indulgence and the gratification of every whim is the order of the day, few find their rest disturbed in the conviction that the worship is languishing. Thousands of professing Christians think more about the welfare of their pet dogs than they do in seeing that the needs of God’s servants and impoverished believers are met, and spend more on the upkeep of their motorcars than they do in the support of missionaries. Little wonder that the Holy Spirit is quenched in so many places.

“And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee” (2 Sam. 7:3). A certain class of writers who delight in criticising almost everyone and everything, and who pretend unto a deeper insight of spiritual things than all who went before them, condemn both David and Nathan on this occasion, which seems to us close akin to the complaint of Judas when Mary lavished her costly ointment upon the

Saviour. Nothing is said in the record here that David actually purposed to build Jehovah a temple, but only that he was troubled because one was not yet erected. Whatever conclusion Nathan may have drawn therefrom, he was careful to say nothing to modify David's godly concern, but rather sought to encourage his spiritual aspirations. Alas, how many today are ready to snub earnestness, quench zeal, and hinder those who have more love for perishing souls than they have.

Nathan was better thought in Divine things than some of those who have traduced him. He was quick to perceive that such unselfishness and godly concern as the king manifested was good evidence that the Lord was with him, for such spiritual exercises of heart proceed not from mere nature. Had David been actuated by a "legalistic" spirit as one of his foolish detractors supposed—deploring it with an "alas, alas!"—God's faithful servant had promptly rebuked, or at least corrected him. But instead of so doing, he says "Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee" (2 Sam. 7:3). O that more of this so-called "legality" were in evidence today—a heart melted by the Lord's abounding mercies, anxious to express its gratitude by furthering His cause and service. But it is hardly to be expected that those who so strenuously oppose the Law's being a rule of life for the Christian, should have any clear ideas on either grace or what constitutes "legality."

"And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan" (v. 4). In the brief notes on this verse found in "The Companion Bible" it is there stated that, "After these words ('that night') all the MSS. (manuscripts) have a hiatus, marking a solemn pause." The design of the ancient Hebrews may have been to connect this passage with Genesis 15:12-17, which is another *night* scene. In both a wondrous revelation was made by the Lord: in both His great purpose concerning the Messiah and Mediator received an unfolding: in both a remarkable adumbration was made respecting the contents of the Everlasting Covenant.

"Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build Me an house for Me to dwell in?" (v. 5), or as it is said in 1 Chronicles 17:4, "Thou shalt not build Me an house to dwell in." Some may suppose that these words make it quite clear that David *had* definitely determined to erect a temple unto Jehovah. But we rather regard these statements as the gracious construction which God placed upon the holy concern of His servant, just as the Saviour sweetly interpreted the loving devotion of Mary's anointing as "against the day of My burying hath she kept this" (John 12:7); and, as in a coming day He will yet say unto those on His right hand, "I was an hungered, and ye gave *Me* meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave *Me* drink: I was a stranger, and ye took *Me* in" (Matt. 25:35, etc.)

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12). It is the disposition and desire of the heart which God regards, and sincere intentions to do good are approved by Him, even though His providences do not permit the execution of them. Thus it was in David's case. He was concerned that the sacred Ark should be under curtains, while he dwelt in a ceiled house. That holy concern was tantamount unto a willingness on his part to honour the Lord's worship by a stately temple, and *this* is the construction which God graciously placed upon it, accepting the will for the deed. Though David had not formally planned to build the temple, God so *interpreted* the exercises of his mind; just as when a man looks lustfully upon a woman, Christ *interprets* this as "adultery" itself (Matt. 5:28).

We have dwelt the longer upon this point because the commentators have quite missed the force of it. Not only so, but some teachers, who are looked upon in certain circles as wellnigh infallible in their expositions, have falsely charged David with “legality.” Now that the Lord had elevated him from sheepcote to the throne, and had given him rest from all his enemies, David’s concern for the dwelling place of the Ark is twisted into his desire to do something *for* the Lord as payment of all He had done for him. Such men err “not knowing the Scriptures.” One verse of the Word is sufficient to refute their childish misconceptions, and establish what we have said above: “And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto My name, thou *didst well* (not “thou wast moved by a legalistic spirit”) that it was in thine heart” (1 Kings 8:18).

We do not propose to comment in detail upon the remainder of the Lord’s message through Nathan, but rather will we generalize our remarks upon the same. First, the Lord made touching mention of His own infinite condescension in graciously accommodating Himself unto the stranger and pilgrim character of His people (v.6). The great Jehovah had deigned to “*walk with* the children of Israel.” What an amazing and heart-melting word is that in Leviticus 25:23 “The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners *with me*.” David himself had laid hold of that word, as his statement in Psalm 39:12 clearly shows, “Hold not Thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger *with Thee*, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.” Until Israel were settled in their inheritance an humble tent had served the Lord’s requirements. In this He has left *us* an example to follow: pomp and parade, extravagance and luxury, ill become those who have here “no continuing city.”

Second, as yet the Lord had given no definite instruction for the erection of an imposing edifice for His worship (v. 7), and until He did, a *tent* of His appointing was better than a *temple* of man’s devising. Our desires, even of usefulness, must be governed by His precepts. Whatever be our spiritual aspirations, they must be regulated by the revealed will of God. He assigns unto every one his own work, and each of us should thankfully and faithfully attend to our own proper business. For example, no matter how strong the sisters may yearn to engage in public preaching, since they have received no commission from the Lord so to do, they are required to “keep silence in the churches.” O to be satisfied with the place which God has allotted *us*, to discharge earnestly the duty which He has appointed us, and leave to others whom He has chosen, the more honourable work. The temple was to bear the name of Solomon, and not that of David.

Third, David was reminded of the wondrous things which God had already wrought for him, so that while he was not called unto the building of the temple, nevertheless, he *was* one of the favourites of Heaven (v. 8). Moreover, God had made him signally victorious over all his foes, and had advanced him unto high honour among the nations (v.9). Let us be thankful for the mercies which God *has* bestowed, and not repine for any which He sees fit to withhold. Fourth, the happy future of his people was assured him (v. 10), from which he might well conclude that, when *they* were more securely established, then would be the time for the erection of a permanent house of worship. Finally, God announces rich blessings as being entailed upon David’s family, for from *his* seed should issue, according to the flesh, the promised Messiah and Mediator (vv. 11-16). Thus, instead of David’s building for the Lord a material and temporal house, the Lord would build for *him* a spiritual house which would abide “forever.” Thus we see that a “willing

mind” (2 Cor. 8:12) is not only accepted, but richly *rewarded*. “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (Eph. 3:20, 21).—A.W.P.

The Divine Covenants.

3. The Noahic (Continued).

Having contemplated the *occasion* when the Lord God entered into covenant with Noah, the unspeakably solemn circumstances which formed its background, we are now almost ready to turn our attention unto the covenant itself, and examine its terms. The covenants which the Lord established at successive intervals with different parties were substantially one, embracing in the main the same promises, and receiving similar confirmation. The Siniatic Covenant—although it possessed peculiar features which distinguished it from all others—was no exception. They were all of them revelations of God's gracious purpose, exhibited at first in an obscure form, but unfolding according to an obvious law of progress: each renewal adding something to what was previously known, so that the path of the just was as the shining light, which shone "more and more" unto the perfect day, when the shadows were displaced by the substance itself.

We are not to suppose that the Divine promises, of which the covenant was the expression and confirmation, were not previously known. The antecedent history shows otherwise. The declaration made by Jehovah unto the Serpent in Genesis 3:15, while it announced his doom, clearly intimated mercy and deliverance unto the woman's "seed"—an expression which is by no means to be restricted unto Christ personally, but which pertains to Christ mystical, that is, to the Head *and* His body, the Church. The Divine institution of sacrifices opened a wide door of hope unto those who were convicted of their sinful and lost condition by nature, as the recorded case of Abel clearly shows (Heb. 11:4). The spiritual history of Enoch, who walked with God and before his translation received testimony that he pleased Him (Heb. 11:5), is a further evidence that the very earliest of the saints were blest with considerable spiritual light, and were granted an insight into God's eternal counsels of grace.

There is a word in Genesis 5:28, 29 which requires to be carefully pondered in this connection. There we read that "Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: and he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed." This is the first mention of Noah in Scripture, and there is no doubt he had his name prophetically given him. His name signifies "Rest," and was bestowed upon him by his father in the confident expectation that he would prove more than an ordinary blessing to his generation: he would be the instrument of bringing in that which would speak peace and inspire hope in the hearts of the elect—for the "us" and "our" (spoken by *a believer*) obviously refer to the godly line.

The words of the believing Lamech had respect unto what had been said in Genesis 3:15, and were also undoubtedly a prophecy which looked forward to Christ Himself, in whom it was to receive its antitypical fulfillment, for *He* is the true Rest-giver (Matt. 11:28) and Deliverer from the curse (Gal. 3:13). The full scope and intent of Lamech's prophetic language is to be understood in the light of those blessings which were pronounced on Noah by God *after* the flood—blessings which, as we shall see, were infinitely more precious than that which their mere letter conveys. They were blessings to proceed through the channel of the Everlasting Covenant of Grace and by means of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. The proof of this is found in the fact that they were pronounced *after* sacrifice had been offered. This requires us to glance again at Genesis 8:20-22.

“And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings *on the altar*” (v. 20). The typical teaching of this carries us much further than that which was foreshadowed by Abel’s offering. Here, for the first time in Scripture, mention is made of the “altar”: the key which unlocks the meaning of this is found in Matthew 23:19—“the altar that sanctifieth the gift.” And what was *the* “Altar” which sanctified the supreme “Gift?” Why, *the Person* of Christ Himself: it was *who* He was that rendered acceptable and efficacious *what* He did. Thus, while the offering of Abel pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ, the altar of Noah adumbrated the One who offered that sacrifice; His Person being that which gave infinite value unto the blood which He shed.

“And the LORD smelled a sweet savour” (Gen. 8:21). Here again our present type rises much higher than that of Abel’s: in the former case it was the *manward* aspect which was in view; but here it is the *Godward* that is brought before us. Blessed indeed is it to learn what the sacrifice of Christ obtained for His people—deliverance from the wrath to come, securing an inheritance in Heaven forever; but far more blessed is it to know what that Sacrifice meant unto Him to whom it was offered. In the sacrifice of Christ God Himself found that which was “a sweet savour,” with which *He* was well pleased, that which not only met every requirement of His righteousness and holiness, but also which satisfied His heart.

“And the LORD said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done” (Gen. 8:21). The unusual words, “The LORD said in His heart” emphasises the effect which the “sweet savour” of the sacrifice had upon Him. The remainder of the verse appears, at first sight, to mar the unity of the passage, for it seems to bear no direct relation unto what immediately precedes or follows. But a more careful pondering of it reveals its pertinency. The reference to human depravity comes in here with a solemn significance, intimating that the waters of judgment had in nowise changed the corruption of fallen man’s nature, and announcing that it was not because of any change in the flesh for the better that the Lord now made known His thoughts of peace and blessing. No, it was solely on the ground of the sweet-smelling sacrifice that He dealt in grace.

The blessings which were included in the benedictions which God pronounced upon Noah and his sons were granted on *a new foundation*, on the basis of a grant quite different from any revelation or promise which the Lord gave to Adam in his *unfallen* condition, even on the ground of that Covenant of Grace which He had established with the Mediator before ever the earth was. That eternal Charter anticipated Adam’s offence, and provided for the deliverance of God’s elect from the curse which came in upon our first parent’s sin: yea, secured for them far greater blessings than any which pertained to the earthly paradise. It is of great importance that this fact should be clearly grasped, namely, that it was on the sure foundation of the Everlasting Covenant of Grace that God here pronounced blessing upon Noah and his sons—as He did later on Abraham and his seed.

What has just been pointed out had been more easily grasped by the average reader had the chapter-break between Genesis 8 and 9 been made at a different point. Genesis 8 should close with the 19th verse. The last three verses of Genesis 8, as they stand in our Bibles, should begin chapter 9, and then *the immediate connection between* Noah’s sacrifice and the covenant which the Lord made with him would be more apparent. The cove-

nant was *Jehovah's response* to the offering upon the altar. That offering was "a sweet savour" to Him, clearly pointing to the offering of Christ. Christ's sacrifice was not then to be offered for over two thousand years, so

the satisfaction which Noah's typical offering gave unto Jehovah must have pointed back to the Everlasting Covenant, in which the great Sacrifice was agreed upon.

Noah's passing safely through the Flood, in the ark, was a type of *salvation* itself. For this statement we have the authority of Holy Writ: see 1 Peter 3:20, 21. Noah and his sons were delivered from the wrath of God which had destroyed the rest of the world, and they now stepped out on to what was, typically, *resurrection* ground. Yes, the earth having been swept clean by the besom of Divine judgment, and a fresh start now being made in its history, it was virtually *new-creation* ground on to which the saved family came as they emerged from the ark. Here is another point in which our present type looked unto higher truths than did the types which had preceded it. It is in connection with the *new* creation that the inheritance of the saints is found (1 Peter 1:3, 4). We are therefore ready now to consider the blessing of the typical heirs.

"And God blessed Noah and his sons" (Gen. 9:1). This is the first time that we read of God *blessing* any since the Fall had occurred. Before sin entered the world we read that "male and female created He them: and God blessed them," (Gen. 1:27, 28). No doubt there is both a comparison and a contrast suggested in these two verses. First, and from the natural viewpoint, God's "blessing" of Noah and his sons was the formal announcement that the same Divine favour which the Creator had extended to our first parents should now rest upon the new progenitors of the human race. But secondly, and more deeply, this blessing of Noah and his sons *after* the offering upon the altar, and in connection with the *covenant*, denoted their "blessing" upon a new basis. Adam and Eve received blessing on the ground of their creature purity; Noah and his sons (as the representatives of the entire Election of Grace) received blessing on the ground of their acceptance and perfection *in Christ*.

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things" (Gen. 9:1-3). These verses (together with the closing ones of chapter 8) introduce us to the beginning of a new world. In several respects it resembles the first beginning: there was the Divine blessing upon the heads of the human family; there was the renewed command for the propagation of the human species—the earth having been depopulated; and there was the promise of the subjection of the lower creatures to man. But there was one great and vital difference, which has escaped the notice of most of the commentators: *all now rested on the Covenant of Grace*.

This difference is indeed radical and fundamental. Adam was placed as lord over the earth on the ground of the Covenant of Works. His tenure was entirely a conditional one, his retention thereof depending wholly upon his own conduct. Consequently, when he sinned, he not only forfeited the blessing and favour of his Creator, but lost his dominion over the creature, and as a discrowned monarch he was sent forth to play the part of a common labourer in the earth (Gen. 3:17-19). But here we see man re-instated over the lost inheritance, not on the basis of creature responsibility and human merits, but on the

basis of Divine grace—for Noah “found *grace* in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen. 6:8); not on the foundation of creature doings, but on the foundation of the excellency of that Sacrifice which satisfied the heart of God. Consequently it was as the children *of faith* the heirship of the new world was given to Noah and his seed.

“Man now rises, in the person of Noah, to a higher place in the world: yet not simply as man, but as a child of God, standing in faith. His faith had saved him amid the general wreck of the old world, to become in the new a second head of mankind, and an inheritor of earth’s domain, as now purged and rescued from the pollution of evil. ‘He is made heir,’ as it is written in Hebrews, ‘of the righteousness which is by faith,’—heir, that is, of all that properly belongs to such righteousness, not merely of the righteousness itself, but also of the world, which in the Divine purpose it was destined to possess and occupy. Hence, as if there had been a new creation, and a new head brought in to exercise over it the right of sovereignty, the original blessing and grant to Adam was substantially renewed to Noah and his family: Genesis 9:1-3. Here, then, the righteousness of faith received direct from the grace of God the dowry that had been originally bestowed upon the righteousness of nature—not a blessing merely, but a blessing coupled with the heirship and dominion of the world” (P. Fairbairn).

“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual” (1 Cor. 15:46). Though these words have reference immediately to the bodies of the saints, yet they enunciate a cardinal principle in the ways of God in the outworking of His eternal purpose. Divine grace cannot clearly appear as *grace* until it shines forth from the dark background of man’s sin and ruin. It was therefore requisite that the Covenant of Works with Adam should precede the Covenant of Grace with Noah. The failure of the first man did but make way and provide a suitable foil for the triumph of the Second Man—whom Noah clearly foreshadowed, as his name and the prophetic utterance of his father concerning him plainly announced. The more clearly this be grasped the easier will it be to perceive the deeper meaning of the Noahic Covenant.

Everything was now clearly placed on a fresh footing and established upon a new basis. This fact throws light upon or brings out the significance of several details which, otherwise, are likely to be passed by unappreciated. For example, that “*eight* souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:20), for in the language of Bible numerics eight speaks of a *new beginning*. Hence, too, the reverent student of Holy Writ, who delights to see the finger of God in its minutest details, will regard as something more than a coincidence the fact that the word “covenant” is found in connection with Noah just *eight* times: Genesis 6:18, 9:9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17. It is to be carefully noted that the entire emphasis is upon the Lord’s making a covenant with Noah, and not Noah with God: He was the initiator and sole compactor. In it there were no conditions stipulated, no “ifs” interposed; all was of grace—free, pure, unchangeable.

There is only space now left for us to call attention unto how the blessed promises recorded in Genesis 8:22 and 9:2, 3 were all well calculated to still the fears of Noah’s heart—see the previous article—and establish his confidence. Therein he was graciously assured that in God’s full view of the evil which still remained in the heart of man, a similar judgment, at least to the same extent, would never again be repeated; that not only would man be preserved on the earth, but that also the whole animal creation should be in subserviency to his use. By these Divine assurances his fears were effectually relieved—adumbrating the fact that God delights to bring His children, sooner or later, into the full

assurance of faith, and of confidence and joy in His presence.—A.W.P.

Christ in Glory. (Concluded).

The second use of the doctrine (of assurance) may be by way of *trial and examination*. Is it so, that believers are the offspring and issue of the house of God? then it concerns every one to try himself, whether he be of that blessed progeny. We read (Heb. 12) of bastards in the visible church, who cannot be reckoned among this number. They are indeed called the children of the kingdom; but they are such as do not inherit the kingdom of God, because they will be cast into utter darkness. And, therefore, it concerns us to see whether or not we be the lawfully-begotten children of Zion, the true offspring and issue of God's household and family. I remember, in the doctrinal part, I told you why they are called the offspring and issue; and now I would offer two or three remarks whereby they may be known.

1. All the offspring and issue of God's family have passed through the strait gate of the new birth; for, says Christ, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). But, say you, How may I *know* if I be a partaker of the new birth? I answer, the new birth brings a new state or standing with it. You have quitted your standing upon the law-bottom or works and all foundations of sand, and taken up your only stand upon the foundation laid in Zion, which is Christ Jesus. The new birth brings a new heart along with it: "A new heart also will I give you" (Ezek. 36:26). The new birth brings with it new principles of action: a principle of life, of faith and love; new motives and ends. Self-love constrains the sinner, but the love of Christ, and the glory of God constrains the new convert to duty. The new birth makes a man to love the new covenant, even a covenant of rich grace and promise, saying, "This is all my salvation." The new birth produces new laws in a man. He was formerly under the law of sin and death; but now he delights in the Law of the Lord after the inner man. The new birth brings a new language with it. The man gets a new tongue: formerly he spoke the language of Ashod, but now the language of Canaan. The new birth produces new views, both of things temporal and eternal. So, then, try yourselves by these, whether you be among the true offspring and issue of the house of God: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29).

2. All the offspring and issue of the house have seen their Father's countenance; and they are always glad at the sight of it. Like David, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased" (Psa. 4:7). 3. All the offspring of God's family, each one of them, resembles the children of the King, because they bear a likeness unto their Father and His firstborn Son. By beholding His glory they are changed into the same image. They hate themselves because of their dissimilitude through remaining sin and indwelling corruption, feeling with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom 7:24). 4. All the offspring of God's family have faith in Christ, hence they are called believers, because they believe in and believe on His name; "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12). The very name of Christ is so sweet to them that it is like "ointment poured forth"; and when the Holy Spirit works faith in them, if they had all the souls that ever sprang from Adam dwelling in their bodies, they could commit the keeping of them all to Him.

5. All the offspring of the house are acquainted with the Shepherd's voice, the voice of His Word, and the voice of His rod: "My sheep hear My voice" (John 10:27). When they hear His promising voice, they are "filled with joy and peace in believing"; when they hear His commanding voice, they are ready to say "I will run the way of Thy commandments; only give grace to obey, and command what Thou wilt"; when they hear His threatening voice, they tremble at His Word; when they hear His correcting voice in worldly trials and crosses, they are ready to say with David, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it" (Psa. 39:9). 6. All the offspring and issue of the family love to lisp out their Father's name, crying, "Abba, Father." It is true, through the prevalency of unbelief and a sense of guilt and filth, they blush when they speak to Him as a Father; but yet, now and then, as faith gets up its head, they will be ready to cry as the church, "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O LORD, art our Father, our Redeemer" (Isa. 63:16). 7. If you be the true offspring of this family, your Father's presence will be your delight, and His absence, hiding, and frowns will be an intolerable affliction. Christ the firstborn of the family never complained so much of all His other troubles as when His Father forsook Him: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Psa. 22:1). Just so it is with the genuine offspring, as you see in David, Asaph, Heman, and others.

8. You will dearly love all that bear their Father's image, and the image of Him who is the express image of the Father; and the more resemblance they have unto Him, you will love them the better: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). You will esteem them as David did, the "excellent of the earth," with whom will be all your delight. Lastly, all the offspring, and issue of God's house have a zeal for the standing of their Father's house: they love the habitation of it, and the place where His honour dwells; and therefore will have something of the spirit of the Firstborn, of whom it is said, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up" (Psa. 69:9). Is it possible that a true child of a family may be unconcerned when he sees robberies committed in his house, or the house of his Father turned into a den of thieves? or will a true-born child herd and associate himself with such without opposing them and witnessing against them? A true child of the family will be ready to say of such, as Jacob did of Simeon and Levi, "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret" (Gen 49:5, 6). Thus I have given you some marks which have a relation to the first character to believers in the text.

I come next to pursue a trial with an eye toward the second character or designation of vessels of different sizes—"vessels of cups and vessels of flagons," all hanging upon the "Nail fastened in a sure place." In the professing church there are vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath, vessels of honour fitted for the Master's use, and vessels of dishonour fitted to destruction. Now here some may readily put the question, "How may I know if I be a vessel of mercy and honour?" For clearing the way of answering this question, you will consider that all the children of men sprang from Adam by natural generation. The elect of God, as well as others, are, in the eye of the law, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, through the pollution and guilt of original and actual sin: and until God comes in a day of power, and digs the vessel of mercy from under the filth and rubbish of the fall of Adam, no man can make a difference betwixt the vessels of mercy and of wrath, because this is among the secret things that belong unto the Lord. But if the question be, "How may a person know he be yet a vessel of mercy *fitted by regeneration and*

sanctifying grace for the Master's use? Hath God yet formed me for Himself? Hath He taken me out of nature's quarry, out of the miry clay, and washed, and justified, and sanctified me in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God?"—Now I say, if *this* be the question, I will give you a few marks of the vessels of mercy and honour.

1. Every vessel of mercy in the house of our God (whether they be vessels of "cups" or vessels of "flagons") has seen himself to be a vessel of wrath by nature, condemned already, full of the vermin of sin and corruption, treasuring up to himself wrath against the day of wrath. Hence, all God's Israel are ready to take up that melancholy song "A Syrian ready to perish was I; at that time I was afar off, an alien to the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenants of promise, without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world." Hence, 2. All the vessels of mercy are taken up in admiring the rich and free mercy of God in taking up the like of them from among the pots: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). O, says Paul, I was a "blasphemer, and injurious: but I obtained mercy" (1 Tim. 1:13). "He brought me up," says David, "out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God" (Psa. 40:2, 3).

3. All God's vessels of mercy have undergone the hammer of the law, in a greater or less measure: "Is not My Word like a hammer," saith the Lord, "that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29). The law is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. So much hammering by the law is necessary, and no more, as serves to beat the heart and hands of a sinner off from the broken nail of the law, in point of righteousness: "I, through the law," say Paul, "am dead to the law" (Gal. 2:19). So much of this hammer is needful to beat down the vain and towering imaginations of our own goodness, holiness, wisdom, and righteousness. The Dagon of self, and all the shapes and forms of it, must be broken down forever. The vessel of mercy shall never more say "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men," or with Laodicea, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing." 4. All the vessels of mercy are made heartily content to change their holding. All mankind have their holding on the first or second Adam; they are either hanging by the broken nail of the Covenant of Works, or by the Gospel nail of the Covenant of Grace; they are either seeking life and righteousness by the works of the law, or by the grace of the Gospel. Now, in a day of conversion, the sinner having his hands knocked off from his first holding, he, by the hand of faith, which is God's gift, receives Christ, and takes hold of that covenant whereof He is Head, saying, "In Him will I be justified, and in Him will I glory; for in Him have I righteousness and strength. He is to me the end of the law for righteousness: for He was made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

5. All the vessels of mercy are melted in the fire of Gospel grace and love, and made pliable to the will of God; the heart of stone is melted into a heart of flesh (Ezek. 36:26); the iron sinew of the obstinate will, through the heat of Divine love, is made to give way, and yield unto the Divine will (Psa. 110:3). The language of every vessel of mercy is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The adamant heart is dissolved into evangelical repentance, so that the man now looks on Him whom he had pierced, and mourns (Zech. 12:10). 6. All the vessels of the house are washed, and will be frequently washing themselves, in the fountain of a Redeemer's blood, from sin and uncleanness (Zech. 13:1). The vessels of the house, through remaining corruption, temptation, and frequent

falls into the puddle of actual sin, gather dust, and become dim and unfit for the use and service of the great Father and Manager of the house; and, therefore, He will have them sprinkled with clean water; He will have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water: "If I wash thee not," says Christ to Peter, "thou hast no part with Me" (John 13:8). And this washing is what they themselves long for, especially when defiled with any fall. Hence they cry with David, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (Psa. 51:2); and again, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psa. 51:7).

7. All the vessels of the house, from the least to the greatest, have the name of the Father of the house, and of the Manager of the house, engraven upon them. It has been, and still is, the custom of great men to have their names and arms graven on their gold and silver vessels. So it is in the house of our God. All the vessels of mercy have *His* name and motto engraven upon them: "Lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1). They have the name of Christ, the great Manager, written on them, particularly that name "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:6); and in this name of His do they rejoice continually, for in His righteousness are they exalted. And then, as we are told (Rev. 3:12), the name of the new Jerusalem, which cometh down from above, out of Heaven, is engraven on them; for they prefer Jerusalem to their chiefest joy. In a word, God's name, His glory, honour, and authority, His truth, His worship, His cause and interest, the Word of God, the testimony of Jesus, the prerogatives of His crown and kingdom—every true believer hath these as it were, engraven on his heart, and will study to maintain them before the world.

8. If you be the vessels of mercy and honour, the Master of the house will now and then be making use of you by pouring the wine, the oil, the water, or milk of His grace and Spirit into you: "And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16). Every vessel of the house is anointed with the fresh oil of the Holy Spirit: "we have an unction from the Holy One"; and they that lack this anointing of the Spirit, in one degree or another, the Manager of the house will not own him as His: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). They will be found among the foolish virgins, whose vessels had no oil when the midnight cry was heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him" (Matt. 25:6). But I say all the vessels of mercy have a greater or smaller measure of the anointing of the Spirit: and every anointing of the Spirit enlargeth the vessel to hold more, insomuch that through the frequent communications of the Spirit, a "cup" vessel at first becomes a large vessel or a "flagon" one, until it be ready to be transplanted from the lower to the upper story of the house, where every vessel shall be filled brimfull of God.

Question: Some exercised soul may be ready to say, "O how happy would I be, if I knew that I were but the least vessel in the house of God, hanging on the 'Nail fastened in a sure place!' but, alas! I am such a poor, worthless, useless creature, that I am afraid I am none of them." Answer: It is the nature of all the vessels of mercy in the house of God, yea, of the great flagons, to *esteem themselves worthless* and among the least, yea, less than the least of all the vessels of the house. Says the Apostle Paul, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8). And the lower they sink in their own eyes, the higher do they rise in the esteem of the great Lord of the house, and the more of His grace and favour do they receive; for He giveth grace to the humble.

Objection 2: Another may say, "I am so broken and tossed with worldly trials, that I am ready to think I am none of the offspring or vessels of His house." Answer: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," and "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Christ Himself suffered before He entered into His glory, and so have all the cloud of witnesses (Heb. 11); and, therefore, it is a false conclusion to think you do not belong to the Lord because of multiplied roots of affliction; for "if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. 12:8) for "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" (Heb 12:6). God's gold and silver vessels go frequently into the furnace; and there is a need be for it, to purge away their dross; and, therefore, they learn to say with Job, "when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (23:10).

Objection 3. "I am such a vile, polluted creature, that I cannot think I am one of His offspring by regeneration, but rather a vessel of wrath." Answer: God will not cast away His gold and silver vessels because of the dross and alloy of sin and corruption that is about them. A man will take up a vessel of his house, though it be lying on a dunghill. So David, Solomon, Peter and many other of the saints, fell in to the mire of sin; and yet the Lord took them from the dunghill, and made them like the wings of a dove; and, therefore, seeing God will not cast off forever, do not you cast yourself off.

Objection 4. "I am so harassed with Satan and his fiery darts, that I am afraid I am not one of God's children. I am tempted to evils and abomination that I am afraid to name to any in the world." Answer: Christ Himself was tempted in all things as we are, that He might be a merciful High Priest to sympathize with those that are tempted. Consider again, for thy encouragement, that usually the devil gives the sorest pulls and pushes at the gold and silver vessels of God's family; and if you did not belong to God, Satan would not pursue so much. When Israel came out of Egypt, then Pharaoh and his hosts pursued most vigorously. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

Objection 5. "I am not one of the offspring or vessels; for God is hiding, and carrying Himself to me as an enemy, that the very remembrance of Him is a terror to me." Answer: This is no unprecedented case among God's children. David, when he remembered God, was "troubled"; Asaph cries, "Is His mercy clean gone?" (Psa. 77:8). Heman also, "While I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted" (Psa. 88:15); yea, Christ, the firstborn and beloved Son, is under such an agony of soul that He cries out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26:38). It is hard to tell how far fatherly chastisement may be carried; but this is an uncontroverted truth, that the foundation of God standeth sure; and God will never disinherit any of the offspring and issue, or cast away any of the vessels which hang by a faith of His operation upon the "Nail fastened in a sure place." This truth will yield comfort, though the present aspect of providence gives just ground to fear some shaking judgment is not far off, on account of the abounding sin of all ranks, a condemned Gospel, and the blood of those whose souls are crying from under the altar. But whatever calamities may be coming, though the world should be unhinged, and nothing be heard or seen but the confused noise of warriors and garments rolled in blood, "yet verily it shall be well with the righteous." Here is comfort in case of rents, and divisions, and manifold disorders in the visible church, as there is at this day; men beating their fellow servants, and putting them out of the house for their faithfulness to the Master of the house, and preferring the man with the gold ring to the man who is rich in faith and an heir of the kingdom. These, or the like evils, take place in the visible church, and have a

melancholy aspect. But here is comfort; the Lord is looking on. He permits and overrules all these confusions and disorders for His own holy and wise ends, for the trial of faith and patience, and to show His own skill in bringing order out of confusion. And when He hath performed His whole work in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, He will reign among His ancients gloriously. Here is comfort to the Lord's remnant, when there are few or none of the rulers or nobles of the land to own the cause of Christ, or to put their hand to the rebuilding of the walls or gates of Jerusalem, lying in rubbish, as in the days of former reformation in this land. The great Zerubbabel can carry on His work either with them or without them; for it is "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). The Man whose name is "The Branch" shall come out of His place; He shall build the Temple, and bear all the glory forever and ever, Amen. (Ralph Erskine, 1743).

Union and Communion.

2. Mediatorial: (Continued).

Having sought to point out at the close of last month's article some of the reasons why it was requisite for the Son of God to become incarnate, we shall now endeavour to consider *the nature of* the Divine incarnation itself—exactly what took place when the Word became flesh. Here it behooves us to tread with the utmost reverence and caution, for the ground is truly holy. Only by adhering closely to the Scriptures themselves can we hope to be preserved from error; only as the Holy Spirit Himself is pleased to be our Guide may we expect to be led into the truth thereof; and only as we attend diligently to every jot and tittle in the revelation which God has graciously vouchsafed, will it be possible to obtain anything approaching a complete view of the same. May the Lord enable us to gird up the loins of our mind, and grant that in His light we may see light, as we approach our happy but difficult task.

In Old Testament times God granted various intimations that the coming Deliverer should be both Divine and human. At the beginning God announced to the Serpent (not “promised” unto Adam, be it noted), “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel” (Gen. 3:15). This was a clear indication that the Saviour should be human, for He would be the woman's “Seed”; yet it as definitely intimated that the Saviour would be more than a man, for it is the work of Omnipotence to destroy Satan's power, hence we read, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. 16:20). Expressly was it revealed that “a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14), “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God” etc., (Isa. 9:6). In the ancient “Theophanies” such as in Genesis 18:1, 2; 32:24; Joshua 5:13, 14, etc., the Divine incarnation was anticipated and adumbrated, for in each case the “man” was obviously the Lord Himself in temporary human form.

Now there were three distinct things which belonged to the Word's becoming flesh: the actual production of His humanity, the sanctifying thereof, and His personal assumption of it. The production of it was by miraculous conception, whereby His human nature was under the supernatural operation of God the Spirit framed of the substance of Mary, without man's help: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). But let it here be pointed out that in no sense was the Spirit the “father” of Jesus, for He contributed no matter to the making of His manhood, but only miraculously fashioned it out of the seed of His virgin mother. “Although the human nature of Christ was individualized and personalized by a miraculous conception, and not by ordinary generation, yet there was as really and truly a conception and birth as if it had been by ordinary generation. Jesus Christ was really and truly the Son of Mary. He was bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh. He was of her substance and blood. He was consubstantial with her, in as full a sense as an ordinary child is consubstantial with an ordinary mother” (W. Shedd, 1889).

That which was conceived by Mary, under the mighty power of the Holy Spirit was *not* a human *person*, but a human *nature*; hence was it said “that holy *thing* which shall be born” (Luke 1:35). It is most important to clearly grasp this fact if we are to be preserved from error. When contemplating the ineffable mystery of the Holy Trinity, we saw

how necessary it was to distinguish sharply between *nature* and *person*, for while there are three Persons in the Godhead, Their essence or nature is but one. In like manner, it is equally essential that we observe the same distinction when viewing the Person of the Mediator, for though He assumed human nature, He did not take a human person into union with Himself. Thus, we may correctly refer to the *complex person* of Christ, but we must not speak of His *dual personality*.

At the first moment of our Lord's assumption of human nature, that human nature existed only as the "seed" or *un-individualized* substance of the Virgin. But it was not for that reason an *incomplete* humanity, for all the essential *properties* of humanity are in the human nature itself. Christ assumed the human nature *before* it had become a particular person by conception in the womb: He "took on Him the *seed* of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16). The personalizing of His humanity was by its miraculous union with His Deity, though that added no new properties to human nature, but gave it a new and unique *form*. Nor was it simply a material body He assumed, but a human spirit and soul and body; for He was made "in all things like unto His brethren, sin excepted."

That it was an *impersonal* human nature which the Son of God assumed is clear from His own words in Hebrews 10:5: "A body hast Thou prepared *Me*." The "body," put metonymically for the entire human nature was *not* the "Me" or "Person," but something which He took unto Himself. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. 5:14): note carefully it is *one* who died: though possessing two natures, there was but a single Person. The humanity of Christ—consisting of spirit, and soul and body—had no subsistence in itself or by itself, but only as it was taken into union with a Divine Person. In answering the question, "What was the cause that the Person of the Son of God *did not* join Himself to a perfect *person* of man," the renowned James Usher (1654) replied, "1. Because then there could not be a personal union of both to make *one* perfect Mediator. 2. Then there should be four Persons in the Trinity. 3. The works of each of the natures could not be counted the works of a whole Person."

"The *personality* of Jesus Christ is in His Divine nature, and not in His human. Jesus Christ existed a distinct, Divine Person from eternity, the second Person in the adorable Trinity. The human nature which this Divine Person, the Word, assumed into a personal union with Himself, is not and never was a distinct person by itself, and personality cannot be ascribed to it, and does not belong to it any otherwise than as united to the Logos" (S. Hopkins, 1795). As a woman has no *wifely* personality until she is married, so the humanity of Christ had no personality till it was united to Himself: "that holy thing which shall be born of thee (Mary) shall be called *the Son of God*" (Luke 1:35)—receiving its name from the Divine Person with which it was made one. Just as my personality and your personality, from first to last, centres in our *highest* part—the soul—and is only shared in by the body, so the personality of the Mediator centres in His highest part—His Deity—His humanity only sharing in it.

The second thing pertaining to the Mediatorial union was the *sanctifying* of that "seed" which was miraculously conceived in the womb of the Virgin. To sanctify signifies to set apart unto God. For that two things are required: the cleansing of the object or person from pollution, and the enduing it with excellency fit for the Divine service—typified under the ceremonial economy by the washing and then the anointing of the priests, and the sacred vessels. In connection with the humanity of our Lord, the first was

secured by God's miraculously preserving it from the slightest taint of defilement, so that the Lamb was "without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). Nothing with the least trace of corruption in it could be joined to the immaculate Son of God. Original sin could not be transmitted to Him, because He was never in Adam nor begotten by a man. The immediate interposition of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35) prevented all possibility of any corruption being transmitted through Mary.

The enduing of Christ's humanity was also by the gracious operation of the Spirit: see Isaiah 11:1, 2. "God, in the human nature of Christ, did perfectly renew that blessed image of His on our nature, which we lost in Adam; with an addition of many glorious endowments which Adam was not made partaker of. God did not renew it in His nature, as though that portion of it whereof He was partaker, had ever been destitute or deprived of it, as it is with the same nature in all other persons. For He derived not His nature from Adam in the same way that we do; nor was He ever in Adam as the public representative of our nature as we were. But our nature in Him had the image of God implanted in it, which was lost and separated from the same nature, in all other instances of its subsistence. It pleased the Father that in Him *all fullness* should dwell, that He should be 'full of grace and truth,' and in all things have the pre-eminence.

"The great design of God in His grace is, that as we have borne the 'image of the first Adam' in the depravation of our natures, so we should bear 'the image of the second' in their renovation. As we have borne 'the image of the earthy,' so we shall bear 'the image of the heavenly' (1 Cor. 15:49). And as He is the pattern of all our graces, so He is of glory also. All our glory will consist in our being 'made like unto Him,' which what it is doth not yet appear (1 John 3:2). For He shall 'change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body' (Phil. 3:21). Wherefore the fullness of grace was bestowed upon the human nature of Christ, and the image of God gloriously implanted thereon, that it might be the prototype and example of what the church was through Him to be made partaker of" (John Owen).

The Holy Spirit infused into our Saviour's humanity *every* spiritual grace in its fullness and perfection. Each child of God is lovely in His sight because of some spiritual excellence which has been imparted to him—in one it is faith, in another courage, in another meekness; but the humanity of Christ was "*altogether lovely*." This was foreshadowed of old in the meal offering (Lev. 2): not only was the fine flour "unleavened" (v. 5), but the fragrant "frankincense" was put thereon as a "sweet savour to the LORD" (v. 2). Christ was more holy in His human nature than was Adam when he was first created, and than are the unfallen and pure angels in Heaven, for it received the Spirit "without measure" (John 3:34), and because it was taken into personal union with the Son of the Living God. "His body and mind were the essence of purity. His heart was filled with the love of God, His thoughts were all regularly acted on what was before Him, His will was perfectly sanctified to perform the whole will of God. His affections were most correctly poised and properly fixed on God" (S.E. Pierce).

The third thing pertaining to the Mediatorial union was *the actual assumption* of that human nature which the Holy Spirit framed in the womb of the Virgin, and which He endowed with a fullness of grace and truth, whereby the eternal Son took the same upon Him, that it might have a proper and personal subsistence. A remarkable adumbration of this mystery seems to have been made in the natural world for the purpose of aiding our feeble understandings. This was set forth by one of the earlier Puritans thus: "As the plant

called mistletoe *has no root of its own*, but grows and lives in the stock or body of the oak or some other tree, so the human nature having no personal subsistence, is, as it were, ingrafted into the Person of the Son, and is wholly supported and sustained by it, so as it should not be at all, if it were not sustained in that manner” (W. Perkins, 1595).

We believe this act of assumption took place at the very first moment of conception in the Virgin’s womb: certainly it was months before the birth, as is clear from Luke 1:43, where Elizabeth, “filled with the Holy Ghost” (v. 41), exclaimed “And whence is this to me, that the mother of my *Lord* should come to me?” This assumption was purely a *voluntary* act on the part of the Son of God: He did not assume human nature from any necessity, but freely; not out of indigence, but bounty; not that *He* might be perfected thereby, but to perfect *it*. It was also a *permanent* act, so that from the first moment of His assumption of our humanity, there never was, nor to all eternity shall there be, any separation between His two natures. Therein the hypostatic union differs from the conjunction between the soul and body in us: at death this conjunction is severed in us; but when Christ died, His body and soul were still united to His Divine Person as much as ever.

As to *how* this act of assumption took place, we cannot say. The Scriptures themselves draw a veil over this mystery: “the power of the Highest shall *overshadow thee*” (Luke 1:35), so that from Mary and from us was hidden that ineffable work of the Most High, forbidding us to make any curious and unholy attempts to pry into it. The Divine transaction occurred, the amazing work was performed, and we are called upon to believe and adore. That unique act whereby the Maker of all things “took on Him the seed of Abraham” (Heb. 2:16), when the Sovereign over angels “took upon Him the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:7), was the foundation of the Divine relation between the Son of God and the man Christ Jesus. Concerning the blessedness, the marvel, the unfathomable depths, the transcendent wisdom and glory of the act of assumption, we cannot do better than quote again from that prince of theologians, John Owen:

“His conception in the womb of the Virgin, as unto the integrity of human nature, was a miraculous operation of the Divine power. But the prevention of that nature from any subsistence of its own, by its assumption into personal union with the Son of God, in the first instance of its conception, is that which is *above all miracles*, nor can be designed by that name. A *mystery* it is, so far above the order of all creating or providential operations, that it wholly transcends the sphere of them that are most miraculous. Herein did God glorify all the properties of the Divine nature, acting in a way of infinite wisdom, grace, and condescension. The depths of the mystery hereof are open only unto Him whose understanding is infinite, which no created understanding can comprehend.

“All other things were produced and effected by an outward emanation of power from God: He said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. But this assumption of our nature into hypostatical union with the Son of God, the constitution of one and the same individual person in two natures so infinitely distinct, as those of God and man, whereby the eternal was made in time, the infinite became finite, the immortal mortal, yet continuing eternal, infinite, immortal, is that singular expression of Divine wisdom, goodness, and power, wherein God will be admired and glorified unto all eternity. Herein was that change introduced into the whole first creation, whereby the blessed angels were exalted, Satan and his works ruined, mankind recovered from a dismal apostacy, all things made new, all things in heaven and earth reconciled and gathered into one Head, and a revenue of eternal glory raised unto God, incomparably above what the first

constitution of all things in the order of nature could yield unto Him.”

“And the Word was made flesh” (John 1:14): not by His Deity being converted into matter, nor simply by His appearing in the outward semblance of man; but by actually assuming that “holy thing” which was framed by the Spirit and conceived by the Virgin. The Word “flesh” in John 1:14 includes more than a physical body—compare Romans 3:20 and 1 Corinthians 1:29 for the scope of this term. The eternal Word took upon Him a complete and perfect human nature, with all the faculties and members pertaining to such. “Choosing from the womb of the Virgin a temple for His residence, He who was the Son of God became also the Son of man: not by confusion of substance, but by a unity of person. For we assert such a connection and union of the Divine with the humanity, that each nature *retains* its properties entire, and yet both together constitute one Christ” (John Calvin, “Institutes”).

This union of the Divine and human natures in the Mediator is not a *consubstantial* one such as pertains to the three Persons in the Godhead, for They are united among Themselves in one Essence: They all have but one and the same nature and will; but in Christ there are two distinct natures and wills. Nor is the Mediatorial union like unto the *physical*, whereby a soul and body are united in one human being, for that constitution is dissolved by death; whereas the hypostatic union is indissoluble. Nor is the Mediatorial union analogous unto the *mystical*, such as exists between Christ and His Church, for though that be indeed a most glorious union, so that we are in Christ and He in us, yet we are not *one person* with Him; and thus the mystical union falls far below that ineffable and incomprehensible oneness which exists between the Son of God and the Son of man.

Thomas Goodwin, of blessed memory among lovers of deep expository works, was wont to call this Mediatorial union “the *middle* union,” coming in as it does between the union of the three Divine Persons in the Godhead, and the Church’s union with God in Christ. We may also perceive and admire the wisdom of the eternal Three in selecting the middle One to be the Mediator; as we may also discern and adore the propriety of choosing the *Son* to be the one who should enter the place of *obedience*. He who eternally subsisted between the Father and the Spirit, has, by virtue of His incarnation, entered the place of “Daysman” between God and men; for in consequence of His union with the Divine Essence, He is able to “take hold” of God on the one side, and in consequence of His union with our humanity, He is able to take hold of us on the other side; so that He “takes hold of both” as Job desired (9:33).—A.W.P.

A Satanic Device.

One device that Satan hath to keep souls off from holy exercises and religious services is by moving them to make false inferences from those blessed and glorious things that Christ hath done. As, that Jesus Christ has done all for us, therefore there is nothing for us to do, but to joy and rejoice. He hath perfectly justified us, fulfilled the law, satisfied Divine justice, pacified His Father's wrath, is gone to Heaven to prepare a place for us, and in the meantime to intercede for us; and therefore away with praying, mourning, hearing, striving, etc. Ah! what a world of professors hath Satan drawn in these days from religious services by working them to make such sad, wild, and strange inferences from the sweet and excellent things that the Lord Jesus hath done for His beloved ones. Now the remedies against this device are these:

1. To dwell as much on those Scriptures that show you the duties *and services that Christ requires of you*, as upon those Scriptures that declare to you the precious and glorious things that Christ hath done for you. It is a sad and dangerous thing to have two eyes to behold our dignity and privileges, and not one to see our duties and services. I should look with one eye upon the choice and excellent things that Christ hath done for me, to raise up my heart to love Christ with the purest love, and to joy in Christ with the strongest joy, and to lift up Christ above all, who hath made Himself to be my all; and I should look with the other eye upon those services and duties that the Scriptures require of those for whom Christ hath done such blessed things, as upon that of the Apostle: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). And that, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). And that "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). And that "Rejoice evermore" and "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:16, 17). And that "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). And that "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:24, 25). Now a soul that would not be drawn away by this device of Satan, he must not look with a squint eye upon *these* blessed Scriptures, and abundance more of like import, but he must dwell upon them; he must make these Scriptures to be his chiefest and choicest companions, and this will be a happy means to keep him close to Christ and His service in these times, wherein many turn their backs upon Christ, under pretense of being interested in the great things that have been acted by Christ.

2. The second remedy against this device of Satan is to consider that the great and glorious things which Jesus Christ hath done and is a-doing for us, should be so far from taking us off from religious services and pious performances, that they should be the *greatest motives and encouragements* to the performance of them that may be, as the Scriptures do abundantly evidence. I will only instance in some, as, "That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75). Christ hath freed you from all your enemies: from the curse of the law, the predominant damnatory power of sin, the wrath of God, the sting of death, and the torments of hell; *but what is the end and*

design of Christ in doing these great and marvellous things for His people? It is not that we should throw off duties of righteousness and holiness, but that our hearts may be the more free and sweet in all holy duties and heavenly services. So says the Apostle, "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"; mark what follows: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 6:18 and 7:1). Again, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, *teaching us that*, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works*" (Titus 2:11-14). Ah, souls! I know no such arguments to work you to a lively and constant performance of all heavenly services, like those that are drawn from the consideration of the heart and glorious things that Christ hath done for you; and if such arguments will not take you and win upon you, I do not think the throwing of hell fire in your faces will ever do it.

3. The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that those precious souls which Jesus Christ hath done and suffered as much for as He hath for you, *were exceedingly active and lively in all religious services and heavenly performances*. He did and suffered as much for David as for you, and yet who more in praying and praising God than David? "Seven times a day will I praise the Lord." Who more in the studying and meditating on the Word than David? "Thy law is my meditation day and night." The same truth we run and read in Jacob, Moses, Job, Daniel, and the rest of the holy prophets and Apostles, for whom Christ hath done as much for as for you. Ah, how have all those worthies abounded in works of righteousness and holiness, to the praise of free grace! Certainly Satan hath got the upper hand of those souls that do argue thus: Christ hath done such and such glorious things for us, therefore we need not make any care and conscience of doing such and such religious services as men say the Word calls for. If this logic be not from hell, what is? Ah, were the holy prophets and Apostles alive to hear such logic from out of the mouths of such as profess themselves to be interested in the great and glorious things that Jesus Christ hath done for His chosen ones, how would they blush to look upon such souls! and how would their hearts grieve and break within them to hear the language and to observe the actings of such souls! He that talks of Heaven, but *doeth not the will of God*, is like him that gazed upon the moon, but fell into the pit.

4. The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider that those who do not walk in the ways of righteousness and holiness, who do not wait upon God in the several duties and services which are commanded by Him, *cannot have that evidence to their own souls of this righteousness before God*, of their fellowship and communion with God, of their blessedness here and their happiness hereafter, as those souls have who love and delight in the ways of the Lord, who are always best when they are most in the works and service of the Lord. "Little children," saith the Apostle, "let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (1 John 3:7). "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 John 3:10). "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of

Him” (1 John 2:29) and “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked” (1 John 2:4-6). “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:6, 7). So James: “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” *i.e.* it cannot. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:14, 26). To look after holy and heavenly works is the best way to preserve the soul from being deceived and deluded by Satan’s devices, and by sudden flashes of joy and comfort; holy works being a more conscious and constant pledge of the precious Spirit, begetting and maintaining in the soul more solid, pure, clear, strong, and lasting joy. Ah souls! as you would have in yourselves a constant and blessed evidence of your fellowship with the Father and Son, and of the truth of grace, and of your future happiness, look that you cleave close to holy services, and that you turn not your backs upon religious duties.

5. The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider that there are other choice and glorious ends for the saints’ performance of religious duties than for the justifying of their persons before God, or for the purchasing of the pardon of sin, namely, *to testify* their justification. A good tree cannot but bring forth good fruits (Matt. 6:17); to testify their love to God, and their sincere obedience to the commands of God; to testify their deliverance from spiritual bondage, to evidence the indwelling of the Spirit, to stop the mouths of the worst of men, and to gladden those righteous souls whom God would not have you sadden. These, and abundance of other choice ends there be, why those that have an interest in the glorious doings of Christ, should, notwithstanding that, keep close to the holy duties and religious services that are commanded by Christ. And if these considerations will not prevail with you to wait upon God in holy and heavenly duties, I am afraid if one should rise from the dead, his arguments would not win you; but you would hold on in your sins and neglect God’s service, though you lost your souls forever” (Thomas Brooks, 1652).

A Personal Word.

Our brief sojourn in Cheltenham is over. The Lord, we believe, has called us to pitch our tent next in Scotland. O that it may prove a case of “they went to *their own* company” (Acts 4:23). Will Christian friends kindly pray that God will make His people of the land of Knox a blessing to our needy souls, and that it may please Him to make us of some service to them. We hope to feel more at home in a land where the Sabbath is more strictly observed, and where the doctrines of the Reformers and Puritans are more widely held, than any country we have yet sojourned in. Letters which had been sent to Cheltenham or Leckhampton will be re-mailed to our new address: but please write us now at Glasgow.—A.W.P.

[Written by Brother Pink to his readers in 1935.]
