

The Spirit Teaching.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall *teach you* all things” (John 14:26). Those words received their first fulfillment in the men to whom they were immediately addressed; the Apostles were so filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit that their proclamation of the Gospel was without flaw, and their writings without error. Those original ambassadors of Christ were so taught by the third Person in the Trinity that what they delivered was the very mind of God. The second fulfillment of the Saviour’s promise has been in those men whom He called to preach His Gospel throughout the Christian era. No new revelations have been made to them, but they were, and are, according to their varied measure, and the particular work assigned to them, so enlightened by the Spirit that the truth of God has been faithfully preached by them. The third and widest application of our Lord’s words are unto the entire Household of Faith, and it is in this sense we shall now consider them.

It is written, “And *all* Thy children shall be taught of the LORD” (Isa. 54:13 and cf. John 6:45). This is one of the great distinguishing marks of the regenerate: all of them are “taught *of the LORD*.” There are multitudes of unregenerate religionists who are taught, numbers of them well taught, in the letter of the Scriptures. They are thoroughly versed in the historical facts and doctrines of Christianity; but their instruction came only from human media—parents, Sunday School teachers, or through reading religious books. Their intellectual knowledge of spiritual things is considerable, sound, and clear; yet is it unaccompanied by any heavenly unction, saving power, or transforming effects. In like manner, there are thousands of preachers who abhor the errors of “Modernists” and who contend earnestly for the Faith. They were taught in Bible Institutes, and theological schools, yet it is to be feared that many of them are total strangers to a *miracle of grace* being wrought in the heart. How it behooves each *of us* to test ourselves rigidly at this point!

It is a common fact of observation—which anyone may test for himself—that a very large percentage of those who constitute the membership of evangelical denominations were first taken there in childhood by their parents. The great majority in the Presbyterian churches today had a father or mother who was a Presbyterian and who instructed the offspring in their beliefs. The same is true of Baptists, the Methodists, and those who are in fellowship at the Brethren assemblies. The present generation has been brought up to believe in the doctrines and religious customs of their ancestors. Now we are far from saying that because a man who is a Presbyterian today had parents and grandparents that were Presbyterians and who taught him the Westminster Catechism, that therefore all the knowledge he possesses of Divine things is but traditional and theoretical. No indeed; yet we do say that such a training in the letter of the Truth makes it more difficult, and calls for a more careful self-examination, to ascertain whether or no he has been taught *of the Lord*.

Though we do not believe that Grace runs in the blood, yet we are convinced that, *as a general rule*, (having many individual exceptions), God does place His elect in families where at least one of the parents loves and seeks to serve Him, and where that elect soul will be nurtured in the fear and admonition of the Lord. At least three-fourths of those

Christians whom the writer has met and had opportunity to question, had a praying and Scripture-reading father or mother. Yet, on the other hand, we are obliged to acknowledge that three-fourths of the empty professors we have encountered also had religious parents, who sent them to the Sunday School and sought to have them trained in their beliefs: and these now rest upon their intellectual knowledge of the Truth, and mistake it for *a saving experience* of the same. And it is *this* class which it is the hardest to reach: it is much more difficult to persuade such to *examine themselves* as to whether or not they have been taught *of God*, than it is those who make no profession at all.

Let it not be concluded from what has been pointed out that, where the Holy Spirit teaches a soul, He dispenses with all human instrumentality. Not so. It is true the Spirit is sovereign, and therefore works where He pleases and when He pleases. It is also a fact that He is Almighty, tied down to no means, and therefore works as He pleases and how He pleases. Nevertheless, He frequently condescends to employ means, and to use very feeble instruments. In fact, this seems to generally characterize His operations: that He works through men and women, and sometimes through little children. Yet, let it be said emphatically, that no preaching, catechising or reading produces any vital and spiritual results unless God the Spirit is pleased to bless and apply the same unto the heart of the individual. Thus there are many who have passed from death unto life and been brought to love the Truth under the Spirit's application of a pious parent's or Sunday School teacher's instruction; while there are some who never enjoyed such privileges yet have been truly and deeply taught by God.

From all that has been said above a very pertinent question arises, How may I know whether or not *my* teaching has been by the Holy Spirit? The simple but sufficient answer is, *By the effects produced*. First, that spiritual knowledge which the teaching of the Holy Spirit imparts is an *operative* knowledge. It is not merely a piece of information which adds to our mental store, but is a species of inspiration which stirs the soul into action. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined *in our hearts*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). The light which the Spirit imparts reaches the heart. It warms the heart, and sets it on fire for God. It masters the heart, and brings it into allegiance to God. It molds the heart, and stamps upon it the image of God. Here, then, is a sure test: how far does the teaching you have received, the knowledge of Divine things you possess, *affect your heart*?

Second, that knowledge which the teaching of the Spirit imparts is *a soul-humbling* knowledge. "Knowledge puffeth up" (1 Cor. 8:1), that is a notional, theoretical, intellectual knowledge, which is merely received from men or books in a natural way. But that spiritual knowledge which comes from God reveals to a man his empty conceits, his ignorance and worthlessness, and abases him. The teaching of the Spirit reveals our sinfulness and vileness, our lack of conformity to Christ, our unholiness; and makes a man little in his own eyes. Among those born of women was not a greater than John the Baptist: wondrous were the privileges granted him, abundant the light he was favoured with. What effect had it on him? "He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet *I am not worthy* to unloose" (John 1:27). Who was granted such an insight into heavenly things as Paul! Did he herald himself as "The greatest Bible teacher of the age"? No; "unto me, who am less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8). Here, then, is a sure test: how far does the teaching you have received *humble* you?

Third, that knowledge which the teaching of the Holy Spirit imparts is a *world-despising* knowledge. It makes a man have poor, low, mean thoughts of those things which his unregenerate fellows (and which he himself, formerly) so highly esteem. It opens his eyes to see the transitoriness and comparative worthlessness of earthly honours, riches and fame. It makes him perceive that all under the sun is but vanity and vexation of spirit. It brings him to realise that the world is a flatterer, a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer, which has fatally deceived the hearts of millions. Where the Spirit reveals eternal things, temporal things are scorned. Those things which once were gain to him, he now counts as loss; yea, as dross and dung (Phil. 3:4-9). The teaching of the Spirit raises the heart high above this poor perishing world. Here is a sure test: does *your* knowledge of spiritual things cause you to hold temporal things with a light hand, and despise those baubles which others hunt so eagerly?

Fourth, the knowledge which the teaching of the Spirit imparts is a *transforming* knowledge. The light of God shows how far, far short we come of the standard Holy Writ reveals, and stirs us unto holy endeavours to lay aside every hindering weight, and run with patience the race set before us. The teaching of the Spirit causes us to “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,” and to “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:12). “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, *are changed into the same image* from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). Here, then, is a sure test: how far does my knowledge of spiritual things influence my heart, govern my will, and regulate my life? Does increasing light lead to a more tender conscience, more Christlike character and conduct? If not, it is vain, worthless, and will only add to my condemnation.—A.W.P.

The Epistle to the Hebrews.

91. Divine Chastisement: 12:10.

Would any Christian in his right mind dare to pray, Let me not be afflicted, no matter what good it should do me? And if he would be unwilling and afraid to pray thus, why should he murmur when it so falls out? Alas, what a wide breach there is, usually, between our praying and the rest of our conduct. Again; if our rescuer dislocated our shoulder when pulling us out of the water in which we were drowning, would we be angry with him? Of course not. Then why fret against the Lord when He afflicts the body in order to better the soul? If God takes away outward comforts and fills us with inward peace, if He removes our worldly wealth but imparts to us more of the true riches, then, instead of having ground for complaint, we have an abundant cause for thanksgiving and praise. Then why should I fear to enter the dark shaft of tribulation if persuaded that it leads to the gold mines of spiritual experience?

In Scripture, afflictions are compared to fire that purges away the dross (1 Peter 1:7), to the fan which drives away the chaff (Matt. 3:12), to a pruning-hook which cuts off superfluous branches and makes more fruitful the others that remain (John 15:2), to physic that purges away poisonous matter (Isa. 27:9), to plowing and harrowing the ground that it may be prepared to receive good seed (Jer. 4:3). Then why should we be so upset when God is pleased to use the fire upon us in order to remove our dross, to employ the fan so as to winnow away the chaff, to take the pruning-hook to lop off the superfluities of our souls, to give us physic to purge out our corruptions and filth, to drive the plow into us so as to break up our fallow ground and to destroy the weeds which grow in our souls? Should we not rather rejoice that He will not leave us alone in our carnality, but rather fit us to become partakers of His holiness?

A little child requires much coaxing (at times, something more!) in order to make him take his medicine. It may be very ill, and mother may earnestly assure him that the unpleasant potion will bring sure relief; but the little one cries out, "I cannot take it, it is so nasty." But adults, generally, need not for the doctor to argue and plead with them: they will swallow the bitterest remedy if convinced that it will do them good. The application of this to spiritual matters is obvious. Those Christians who are but spiritual babes, fret and fume when called upon to endure Divine chastisement, knowing not the gains they will receive if it be accepted in the right spirit. But those who have grown in grace, and become *men* in Christ, who know that all things work together for good to them that love God, and who have learned by experience the precious fruits which issue from sanctified afflictions, accept from God the bitterest cup, and thank Him for it.

But alas, many of God's people are but infants experimentally, and need much coaxing to reconcile them to the cup of trial. Therefore is it needful to present our consideration one argument after another. Such is the case here in Hebrews 12: if one line of reasoning does not suffice, perhaps another will. The Christian is very sceptical and takes much convincing. We have heard a person say to one who claims he has done, or can do, some remarkable thing, "You must *show me* before I will believe you." Most of us are very much like that in connection with spiritual things. Though the Scriptures assure us, again and again, that chastisement proceeds from our Father's love, and is designed for our good, yet we are slow, very slow, to really believe it. Therefore does the Apostle here proceed from one consideration to another so as to assure the hearts and establish the faith of his afflicted brethren upon this important subject.

O that our hearts might be so taught by the Spirit, our understandings so enlightened, our faith so strengthened by Him, that we would be more grateful and increasingly thankful for the merciful discipline of our Father. What a proof of His love is this, that in His chastening of us, His object is to bring us nearer Himself and make us more like His blessed Son. The more highly we prize health, the more willing are we to take that which would cure our sickness; and the more we value holiness (which is the health of our souls) the gladder shall we be for that which is a means to increase the same in us. We are on a low plane of spiritual experience, if we do nothing more than simply “bow” to God’s hand. Scripture says, “Giving *thanks* always for *all* things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20); and again it exhorts us “Rejoice in the Lord *always*” (Eph. 4:4). We are to “glory in tribulations” (Rom. 5:3), and *we shall* when we perceive more clearly and fully what blessed fruits are brought forth under the pruning knife.

“For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness” (Heb. 12:10). This is a continuation of what was before us in the previous verse: a further reason is given why Christians should be “in subjection unto” their heavenly Father, when His correcting rod is laid upon them, not only is it becoming for them so to do, because of the relationship which exists between them: but it is also meet they should act thus, because of the gains they receive thereby. The consideration which the Apostle now presents to the attention of the afflicted saints is really a double one. First, the chastisement we received from our earthly parents had reference mainly to our good in this life, whereas the disciplinary dealings of our heavenly Father look forward to the life to come (2 Cor. 4:17, 18). Second, the chastisement of our earthly parents was often a matter of their caprice and sometimes issued from irritability of temper, but the rod of our heavenly Father is wielded by infinite goodness and wisdom, and has in view our well being.

We regard the words “for they verily *for a few days* chastened us” as referring not so much to the brief season of our childhood, but more to the fact that our parents had only our *temporal* interests in view: whereas God has our *eternal* welfare before Him. “The Apostle seems to bring in this circumstance to contrast the dealings of earthly parents with those of God. One of the circumstances is that the corrections of earthly parents had a much less important object than those of God. They related to this life—a life so brief that it may be said to continue but a “few days.” Yet, in order to secure the benefit to be derived for so short a period from fatherly correction, we submitted without murmuring. Much more cheerfully ought we to submit to that discipline from the hand of our heavenly Father which is designed to extend its benefits through eternity” (A. Barnes).

The added words “after their own pleasure” or “as seemed good” to them, points another contrast between the disciplinary dealings of our earthly parents and those of our heavenly Father. In their infirmity, sometimes the rod was used upon us in a fit of anger, rather than from a loving desire to reform our manners. “Meaning that it was sometimes done arbitrarily, or under the influence of passion. This is an additional reason why we should submit to God. We submitted to our earthly parents, though their correction was sometimes passionate, and was designed to gratify their own pleasure rather than to promote our good. There is much of this kind of punishment in families: but there is none of it under the administration of God. ‘*But He for our profit*’: never from passion, from caprice, from the love of power or superiority, but always for our good” (A. Burns).

Now the particular contribution which our present verse makes to the subject of chastisement is, the Apostle here makes known the general end or design of God in the same, namely “our profit.” And let it be pointed out that whatsoever He purposes must surely come to pass, for He will make the means He employs effectual unto the accomplishment of His end. Many are the blessings comprehended and various are the fruits produced through and by means of Divine chastisement. This word “for our profit” is a very embracing one, including the development of our characters, the enrichment of our spiritual lives, a closer conformity to the image of Christ. The same truth is found again in the “that we might be partakers of His holiness”: that our lusts might be mortified, our graces vivified, our souls sanctified. Whatever be the form, degree, or duration of our afflictions, all is ordered by infinite wisdom so as to secure this object. But to particularize: the benefits of Divine chastisement—

1. *It weans us from the world.* One of the greatest surprises of the writer’s Christian life in connection with his fellow saints has been, not their ignorance, nor even their inconsistencies, but their *earthliness*, their reluctance to leave this world. As “strangers and pilgrims” we should be longing and yearning for our Heavenly Home; as those who are away from Him whom they love best, we should desire to “depart and be with Him” (Phil. 1:23). Paul did. Christ has promised to return for His people, yet how few of them are daily crying, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” How rarely we hear them saying, in the language of the mother of Sisera, “Why is His chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of His chariot?”

“And all the trials here we see
Should make us long to be with Thee.”

Scripture speaks of this world as a “dry and thirsty land, where no water is” (Psa. 63:1), and God intends for us to *prove* this in our experiences. His Word also affirms that this world is a “dark place” (2 Peter 1:19), and He means for us to discover that this *is* so.

One would think that after the soul had once seen the King in His beauty, it would henceforth discover no attractions elsewhere. One would suppose that once we had quenched our thirst at the Fountain of living waters, we would no more want to drink from the unsatisfying and polluted cisterns of this world. Surely now that we have experienced a taste and foretaste of Heaven itself, we shall be repelled and nauseated by the poor husks this world has to offer. But alas! the “old man” is still in us, unchanged; and though Divine grace subdues his activities, still he is very much alive. It is because of this that we are called on to “crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.” And this is not only an unpalatable, but a very hard task. Therefore does God in His mercy help us: help us by chastenings, which serve to loosen the roots of our souls downward and tighten the anchor-hold of our hearts Heavenward.

This God does in various ways. Sometimes He causes us to lose our confidence in and draw us away from fellowship with worldings by receiving cruel treatment at their hands. “Come out from among them, and be ye separate” is the Lord’s word to His people. But they are slow to heed; oftentimes they must be *driven out*. So with worldly pleasures: God often makes the grapes of earthly joys bitter to our taste, so that we should no longer seek after them. It is earthly disappointments and worldly disillusionments which make us sigh for our Heavenly Home. While the Hebrews enjoyed the land of Goshen they were content: hard and cruel bondage was needed to make them ready to leave for the promised land. We were once familiar with a Christian who had formed a

habit of meeting each worldly difficulty or trial to the flesh by saying, "This is only another nail in my coffin." But that is a very gloomy way of viewing things: rather should the children of God say after each trial or affliction, "That severs another strand in the rope which binds me to this world, and makes me long all the more for Heaven."

2. *It casts us back the more upon God.* By nature we are filled with a spirit of independency. The fallen sons of Adam are like wild ass' colts. Chastisement is designed to empty us of our self-sufficiency, to make us feel our weakness and helplessness. "In their affliction they will seek Me early" (Hosea 5:15), then surely afflictions are for our "profit." Trials and troubles often drive us to our knees: sickness and sorrow make us seek unto the Lord. It is very noticeable in the four Gospels how rarely men and women that were in health and strength sought out Christ; it was trouble and illness which brought them to the great Physician. A nobleman came to Christ—why? Because his son was at the point of death. Jarius sought out the Master—why? Because his little daughter was so low. The Canaanitish woman interviewed the Lord Jesus—why? On behalf of her tormented daughter. The sisters of Lazarus sent a message to the absent Saviour—why? Because their brother was sick.

Afflictions may be very bitter, but they are a fine tonic for the soul, and are a medicine which God often uses on us. Most vividly is this illustrated in Psalm 107—read carefully verses 11 to 28. Note that it is when men are "brought down," when they are "afflicted," when they are "at their wits' end" that they "*cry* unto the Lord in their trouble." Yes, it is "trouble" which makes us turn unto the Lord, not in a mechanical and formal way, but in deep earnestness. Remember that it is the "effectual *fervent* prayer of a righteous man that availeth much." When you observe that the fire in your room is getting dull, you do not always put on more coal, but simply *stir* with the poker; so God often uses the black poker of adversity in order that the flames of devotion may burn more brightly.

Ah, my brethren, all of us delight in being made to lie down in the "green pastures" and being led beside the "still waters"; yet it would not be for God's glory nor for our own highest good to luxuriate spiritually at all times. And why not? Because our hearts would soon be more occupied with the blessings rather than the Blessor Himself. Oftentimes the sheep have to be brought into the dry and desolate wilderness, that they may be made more conscious of their dependency upon the Shepherd. May we not discern here one reason why some saints so quickly lose their assurance: they are occupied more with their graces or comfortable feelings than they are with the Giver of them. God is a jealous God, and will not tolerate idols in the hearts of His people. A sense of our acceptance in Christ is indeed a blessed thing, yet it becomes a hindrance if it be treasured more highly than the Saviour Himself.

3. *It makes the promises of God more precious to us.* Trouble often acts on us like a sharp knife which opens the truth of God to us and our hearts unto the truth. Experience unlocks passages which were otherwise closed. There is many a text in the Bible which no commentator can helpfully expound to a child of God: it must be interpreted by experience. Paul wrote his profoundest Epistles while in prison; John was "in tribulation" on Patmos when he received the Revelation. If you go down into a deep well or mine in the daytime, you will then see the shining of stars which were not visible from the earth's surface; so God often brings us low in order that we may perceive the shining beauty of some of His comforting assurances. Note how Jacob, in Genesis 32, pleaded God's prom-

ises when he heard that Esau was approaching with four hundred men! The promises of resurrection mean far more unto Christians when some of their loved ones have been removed by death.

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Isa. 43:2) means far more to afflicted souls than it can to those who are not under the rod. So, too, the many “fear not” promises are most valued when our strength fails us and we are ready to sink under despair. As the late C.H. Spurgeon was wont to say, “There are some verses written, as it were, in a secret ink, which must be held before the fire of adversity before they become visible.” There are many passages in Job, the Psalms, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah which do not appeal to one while the sun is shining; but which, in times of adversity, are like the welcome beams of the moon on a dark night. It was his painful thorn in the flesh which taught Paul the blessedness of that text, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

4. *It qualifies us to sympathise with others.* If we have never trod the vale of sorrow and affliction we are really unable to “weep with those that weep.” There are some surgeons who would be more tender if they had suffered from broken bones themselves. If we have never known much trouble, we can be but poor comforters to others. Even of our Saviour it is written, “For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb. 2:18). Bunyan could never have written the book which he did, unless God had permitted the Devil to tempt and buffet him severely for so many years. How clearly is all this brought out in 2 Corinthians 1:4: “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, *that we* may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, *by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*” Luther frequently said, “Three things make a good preacher: prayer, meditation, and *temptation.*”

5. *It demonstrates to us the blessedness and sufficiency of Divine grace.* “My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9). But in order to *prove* this, we have to be brought into the place of severe testing and trial, and made to feel our own incompetency and nothingness. Brethren, if you have prospered in business all your lives, and have always had an easy time financially, then it is probable you know very little about God’s strength being perfected in your weakness. If you have been healthy all your lives and have never suffered much weakness and pain, then you are not likely to know much about the strength of God. If you have never been visited with trying situations which bring you to your wits’ end, or by heart-rending bereavements, you may not have discovered much of the sufficiency of Divine grace. You have *read* about it in books, *or heard* others speak of it, but this is a very different thing from having an *experimental* acquaintance of it for yourself. It is much tribulation which brings out the sufficiency of God’s strength to support under the severest trials, and demonstrates that His grace *can* sustain the heart under the heaviest losses.

It is in the stormiest weather that a captain gives most heed to the steering of his ship; so it is in seasons of stress and grief that Christians pay most attention to, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16). If Israel had journeyed direct from Egypt to Canaan, they had missed the tender care of Jehovah in the wilderness. If Lazarus had not died, Martha and Mary would not have received such a demonstration of Christ as the Resur-

rection and the Life. And if *you*, my brother, my sister, had not been cast into the furnace of affliction, you would not have known the nearness and preciousness of His presence with you there. Yes, God intends us to *prove* the reality and sufficiency of His grace.

6. *It develops our spiritual graces.* This is clearly set forth in that familiar passage Romans 5:3-5: "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed." This "rejoicing" is not in tribulations considered in themselves, but because the Christian knows they are appointed by his Father, and because of their beneficial effects. Three of these effects or spiritual graces thus developed are here mentioned. First, tribulation worketh "patience." Patience never thrives except under buffetings and disappointments: it is not even called into exercise while things are going smoothly and pleasantly. Sanctified tribulations call into activity that strength and fortitude which is evidenced by a submissive endurance of suffering. The patience here referred to signifies deliverance from murmuring, refusing to take things into our own hands (which only causes additional trouble), a contented waiting for God's time of deliverance, and a persevering continuance in the path of duty.

Second, patience worketh experience, that is a *vital* experience of the reality of what we profess; a personal acquaintance with that which before we knew only theoretically. An experience of the sufficiency of Divine grace to support and sustain. An experience of God's faithfulness, that He *is* "a very present help in trouble." An experience of the preciousness of Christ, such as the three Hebrews had in the furnace. The Greek word for "experience" also means "the obtaining of proof." The patient submission which tribulation works in the saint *proves* both to him and to his brethren the reality of his trust in God: it makes manifest the fact that the faith which he possesses is genuine. Instead of his faith being overcome, it triumphs. The test of a ship is to weather the storm; so it is with faith. Real faith ever says, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Third, experience worketh hope. This is a grace which anticipates the future. While circumstances are as we like them, our outlook is mainly confined to the present: but sorrows and trials make us long for the future bliss. "*As an eagle stirreth up her nest*" . . . *so the Lord led Israel* (Deut. 32:11). God removes us from our comfortable restingplaces for the purpose of teaching us to use the wings of hope.

7. *It brings us into fellowship with the sufferings of Christ.* The Cross is the symbol of Christian discipleship. Like the scars which the wounded soldier prizes above all other distinctions, so our sufferings are the proof of our oneness with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Not only so, they make us appreciate the more what He endured for us. While we have plenty, we cannot properly estimate or appreciate the poverty which our Saviour endured. While we enjoy a comfortable bed we cannot truly sympathize with Him who "had not where to lay His head." It is not till some familiar friend, on whom we counted, has basely betrayed our trust, that we can enter into something of what the Saviour suffered through the perfidy of Judas. It is only when some brother has denied you, that you begin to understand what Christ felt, when Peter denied Him. As we, in some small measure, obtain an experimental acquaintance with such trials, it makes Christ increasingly precious to us, and enables us to appreciate the more all that He went through on our behalf. In a coming day we are going to share His throne; now we are privileged to taste His cross.

If, then, trials and tribulations, under God, produce such delightful fruits, then *welcome* chastisements that are for "our profit." Let the rains of disappointment come if they

water the plants of spiritual graces. Let the winds of adversity blow if they serve to root more securely in grace the trees of the Lord's planting. Let the sun of prosperity be eclipsed if this brings us into closer communion with the Light of Life. Oh, brothers and sisters, however distasteful they are to the flesh, chastisements are not to be dreaded, but welcomed, for they are designed to make us "partakers of God's holiness."—A.W.P.

The Life of David.

43. His deep Humility.

In last month's article we looked upon David while he was permitted to enjoy a brief season of repose, following the trying experiences through which he had passed ere he came to the throne. He might well have found in the many trials and vicissitudes of his past life an excuse for luxurious repose now. But devout souls will consecrate their leisure as well as their toil to God, and will serve with thank offerings in peace Him whom they invoked with earnest supplication in battle. As another has said, "Prosperity is harmless only when it is accepted as an opportunity for fresh forms of devotion, and not as an occasion for idle self-indulgence." Thus it was with our hero. He was not spoilt by success; his head was not made giddy by the height he now occupied; the Lord was not forgotten when prosperity smiled upon him. Instead, he was deeply concerned about the honour of God, especially at there being no suitable place for His public worship.

As David sat alone in his palace, meditating, there can be little doubt that one so conversant with the Scriptures as he was, would turn in thought to the ancient promise, "When He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there" (Deut. 12:10, 11). It was *that* word, we believe, which caused our hero to say unto Nathan, "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains" (2 Sam. 7:2). Israel's king felt more or less rebuked by his own ease and comfort, and regarded his tranquillity not as a season for selfish indolence, but rather as a call to serious reflection upon the interests of God's cause or kingdom. He could not bear the thought of lavishing more upon self than upon the service of Him to whom he owed everything.

The response made by the Lord unto the spiritual exercises of His servant was indeed blessed. Through the Prophet He gave David a much fuller revelation of what was in *His* heart toward him: "I will set up thy seed after thee . . . I will establish his kingdom . . . I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever . . . thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. 7:12, 13, 16). God made known His purpose to confer upon the posterity of David a special favour, which He had not granted even to Abraham, Moses, or Joshua, namely, establish them upon the throne of Israel. Moreover, it was declared of his seed who should be set up after him, "He shall build an house for My name" (v. 13). If we are spared, this will be considered in more detail under "The Divine Covenants" (when we reach the "Davidic"): suffice it now to say, the ultimate reference was a *spiritual* one in the Person and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

While there was much in the revelation now granted to David which was well calculated to evoke gratitude and praise, yet there was one omission from it that presented a real test of his submission, humility, and patience. While there was abundant cause for thanksgiving, that *his* posterity should continue to occupy the throne, and his own son build an house for Jehovah's name (and fame), yet that *he* was denied this honour, had been resented by one who was proud and filled with a sense of his own importance. David's longings were not to be realized during his own lifetime, and though he should be permitted to gather together much of the material for the future temple, yet *he* would not be permitted to see the finished product itself. Here, then, was a real trying of his character, and it is blessed to see how he endured and met the same.

How often it falls out that one sows and another reaps: one set of men labour, and an-

other generation is permitted to enter into the benefits of their toil. Nor should we complain at this, seeing that our sovereign and all-wise God has so ordered it. David did not complain, nor did he manifest any petulant disappointment at the crowning of his hopes being deferred to a future time. Instead, as we shall see, he sweetly bowed to God's pleasure and adored Him for the same. Ah, my readers, our prayers may yet move God to send a gracious Revival, yet that happy event may not come during *our* lifetime. The faithful labourers of God's servants today may not immediately transform the present "wilderness" state of Zion into a fruitful garden, yet if they be the means of plowing and harrowing the ground as a necessary preliminary thereto, ought we not to gladly acquiesce?

In the passage which is now to be before us, we behold the effects which God's wondrous revelation through Nathan had upon the soul of David. "Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" (2 Sam. 7:18). Inexpressibly blessed is this. Such tidings as had just fallen on his ears would have puffed up many a man, filled him with a sense of his own importance, and caused him to act arrogantly toward his fellows. Far otherwise was it with "the man after God's own heart." Filled with joyful amazement at Jehovah's infinite condescension, David at once left the royal palace and betook himself to the humble tent which housed that sacred Ark, there to pour out his heart in adoration and praise. There is nothing like a feeling sense of God's sovereign, free, and rich *grace*, to melt the soul, humble the heart, and stir unto true and acceptable worship.

"Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD" (2 Sam. 7:18). This is in designed contrast from verse 1: there the king "sat in his house": here he is seen in the tabernacle, before Jehovah. The word "*sat* before the LORD," probably refers to his *continuance* in the tabernacle, rather than to the posture in which he prayed. "And he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" (v. 18). How few kings there are who have such a realization of their lowliness as this! All sense of personal greatness vanished when David came into the presence of the great Jehovah. Ah, my reader, when *the Lord* is truly before us, "I" sinks into utter insignificance! But it is only as we are absorbed with His perfections—His infinitude, His majesty, His omnipotency—that self will be lost sight of.

"Who am I, O LORD God? and what is my house?" How these words bring before us the deep humility of David! Truthfully could he say, "LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty" (Psa. 131:1). A number of illustrations of this lovely grace may be cited from the record of David's life. His being content to follow his mean vocation as a shepherd, till God called him to a higher office. He never affected the royal diadem, neither would it have been any grief of heart to him had God passed him by, and made another king. His words to Abishai concerning Saul, "Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?" (1 Sam. 26:9) show plainly that he was not coveting the crown, and was quite content for the son of Kish to continue occupying the throne of Israel.

It is beautiful to see how often this spirit of lowliness and self-abnegation appears in "the man after God's own heart." When he went forth to engage Goliath, it was not in the confidence of his own skill, but with the holy assurance "This day will *the LORD* deliver thee into mine hand" (1 Sam. 17:46). When Saul lay helpless before him, he took no credit unto himself, but said to the king, "*the LORD* had delivered thee to day into mine

hand” (1 Sam. 24:10). When Abigail was used to quieten his passionate spirit, he exclaimed, “Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me” (1 Sam. 25:32); and when Nabal was dead, “Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach . . . and hath kept his servant from evil” (v. 39). After his notable victory over the Amalekites he said, “Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which *the LORD* hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand” (1 Sam. 30:23). Humility is that grace which gives the Lord His proper place.

Distrusting his own wisdom, we find David “enquiring of the LORD” again and again (1 Sam. 23:2, 4; 30:8; 2 Sam. 2:1; 5:19, etc.). This is another sure mark of genuine humility: that spirit which is afraid to trust in our own knowledge, experience, and powers, and seeks counsel and direction from above. When for his prowess Saul called him to court and promised to give him Michal to wife, he answered “Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king’s son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?” (1 Sam. 18:23). Note the love he bore to those who admonished him for his sins: “Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head” (Psa. 141:5): far meaner people do not take it so kindly! In all his heroic acts he sought not his own honour, but God’s: “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory” (Psa. 115:1).

Mark his submission to God under chastisement: “And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me again, and show me both it, and His habitation: But if He thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him *do to me as seemeth good unto Him*” (2 Sam. 15:25, 26). In all his dealings with God, he dared not trust in his own righteousness, but wholly took refuge in the Covenant of Grace: “If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” (Psa. 130:3). “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified” (Psa. 143:2). When a man can find all this in himself, he may honestly say, “LORD, *my* heart is not haughty” (Psa. 131:1). Yet, David was not perfect, and the remains of pride still indwelt him, as they do each of us—till we get rid of the flesh, we shall never be completely rid of pride. Psalm 30:2 and 2 Samuel 24:2 show his vainglory creeping out.

We have dealt the more largely upon David’s *humility*, because in this day of Laodicean conceit and boasting, it needs to be emphasised that, as a general rule, those whom God has used most mightily have not been men who were distinguished for abnormal powers or gifts, but instead *by deep humility*. See this admirable trait in Abraham: “I am but dust and ashes” (Gen. 18:27); in Moses, “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (Exo. 3:11); in Christ’s forerunner, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30); in Paul, “I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” (1 Cor. 15:9). O that Divine grace may make us “little in our own eyes.”

But again we would notice it was while David was “before the Lord” that he said, “Who am I?” So too it was while he was in the immediate presence of the Lord that Abraham confessed himself to be “but dust and ashes.” In like manner, it was when the great I Am revealed Himself at the burning bush that Moses asked, “who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?” It was when Job could say, “now mine eye seeth Thee”—in all Thine awful sovereignty (see context)—that he cried, “Wherefore I abhor myself” (42:6).

It was when Isaiah saw Jehovah “sitting upon a throne high and lifted up,” that he be-moaned “woe is me! for I am undone” (Isa. 6:5). It was when he stood face to face with the Lord Jesus in the theophanic manifestation that Daniel owned “my comeliness was turned in me into corruption” (10:8). And my brethren if *we* were more in the Lord’s presence and had closer dealings with Him, pride would be more largely subdued in us.

“And what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?” (2 Sam. 7:18). David continued in the same lowly strain. His “house” pertained to the royal tribe; he was the immediate descendant of the prince of Judah, so that he was connected with the most honourable family in Israel; yet such fleshly distinctions were held very lightly by him. The “Thou hast brought me hitherto”—to the throne, to rest from all his enemies—gave to God the rightful glory. “It intimates that he could not have reached this himself by his own management, if God had not brought him to it. All our attainments must be looked upon as God’s vouchsafements” (Matthew Henry).

“And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord GOD; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant’s house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?” (v. 19). Having owned the goodness of the Lord upon him “hitherto,” David now turns to comment upon the glorious things which God had promised for the future. The latter so immeasurably outweighed the former, that he sums up his own establishment over the kingdom as “this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord GOD.” We believe this throws light upon the word “sat” in the previous verse, which has presented a difficulty unto the commentators—who point out that this is the only place in Scripture where a saint is represented as being seated while engaged in prayer. But are we not rather to regard the term as denoting that David was in an attitude of most carefully surveying the wonderful riches of Divine grace toward him, instead of defining his posture while engaged in his devotions?

The whole of 2 Samuel 7 is to be viewed as the blessed and instructive sequel to what is presented to us in the opening verse. God had tenderly given His servant a season of rest that he might receive a fuller revelation of what was in *His* heart toward David. And now he is in the sacred tabernacle, pondering over what he had heard through Nathan. As he meditated, Divine light and understanding broke in upon him, so that he was enabled, in measure at least, to penetrate the mysterious depths of that wonderful prophecy. The golden future was now opened to him, shining with more than earthly glory and bliss. “He beheld in spirit another Son than Solomon, another Temple than that built of stones and cedar, another Kingdom than the earthly one of whose throne he sat. He beholds a sceptre and a crown, of which his own on Mount Zion were only feeble types—dim and shadowy images” (Krummacher’s “David and the Godman”).

Beautifully does this come out in his next words: “And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? And what can David say more unto Thee? for Thou, Lord GOD, knowest Thy servant. For Thy word’s sake, and according to Thine own heart, hast Thou done all these great things, to make Thy servant know them” (vv. 19-21)—in the light of which knowledge, he no doubt penned the 40th, 45th, and 110th Psalms. The last clause of verse 19 should be translated, more literally, “This is the law of *the* Man, the Lord GOD,” namely, “The Man” of Psalm 8:5, 6 and of Psalm 80:17! David was now given to realise that the blessed promises which had been given to him through the Prophet would be made good in the Person of the Messiah, who should yet issue from his own loins, who would be “The Man,” yet none other than “the Lord God” incarnate. Yes, God reveals

His secrets to the lowly, but hides them from those who are wise and prudent in their own esteem.—A.W.P.

The Divine Covenants.

3. The Noahic (continued).

In last month's article, we intimated that the blessings contained in the benediction which the Lord pronounced upon Noah and his sons were infinitely more precious than the mere letter conveys. In order to a right understanding of the various covenants which God made with different men, it is highly essential that we carefully distinguish between the literal and the figurative, or the outward form and its inner meaning. Only thus shall we be able to separate between what was merely local and evanescent, and that which was more comprehensive and enduring. There was connected with each covenant that which was literal or material, and also that which was mystical or spiritual, and unless this be duly noted, confusion is bound to ensue. Yea, it is at *this* very point that many have erred—particularly so with the Abrahamic and Siniatic Covenants.

Literalists and futurists have been so occupied with the shell or letter that they have quite missed the spirit or kernel. Allegorizers have been so much engaged with the figurative allusions, they have often failed to discern the historical fulfillment. Still others have so arbitrarily juggled with the two that they have carried out and applied neither consistently. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we use the best possible care in seeking to distinguish between the carnal and the spiritual, the transient and the eternal, what pertains to the earthly and what adumbrated the heavenly in the several covenants. The reader should already have been prepared, in some measure at least, to follow us in what we are now saying, by that which was brought out in our examination of the Adamic Covenant.

When studying the Adamic Covenant we discovered the need for throwing upon the Genesis record the light of the later Scriptures, finding in the Prophets and the Epistles that which helped to open the meaning of the historical narrative. We saw the necessity of regarding Adam as something more than a private individual, namely, as a public head or federal representative. We learned that the language of Genesis 2:17 conveyed not only a solemn threat, but, by necessary implication, also contained a blessed promise. We also perceived that the "death" there threatened was something far more dreadful than physical dissolution. We ascertained from other passages that while the "tree of life" in the centre of the Garden was a real and tangible one, yet it also possessed an emblematic significance, being the *seal* of the covenant. Let us seek to keep in mind these principles as we proceed to our consideration of the other covenants.

Each covenant that God made with men shadowed forth some element of the Everlasting Covenant which He entered into with Christ before the foundation of the world on the behalf of His elect. The covenants which God made with Noah, Abraham, and David, as truly exhibited different aspects of the Compact of Grace as did the several vessels in the tabernacle typify certain characteristics of the Person and work of Christ. Yet, just as those vessels also had an immediate and local use, so the covenants respected that which was earthly and carnal, as well as what was spiritual and heavenly. This dual fact receives illustration and exemplification in the covenant which is now before us. That in it which was literal and external is so obvious and well known that it needs no enlarging upon by us here. The sign and seal of the covenant—the rainbow—and the promise connected therewith were tangible and visible things, which the senses of men have verified for themselves from then till now. But is that *all* there was to the Noahic Covenant?

The note made upon the Noahic Covenant in the "Scofield" Bible reads as follows:

“The elements of: (1) The relation of man to earth under the Adamic Covenant is confirmed (Gen. 8:21). (2) The order of nature is confirmed (Gen. 8:22). (3) Human government is established (Gen. 9:1-6). (4) Earth is secured against another universal judgment by water (Gen. 8:21; 9:11). (5) A prophetic declaration is made that Ham will descend an inferior and servile posterity (Gen. 9:24, 25). (6) A prophetic declaration is made that Shem will have a peculiar relation to Jehovah (Gen. 9:26, 27). All Divine revelation is made through Semitic men, and Christ, after the flesh, descends from Shem. (7) A prophetic declaration is made that from Japheth will descend the ‘enlarged’ races (Gen. 9:27). Government, science, and art, speaking broadly, are and have been Japhetic, so that history is the indisputable record of the exact fulfillment of these declarations.” This is a fair sample of the superficial contents to be found in this popular catch-penny, and we strongly advise our readers not to waste their money in purchasing or their time in perusing the same.

Asking our readers’ pardon for so doing, let us glance for a moment at the above summary. The last three items in Mr. Scofield’s “Elements” do not belong at all to the Noahic Covenant, having no more connection with it than does that which is recorded in Genesis 9:20-23. The first four elements Mr. S. mentions all concern that which is mundane and political. The whole is a lifeless analysis of the letter of the passage. There is absolutely nothing helpful in it. No effort is attempted at interpretation: no mention is made of the significant and blessed connection there is between the offering on the altar (8:20) and the Lord’s covenant with Noah; no notice is taken of the new foundation upon which the Divine grant is made: no hint is given of the precious typical instruction of the whole: and the thought does not seem to have entered the editor’s mind that there was anything mystical or spiritual in the covenant.

Was there no deeper meaning in the promises than that the earth should never again be destroyed by a flood, that so long as it existed its seasons and harvests were guaranteed, that the fear of man should be upon all the lower creatures? Had those things no spiritual import? Assuredly they have, and in them may be clearly discerned, by those favoured with anointed eyes, that which adumbrated the contents of the Everlasting Covenant. Noah and his family had been wondrously saved from the wrath of God, which had destroyed the rest of the race. Now that the world was to be restored from its ruined state, what more suitable occasion than that for a fuller revelation of various aspects of the believer’s so-great salvation! It was ever God’s way in Old Testament times to employ the event of some *temporal* deliverance of His people, to renew His intimation of the great *spiritual* deliverance and restoration by Christ’s redemption. Who can doubt that it was so here, immediately after the flood?

It seems pitiable that at this late date it should be necessary to labour a point which ought to be obvious to all God’s people. And obvious it would be, at least when pointed out to them, were it not that so many have had dust thrown into their eyes by carnal “dispensationalists” and hucksters of “prophecy.” Alas, that the writer himself once had his own vision dimmed by them, and even now he often has to exert himself in order to refuse looking at things through their coloured spectacles. That there were *temporal* benefits bestowed upon Noah and his seed in Jehovah’s covenant-grant, is just as sure as that Noah built a tangible altar and offered real sacrifices thereon. But to confine those benefits to the temporal, and ignore (or deny) their *spiritual* import, is as excuseless as would be a failure to discern Christ and His sacrifice in what Noah presented and which was a

“sweet savour” unto God.

Yet so dull of spiritual comprehension are many of God’s own people, so prejudiced and stupefied are they by the opiates which false teachers have ministered to them, we must perforce proceed slowly, and take nothing for granted. Therefore, before we seek to point out the various typical, mystical, and spiritual features of the Noahic Covenant, we must first establish the fact that something more than the temporary interests of this earth or the material well-being of its inhabitants was involved in what God said to our patriarch in Genesis 9. Nor is this at all a difficult matter. Leaving for our closing paper the contemplation of the later Scriptures which cast a radiant glow upon the seal of the covenant, the rainbow, we turn to one passage in the Prophets which clearly contains all that can be required by us.

In Isaiah 54:4-9 we read, “Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine Husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.”

The connection of Isaiah 54 with the preceding chapter (on the Atonement) suggests that Gospel times are there in view, which is confirmed by the use Paul makes of it in Galatians 4:27, etc. The Church, under the form of the Israelitish theocracy, is pictured as a married woman, who (like Sarah) had long continued barren. Comparatively few of the real children of God had been raised up among the Jews. At the time of Christ’s advent Pharisaical formality and Sadducean infidelity were wellnigh universal, and this was a sore grief unto the little remnant of genuine saints. But the death of Christ was to introduce better times, for many from among the Gentiles would then be saved. Accordingly, the barren woman is exhorted to break forth into singing, faith being called upon to joyfully anticipate the promised blessings. Gracious assurances were given that her hope should not be confounded.

True, the Church was then at a low ebb, and seemingly deserted by the Lord Himself, but the hiding of His face was only temporary, and He would yet gather an increasing number of children into His family, and that with “great mercy” and with “everlasting kindness.” God’s engagements to this effect were irrevocable, as His covenant testified. In the days of that patriarch the Lord had contended with the world in great wrath for a whole year, the “waters of Noah” having completely destroyed it. Nevertheless, He returned in “great mercy,” yea, with “everlasting kindness,” as His covenant with Noah attested. Though the world has often been highly provoking to God since then, yet He has faithfully kept His promise, and will continue doing so unto the end. In like manner there is often much in His people to displease and try God’s patience, but He *will not* utterly cast them off (Psa. 89:34).

Here in Isaiah 54 the Noahic Covenant is appealed to in proof of the perpetuity of God’s gracious purpose in the midst of His sore chastenings. There we find definite in-

terpretation of its original import, confirming what we said in the earlier paragraphs. The Prophet Isaiah was announcing God's mercy to the Church in future times, and he adduces His oath unto Noah as a sure pledge of the promised grace—an assurance of its certain bestowment notwithstanding the afflictions which the people of God were then enduring and of the low condition to which they had been reduced. The unalterableness of the one is appealed to in proof of the unalterableness of the other. How plainly this shows that the covenant with Noah not only afforded a practical demonstration of the un-failing faithfulness of God in fulfilling its temporal promise to the world, but also that the *Church* was the chief object and subject concerned in it.

Why did the Lord promise to preserve the earth until the end of time, so that it should not again be destroyed by a flood? The answer is, *Because of the Church*, for when the full number of the elect have been gathered out of every clime, and brought (manifestatively) into the Body of Christ, the world will come to an end. That the Noahic Covenant has a clear connection with the Everlasting Covenant (called in Isaiah 54 “the Covenant of Peace” because based upon *reconciliation effected*), and that it has a special relation to the Church, is abundantly evident from what the Prophet there says of it: “For this (namely, ‘with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee’) is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for *as* I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; *so* have I sworn that I would not be wroth *with thee*”—the Church.

From all that has been said it should now be abundantly clear that, while the *literal* aspect of the promises made to Noah concerned the *temporal* welfare of the earth and its inhabitants, yet their *mystical* import had respect unto the *spiritual* well-being of the Church and its members. This same twofoldedness will come before us again yet more plainly, when we consider the “rainbow,” which was the sign and the seal of the Noahic Covenant. It seems strange that those who perceived that the laws which God gave unto Israel respecting the eating only of fishes with scales and fins and animals which divided the hoof and chewed the cud, had not only a temporal or hygienic value, but a mystical or spiritual meaning as well, should have failed to discern that the same dual feature holds good in respect to all the details of the Noahic Covenant.

Once this key is firmly grasped by us, it is not difficult to reach the inner contents contained in the benediction which the Lord pronounced after He had smelled the sweet savour of Noah's offering. The guarantee that the earth should not again be destroyed by a flood (as the Adamic earth had been), pointed to the *eternal security* of the saints—a security assured by the vastly superior position which is now theirs from what they had in Adam, namely, their inalienable portion *in Christ*. The promise that while the earth remained, seedtime and harvest should not fail, contained as its inner kernel the Divine pledge that as long as the saints were left below, God would *supply all their need* “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” The fact that those blessings were promised after Noah and his family had come on to resurrection and new-creation ground, foreshadowed the blessed truth that the believer's standing is no longer “in the flesh.”

Noah is the figure of Christ. First, as the remover of the curse from a corrupted earth, and as the rest-giver to those who, with sorrow of heart and sweat of the brow, had to till and eat of it (Gen. 5:29, Matt. 11:28). Second, as the heir of the new earth, wherein there shall be “no more curse” (Gen. 8:21, Rev. 22:3). Third, as the one into whose hands all things were now delivered (Gen. 9:2, John 17:2 and Heb. 1:2). Noah's sons or seed were the figure of the Church. With him they were “blessed” (Gen. 9:1, and cf. Eph. 1:3). With

him they were given dominion over all the lower creatures: so the saints have been made “*kings* and priests unto God” (Rev. 1:6) and shall “reign with Him” (2 Tim. 2:12). With him they were bidden to be “fruitful” and “bring forth abundantly” (Gen. 9:7), so Christians are to abound in fruit and in every good work. The fact that this covenant was an absolute or unconditional one, tells us of the immutability of our blessings in Christ.—
A.W.P.

Union and Communion.

2. Mediatorial (Completed).

Christ is not now two persons combined together, but one Person having two natures. He is both God and man, as many Scriptures plainly affirm, possessing in Himself both Deity and humanity. “Unto us a child is born,” there is His humanity; “Unto us a Son is given: and His name shall be called The mighty God” (Isa. 9:6), there is His Deity. “That holy thing which shall be born of thee,” there is His humanity; “shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35), there is His Deity—“*called* the Son of God” means He shall be *owned* as such: “all shall so acknowledge Him: either here in gracious confession, or in glorious confusion hereafter” (Thomas Adams, 1660). “God sent forth his Son,” there is His Deity; “made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4), there is His humanity. “Made of the seed of David according to the flesh,” there is His humanity; “And declared to be the Son of God” (Rom. 1:3, 4), there is His Deity, both making up the one Person of “Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Having considered the needs-be for the Divine incarnation, having sought to contemplate the nature thereof, we now turn unto some of the *effects and consequences* of the same. We shall seek to examine, first, the effects of the Mediatorial union with respect unto the Divine nature of Christ; second, with respect unto His human nature; and third with respect unto His complex Person.

When the eternal Word became flesh, His Divine nature underwent *no* change whatsoever. Such a thing could not be: God is no more subject to alteration or variation than He is to death. Being God the Son, the Word was immutable, and must remain forever the same. To say that His Deity was humanized is to assert an utter impossibility. The incarnation of the Beloved of the Father, despoiled Him of none of His perfections. Had He lost (or “emptied” Himself of) any of those attributes proper to the Divine nature, He could not have been a sufficient Mediator. That is properly a “change,” when anything ceases to be what it was before; but such was not the case with Immanuel. It was none other than *God* who was “manifest in flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16), so that the incarnate Son could say, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).

When it is affirmed “The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us,” the Spirit was careful to move John to at once add, “and we beheld His glory.” *What* “glory”? the “glory” of His meekness, gentleness, compassion? No, but “the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father.” Though He now became what He was not previously—united to manhood—yet He ceased not to be in Himself all that He was before. “He assumed our nature without laying aside His own. When the soul is united to the body, doth it lose any of those perfections that are proper to its nature? Is there any change either in the substance or qualities of it? No; but it makes a change in the body; and of a dull lump it makes a living mass, conveys vigour to it, and by its power quickens it to sense and motion. So did the Divine nature and human remain entire: there was no change of the one into the other, as Christ by a miracle changed water into wine, or men by art change sand or ashes into glass” (S. Charnock).

During the days of His humiliation, the Divine *glory* of the Mediator was partly veiled. There was no halo of Divine light encircling His head, to mark Him out as Immanuel. There was no visible retinue of angels in attendance upon Him, to signify the Lord of Heaven was tabernacling upon earth. Instead, He was born in a manger, grew up in the home of a peasant family, and when He began His public ministry His forerunner

was clothed in a garment of camel's hair and His ambassadors were humble fishermen. Yet even then His Divine glory was not completely eclipsed. The character He displayed was "Fairer than the children of men" (Psa. 45:2). His teaching was such that even the officers sent to arrest Him testified, "never man spake like this Man" (John 7:46). His miracles witnessed to His Almightyness. Even in death He could not be hid: the centurion exclaiming, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54).

Yet the partial veiling of His Divine glory in nowise wrought any change in, still less did it injure the Divine nature itself, any more than the sun undergoes any change or is to the slightest degree injured when it is hid by the interposition of a cloud. "When He prays for the glory He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5), He prays that a glory He had in His deity might shine forth in His Person as Mediator, and be evinced in that height and splendour suitable to His dignity, which had been so lately darkened by His abasement; that as He had appeared to be the Son of man in the infirmity of the flesh, He might appear to be the Son of God in the glory of His Person, that He might appear to be the Son of God and the Son of man in one Person" (S. Charnock). At His ascension, nothing was added to His essential Person: His Divine glory did but shine forth more distinctly when He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

We turn next to consider the consequence of His human nature being taken into union with the Son of God. And, first, negatively. His humanity was not invested with Divine attributes. As the Divine nature was not humanized at the incarnation, neither was the humanity deified: there was no communication of properties from one to the other; both preserved their integrity, and remained in possession of their distinctive qualities. "I do not hereby ascribe the infusion of omniscience, of infinite understanding, wisdom, and knowledge into the human nature of Christ. It was and is a creature, finite and limited, nor is a capable subject of properties absolutely infinite and immense. Filled it was with light and wisdom to the utmost capacity of a creature. But it was so, not by being changed into a Divine nature or essence, but by the communication of the Spirit unto it without measure. The Spirit of the Lord did rest upon Him: Isaiah 11:1-3" (John Owen).

There were three respects in which the humanity of Christ underwent no change by virtue of its union with His Divine Person. First, with respect to its *essence*: intrinsically and integrally it was and forever remains a real and true humanity. Second, in respect to its *properties*: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52); when He prayed "not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42), it was the subjecting of the human unto the Divine. Third, with respect to its *operations*: every human faculty was normally exercised by "the man Christ Jesus." He hungered and thirsted, ate and drank; He wearied and slept; He sorrowed and wept; He suffered and died. Some things as a man He knew not (Mark 13:32), except as they were *given* Him by revelation (Rev. 1:1).

Positively, the humanity was elevated unto a state infinitely surpassing that of every other creature in earth and Heaven. Though the Godhead received nothing from the manhood, yet the manhood itself—taken into union with the second Person in the Trinity—was immeasurably enriched and exalted to unspeakable dignity, infinitely above that of the angels. He who is Head of the Church has, in all things, "the pre-eminence." Not only was the Divine *wisdom* more illustriously displayed in the wondrous constitution of the Mediator than in any or all the other works of God, but His *grace* was also more gloriously evidenced unto the man Christ Jesus than it was in the saving of sinners. The high-

est act of Divine favour was exercised when the woman's "Seed" was raised high above all other creatures, and made Jehovah's "Fellow." Wherein could the Seed of Abraham merit such an inestimable honour! It was *grace*, pure and simple, grace in its most superlative exercise, which conferred upon the humanity of Christ a dignity and glory immeasurably exceeding that possessed by the cherubim and seraphim.

The Man Christ Jesus was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20) unto union with the second Person in the Godhead, and therefore the Divine grace shown unto Him in *His* predestination was greater far than that shown unto *us*, by how much more the privileges ordained were greater. Marvelous grace indeed is it that we should be elevated unto a place in the family of God and "made neigh" (Eph. 2:13) unto Him; but that falls far, far short of the Man Christ Jesus being actually united to the immediate Person of the Son of God; and in consequence thereof being not only "the *First-born* (Chief) of every creature," but "the Man that is *My Fellow*, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 13:7)—advanced unto a fellowship in the Society of the blessed Trinity. This it was which stamped an infinite worth upon the whole work of the Mediator.

"Behold My servant, whom I uphold; *Mine Elect*, in whom My soul delighteth" (Isa. 42:1). God's "Elect" was the Man whom He eternally chose to taken into personal union with His co-essential and co-equal Son. This is the One in whom He eternally delighted, ever viewing Him in the glass of His decrees. This is "the Man of His right hand, the Son of man whom He madest strong *for Himself*" (Psa. 80:17). This was indeed grace worthy of God, such as can never be fully conceived by any finite intelligence, no not by the saints in Heaven through the ages of eternity. In the Person of the God-man, grace, sovereign grace, was exercised in its first and greatest act, shining forth in its utmost splendour and discovered in its utmost freeness. For again we say, there could be nothing whatever in the unindividualized "seed" of the woman which could be, to the smallest degree, entitled unto such supernal glory.

It was therefore meet and requisite that grace and glory should be communicated and bestowed upon the humanity of Christ, proportionately to the high dignity of its being taken into union with the Son. "1. Preeminence, to all other individuals of human nature: the humanity of Christ was chosen and preferred to the grace of union with the Son of God, above them all; it has a better subsistence than they had, and has obtained a more excellent name than they, and is possessed of blessings and privileges above all creatures. All which is not of any merit in it, but of the free grace of God. 2. Perfect holiness and impeccability: it is called *that holy Thing*: it is eminently and perfectly so, without original sin, or any actual transgression; it is not conscious of any sin, never committed any, nor is it possible it should. 3. A communication of habitual grace to it in the greatest degree; it is, in this respect, fairer and more beautiful than any of the sons of men: grace being poured into it in great plenty; it is anointed with the oil of gladness above its fellows; that is, with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit" (John Gill, 1770).

Consider, briefly, some of the super-excellent perfections of the Man Christ Jesus. There is a *wisdom* in Him which is far above what all other creatures have attained or can reach unto, so that in Him "Are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). It is true those treasures of wisdom are not of that richness and extent as the wisdom that dwells in God Himself, for the manhood of Christ is not omniscient; yet by virtue of its union with the Son of God, it has been taken into all the counsels of the Godhead, and knows all decrees concerning the past, the present, and the future.

The same holds good of His *power*. Though the manhood of Christ has not been endowed with omnipotence, yet it approximates as closely thereto, as any creature could, for all power has been given to Him, both in Heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18), so that the rule of the universe is committed to Him, He upholding all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3). God “hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of *man*” (John 5:27).

The image of God shines brightly in Christ’s *independency* and *sovereignty*. This incommunicable attribute of Deity is reflected to a high degree in Him who has been made “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), being one of the brightest jewels in the crown of His glorified humanity. This personal prerogative of the Son of God is now shared in by the nature which He took into union with Himself, as the queen shares the palace of the king. A dependent “thing” has been made an independent creature—what a marvel of marvels!

So too of His *holiness*. There is that transcendency of holiness in the Man Christ Jesus that is not found in all other creatures put together, and in this respect also He is “the Image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). There is in Him a holiness over and above that grace communicated to Him “without measure” by the Spirit: it is a relative holiness of a man united to the second Person of the Godhead, which casts the shine of its superlative glory upon that which is habitual or communicated. It is *this* which gave infinite value to all He did.

Coming now to the consequences of the Divine incarnation as it respects *the complex Person* of the Mediator. First, there is a communion between the two natures in Him which is far more intimate than that enjoyed by husband and wife, or even that which obtains between Christ and His Church: it is exceeded only by that ineffable fellowship which exists among the eternal Three. While the properties of each several nature preserve their distinctness, yet they are so united to form one Person, who may be denominated according to either nature. Sometimes the Mediator is called “man” as in Acts 17:31, etc., and at others He is designated “God,” as in Romans 9:5, etc. Thus, what cannot be said of Christ in the abstract, can be predicated of Him in the concrete—His Deity could not be tempted, nor is His humanity omnipresent: yet as a *Person* He was tempted and is omnipresent.

Second, in consequence of the two natures in His Person, Christ holds the office of Mediator. “But He is not Mediator only in His human nature, and only exercises it in that; He took upon Him, and was invested with this *office* before His assumption of human nature; and could and did exercise some parts of it without it; but there were others that required His human nature; and when, and not before it was requisite, He assumed it; and in it, as united to His Divine Person, He is God-man, is Prophet, Priest, King, Judge, Lawgiver, and Saviour; and has power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him” (John Gill). This it is which stamped infinite worth, dignity and glory on what He did. He being both God and man in one Person, His love was the love of God (1 John 3:16), His righteousness was the righteousness of God (Phil. 3:9), His blood was the blood of God (Acts 20:28).

Thirdly, there is a communion *of operations* in both natures to the discharge of His Mediatorial office. The work performed by Christ was the work of the God-man: there was a concurrence of both natures in the performance of it. “In the work of atonement, as well as in all the other parts of His mediatorial activity, Christ acted according to both natures. They ever acted conjointly, but in their several spheres. It is important to keep in

mind that they never acted apart in anything that concerned the mediatorial function. And this it is the more necessary to mention, because the notion has obtained currency in modern times that the Divine nature was for the most part in abeyance during His humiliation” (George Smeaton, 1868). “The perfect complete work of Christ in every act of His mediatory office, in all that He did as the King, Priest, and Prophet of the Church, in all that He continueth to do for us, in or by virtue of whether nature soever it be done, is not to be considered as the act of this or that nature in Him alone, but it is the act and work of *the whole person*” (John Owen).

Fourth, though the human nature of Christ, distinctively considered, is not a formal object of worship, since it is a creature, yet as taken into union with God the Son, and both natures together forming the one Person of the Mediator, Christ is to be adored and worshipped. Thus, at His birth it was said, “Let all the angels of God worship Him” (Heb. 1:6). So at His ascension He was given a name which is above every name, “that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow” (Phil. 2:9, 10), that is, in a way of religious adoration. Accordingly we read “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, *and unto the Lamb* for ever and ever” (Rev. 5:13).

Fifth, in consequence of the hypostatic union, all the fullness of the Godhead dwells personally in Jesus Christ, and in Him there is such an outshining of the perfections of Jehovah as contain the utmost manifestation of Deity which can be made either unto the angels or unto men. The “glory of God” shines “in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). Much may be seen of God, in creation, in providence, in grace, but in and by *Jesus Christ alone* is He fully and perfectly revealed. Therefore could He say, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).

The particular points which most need to be guarded in connection with this mysterious and glorious subject are: 1. The eternal Son of God united to Himself human nature. 2. Every particular man is a separate person, because he subsists of himself; but the manhood of Christ never subsisted of itself, but only in union with the second Person of the Godhead. 3. Christ, the Mediator, is but one Person; God and man being perfectly united in Him. 4. The two natures remain distinct in Him, preserving their own properties and characteristics. 5. Christ’s human nature was *not* created in Heaven (as the early Plymouth Brethren taught): “The Lord from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47) refers to His *Divine Person*, and not to the descent of His humanity. If Christ’s humanity had not been formed out of Mary’s substance, it had belonged to another class of creatures, and Christ had not been “the Son of *man*” and so could not have been our Kinsman-Redeemer. 6. The humanity of Christ was not begotten by generation according to the ordinary course of nature, but was produced by the extraordinary operation of the Holy Spirit, and therefore it is high above the compass of human reason to understand or explain. 7. As man, Christ is neither “the Son of God” (Luke 1:35) by nature or by adoption, but only *by personal union*—as the wife receives the name of her husband. 8. The humanity of Christ had to be united to His Divine Person, in order that His work should possess infinite merits. 9. Each nature acts separately, yet in conjunction with the other: as man Christ “laid down” His life, as God He “took it again” (John 10:18). 10. A *whole* Christ, God and man, is the Object of our faith, is our Saviour and Lord, and is to be worshipped and served as such.

In conclusion, let us marvel at, admire and adore this transcendent wonder and mys-

tery. First, that a *human* nature was produced without the instrumentality of any man. Second, that that human nature was produced out of a woman without contracting the slightest taint of sin. Third, that it had no separate personality subsisting by itself. Fourth, that it should be, nevertheless, “the Son of man.” Fifth, that a Divine Person should unite unto Himself such a frail and lowly nature. Sixth, that that Divine Person was in nowise injured by such an union. Seventh, that each nature should continue to preserve its own separate properties and functions.—A.W.P.

The Doctrine of Sanctification.

5. *Its Solution.*

In connection with the grand truth of sanctification there is both a mystery and a problem: the former relates to the unregenerate; the latter is what exercises so deeply the regenerate. That which is hidden from the understanding of the natural man is, why his best performances are unacceptable unto God, no matter how earnestly and devoutly they be done. Even though he be informed that the tree must be made good if its fruit is to be wholesome, in other words, that his very *state* and *nature* must first be made acceptable unto God before any of his *works* can be so, he has not the remotest idea of how this is to be accomplished. But that which perplexes the spiritual man is, how one who is still full of sin may justly regard his state and nature as being acceptable unto God, and how one who is a mass of corruption within can honestly claim to be holy. As the Lord is pleased to enable we will consider each in turn.

The natural man is quite ignorant of the mystery of sanctification. Though he may—under the spur of conscience, the fear of Hell, or from desire to go to Heaven—be very diligent in seeking to conquer the activities of indwelling sin and exceedingly zealous in performing every known duty, yet he is quite in the dark as to why his *state* must be changed before his *actions* can be acceptable unto God. That upon which he is unenlightened is, that it is not *the matter* which makes a work good and pleasing to God, but *the principles* from which that work proceeds. It is true that the conscience of the natural man distinguishes between good and evil, and religious instruction may educate him to do much which is right and avoid much that is wrong; nevertheless, his actions are not done out of gratitude and in a spirit of loving obedience, but out of fear and from a servile spirit; and therefore are they like fruit ripened by art and forced in the hothouse, rather than normally by the genial rays of the sun.

“Now the end (design) of the commandment (or law) is charity (love) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim. 1:5). Nothing less than this will meet the Divine requirements. Only those actions are pleasing to God which have respect unto His commandment, which proceed from gratitude unto Him for His goodness, and where faith has respect unto His promised acceptance and blessing. No works are approved of Heaven except they possess these qualities. A sense of duty must sway the conscience, disinterested affection must move the heart, and faith in exercise must direct the actions. Hence, should I be asked why I do thus and so? the answer should be, Because God has commanded it. And if it be further enquired, And why such earnestness and affection? the answer ought to be, Because God requires my best, and I desire to honour Him with the same. Obedience respects God’s authority; love His kindness; faith His bounty or reward.

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). This must be our design—the glory of God—if our actions are to meet with His approval. Whether it be the discharge of our temporal duties, the performing of deeds of charity and kindness, or acts of piety and devotion, they must be executed with this aim: that *God* may be honoured by our conformity to His revealed will. The natural man, when in sore straits, will cry fervently unto God, but it is only that *his* wants may be supplied. Many will contribute liberally of their means to the relief of sufferers, but it is “that they may have glory of men” (Matt. 6:2). People are religious on the Sabbath and attend public worship, but it is either to satisfy an uneasy conscience or in the hope of

earning Heaven thereby.

From what has been said above it should be clear that the best deeds of the unregenerate fall far short of the Divine requirements. The actions of the natural man cannot receive the approbation of Heaven, because *God* is neither the beginning nor the end of them: love for Him is not their spring, glorifying Him is not their aim. Instead, they issue from the workings of corrupt self, and they have in view only the advancement of self. Nor can it be otherwise. Water will not rise above its own level, or flow uphill. A pure stream cannot issue from an impure fountain. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (John 3:6), and will never be anything but flesh: educate, refine, religionize the flesh all we may, it can never become spirit. The man himself must be sanctified, before his actions are purified.

But how shall men be sanctified so as to be suited unto the presence of an infinitely pure God? By nature they are utterly without holiness: they are “corrupt, filthy, an unclean thing.” They have no more power to make themselves holy than they have to create a world. We could tame a tiger from the jungle far more easily than we could our lusts. We might empty the ocean more quickly than we could banish pride from our souls. We might melt marble more readily than our hard hearts. We might purge the sea of salt more easily than we could our beings of sin. “For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before Me, saith the Lord GOD” (Jer. 2:22).

Why, when we were in our best condition by nature, when we were in the state of original holiness, when we were in Adam vested with the image of God, we preserved it not. How much less likely then, is it, that now, in the state of lapsed and depraved nature, it is in our power to restore ourselves, to re-introduce the image of God into our souls, and that in a far more eminent manner than it was at first created by God? What needed all that contrivance of infinite wisdom and grace for the reparation of our nature by Jesus Christ, if holiness, wherein it doth consist, be in our power, and educed out of the natural faculties of our souls? There can be no more fond imagination befall the minds of men, than that defiled nature is able to cleanse itself, or depraved nature to rectify itself, or we, who have lost that image of God which He created in us, and with us, should create it again in ourselves by our own endeavours” (John Owen).

Yet, let it be pointed out that this impotency to measure up to the requirements of God is no mere innocent infirmity, but a highly culpable thing, which greatly aggravates our vileness and adds to our guilt. Our inability to measure up to the standard of personal piety which God has appointed, lies not in a lack of executive power or the needful faculties, but in the want of a willing mind and a ready heart to practice true holiness. If men in a natural state had a hearty love and liking to true holiness, and a fervent and sincere endeavour to practice it, and yet failed in the event, then they might under some pretence plead for this excuse (as many do), that they are compelled to sin by an inevitable necessity. But the fact is that man’s impotency lies in his own *obstinacy*—“Ye will not come to Me” (John 5:40) said the Lord Jesus.

Inability to pay a debt does not excuse a debtor who has recklessly squandered his estate; nor does drunkenness excuse the mad or violent actions of a drunkard, but rather aggravates his crime. God has not lost His right to command, even though man through his wickedness has lost his power to obey. Because the flesh “lusteth against the Spirit” (Gal. 5:17), that is far from an extenuation for not being in subjection to Him. Because

“every one that doeth evil *hateth* the light,” that is far from justifying them because they “loved darkness” (John 3:19, 20); yea, as the Saviour there so plainly and solemnly states, it only serves to heighten their criminality—”This is *the* condemnation.” Then “How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?” (Job 15:16) that cannot practice holiness because he will not.

It is because men do not *make a right use of* their faculties that they are justly condemned. The soul in an unsanctified person is not dead, but is a living and acting principle; and therefore it is able to understand, desire, will, reason, and improve its opportunities, or redeem the time. Though the natural man is unable to work grace in his own heart, yet he *is* able to attend and wait upon the means of grace. An unsanctified person may as well go to hear a sermon as attend a theatre: he has the same eyes for reading the Scriptures as the newspaper or a novel: he may as well associate himself with those who fear an oath, as with those who delight to blaspheme that Name at which all should tremble. In the day of judgment unsanctified persons will be damned not for *cannots*, but for *will nots*.

Men complain that they cannot purify themselves, that they cannot cease from sin, that they cannot repent, that they cannot believe in Christ, that they cannot live a holy life. But if only they were honest, if they were duly humbled, if they sincerely grieved over the awful hold which sin has obtained upon them, they would fly to the Throne of Grace, they would cry unto God day and night for Him to break the chains which bind them, deliver them from the power of Satan and translate them into the kingdom of His dear Son. If they were but sincere in their complaint of inability, they would go to God and beg Him to sprinkle clean water upon them, put His Spirit within them, and give them a new heart, so that they might walk in His statutes and keep His judgments (Ezek. 36:25-28). And it is just because they will not, that their blood justly lies upon their own heads.

“Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:8). Outward separation from that which is evil and polluting is not sufficient: purity of heart is also indispensable. “Behold, Thou desirest truth in the *inward* parts” (Psa. 51:6). The Divine Law not only prohibits stealing, but also insists “Thou shalt not covet,” which is a lusting of our souls rather than an external act. Holiness *of nature* is required by the law, for how else shall a man love the Lord his God with all his heart, mind, and strength, and his neighbour as himself? God is essentially holy by nature, and nothing can be so contrary to Him as an unholy nature. Nothing can be so contrary as opposite natures. How can a wolf and a lamb, or a vulture and a dove, dwell together? “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?” (2 Cor. 6:14, 15).

How, then, is this mystery cleared up? By what method, or in what way, have the sanctified become blest with a nature which makes them meet for the ineffable presence of God? By what process does the evil tree become good, so that its fruit is wholesome and acceptable? Obviously, we cannot here supply the full answer to these questions, or we should be anticipating too much what we desire to bring out (D.V.) in later articles. But we will endeavour to now indicate, at least, the direction in which and the lines along which this great mystery is cleared—lines which most assuredly would never have entered our hearts and minds to so much as conceive; but which once they are viewed by anointed eyes, are seen to be Divine and satisfying. The Lord graciously assist us to steer

clear of the rocks of error and guide us into clear and refreshing waters of the truth.

As we have shown, it was quite impossible—though it was their bounden duty—for those whom God sanctifies to personally answer the requirements of His holy Law: “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Prov. 20:9). Wherefore, for the satisfaction of the law, which requires absolute purity of nature, it was settled as one of the articles in the Everlasting Covenant, that Christ, the Representative of all who would be sanctified, should be a Man of an untainted and perfectly pure nature, which fully met the requirements of the law: “For such an High Priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26). The meeting of that requirement necessitated two things: first, that the Head of His people should be born with a holy human nature; second, that He should retain that holiness of nature inviolate unto the end. Let us consider, briefly, each of these separately.

There was a holy nature given to Adam as the Root of mankind, to be kept by him and transmitted to his posterity by natural generation. Upon that ground the law requires all men to be born holy, and pronounces them unclean and “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3) in the contrary. But how can this demand be met by those who are born in sin? They cannot enter again into their mother’s womb, and be born a second time without sin. Even so, the law will not abate its demand. Wherefore it was provided that Christ, the last Adam, should, as the Representative and Root of His spiritual seed, be born perfectly holy; that whereas they brought a sinful nature into the world with them, He should be born “that *holy* thing” (Luke 1:35). Consequently, in the reckoning of the law all believers are born holy in the last Adam. They are said to be “circumcised” by the circumcision of Christ (Col. 2:11), and circumcision necessarily presupposes *birth*!

But more was required. It was necessary that the Second Man should preserve His holy nature free from all spot or defilement, as He passed through this world of sin. The law not only demands holiness of nature, but also that the purity and integrity of that nature be preserved. Wherefore to satisfy this demand, it was provided that the believers’ federal Head should preserve His ineffable purity unstained. “He shall not fail” (Isa. 42:4). The first man did fail: the fine gold soon became dim: the holiness of his nature was quickly extinguished by sin. But the Second Man failed not: neither man nor devil could corrupt Him. He preserved the holiness of His nature unstained, even to the end of His life. And so of His sanctified, viewing them in Himself, He declares, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee” (Song. 4:7).

But while that completely meets the judicial side, satisfying the demands of the law, something more was yet required to satisfy the heart of God and meet the experimental needs of His people. In view of their being actually defiled in Adam when he sinned, they are defiled in their own persons so that not only is his guilt imputed to them, but his corruption is imparted to them in the nature they have received from him by generation. Therefore, not only were the elect legally born holy in Christ their Head, but from Him they also receive a holy nature: it is written, “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45). This is accomplished by that gracious and supernatural working of the third Person in the Godhead, whereby the elect are vitally united to their Head so that “he that is joined unto the Lord is *one spirit*” (1 Cor. 6:17).

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). Our being united to Christ, through the

Spirit, by faith, makes us partakers of the same spiritual and holy nature with Him, as really and as actually as Eve (type of the Church) was made of one nature with Adam, being bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Because believers are united to Christ the Holy One, they are “sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor. 1:2). The believer being one with Christ is made “a new creature,” because He is such a Stock as changes the graft into its own nature: “If the Root be holy, so are the branches” (Rom. 11:16). The same Spirit which Christ received “without measure” (John 3:34) is communicated to the members of His body, so that it can be said, “Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16). Being united to Christ by faith, and through the communication of the quickening Spirit from Christ unto him, the believer is thereupon not only justified and reconciled to God, but sanctified, made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and made an heir of God.—A.W.P.

Welcome Tidings.

In the midst of so much that is depressing and saddening, it becomes the more necessary for the Christian's heart and mind to be occupied with that which is elevating and joy-producing: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on *these* things" (Phil. 4:8). Instead of dwelling so much upon the evil fruits which sin bears we need to be more engaged with the glorious things which Divine grace produces. This is what the editor has sought to keep before him from month to month, and year to year. He realises that he has by no means fully succeeded, for here too it is no easy matter to preserve the balance. There are alarms which need to be sounded, faults which need pointing out, diseases requiring to be ministered unto; yet the performance of such duties must not absorb the entire, or even principal, attention of God's servant. There is also good news to be proclaimed, a glorious Christ to delight our souls, precious promises to comfort, amazing grace to be extolled.

It is wrong for the Christian to dwell too much on the state of this poor world, the advancing apostasy in Christendom, the workings of Satan, and the depravity of his own heart. There is no food for the soul in such things, nothing that stimulates to praise and thanksgiving, nought which lifts up above the things of time and sense. The heart needs to be more occupied with those things which will cause him to bring his "harp" into use, which will put a song into his mouth, which will send him on his way rejoicing. But *where* are such things to be found? Not in the doings of the creature, not in the achievements of art and science, not in any of the productions of man. No, we must look elsewhere, for that which will deliver us from gloom and despondency: "Set your affection *on things above*, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

"Among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto *Thy* works" (Psa. 86:8). Ah, *these* are what should engage the attention of the saint; the wondrous "works" of the Lord. Note well the connection between these two verses: "Praise ye the LORD. I will *praise* the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation," and "The *works of the LORD* are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein" (Psa. 111:1, 2). What was it there which stirred up the Psalmist into praising the LORD? Why, His wondrous, glorious, perfect "works." Those "works" are indeed "great": the *only* ones entitled to be so designated. Man is fond of describing *his* achievements by high-sounding terms, such as "marvellous achievements," "astounding exploits," "amazing productions," etc.; but what are all of them in comparison with *the works of the LORD*? Man cannot so much as create a blade of grass, change the Ethiopian's skin, far less raise the dead. But God's "works" are "great" in wisdom, great in power, great in glory. There are none like unto His, which is freely acknowledged when "sought out of all that have pleasure therein."

"Among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto *Thy* works" (Psa. 86:8). As a hint to our many preacher-friends, the wondrous "works" of Jehovah, first in creation, second in providence, third in grace, might be dwelt upon to advantage. As a word to the wise is sufficient, we will not here attempt to work out a complete outline for them, but trust that not a few will heed the hint and seek to make a sermon magnifying the goodness of God as evidenced in His wondrous "works." That which is in our own thoughts at the moment is the blessed working of the Lord's

providence, particularly His continued grace in showing Himself strong on the behalf of this little magazine, which has no wealthy “backers” behind it, no denomination or even church to provide for its maintenance, but is entirely dependent upon the living God. Once again it is our happy privilege to make some report of how the God of all grace deigns to employ its pages in blessing to one and another of His people. We cannot exhibit this more effectively than by giving quotations from some of the many letters received.

“Please accept our thanks for the ‘Studies.’ Once again we thank God for them, for putting it into our hearts to desire them, and to pray that the Holy Spirit will graciously give us strength to obey willingly, and for bringing us in touch with you and the blessed unfolding of the Word. I often say to _____ how wonderful it is, that God in His mercy has opened a way whereby we can have (in our solitude and loneliness) such a wonderful teacher who so faithfully tends God’s sheep. As you have pointed out, so many today are only giving out part of God’s message to man: His love in giving His Son to die for our sins, but silent concerning His just and holy wrath. We pray that God will mercifully send out faithful servants who will not fail ‘to declare all the counsel of God’ and to warn men to ‘flee from the wrath to come.’ The message in the ‘Studies’ is more and more searching, and often the thought comes to me that I cannot possibly live up to such a holy standard; but I know that it is the truth.” (An isolated couple in Canada). What a holy privilege it is to minister to those who are entirely cut off from the public means of grace: we are in touch with quite a few such—pray their number may increase.

“I feel assured the Lord will make your ‘Studies’ profitable to many hungry souls. I find them most precious from the beginning to end, and am delighted with the articles on the Holy Spirit and Hebrews. We are not nearly through with the copies received, as they can be read and read over again; we are slow scholars” (A Sister in Canada).

“With much gratitude in my heart I forward you money order for your splendid work. The ‘Studies’ continue to be much appreciated. I must say I devour them with much relish, although they are very searching and humbling” (Brother in New Zealand).

“I write again to thank you for the help received from ‘Studies,’ and I do praise God for enabling you to send out food of the kind so sorely needed in these days of carelessness and indifference to the claims of God: may He be pleased to continue and bless abundantly your ministry to the saints, that it may be of Him and for Him, and rebound to the glory of His own blessed name” (Brother in Australia).

“While on our holiday we saw plenty of ‘Churchianity,’ all of the flesh, so we had to walk instead of talk religion, and I felt we were being watched all the time. You can understand how much I felt my need of wisdom, to walk so that we would not compromise or be a stumbling block to others, and I was very conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. ‘Be not righteous over much’ I came upon in the ‘Studies,’ and I saw that if Satan could not make us loose in our walk, he could make us very narrow” (Sister in Australia).

“Just a few lines to let you know how very much I appreciate having received the ‘Studies’ through another year, and to record our thankfulness for the spiritual food we have received through its pages” (Brother in Australia).

“Once more the time has come when we feel the Lord would have us contribute our small part to the ministry of the Word, and we know of no better way of spreading a sure testimony than through your ‘Studies in the Scriptures.’ What rich spiritual food for the

soul! In this day of spiritual famine your writings are indeed a blessing to the soul-hungry children of God” (Brother in California).

“I have just received the ‘Studies’ for which I am very thankful. I am certainly glad for the immense value of the food I get from them. How they teach me to form a true estimate of myself, and to realise the necessity of an inward cleanliness and not merely external righteousness. I pray God may more and more bring me into subjection to Him in all things and apply the spiritual truths I find in the ‘Studies’ to my heart and life. May God bless them to others as He has to me. Thank you Brother Pink for them, and for your faithfulness in proclaiming what is so distasteful to the flesh” (Brother in Michigan).

“I have enjoyed reading the various articles in the ‘Studies’ and have derived much help therefrom. I enclose a P.O.” (Brother in Scotland).

“When I got your first copies, not knowing what they were, I was afraid and looked upon them with suspicion. But when I began to read them carefully, I felt my heart burn within me. For a long time previously I was in a very low spiritual condition, I am sorry to say. I could not read God’s Word or pray, except in a dead sort of way. As I read on I began to hope the Spirit had not ceased to strive with me after all. I found I could utter once more the prayer that the love of Christ might be shed abroad in my heart and that I might behold His beauty” (Sister in Scotland). Thank God for reviving and restoring one of His children.

“Thank you for the ‘Studies’: I receive much light from God’s Word in reading them, also much that causes heart searching. Christ is precious, and I do want to be conformed to His will. I have just been re-reading the articles on Divine Guidance, and realise how true it is that unless we know God’s Word we cannot do His will” (Sister in Lincoln).

Our purpose in publishing the above excerpts is to evoke praise unto the Lord, that in this cloudy and dark day He is still ministering to His own, giving Seed to the sower, and then blessing the same unto the eater. We know not why the mighty God should condescend to use one so feeble and unworthy; sufficient for us that He is pleased to do so. Our longing is to be used more widely, in sending “portions” to a large number of Christ’s scattered and hungry sheep. Will you not pray more definitely, dear reader, that *this* may be so; and that God will graciously fit and furnish the writer. [Please pray this for the *publisher* of Brother Pink’s *Studies*—Mt. Zion Publications—a Ministry of Mt. Zion Bible Church.] Also that He will continue to send us the needful funds. Quite a number of liberal contributors have recently been called Home. A greatly increased number of our readers in the U.S.A. are now unable to give as they did formerly. We do not receive one penny for our own labours: *all* that is sent in, goes to defray the expenses of publishing. We long to see more of the readers having a personal part in this “work of faith and labour of love,” that there may be “fruit” to their account in that Day (Phil. 4:17).—A.W. and V.E. Pink.
