

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

TWELVE SERMONS

CHIEFLY ON THE

TRUE AND ESSENTIAL HUMANITY

OF THE

LORD JESUS CHRIST

IN RELATION TO HIS MEDIATORIAL WORK, AND THE

VARIED EXPERIENCES OF THE TRIED AND

EXERCISED CHILDREN OF GOD.

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PREFACE.

SERMON literature attains its proper place and limit when it becomes a faithful expositor of God's word ; or when it is suggestive in its character, leading the mind to a thoughtful study of the sacred page. Something of this has been attempted in the Sermons now presented to the reader's attention. The aim of the author has been to set forth the subjects they refer to in an experimental manner, though, occasionally, some remarks are made in which the subtle and insidious errors of modern Arianism and semi-Arianism are confronted and confuted. He ventures to hope that, under the anointing of the Spirit, the book may be read with profit, savour, and comfort, more especially by that portion of the Church of God whose path is that of tribulation. To them this little volume is dedicated; and is also designed by the Author as a supplement to his former work, " The Truth as it is in Jesus."

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THE DIVINE OBJECT
FOR WHICH THE
TONGUE OF THE LEARNED
WAS
GIVEN TO THE SON OF GOD.

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AUTHOR'S
MINISTRY AT HEPHIZIBAH CHAPEL, MILE END,

On Lord's Day Morning, April 14th, 1867.

"The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned."—ISA. l. 4.

I AM accustomed on these periodical occasions to bring before your attention more definitely topics intimately connected with the doctrine of the Divine and eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ—a doctrine most dearly cherished by me, and one which I hold as primary and fundamental in all that relates to the covenant of grace, the preaching of the gospel, and the experimental enjoyment of the truth as it is in Jesus. I have stood before you as your minister now full four years, and I think I can appeal to you that I have ever aimed to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. His Person as the eternal Son of God, and his Mediatorial work, have always been my main themes; and, so far as I have been experimentally taught, these themes have been commended to your hearts and consciences in that way and manner, so far as simplicity and sincerity are concerned, which I could desire for myself had I been permitted to occupy the position you hold as hearers of the gospel.

The text to which my mind is directed has special reference to the mediatorial character and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. His qualification in having the tongue of the learned divinely given to him relates to his

manhood only; for being God, he needed not to be instructed, for he knew what was in man, and he is essentially in himself the fountain of all knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. It must ever be considered, "great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." The complex Person of Jesus the Son of God is a subject too profound for mortals to explain. Occasionally, we have glimpses of the humanity, but it is a *perfect* humanity, seen only in him; at other times, we see the mighty God. Here, in our text, we have a most beautiful description of his mediatorial capacity, and *why* he was fitted for the peculiar work to which he was called of God the Father. It is the testimony of Jesus, and the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; and let it be remarked, this prophecy is not of what shall be hereafter, but of that which already is done; it is the language of Jesus Christ, "who is, and wast, and art to come, the Alpha and the Omega;" "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

The subject before us is great and comprehensive, and in order that our minds may the easier apprehend the truth as it is in Jesus, I shall endeavour to observe the following method, by considering, in the

FIRST place, *the Person of Jesus Christ the Son of God in his mediatorial capacity.*

SECONDLY, make some inquiry as to *what is to be understood by our Lord having the tongue of the learned GIVEN to him.*

THIRDLY, notice *the school in which our Lord was instructed and became learned;*

And, FOURTHLY, *the great object designed in the Father giving Jesus the tongue of the learned.*

I confess, I feel unequal to undertake what lies before me; but I earnestly pray that the Spirit of truth may take of the things of Christ, and reveal them unto us. May he shine into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. May the Lord be pleased thus to give us his help and blessing, and then to his name shall be all the praise.

I. We are to consider THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD IN HIS MEDIATORIAL CAPACITY.

The apostle Paul speaks of Christ as the unspeakable

gift of God the Father to the Church. The love of God in the redemption of the Church by Christ Jesus is most gloriously displayed in the great fact that when sin entered the world, and death by sin, "God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." (1 John iv. 9, 10.) He spared not his only Son, but freely gave him up for us all. The work of salvation was ordained in the hands of a mediator—one who could be equally interested in both parties, the offended and the offender; one with whose work divine justice should be fully satisfied, both by meeting the claims of God's most holy law, and also suffering the penalty of its having been violated and dishonoured. All this has been revealed to us in the gospel as having been accomplished by the eternal Son of God undertaking to become our Mediator; first, by becoming our Surety in covenant engagement with his Father; secondly, by becoming incarnate, and thus in our nature, by *the sacrifice* of himself, thereby effecting a reconciliation. This mediatorial work could only be undertaken by the Son of God himself. No archangel, or any other creature, could make an atonement for the sin of man. If all the heavenly host had combined to offer themselves for human redemption, it would have been contemned; and if all mankind had perished in their sin, that is, died eternally for it, it would have been no sacrifice, no atonement, no reconciliation; for punishment, though it may satisfy law and justice, cannot, abstractedly considered, *reconcile* the offended with the offender; but a *sacrifice* made on behalf of the offender by one interested in the honour of the offended, and on equal terms with him, would not only prove acceptable, but effect also a reconciliation with the offended and the offender. Now this is what the Scriptures set forth as having been done by the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of the whole Church of God." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "In the day thou eatest thereof, in dying, thou shalt die;" this was God's all wise and just decree. The nature that sinned must pay the penalty of sin; for the creature is subject to the Creator, and being under the law, is under the curse of that law. We read in prophecy: "And Jehovah saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." (Isa. lix.

16.) And again we read: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then it is we hear the voice of the Son of God, "Then said I, here am I; send me." "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." (Isa. vi. 8; Ps. xl. 7, 8.) Now, no other Person but "the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father," could receive the Father's commission, and undertake and finish the work given him to do. None but the Son of God could take human nature into union with his own Person, and in that nature accomplish both his Father's will and our redemption; none but the Son of God could offer himself an acceptable sacrifice to his Father. Hence, he became the Christ of God, being divinely commissioned, and is, therefore, *the* divinely anointed *one*. Hear the Father saying, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him," &c. (Isa. xlii. 1.) Hear the Son also saying: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," &c. (Isa. xli. 1-3.)

These quotations from the prophet Isaiah show the *official* appellatives of Jesus the Mediator, every one of which were needed by the fallen and sinful condition into which the Church of God had been brought by the disobedience of the first man. These offices are all united in the Person of the Son of God. As the Mediator of the new covenant, he has the authority to fill, administer, and execute the functions of his office between God and man, because he is *the* Son of God; and, because he is *the* Son of God, the only Son, his own proper Son, such a Son as he has never another, he therefore is *the* mediator of the new covenant, the only Mediator, the Lord's Christ, the Christ of God, the only Saviour. Thus we see, that as he is called officially, not *a* Christ, not *a* mediator, but *the* Christ, *the* Mediator, so we also perceive that, relatively to the Father, he is called *the* Son; setting forth to us the peculiar and unequalled designations that belong only to Jesus of Nazareth, born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem. It is true his designation "the Son of God" was affirmed at his incarnation; not because his incarnation made him

the Son of God, that is impossible, to assert it is absurd and altogether erroneous; indeed, that is the Arian heresy with which so many of the professed churches of truth are now infected. Jesus was the Son of God before he became the Son of Mary. He was *the Son given* before he was *the child born*; he was the Son of God before he became the Christ of God, the Mediator, or the man Christ Jesus. As I have often told you, his becoming the sent of God, and taking upon himself our nature, did not make him the Son of God; for he was the Son of God eternally with the Father before any of the covenant transactions whereby he became his Father's servant, or came in his Father's name to seek his Father's honour or to do his will. Here we see what it is that makes the Person of Christ so glorious to the church of God. The divinity of his Person shows the greatness of his love, his amazing condescension, and his wonderful humiliation. His personal dignity stamps all his mediatorial work with importance, authority, and sufficiency; it is what he is in himself, as the Son of God, and what he has done as the Mediator between God and man, that constitutes the sum and substance of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

The mediatorial capacity of Jesus Christ is the most stupendous act of Jehovah; it outshines all creation. His offices, and the characters he sustains to the church of God on earth and in heaven, are beyond all human description. There is no condition, want, or circumstance in which the weary-worn child of God can be placed; but there is in Christ such a divine fulness of grace as to meet them all, and for ages eternally, because he is the Son of God. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily; for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Not only so, the Church of God is "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, according as they are chosen in him, before the foundation of the world." His godhead is the divine storehouse and treasury of everything the church can require either before time, in time, or through eternity. Whatever Christ is in himself, personally, as the Son of God, he is all that to the church of God; he gave himself for it, having loved it and cherished it as the bride of his affections from everlasting. So in like manner, whatever Christ is in himself as the Mediator of the new covenant,

all the fulness of blessings he possesses, he possesses for the good of his church, to whom he is ever united as her covenant head.

Again, his union with the human nature is the most mysterious that can be conceived. It cannot be explained. Angels desire to look into it. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Phil. ii. 6, 7.) The *reason* why he took our nature is declared: "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." (Heb. ii. 14, 16.) It was necessary that our Lord should take our nature into personal union with himself, without which, he could not have accomplished his mediatorship. Thus it is added, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (v. 17.) The office of the high priest being purely of a mediatorial character, the priesthood and the sacrifice set forth the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man Mediator, in obtaining "eternal redemption for us."

Another great fact in Christ's personal union with our nature is, that it brings us who are regenerated by the Holy Ghost into nearness, union, and fellowship, with Jehovah in his trinity of persons. God out of Christ would be a consuming fire to us; we dare not approach abstract Deity; we are repelled by the very thought. *Incarnate Deity* we can approach. Here is the great difference, God is perfectly pure, perfectly holy, perfectly wise, and perfectly loving; but then that thought of God does not inspire the tenderness, the confidence, the love, that the thought of Christ does, just because there is in Christ a perfect manhood as well as a perfect Godhead. He has a manhood that was subjected to all our human experiences, and by which it was matured into its perfection. The simple innocency of his childhood *grew* in wisdom and in grace; "he grew into mellowed sanctity and sympathy of manhood that was perfected through

sufferings by a course of years which his human nature necessarily imposed upon him, and the humiliating condition he took necessarily subjected him." Thus, by his nature as man, he has full sympathy with us in all our experiences of sorrow, temptations, and discipline; for, says the apostle Paul, "he learned obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. v. 8.)

II. Let us now proceed in the *second* place, to notice, WHAT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HAVING THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED GIVEN TO HIM.

This we have just hinted at in the quotation from Heb. v. 8: "Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." What Jesus had to learn was as the Son of man, not as the Son of God; for as the Son of God, he is the fountain of all knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, but as to his human acquaintance and experience of those sorrows known only to man as the result and effect of sin; the things which Jesus had to learn have no reference to the eloquence or elegance of mere language with which he was to express his thoughts or his feelings to our minds. Verbal learning is not what is here meant, but that kind of learning which human knowledge and experience alone can give; and, because the Lord God sent his Son into our world that he might become incarnate, it is therefore said that he gave him the tongue of the learned. It was necessary, though he was the Son of God, that his human life should be subjected to the varied experiences, sorrows, temptations, privations, and the discipline of our own; and thus it was that he became "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." It is not enough to say that the humanity of Christ was pure and sinless; we must say further, that it was matured and perfected in the knowledge of suffering as ours is. Had it not been so, his sympathy, so far as his human nature is concerned, would have been imperfect and incomplete, because it was not derived from human acquaintance and experience; not but what *as God*, he *divinely knows* all our sorrows, and is fully acquainted with all our thoughts, and feelings, and desires." "He that formed the eye shall he not see, he that formed the ear shall he not hear, and he that giveth man knowledge shall not he know?" but *as man*, his sympathy is perfect, that is, it is human, and perfect of its kind, he has a fellow feeling with us, not partially, but perfectly,

fully and accurate. "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." (Heb. ii. 18.) Thus it was that Jesus derived his ability "to succour those that are tempted from having been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," so he became, in his humanity, *learned* in the woes of humanity; he became *perfectly* learned, for his nature was without sin, and, therefore, he had a more acute and intelligent perception of the nature of our griefs, he was made "quick of understanding;" from the fact of his human nature being sinless, he was more sensitive to bodily pain and mental grief. Our nature being sinful, our faculties of thought and feeling are, in consequence, imperfect, blunted, and obtuse; but his nature being perfect, his sufferings were therefore keener, his sense of bodily pain was the more acute and intense than ours, while to everything that was wrong he was the more sensitive than any of us could possibly be. His experience of sorrow was infinitely deeper than ours: "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger" (Lam. i. 12); "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." (Isa. liii. 10.) Having taken our nature in order to take our sin, he became "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." (Isa. liii. 3, 4.) Therefore it is that we say, Jesus had the tongue of the learned bestowed upon him in the greatest possible degree; for who can be so well qualified to sympathise with human sufferings as he, who by reason of a superlative knowledge and a more sensitive experience, is able to discourse and say the proper word in its fitting place at the proper time as our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate God? Laban said, "I have learned by experience." The man Christ Jesus could indeed say so in its fullest and deepest sense, for he has the tongue of the learned. It is no way derogatory to his character as Mediator, or to his Person as the Son of God, that he should become a learner; no, indeed, it more exalts him in the eyes of his own people, for it displays most resplendently his infinite condescension and grace to take our low estate in order to prepare and raise us to his heavenly inheritance prepared for us before the foundation of the world.

But our text says, "the tongue of the learned *was given him*." "The Lord God hath *given* me the tongue of the learned." God the Father set apart his beloved and only begotten Son for the work of the mediatorship; he was the Christ of God, the anointed of the Father: "The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me;" "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to *preach* good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted," &c. (Isa. lxi. 1-3) Here then we see his commission and authority; here is the Father's love in sending his own Son, here is the anointing of the Spirit upon him in all the plenitude of his grace, and also he is himself endowed with all the knowledge and ability that can be possibly required for the help and comfort of a poor fallen sinner in this world of suffering. We are, therefore, to understand, that it was in the dispensation of mercy to man by the covenant of grace between the persons of the triune Jehovah, that Jesus, in undertaking the mediatorial office, should become perfectly and completely qualified by his own personal experience with the knowledge of every degree of human suffering and grief in the veritable human nature which he took into personal union with himself.

Brethren, I feel I can make but a very faint and imperfect outline of what is to be understood by Jesus Christ having the tongue of the learned *given* to him by the Lord God. It is one of those deep things of God which the human mind cannot sound or fathom; "It is high, I cannot attain unto it;" I have tried to grasp it, I try to apprehend it, though I know I cannot comprehend it; but I do feel this—how unspeakably great and astonishing must be the love of God in sending forth his Son in the likeness of human flesh to redeem his Church from that gall of bitterness and that bond of iniquity into which she had sunk; for not only did the great and eternal Jehovah know the full extent of the ruin and degradation into which sin had brought mankind, and had made a full and glorious provision for the recovery of those who were ordained to eternal life, but we see he has also provided that every member of his living family, whilst in this world of sin and sorrow, shall have a flow of perfect human sympathy and comfort through the divine channel of Christ's mediatorship, the personal experience of Jesus of that state of humiliation into which his incarnation ne-

cessarily involved him. He calls it a *gift*, a divine gift, the Father's gift; for it was the Father's will that he should experimentally know the sorrows and grief to which his people should be subject through sin, and thus be capacitated to sympathise with them in every state, condition, and circumstance into which they may be brought. Well may we say with the apostle, "On the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

III. We now proceed to notice, in the *third* place, THE SCHOOL IN WHICH THE LORD JESUS BECAME INSTRUCTED AND LEARNED.

Here our materials are more ample than our time will allow us to enter fully into. It was the school of suffering affliction into which our Lord had to enter in order to become a learner; it behoved him to suffer that he might become learned in human suffering and affliction, temptation, and sorrow. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. v. 8.) Though he was the Son of God, he was not exempted from either learning obedience, or from enduring sufferings, as the Son of man. The book of Psalms alone, prophetically, contain a complete compendium of the sorrows and sufferings which pierced the holy soul of Jesus. The deeper shades of agony and grief are to be found more in that precious book, than even in the gospel narrative of those contradictions of sinners which he endured against himself; indeed, I might say, the Gospels are but the records of the *outer life* of our Lord, whilst, in the book of Psalms, and occasionally in the prophets, under the leadings and teachings of the Spirit, we have revealed to us the *inner life*, the heart breathings, the pouring out of the soul, the portraying of the sorrows which he endured; thus it is, that the book of Psalms, under divine anointing, contains such full cups of blessed sympathy and comfort for the tried believer whilst in affliction and sorrow, for they are constantly filled from the flowings of Christ's loving heart. "You know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, yet he, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty might be made rich." He was humbled in his incarnation and in all the circumstances of his birth, childhood and boyhood. He was humbled in all the circumstances of his public life and

death. He suffered in his entire humanity—in his whole spirit, soul, and body. He suffered in his body from poverty, cold, hunger, labour, fatigue, infirmity, and violence. He suffered in his soul from the revilings and reproaches of men, from the contradiction of sinners against himself; he suffered from temptations, persecutions, perils, the desertion of his friends, and from excessive sorrow; from conflict with the powers of darkness both in the wilderness and the garden of Gethsemane; he suffered from the hidings of his Father's face in the time which he said was the hour of his enemies, and of the power of darkness. How grievous, how great was his humiliation! He was taken from prison and from judgment. "In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation." What deadly sorrow seized his holy soul; what fear, what consternation and amazement, what agony! He looked for help from his selected companions in the hour of trial, but he found none; they saw something of his sorrow, but the sight of it drowned them in sleep; the sufferings of his soul were the soul of his sufferings. 'Tis true, the *nature* of his soul's sufferings were peculiar to himself alone; he bore in his own consciousness the burden and weight of all the sins of all his elect people; and not only so, he also bore the curse of the Law, his soul was in our soul's stead. "The Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all." He bore the sense of his Father's indignation against sin, for he then stood as the representative of sinners; he was made to be sin, and in his person sin was punished. He bore away the mighty load, and delivered his people from the curse. He died that they might live. His sufferings were substitutionary; his person was representative. "Behold," says the prophet, "and see, if any sorrow be like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."

It may, however, be desirable to point out more particularly the form of suffering which our Lord passed through, in order that he might acquire the experience of suffering humanity in this lower world of sin and woe. What a school was this for the divine Father to place his divine and only Son! There were lessons for him to learn in his human nature for every day of his life on earth, for so I understand the latter portion of our text, "he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear

as the learned." *Every day* of his life was a life of trial, suffering, and obedience; no respite, no relaxation, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and he, as "the captain of our salvation, was made perfect through suffering." Now, in drawing your attention to the particular circumstances of our Lord's sufferings, we can only present but a limited selection; your own knowledge of the gospel history must supply what I may happen to omit. First, we see in the very infancy of our Lord that his holy flesh was made subject to painful suffering by the act of circumcision, for being made of a woman, made under the law, it was requisite that the law should be fulfilled in his own person on his entrance into earthly life. Then we see how he was persecuted and carried out of the country through the fear of Herod's jealousy and cruelty, because he was known to be the "born king of the Jews," no other protection was afforded over his human life, apparently, than that of any other child. With regard to his boyhood, divine wisdom has drawn a veil over that period; I believe that none but Jesus himself can know the self-denial that he exercised in not being "about his Father's business," for necessarily, by Jewish law, he was subject to his reputed parents, Mary and Joseph, until he was thirty years of age, and in this respect he pleased not himself; and on the day of his showing unto Israel, he commenced his public life and ministry in going through the rite of John's baptism of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, not for himself personally, but that it became him to fulfil all righteousness. Immediately upon his public baptism, we are told, he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where he passed six weeks, being tempted of the devil, and suffering the pangs of hunger, thus body and soul were tried at one and the same time. Throughout his public ministrations "consider how he endured the contradictions of sinners against himself," "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." The world hated him because he was truth; his enemies never ceased their plotting and contrivances for ridding themselves of his teaching and presence, until they had by the foulest means accomplished their diabolical purpose, though "he went about doing good." If, again, we observe the records of his being weary in body, we are at once struck with the perfection of his manhood, for in order to "know

how to speak a word in season to him that is weary," he suffered and endured weariness too, weariness of body and weariness of spirit; he was weary in walking (John iv. 6), he was weary from long preaching, for he fell in a deep sleep in a ship during a storm; his disciples in their distress, at the peril in which he and themselves were placed, sternly demanded of him whether he had any care for them; he might have chided them, he might have rebuked them, but no, neither; he rebuked the wind, and immediately there was a calm. The God shone gracious through the man and delivered them from all their fears.

Look, too, at the numerous and various instances of his praying. Here, emphatically, the tongue of the learned was given to Jesus Christ. "Who in the days of his flesh offered up prayer and supplication with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that which he feared." Of all the acts of Christ's manhood his praying unto his Father is most mysterious and unexplainable. Unquestionably, in every instance, they were his own personal acts; he has entered into the mysteries of the believer's varied experiences, his hopes, fears, dread of the future, distress of mind and agony of soul; he truly sighed, he groaned in spirit, he felt his personal human necessities so as to feel the need of seeking the aid of his Father in heaven. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." Our griefs he felt, our afflictions he bore; he presented at his Father's throne when on earth the petitions and complaints of his people, as well as his own.

We might also point to other features of the human life of our Lord, which would strongly mark the school and schooling he went through for our redemption from sin, and for our comfort in tribulation. His being meek and lowly of heart was a pattern for those who were to learn of him and to find rest for their souls; where he found rest, there must we find rest—in God; our souls can only find rest in him, because he only is our rest; he is God-man. He became weary in his flesh, and by it he became learned in the weariness which his people experience—corporeal weariness, mental weariness, soul weariness, circumstantially and spiritually. Throughout his natural life he suffered the privations, hardships, and

inconveniences of poverty; for he had no home, no source of income, his bodily necessities were provided for him by the generosity of others; true, it was not for long, but long enough for him to know what it was: this humbleness of mind and poverty of spirit which Jesus exhibited in his temper and manner of life was derived from the school of discipline through which he passed; he sat on the lowest form. He learned obedience by the things which he suffered; he suffered in obedience to his Father's righteous will; he complied with every law and ordinance demanded of him, both by God and man; he rendered tribute to whom tribute was due, and custom to whom custom. Such is the brief and imperfect sketch of the school in which the captain of our salvation was made perfect and learned obedience; he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 8.)

IV. I now hasten to observe, in the last place, THE GREAT OBJECT CONTEMPLATED IN THE LORD GOD GIVING JESUS THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED, viz., "that he might know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."

This is the object contemplated, and in looking at it we are struck at the fact of its being the most wonderful act of commiseration and unbounded benevolence that Jehovah could possibly exercise towards his creature man: this will lead us to inquire, 1. What is the state and condition of him that is weary? 2. What is the word in season to be spoken? 3. The ability with which it is done.

1. *What is the state or condition of him that is here said to be weary?* It is the soul who is weary of self, weary of sin, weary of Satan, and weary of the world. The soul who is made to feel weary of himself feels the body of sin and death to be a daily burden, and constraining him often to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." I thank God, says the apostle, "through Jesus Christ." He knows how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; how often has he said to the sin-burdened soul, sick of self, sick of sin, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" a word like this spoken to the heart helps the believer along the rugged and uphill road. O what a weary life has a life of self been, spending its labour for that which is not bread, and its strength for that which satisfieth not. What exhaustion follows the

doing of one's own way, finding one's own pleasure, and speaking one's own words; what a weariness it is to find no satisfaction in selfish aims and selfish doings; to find continual disappointments until one is weary of self altogether! Now, it is the work of the Holy Ghost to point out the fruitlessness of sin and self, it is not until the exceeding sinfulness of sin is felt, and so becomes a hateful thing, that the soul is weary and longs to be eased of its burden; then to hear the blessed voice, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He gives rest to the weary soul by speaking a word in season, a good word, one that maketh the heart glad; he gives rest to the weary by showing he has taken away our sin, borne our sicknesses, and carried all our sorrows; he gives rest to the weary by showing that the Father has accepted Christ for a ransom, and that for his sake all his sins are forgiven, and for ever blotted out.

The believer in Jesus becomes weary because of the daily conflict within; the flesh lusteth against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh, so that he cannot do the things that he would; he is weary in the struggle and weary of it; again and again he is made to exclaim, O wretched man that I am! and though he knows he shall not be finally overcome, yet he pants for deliverance, he sighs for help, his groanings are often deep and unutterable, and if it were not for the inward aids of the Holy Spirit he would, indeed, be overcome; indeed, sometimes the poor soul has very grave doubts whether there is any real work begun at all; sin prevails, is so strong, never ceases the strife, and grace apparently so weak, that there seems, at times, a moral certainty of falling some day by the hands of this Saul, although, like David, anointed to the kingdom. But so it is, though it is poor comfort for me to tell thee, poor soul, that this conflict will never cease; but then thou shalt have strength for thy day, for the eternal God is thy refuge, and he knows how to speak a word in season to him that is weary in the conflict.

The believer, too, is of often weary with many apparently unanswered prayers, with many disappointing providences, with long bodily afflictions, weary with his own cryings, "Lord, how long!" Sometimes the Lord suffers oppression to be long continued—long seasons of darkness, until, with Job, the tried one says, "My soul is weary of my life;" sometimes the believer seems to get weary with

long seeking to grow in grace, sees no progress in the divine life, but apparently gets weaker and weaker—the work of grace seems to decline and bids fair to die out, but the Lord knows how to speak a word in season to such weary souls; he will come and save his people from all their fears; he will help them and deliver them; “he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.”

The poor backslider, made to feel that he has erred and strayed like a lost sheep, feels weary with his own ways, he is made to hate himself and to say, What have I to do any more with idols; he has had enough of the world, until he has become sick of it; he has had enough of himself, until he has become sick of himself; weary and worn, when once more he looks again to the holy temple, and finds the Lord has a word in season for him, and restores him to the joy of his salvation.

There are also those who all their lifetime are subject to bondage, through fear of death. Jesus has a word in season for such; he will comfort those standing on the verge of the mystic river, the waters shall be cut off, and they shall pass over dryshod.

2. *The word in season to be spoken.* Solomon says (Prov. xv. xxiii.), “A word spoken in due season, how good is it,” and (xxv. 11), “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” “How forcible are right words.” (Job vi. 25). “Heaviness in the heart maketh it stoop, but a good word maketh it glad.” (Prov. xii. 25).

Here we see the value of a word in season—a word in season is when it is wanted; a proper word at the right time properly spoken. As when a man is cast down, it is proper that he should be cheered by a cheering word; a mourner should be comforted and sympathised with; if one is in despair of God’s mercy, a word of hope is needed; if one is in darkness, a suitable word is felt desirable; if one is thrust down, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand—a word will do it: times of sorrow and grief require suitable words to soothe and to alleviate—times of rejoicing and gladness have their fitting and appropriate words for responding. Words of kindness, O how cheering to the mourning, sad, desponding heart! words of kindness to the weary, to the forlorn, the oppressed, the forsaken, the poor, how good, when spoken in a kindly manner! These are words in season, and Jesus knows how

to speak a kind word in season to him that is weary and way-worn in the path of tribulation; he speaks to the heart, he speaks to the purpose, for his word is with power, and when he speaks peace, who shall bring trouble? Our friends may try to comfort us, they often fail; they miss their mark, they don't know how to speak a word in season; their will may be good, but they are lacking in the power which Jesus alone possesses. He only "knows how to speak a word in season to him that is weary;" he only knows how and when to apply his own promises to the tried believer's heart. Poor Job's friends, what miserable comforters they were! they saw that his grief was very great, so great that they could not say one word of pity or sympathy; they did not know how to speak a word in season. They themselves were overcome with grief; they could feel pity, no doubt, but could apply no relief. Not so our Jesus, for whatever may be the measure of our affliction or misery, he knows how to abound in consolations towards us, and this leads me to notice

3. *The ability with which it is done.* "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, implying that he has the wisdom and the power. (2 Peter ii. 9.) What a precious portion of God's word is this, "The Lord knows how!" Many times have I felt its preciousness, its sweetness, and its power. "The Lord knows how;" my soul has hung on that word in the windy storm and tempest, it has been like an anchor, sure and steadfast. "The Lord knows how," by his own personal experience; it was in the school of temptation that he became so distinguished a learner; it was in the school of suffering that he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Never was there so perfect and ripe a scholar—perfect through sufferings; having been tempted, he is able to succour those that are tempted. He knows how to speak a word in season to all such. He does it with an almighty power, with an irresistible power, with a sure and certain power, with an effectual power. He speaks to the heart, he knows the case perfectly and how to treat it. He has a divine knowledge, a fulness of knowledge, as well as a comprehensive understanding derived from his own human experience; he therefore knows *what* is best to say, *when* it is best to say it, and *how* to apply it, for he is infinite in wisdom, as well as in power and knowledge, and his infinite love and sympathy will prompt him to

speak a word in season to all wounded, afflicted, mourning, weary souls. He knows how to speak pardon to the guilty and returning penitent; he knows how to speak peace to the troubled heart; he knows how to speak comfort to all that mourn, for the Spirit of the Lord God is upon him, because the Lord hath anointed him to *preach* good tidings to the meek;" "he hath sent me (saith Jesus) to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." (Isa. lxi. 1-3.)

All power is given to our Lord Jesus Christ, both in heaven and in earth; hence he gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increases strength. The words he speaks are spirit and they are life; he speaks with power, for where the word of a king is, there is power. Never man spake like the Lord Jesus, for his word was with power. When his voice was heard on this earth, the people wondered at the gracious words that proceeded from his lips: the same voice is still heard on earth; though he is in heaven, it is heard in the remotest recesses of the conscience; some of you, I doubt not, have often said or sung, "No voice but thine can give me rest, or satisfy my heart." The words of Jesus will raise the dead—it was the words of Jesus that raised me from a death of sin. "Search the Scriptures, search the Scriptures," sounded in my ears for many days until my stout rebellious heart was broken, and I became an humble suppliant for his mercy and grace. The words of Jesus will hush the tempest, I have proved it again and again—poor tempest-tossed soul, it is only for him to say to the winds and waves, "Peace, be still," and immediately there shall be a calm. The prince of the air must obey his voice; his word will cast out devils, it will confute the disputing sophist, it will condemn the wicked, but it will save the righteous. When we are in any trouble, our own dear friends, as we have just said of Job's, often prove wanting in ability, for they don't know how to speak a word in season; they try to do so, they think they know how, but

their knowledge is so imperfect, and their capacity is so small, that they fail, miserably fail, unless the Lord condescends to own their effort and conveys the comfort which they desire to impart. O! this should lead us to look to Christ alone, and say, "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him; from him cometh my salvation."

They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. He strengthens them by communicating the supply of his Spirit. "In the day of my trouble, I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and he *answered* me; he strengthened me with strength in my soul." The words of the Lord Jesus are divine words, founded in his human experience, but spoken with almighty power, with divine wisdom, in divine love; hence his sympathy is perfect, and being applied with a divine power, secures the end designed. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The soul finds rest in Christ, is stayed upon him, and has peace; for "if he speaks a promise once, the eternal grace is sure." The words of the Lord are *sure* words, *tried* words, words spoken out of his human heart, from his own experience, his own personal trials; all his sufferings, temptations, privations, scornings, buffetings, cruel mockings, or whatever has been inflicted by men, devils, sin, or from the hidings of his Father's face in the great day of his fierce anger, have qualified him for speaking a word in season to him that is weary. Oh ye weary, worn-out sinners, who are now passing through the same school of affliction, though in a lower degree, you are the objects of his pity, love, and grace; it is to you he has a word in season; to the broken-hearted sinner he applies the balm of Gilead, his own precious blood, and binds up their wounds; in every case it shall be found "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to men; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it; "For in that he himself hath suffered, he is able to succour them that are tempted;" "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

Brethren, tried believers, what think ye of Christ? Is

he not a most glorious and precious Christ? Have you not found him to have the tongue of the learned, and to have spoken a word in season to you? I am sure he has to me, and I must declare it to the honour of his name. He speaks salvation to the sinner, feeling his lost, ruined, undone condition in himself; he says to such a soul, "I am thy salvation." Seeking sinner, is this the word you are longing to hear? or, are you weary with seeking rest where it cannot be found? in your own methods, your fancied meetness, your own self-righteousness, your own performances, vows, and resolutions? Now, if you are weary in such works of the flesh, and are desiring to look to Christ alone to speak a word in season, know then of a surety, he will do it; ere long you shall find rest for your soul; he is faithful that has promised, and he will do it; he knows *how*; he has all the ability that your case can possibly require. He spoke a word in season to the man sick of the palsy: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are all forgiven thee." He spoke a word in season to the trembling woman who came behind him, "Daughter, go in peace, thy faith hath made thee whole." He spoke a word in season to the leper who came to him for healing; he came believing in his ability, but not assured of his willingness—"I will, be thou clean." Perhaps some of you have no doubt of his ability, but fear his willingness towards you. To such he says, "Be not afraid, only believe." Perhaps you respond, "Lord, I would believe, help my unbelief?" Now, do you keep there; do not move from that spot; the Lord will speak a word in season, never fear. Perhaps some of you are in circumstantial troubles, deep waters, the fiery furnace. Well, the dear Lord has a word in season for you; he will not be unmindful of his covenant; he has the control of all the elements of nature and the circumstances of life, and, remember too, the hearts of all men are in his hand; he will not only speak a good word, but it shall be spoken at the time that it is most wanted; see that you are waiting upon God; trust his wisdom, trust his love, trust his power; his covenant stands engaged to help you, and to bring you through; your past experience has proved that if you have heard his voice in a time of trouble, it has done you good, and it has proved a word in season indeed. It is the will of God the Father that you shall have a word of comfort in your affliction, for he gave

his own dear Son the tongue of the learned that he "might know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Was ever love like this! Amen.

With regard to our Anniversary, which for the fourth time we now observe, I wish we could give some pleasing account. So far as the attendance of hearers is concerned, as you may see, we have but little to encourage us; and, as for spiritual fruit, that testimony which God gives to the word of his grace, which is what I can only be contented with, I fear there is still less ground for encouragement; and unless some fruit is borne to my labour in this place, I do not think I shall be justified in remaining; still, we will try a little longer; perhaps the Lord may shine in upon us yet, and send us some prosperity. If so, well; we shall soon forget our long night of toil.

Next Friday, known as Good Friday, morning and evening, Mr. Dangerfield, of Devizes, has kindly promised to preach two sermons. I make no doubt, but that, as usual, some of our friends from Zoar and Gower Street chapels will be present, and cheer us with their countenance and support. Our cash matters trouble us the least; what we want is the Lord's help and blessing upon us as a church and congregation. If we have this, the pecuniary supplies will be quite a secondary consideration. Friends, pray for us, and when you leave, kindly leave a testimony of your sympathy with us by contributing to the collection. Amen.

N.B.—The substance of this sermon was preached also at Providence Chapel, Chichester, on the following Lord's day evening, April 21st.

THE REALITY
OF
OUR LORD'S HUMAN NATURE,
VERIFIED BY THE VARIOUS FACTS AND
CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS LIFE ON EARTH.

A SERMON

PREACHED ON BEHALF OF THE AGED PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY,
AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, MILE END,

On Lord's Day Morning, December 22nd, 1867.

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—
PHILIPPIANS II. 6, 7, 8.

MY mind has of late been much occupied in dwelling upon the reality of the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ—namely, that he possessed a true human soul, with all its faculties and capabilities common to mankind; that he possessed human sympathies arising out of his own personal experience with men and the things of men, and that his bodily organisation and powers were the same as with man in common, sin only excepted. It is a subject which, I think, is not sufficiently entered into by the people of God generally; they believe it, I know, but I much question whether they live upon it as they ought to do, especially that portion of the living family whose peculiar lot it is to enter the kingdom through much tribulation.

I am led to take the verses which I have read by way of a text, as the foundation of the remarks that I may make upon this important and interesting subject proposed for your meditation. It is a wonderful scripture, for it gives us a glorious account of the dignity of Christ's
No. 26.

person and of his equality with God; and also his humiliation, his sufferings, and his death, are thereby most explicitly declared. May the Lord grant us his help and blessing in considering some of the precious truths contained in this portion of his holy word, and that we may each experimentally "know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." If this be granted, I shall have but little need to urge upon you the necessity of ministering to the external wants of our poor brethren and sisters, through the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society.

But before I proceed to enter upon my subject—the reality of Christ's human nature, I shall notice the first portion of the text, "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Few passages in the New Testament have given rise to more discussion than this. Its importance on the question of the Godhead of Christ as the Son of God will be seen at once. His glory is spoken of substantially and essentially, as his *nature*, his own, underived, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. The expression "Form of God," is here used in contrast with "Form of servant" in the next verse, and has no reference to his bodily shape whatever; the meaning is, that what Jesus Christ was in his incarnate state, *truly man*, in like manner he was truly God prior to his incarnation. He was in the form of God, true and very God; so also he was true and very man in the form of a servant, the subordinate condition of a servant was undertaken by him, though in his personality he was the Son of God. The union of the two natures, the human with the divine, is the great mystery of godliness. Possessing a true human soul, as well as a true human body, and knowing in his own personal consciousness that he was God, the Son of God, he therefore, in his complex person, the God-man, *thought* it not robbery to be equal with God: that is, he knew in his own mind, that it was not derogatory to his person as the Son of God, to assert his equality with God the Father; hence he declared that he and his Father were *essentially* one, though personally distinct. His taking our nature was for the purpose of becoming our Mediator, which office, though it made him the servant of his Father in the covenant of grace, nevertheless did not alter the relationship

in which he stood with the Father, nor detract from the dignity he possessed as the Son of God. The glory of his Person is his nature and essence. The Son of God co-essential, co-equal, and co-eternal with the Father. Therefore we see that his voluntary humiliation in taking the form of a servant is the more remarkable and condescending. He became the servant of the Father that he might be the Saviour of the Church. The safety and glory of the Church depend mainly upon the capacity and grace of its Redeemer and Covenant Head. What Christ is in himself, and what he is to us, by the appointment of the Father, unite in presenting to our faith a most glorious view of the love of God in so great and unspeakable a gift as his dear Son for our redemption, and in providing so solid a ground for our trust and triumph. "In this was manifest the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." (1 John iv. 9.) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

I shall now attempt to consider *a series of facts and circumstances* intimately associated with the life of our Lord Jesus when on earth: this, I think, will illustrate and elucidate our subject better than by taking a few general heads and making subdivisions. My desire is, if possible, to set forth these various facts as so many links, so as to form one chain of argument which will exhibit the doctrine of the reality of our Lord's human nature in a light that may be easily perceived by the plainest seeker and lover of divine truth. My earnest prayer is, that the Holy Ghost may be pleased to take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto us, for it is only in his light that we see light: without it, all our preaching is vain and unprofitable.

THE FIRST FACT we have to notice is, *the incarnation of the Son of God.*

"Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." This glorious fact lies at the threshold of the Christian faith. "The incarnation of the Eternal Word made the unseen God visible to mortal eyes, and so enabled mankind to see, as they had never seen before, the glory of God." Now it is easy to see that by *the Word* the beloved dis-

ciple means the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the second person in the glorious Trinity; under this name he is frequently spoken of in other parts of his writings, as in 1 *Épistle*, v. 7: "There are three that bare record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost;" and in *Rev.* xix. 13, he tells us most emphatically, or rather, it is a revelation made to him, his name is called "THE WORD OF GOD." 'Tis true, the more general name which the apostle uses—indeed, I may say, his darling phrase is, the Son of God, for so he was called at his birth, to intimate his divine dignity, and what a mighty Saviour he should be; and here we must remark, his incarnation was not more the cause of his being the Son than it was of his being God. It was a declaration of his title to which he had a divine right long ere the purpose existed for which he became incarnate. The incarnation was a manifestation of his own personality, as well as its being the manifestation of his Father's design to destroy the works of the devil; it was God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (*Rom.* viii. 3.) Dr. Guyse, in his sermon on preaching Christ, says, "I take the *Son of God* to be a title originally founded in a necessary eternal generation, which is peculiar to him and altogether above our conception as to the manner of it, but according to which he is, and always was, partaker of the same nature and essential perfections with the Father, personally distinguished from him, and necessarily co-existent with him." The title, therefore, THE SON OF GOD, I regard as the highest title of our Lord Jesus, and the most proper to use *in ordinary*, in order to keep up in our minds right and exalted views of him as God our Saviour; evidently it was his title before his incarnation and apart from the office which he undertook as our Mediator. Right thoughts of *the person* of the Son of God will, under the teachings of his Spirit, keep us from having wrong thoughts of *his work* as our Mediator, for if we be wrong in our views of his personality as the Son of God, we shall be in danger of trusting the matter of our salvation to some imaginary God, or superior creature called God, which the heated imaginations of Arians and semi-Arians have cunningly devised to foster their own pernicious notions, because they hate the light of God's own word and will not come to it. Brethren,

be not deceived by men's fancies: men who are taught of God hold the faith of God's elect.

But let us proceed. In taking the nature of man, it is evident Jesus also took a human soul—that is, such a soul as ours; that is, in its natural attributes, peculiar and proper to men, its mental and moral powers, sin, of course, excepted; and, indeed, without a human soul, he would not have been truly a man, though in the form of a man; his human body was not governed by the Deity, as appears from our text, “*He thought it not robbery to be equal with God* ;” that is, in his state of manhood, he though it not robbery to be equal with God his Father. Indeed, it is quite absurd to suppose that the Incarnation of the Word was simply a divine soul in a human body, for when Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane, it is said, “and, being in an agony, he prayed the more earnestly, saying, Father, not my will but thine be done”—a sentence which at once shows that he was the Son of God, yet possessing a human soul. The two natures, though mysteriously united in his person, were essential for us as our Mediator, Substitute, and Saviour. For if his human nature was not wholly body and soul a true man, then his work as our Redeemer is incomplete, and we have no sure foundation for our hope of salvation. But, observe, there is a positive reality in the Incarnation, as appears from the fact in the *time* of the conception to the birth, all was natural, the ordinary time of human gestation, the phrase *born of a woman* implies so much, and the history as recorded fully proves it, as much as if medical men had technically described it: Jesus was born of Mary the wife of Joseph, in Bethlehem.

Wonderful also are the *circumstances* of the Incarnation. By the ordering of Providence, Joseph and his wife are led to Bethlehem, their own city, the city where David their ancestor was born. In this city Jesus was born, born king of the Jews, for he was the first-born son of Mary, the last of the house and lineage of David. and therefore he is, and ever will be, the rightful heir to David's throne. He came in the form of a servant, the son of a carpenter—that is, so far as the world is concerned. In his human nature he was as much a servant, being the reputed son of a carpenter, as any other tradesman would be, for they are all hired or employed for the service they can render, and are but servants, for the time being, strictly speaking.

So, in his divine nature, the Son of God undertook to be the Mediator and Redeemer of his Church, a service which he only, being the Son of God, could undertake. Wondrously in his complex nature, as God and Man, he is his Father's servant and our Mediator. In Bethlehem, in circumstances the most ill-adapted, and miserably inconvenient; in a stable, a mere hovel or shed for cattle, Mary, the Virgin mother, brought forth her *first-born Son*, a phrase that quite settles the question that she had afterwards other children. The holy child Jesus was wrapped in swaddling-clothes, laid in a manger, there being no bed for the poor mother, save only the litter or straw intended for the cattle.

How singular *the signs* that prognosticated his birth; the astronomers are guided by a brilliant star; they trace his place of nursing; they inquire, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" they offer him gifts fit for a king; the shepherds are *divinely* directed by signs easily to be traced by such persons, the only case of the kind in Bethlehem. What a revelation of his divine person was made to these men? They were not so vain in their imaginations as to suppose that, by his birth, he became the Son of God, because it was a title then declared. No, they received the truth in the love of it: "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, *which is Christ the Lord.*" He was the Son of God before he became the son of Mary; he was the Son given before he was the child born; he was the only-begotten Son of God before he became the Christ of God, or the man Christ Jesus. Because he was God's only-begotten Son, he was anointed to be the Father's servant in the work of salvation. Being the Lord's anointed, he became incarnate. He became incarnate because he was sent; he was sent because he was the Son of God.

Such was the infantine state of him whose goings forth have been from everlasting. Before all worlds, in the bosom of his Father, he was the Almighty I AM. The incarnation was not the loss or deprivation of the Godhead. No; it was the closest possible linking of the divine and human natures in one person; each nature distinct, yet both for ever united. His weakness and poverty of circumstances were seen in the stable, but his praise as Christ the Lord was sung by angels in the adjoining field. He made himself of no reputation, but

took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. The ancient of days became the infant of days; though the worlds were being upheld by the word of his power, yet in his birth he was humanly weak as other infants; he was upheld and carried in the arms of his mother; he was suckled, soothed, caressed, cradled, and cared for as other infants are. Wonderful! wonderful! the incarnation of the Son of God.

“No less Almighty at his birth
Than on his throne supreme;
His shoulders held up heaven and earth
When Mary held up him.”

Again. That Jesus had a true human body is evident from its being called a body: “A body hast thou prepared me” (Heb. x. 5); and from the description that is given of it *as flesh and blood* (Heb. ii. 14), the same kind with that which the children redeemed by him are partakers of. And after his resurrection, Jesus spoke of his body as consisting of flesh and bones of the members proper to the human body. (Luke xxiv. 39.)

And that he had a true human soul is also evident; for he, as a child, *increased* in wisdom as well as in stature. His soul was developed by degrees the same as his body. His soul as a man was subject to the same passions and emotions of love, joy, desire, hope, displeasure, grief, and sorrow, as ourselves, only without sin, either in himself as its cause, or in the exercise of such emotions. We read of his rejoicing in spirit, of his being grieved and troubled, of his sighing deeply and groaning in himself, of his being sorrowful even unto death. All these and such like expressions show that he had a true human soul and a true human body. Each was developed in their parts and faculties as his years increased. “He was made in all points like unto his brethren, sin excepted.” So then his human soul had no pre-existence to his body, as some most absurdly and blindly say.

THE SECOND FACT. *His Childhood and Boyhood.* We read “It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren.” (Heb. ii. 17.) Of John the Baptist, he is spoken of as being *born of women*—that is, successively so, having a carnal father who was born of his mother; but of Christ it is said, “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son *made of a woman*, made under the law,” &c. (Gal. iv. 4.) Here we see an

important distinction, and it proves both the *purity* of his human nature and the *reality* of it; for, as the substitute of his Church, he must undergo, when the days of his mother's purification were completed, the rite of circumcision. This rite was the sign of a covenant between God and his people, the Jews; and in the Son of God's submission to it, we have a strong link in the chain of evidence borne to his perfect humanity. He as the Head of his Church represented it. In him his people were circumcised under that law; he underwent presentation to God at the temple, and was ceremoniously redeemed. In infancy he is treated as a sinner; he suffered the infliction of pain, though born sinless; being made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law; he came under the curse, for he was made a curse for us; he was holy while unborn, holy when born, but the law must be fulfilled. His circumcision was not only a national rite, but also a substitutionary act on behalf of the Church of God. But I think I can give this subject considerable more point by quoting an extract from one of Mr. Philpot's early sermons. On a former occasion I approved of it so much that I inserted it as a foot-note in the second edition of my sermon on the "Sonship of Christ." I wish now to incorporate it in this sermon, for I think, as it regards the human pre-exterian doctrine, it is unanswerable.

"The dream of the pre-exterians is utterly and directly contrary to the truth of God; and those that are wrapped up in this delusion found much of their argument on this 8th chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon. I call it a delusion, and a dangerous delusion too, because it strikes at the very root of the atonement. For, if Christ's human soul existed before the foundation of the world, then that human soul of Christ was never under the law; but we read that he was made of a woman, *made under the law*." But if that soul existed before the law was given, there could be no subsequent *ex post facto* operation of the law upon that soul; and if it was never under the law, then Christ never could have wrought out the righteousness demanded by the law; and therefore it strikes a deadly blow at Christ's righteousness and Christ's atonement." *Vide* No. 364 "Penny Pulpit," 6th ed.

To return. The presentation of the infant Saviour was attended by two very remarkable coincidences in the

recognition of him as the Lord's Christ, the Simeon blessing God that he had seen the consolation of Israel, the salvation of God; Anna the prophetess, the first preacher of Christ in the temple at Jerusalem, the city of the great king. These two persons thus became important and independent witnesses to the identifying the person of the child born and the son given with the prophecies that had long before been made concerning him. The parents return to Bethlehem to live in privacy, as they had hitherto, but the birth, the presentation, and the attendant circumstances, have become matters of public interest. Herod the king secretly purposes to destroy him, but Joseph is warned, and the helpless babe is taken to Egypt by flight. Apparently his human life was no more protected than other infants. At length, he is brought back; he lives with his parents at Nazareth; he was not educated at any of the national or public schools of learning, but was mysteriously secluded and unnoticed, as other boys of poor working parents usually are. At twelve years of age he drew the attention of the doctors at Jerusalem by asking them questions, an indubitable evidence of the growth and development of the intellectual faculties, and that his soul could not have been in a pre-existent state. Jesus evidently, though but a youth, had his mind engaged in the work which his Father gave him to do; but, according to Jewish law and custom, he remained subject to his reputed parents, returned with them to Nazareth, and remained unknown to the world until he was thirty years of age. What an amazing cross the Saviour had to take up in his youth; what extraordinary self-denial; he knew he must be about his Father's business, for, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy will is within my heart." But no, the public exercise of his work must be retarded for eighteen years. Eighteen years of such close self-denial as must have astonished angels. With heaven and earth at his command, he postpones preaching righteousness in the great congregation, and refrains his lips, until he in his manhood is no longer subject to Joseph and Mary. A veil is divinely drawn over the period between his adolescence and manhood. Of his childhood there is no record, except that he "grew and waxed strong in spirit," as healthy boys of good constitution do; he was "filled with wisdom,

and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke ii. 40.) Here is his natural growth in stature, strength of body and mind; beauty of person, well-formed and regular features, with pleasing expression of countenance; he *increased in wisdom*, no undue precocity of intellect that prematurely subsides into inanity of mind, no folly was bound up in his heart, no childishness of manners, no boyish mischievousness, no sinful thoughts ever entered his mind; he had no need of correction; he grew in favour with God. The human growth of Jesus was pleasing to his Father, the more so, because he was the only sinless child that had ever lived upon earth, his boyhood was without sin; he was full of grace and truth; no man had ever beheld such a youth before, or ever will again. He grew in favour with men; the more he was known, the more he was loved. Men saw in him, man in its native pristine purity. Men saw in him what would have been seen universally if man had never sinned. Oh what a lovely world this would have been had sin never entered!

We see, therefore, in the boyhood of Jesus, a loveliness of character that commands our wonder and admiration, especially at the exercise of self-denial in suspending his own will to execute his Father's business. Nevertheless, he asserted his divine Sonship, and claimed its prerogatives. "He learned obedience by the things which he suffered." For even Christ pleased not himself. (Rom. xv. 3.)

THE THIRD FACT. *His Temptation in the Wilderness.* We now approach the entrance of the public life of the dear Redeemer. Every step is full of wonders. The baptism of John was a baptism of repentance, a change in the dispensation, a reformation, a turning from dead works to serve the living God. Yet we see Jesus coming to John for baptism; he needed no repentance, for he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; but he thought it right to pass through that solemn ordinance in order to fulfil all righteousness, and so honoured the rite of immersion as a divine institution. We read, that as he went up straightway out of the water, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him. The bystanders heard a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Here was God's own testimony to the divine Sonship of Christ;

the ordinance of believers' baptism honoured by the divine approval, and an example set of humble obedience to all the followers of the Lamb that they should walk in his steps.

Our Lord is now, at his baptism, consecrated, set apart in his human nature, and future life, for the public ministry, for the fulfilment of his Father's business: "It behoved him, in all respects, to be made like unto his brethren," and that he might be fitted and qualified for his work, and be a merciful and faithful priest in things pertaining to God, he must needs be tempted of the devil. He is therefore led by the Spirit, or, as it reads in one place, "immediately the Spirit *driveth* him into the wilderness." Here he endured a fast of forty days, and was among wild beasts. Afterwards, it is said, *he hungered*. Here is a proof of his humanity; his body needed food; here is a reality that cannot be denied, though it is unusual for persons in the present state of things to feel a desire or craving for food after so long an abstinence, for loss of appetite and exhaustion usually supervene. During the whole of this period Jesus was tempted of the evil spirit. Only three of the most prominent assaults are recorded. It was a conflict which had no human witness, and therefore the circumstances must have been related to the disciples on some fitting occasion. We know of one instance when Jesus said, "I beheld Satan, as lightning fall from heaven." The lesson we derive is, we see our Lord's triumph over the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Here is Satan disputing with Christ himself on all points as to his own divine Sonship. Satan himself had no doubt of the fact, but he hurled his fiery darts in order to wound and to distress the holy soul of the Son of God in the extremity of human weakness. His being thus tempted as recorded, clearly proves he was really a man; his victory over the tempter clearly proves the impeccability of his nature, and is an earnest of his final and complete conquest over the devil. The temptation qualified him by actual human experience to pity, sympathise, and help us as fellow-men, with power above man because he is God. The result of this human compassion wrought experimentally in the soul of Christ was a further reason why he submitted to the temptation—to wit, that his Church might have the greatest comfort and encouragement in expecting help at

the throne of grace in every time of need. This temptation gives us a signal instance of Satan's subtlety and effrontery, and shows what temptations we are to expect, what weapon to use, and how to use it. If the object of the first two temptations was to discover whether Jesus was the Son of God, and that of the third whether he was the true Christ, as some seem to think, then Satan had a most complete overthrow, and must have been fully convinced that he had nothing in Jesus the Son of God.

We ourselves are hereby taught that there is no sin so gross which Satan will not tempt the best of men to commit; and we have the consolation of knowing that Jesus has an experimental knowledge of the temptations themselves which try his people, for like, as in his own case, there is no human eye to witness the conflict, nor is it in the power of human sympathy to make a way of escape, or to mitigate the suffering; but Jesus can, we know he can, and does sympathise with his tempted brethren in the wilderness, and that he is able to subdue or moderate temptation: "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." We know too, that all power is in his hand, and that he stands engaged to be with his people in all their trials, to give strength according to the day, and also that through him we shall come off more than conquerors.

THE FOURTH FACT. *His Sympathy and Friendship.* This subject is as a Garden of Eden. Every plant and flower is of the choicest kind, not a thorn, not a weed, not a worm; here all the air is pure, serene, for it is love.

The friendship of Jesus Christ with mortals on earth is very remarkable. Of John, it is said, "that disciple whom Jesus loved." Peter and James were intimate friends, yet not bosom friends as John; his other disciples were, as we might say, but companions. The Bethany family had a large share of his love. He loved each of them, that is, with a human preference beyond others. He enjoyed their society, and when at Jerusalem or near their locality, made their house his home. His journeys and his whereabouts were known to this family; for when the brother fell sick, the sisters knew where to send for him, and they knew how to touch his feelings. His divinity and his humanity are here strangely conjoined in that sentence, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." In that word "friend," as he uttered it, Oh, what power!

what sweetness! what music! such as the world never knew after sin came into it. It was such friendship as would have been known and felt throughout the world if sin had not entered. The scene at the grave shows how truly he was a loving man. The Jews saw it and remarked it. Jesus yielded to the power of affection and sympathy which struggled for vent. He suffered compassion and sorrow to lay hold of him. He felt the loss of his beloved friend Lazarus. He wept with those who wept; he found relief in tears; it was not unmanly to weep, but it showed that he was a man, and had all the feelings of a man sensitive to those emotions which bereavement and sorrow call forth; but when he spoke out, "Lazarus, come forth," it showed he was God.

There are several other instances which might be noticed under this head, but time forbids. We will, however, just notice his condescension and urbanity in his discourse with Nicodemus, who came at an appointed leisure time to seek truth and to have it explained. Oh, what patience and kindness marked every explanation given, and what choice revelations were made of spiritual things which the learned listener had not heard before; what an unfolding of the rich treasures of Gospel grace to his wondering view. How delightful the thought! the same Jesus, in the same temper and with the same grace, is ever ready to open the minds of any of his followers who feel their lack of wisdom.

His interview with the woman of Samaria: what a tone of human kindness in his communication! how it was underlaid with divine power—unseen, but not unfelt. No severe rebuke for her manner of life. His exposure of it was its own rebuke. He spoke out so manly, brotherly, openly, frankly, freely, candidly, truthfully, and with such persuasiveness, that she was disarmed of prejudice. She called her neighbours, they conversed with him, they liked the stranger Jew. He entered their city, he discoursed with them of the things pertaining to salvation, they received his word, and he was hosted by them, many believing to the salvation of the soul. What encouragement to every class of characters who are led simply to hear the word of Christ without the prejudices of nationality, class feeling, or a previous course of life!

So, with regard to the woman accused of adultery, what kindness of manner towards one who had been dragged

about and exposed with needless severity ! what wondrous words of grace he spake to her : "Neither do I condemn thee ; go, and sin no more." He would not take the judge's seat, but he advised her for her good. I warrant you, she never did in the sense he meant ; for I believe divine grace took possession of her heart, and she became a chaste person, and a humble follower of Jesus.

Again, look at the case of the beggar born blind. Jesus was hasting away to escape being stoned, yet he courageously and dexterously passes through their very midst, for no one would then throw stones amongst each other ; but, wonderful to relate, as he passed by, he saw this blind man, he stops, his disciples put a question as to the cause, but Jesus takes in hand *the cure* : the disciples were speculative, but Jesus is practical. Here, in the midst of confusion and excitement, the violent mob at his heels, he is found doing a work of mercy which only a God could do. He heals the blind man with all the calmness of spirit imaginable.

His compassion for the multitude and strangers is well known by the frequent records we have in the New Testament. He "went about doing good." He fed thousands of hungry men and women. He healed the sick and cast out devils. True, he did all this because he was God ; but it showed he was also man. He felt for them ; he himself had been hungry, he knew the miseries of the diseased, the lunatic, and the demoniac. He healed all who came unto him : his compassionate heart refused no case that came under his observation.

Last, but not least, his care for his agonising mother, her soul being pierced as with a sword, whilst he was suffering on the cross. How thoughtful of her earthly comfort for the future. He makes his will in her favour, and appoints his beloved friend John to be his executor. My friends, we must take hold of these facts in our Lord's history. Jesus is still our friend, and he is with us still through all our journeyings in this wilderness state. He is at all times ready for our help and for our supply. These things are not mere matters of history of what has been ; they are recorded for our present comfort and support, "that we, through faith and comfort in the Scriptures, might have hope." Jesus is our friend, "a friend that loveth at all times and sticketh closer than a brother." And as Mr. Hart most sweetly says—

"That human heart he still retains,
 Though thron'd in highest bliss;
 He feels each tempted member's pains;
 For our affliction's his."

THE FIFTH FACT. *His endurance of contradiction of sinners against himself.* In this portion of our subject we shall see the Redeemer travelling in the greatness of his strength. Manhood without sin. Notice first, John vii. 5, "For neither did his brethren believe in him." Who can tell the pain he endured to know that his own family did not receive him as the Christ or as a prophet? He knew and felt what it was to be a prophet without honour in his house. He told them their true character, but scorned to notice their base insinuations. Mark iii., 21. When much thronged and people pressed upon him, and had no leisure to eat; when *his friends* heard of it, they came out to lay hold on him, for they said *he is beside himself*, meaning to take him away from society, and put him under the care of a keeper, looking upon him as a maniac. Matt. xii. 46-50. His mother and his family seemed to have had no respect for him, his teaching, or his hearers, yet he endured their impertinent interruptions; but, oh, how dignified he disowned all such relationships where the will of his Father was disregarded!

Luke xvi. 16. What endurance under derision! The Pharisees *derided* him, laughed at him, hooted him, shouted at him, bantered him, reproached him as to his former occupation, *the carpenter*, and his want of Rabbinical learning; but he endured their banter and ridicule, turning their reproaches upon them in a way for their own good. "When he was reviled he reviled not again." "He made himself of no reputation."

Matt. xii. 24. Beelzebub was a vile name which the Pharisees gave him, meaning the greatest fiend, the foulest, the filthiest fiend. They called him gluttonous and a winebibber. This they did to lower him in the eyes of the people, to degrade him below a brute beast, worthy of being stoned as a disgraceful, untameable boy. (See Deut. xxi. 20, 21.) He was charged with madness. (John x. 20.) "He hath a devil, and is mad. Why hear ye him?" A man that ought to be kept in confinement and unnoticed. (John viii. 13.) He was charged with falsehood. This he repelled, as all truthful men ought to.

do. Falsehood must be checked if we have regard to truth and our own character. It is not always good advice, "live it down." We ought to vindicate ourselves whenever we have the opportunity.

His ministry and doctrine were entirely rejected by his own people, nationally, especially by the rulers. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." "Have any of the rulers believed on him?" His own townspeople were strongly prejudiced against him; and they were strengthened in their unbelief from the fact that his mother, his own brethren and his sisters were all against him. (See Matt. xiii. 54, 58.) He was reproached because of his former trade as a carpenter, as being derogatory in their eyes to a teacher of religion; but he turned their reproach to a practical improvement by advising them to take his yoke upon themselves, for his yoke was easy and his burden light. He was constantly being found fault with. See how he endured it. (Matt. xv. 1, 3.) If he was *praised*, it gave offence. He was found fault with for pronouncing absolution of sins. The ruler of a synagogue hit off his indignation at him for healing a crooked-backed woman on the sabbath. He was murmured against because he mixed with the lower classes of society. The world, that is, society in common, hated him. (John xv. 18, 24.) Professors of religion aimed to entangle him, and to confuse him (Matt. xxii. 15) as to the tribute-money, seeking a sign from heaven. They tried to provoke him, to put him out of temper, lying in wait to catch something out of his mouth; but he endured it all with a calmness and placidity of spirit that exhibited the human nature without sin—"he pleased not himself," though marvellously self-possessed.

See also how he endured contradiction against himself. All were against him. He had to battle with his enemies alone, unaided. (John viii. 13, 33, 48, 49, 52, and 59; also ix. 40.) The Sadducees, our modern Socinians and Unitarians, questioned him as to the Resurrection, and put a most improbable case for an illustration. The Gadarenes being grieved for their losses in trade, prayed him to leave their coasts. Some of his false friends thought of getting rid of his preaching by advising him to go quite away; for, said they, "Herod will kill thee;" but he took little heed of such idle talk.

At length, his enemies were filled with madness and

command together what they might *do with* Him. What awful communion about the person of Jesus! How unlike the communion of his saints! They commune together of his love and doctrine, and what they might *do for* him. Do you, my friends, have such communion as this?

His enemies held a council against him (Matt. xii. 14), that is, formed themselves into a committee, an organised body, the object of which was to crush the kingdom of heaven, and to put out the light of the world. And they did actually make several attempts to carry out their designs for to take him into custody, and prosecute, him on any charge that could be raised; but he smiled at their futile and feeble attempts, and challenged them all, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

He was charged with blasphemy. This he repudiated, and severely rebuked those who made it. He defended his divine Sonship and mission with a stern front and boldness, which it would be well if all his true servants would strive to imitate, regardless of the discomfort of controversy. How serenely he bore the treachery of Judas. How passive when the traitor's band came to take him; what endurance in the High Priest's hall; in Pilate's Court of Justice; the insolent and abominably rude conduct of the Roman soldiers. O the meekness of the Lamb of God! he answered nothing, but bore it all against himself; of his own people there were none with him for his defence. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Now, you are called to "consider him who endureth such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." As believers in Jesus, we are called upon to rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, and have some experience of the same things in passing through life, that "when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad with exceeding joy." "If we be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are we." Let us, then, consider what contradictions Christ endured against himself. His whole life was a continued series of contradictions. He has passed through it all. He knows by heart felt experience the provokings, the aggravating speeches, the revilings and contumely of his enemies and his professed friends. He *feels* as well as

knows all these things. His divine and omniscient eye sees all the machinations and hate against his people, but his human heart feels for them. He gives grace as we need it, and forsakes us not in the hour of peril. On his enemies' part, he is evilly spoken of, but on our part he is glorified.

THE SIXTH FACT. *His weariness of body.* This is one of the mysteries of the incarnation; one which shows the essential manhood of Jesus in perfection. Weariness of the body; weariness of the spirit. He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, was found in the fashion of a man, and exhibited proofs of his manhood. Weariness of body is one. Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat on Jacob's well for rest. (John iv. 6.) John evidently was with him at the time, and noted it down for our instruction. Jesus was also fatigued with the labours of long preaching, for he fell in a deep sleep in the ship during the rough passage over the lake Gennesaret. (Matt. viii. 24.) We see also his weakness of body in his being unable to bear the pressure of the crowd about him. He could no more endure a stifling heat to suffocation than any other man; though as God he had life in himself. He endured hunger. Besides the forty days' abstinence in the wilderness, there were other times in which he hungered. One time there was so much teaching that he and the disciples "had no leisure to eat." He rose early from Bethany, and being hungered, he looked for figs to satisfy his craving, but none being there he declared its unfruitfulness for ever. He accepted hospitalities of food, lodging, and clothing for his personal necessities, all which showed he was in subjection to all the circumstances of man. View him in the garden of Gethsemane; his falling on the ground in a swoon. "Horror had taken hold of him," his soul was exceeding sorrowful, the mind had overpowered the body, an angel was seen supporting him. Had he not been truly man, he could not have been our substitute; had he not been God, he could not have been our Mediator. The human nature suffered in the person of the Son of God.

"Bore all incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough, and none to spare."

Nor could he bear the weight of his cross, for he had no rest during the night. He had been taken to and fro from the house of Caiaphas, before the council, before

Pilate's bar, scourged, sent to Herod, back again, treated with the vilest indignities upon his sacred person, all which had exhausted his bodily powers and completely prostrated him, so that he could not bear the weight of the cross on which he was to be crucified. Literally, he could not, as was designed, carry his own execution into effect. What shall we say to these things? Jesus suffered weariness of body and complete exhaustion, even under the worst and most extreme circumstances. Now the worst can never happen to his people, for he has gone through the worst himself. He knows well our weaknesses and our weariness. He knows by his own experience the measure of a man's strength; "for who knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man, which is in him?" (1 Cor. ii. 11.) Jesus thus knows the things of a man by the spirit of man which is in him. Thus it is he pities us, feels for us, is able to sympathise with us; but as God supports our spirits, gives strength for the day, and helps us to hold on our way, and to hold out to the end; then, to feel the need of his strength, and to have grace to look to the strong for strength, this is the benefit we gain by looking at this fact.

THE SEVENTH FACT. *His praying to his heavenly Father.* This is another of the mysteries of the incarnation. Jesus in prayer to God. Prayer is one of the chiefest and most distinctive marks of humanity. We have seen plain proofs of the manhood of Jesus which we could somewhat enter into, and think we could understand. But for what could Christ pray? Here we are baffled. He prayed at his baptism. In Luke xi. 1, it is said, as he was praying, the disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray." I suppose there was something so perfectly natural and appropriate, as an humble, good man before his God and Father, that they wished to be so taught. But he was without sin; he had no corruption of heart to deplore and pray against. We are also told in Luke vi. 12, he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued *all night* in prayer to God. (See also Mark vi. 46; Matt. xiv. 23.) He was there alone in prayer. (Mark i. 35.) He rose a great while before day, went into a solitary place, and *there* prayed. In all this, he not only sought seclusion, but I regard it as to the manner, "He cried unto God with his voice." He prayed not only mentally, but vocally—an evidence of the reality of his human feelings, thoughts, and desires;

but I confess I cannot understand it. I cannot explain it. Great is the mystery of godliness. If we had time we might refer to a variety of cases, as with the deaf and dumb boy, he sighed, and said *Ephphatha*. (Mark vii. 32, 34.) "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xviii. 24.) He prayed at the grave of Lazarus, and the prayer recorded in John xvii. is emphatically the Lord's prayer, and concerned himself only as the God-man mediator.

He had much mental prayer, and for particular individuals, as for Peter: "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." (Luke xxii. 33.) O what a mercy to have a friend at court like our precious Jesus! one who can see our danger when we cannot, and one that knows what to pray for, though we do not.

The most remarkable is his own case of praying for himself. I allude to his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." (Matt. xxvi. 39.) This, I think, is that to which the apostle chiefly refers where he says, "Who in the days of his flesh offered up prayer and supplication with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that which he feared."

In these instances of Christ's praying, we see the reality of his human nature; he felt those wants we feel when we come to God, and though he was God, yet, as our substitute on earth, his Godhead is not employed to save him from feeling human woes, human necessities; divine justice exacted the utmost to the very last mite, and, as our covenant head, in his human nature he paid the whole of what God's law demanded of us. His continuing all night in prayer is most astonishing; we only know of one similar, that of Jacob wrestling with the angel all night until break of day. If you and I know anything of such wrestling with God, then we can say, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help." Our astonishment, however, may serve to raise our expectations for the future. We see that in the beginning of our Lord's public work he prayed. On every momentous occasion, during the whole of his public ministry, we find him never ceasing to pray, and in the finishing of his Father's business, we find him still in prayer.

In what we have presented before us, we see the manhood of Christ portrayed without undervaluing his Godhead, or of unduly separating the human from the divine. In whatever light we view the separate and individual acts of our Lord, they are his personal acts, the acts of the God-man, Christ Jesus. So of his weariness, his praying, it was the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour of his body, the Church, who bore the burden and heat of the day as other men. We cannot explain how it was that he was ever wearied in body, and how it was that his personal necessities were such that he prayed unto his Father. The Mediatorial character is displayed to us that we may be astonished with the wonders of Redeeming Love, and not to explain the complex union.

THE EIGHTH FACT.—*His Obedience to Divine Law.*—The nature and extent of the obedience which Christ rendered to the law of God demands our attention. The law of God demands that man should love and serve God with all his heart, mind, and strength; this constitutes the will and powers of the entire Person. Adam, our first father, our federal head, sinned in the heart before he raised his hand to take the forbidden fruit. The moment he felt the inclination for it, the heart was gone; and which engulfed all mankind in ruin and perdition; in the same ruin the whole Church of God was equally involved, and the recovery thereof was the business which God committed to his only begotten Son. In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem those that were under the law. When on earth, Jesus said emphatically, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." He humbled himself and became obedient to that law. His subordination was for the Church whom he represented—"he pleased not himself"—and because the Church was held in the bonds of the law, he submitted himself to those bonds that every member of it might have release. He assumed all their debts in order to gain them for himself; hence he took our nature that he might take our sin. He took our nature that he might render a perfect obedience to the law of God on our behalf. Thus, there was a double purpose in Christ taking our nature into personal union with himself. He was made sin for us; his substitutionary and expiatory work was rendered in a sinless nature and in a perfect manner by him

as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death. He learned obedience by the things which he suffered. His position as being in the circumstances or condition of a man—that is, in the form or nature of a servant to the law, as the preceding verse of our text describes him—is stated as the ground upon which he was held to obedience in his life, and to death at last. His obedience, then, was the obedience of a man, such as was due from man, whom he came to save and whom he represented in his person as their covenant head. It was a true obedience, for he was truly man. It was a perfect obedience, for he was a perfect man. What he did was what the law required; and what he submitted to endure, was what that law imposed. He came to comply with the Mosaic ritual as a believing Israelite. The law was in every iota, jot and tittle, perfectly fulfilled. No other person but the Son of God could have undertaken the work, and to no other person would the eternal Father have entrusted the business of our salvation. “Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.” The righteousness of the law was fulfilled *by him*, that it might be fulfilled in us. All his acts, which as a man he rendered, were mediatorial, rendered to God as his servant, on our behalf, as our covenant-head and substitute. Here is a theme for our everlasting contemplation and consolation. We are redeemed from the curse of the law, Christ being made a curse for us. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Well might the poet exclaim:

“What wondrous love, what mysteries,
In this appointment shine;
My breaches of the law are his,
And his obedience mine.”

We have now arrived at our last particular, THE NINTH FACT.—*His Sufferings and Death.*—The death of Christ being the most important fact that ever occurred, we are not surprised that a vast interest should be taken by angels and glorified spirits, for Moses and Elijah left their bliss in heaven to commune with the Son of God to speak of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. What an important part it occupies in the

gospel history, the details are not simply evidences of truthfulness but of the prominence given to the fact. John gives special heed to these points, which are most conclusive of Christ's humanity; his thirst, refusing the vinegar, his prayer to his Father, his anguish of soul, the giving up his spirit to his Father, the sparing of his limbs, his heart being pierced to make sure he was really dead, which latter part, from the circumstance of the pericardium being filled with blood and water, has been shown by persons competent to judge of the physical causes of human death, that Jesus literally died of "a broken heart."

The manner in which Jesus treated his own death is remarkable—he educated his disciples to that view of his sufferings and death which they afterwards adopted in its fulness, though not then understood. He told them of things future, that when they did come to pass they might believe in him, and so preach Christ crucified, as the life of poor believing sinners. (Mark viii.; Matt. xvi.; Luke ix.) It began thus: Jesus questioning his disciples as to whom the people supposed him to be. The answer evidently placed them in a belief which they had not realised before, and when this unveiling of his person was made by Peter's confession, he began from that time to show unto his disciples how he must go up to Jerusalem and suffer many things, and be killed and raised again. Thus the declaration of his death dates from the first open confession of his glory. It would seem as if the disciples were unfit to receive instruction concerning the wonderful manner in which the power of death should assert itself over that body which was human flesh until they had first learned that the same body was more than mere human flesh; that he was not only the Son of man, but truly the Son of the living God; that is, that his person was complex. How true it is that even we ourselves fail to enter into the deep meaning of those great realities of redemption accomplished by the death of Christ until we believe and are sure that Jesus is the Son of the living God.

Again, the peculiar occasions of suffering which our Lord endured in anticipation of his death show how truly human were his feelings. (John xii. 20-28.) Certain Greeks desired to see him. He spake of his death under a parable of corn dying before it brought forth fruit, and then said, "now is my soul troubled"—at the immediate

prospect of death, "and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The next occasion was on the eve of the Passover, how he was troubled in spirit; his prayer at the temple (John xvii.) speaks of his death in connection with the glory that was to follow. In Gethsemane he said, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even *unto death*," as if he felt his life sinking away—his agony must have been intense. Here you see the incarnate Son of God felt all the agony of a man in torture, the dread of death in full bodily health—he felt the need of help. Thrice he came to his three friends, but they were helpless, for they themselves were drowned in sorrow at the very sight. He felt his inability in his own strength to pass through the ordeal of suffering—his Father's vengeance against sin, and even shrunk from the task he had undertaken, but he was strengthened to bear the sword of justice sheathed in his very soul.

"How it was done we can't discuss,
But this we know, 'twas done for us."

How extremely painful to his mind must have been the diabolical treatment during the pretended judicial proceedings that preceded his death, but the only thing that moved the soul of the meek and lowly Jesus was the elevated voice of one who said, "I know not the man." The Lord *turned* and looked upon *him*; yes, Jesus felt most keenly the denial of his friend Peter in the hour of trial. O what are the best of men when left to their own confidence? "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

I shall not dwell on the circumstances of the Lord's death, but the manner of it deserves remark. What calm majesty when commending his spirit to his Father! it shows a glory in the midst of his sufferings. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Death had but a short triumph, yet sufficiently long for the satisfaction of divine justice to whom that death was made—it was the Son of God that died for man's sin, and it was because he asserted his divinity as the Son of God that he was accused of blasphemy, and for it was crucified; there is, therefore, an agreement between the act of men and his own act in the fact that JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, DIED FOR SIN; it also harmonises with the divine appointment, for had he been stricken dead by what is usually termed "the act of God," *men* could not have had so reliable an

evidence that he was the Son of God, but the earthquake and the darkness declared what the Jewish Sanhedrim disbelieved. One of the centurions, an intelligent heathen, believed the witnesses of the earth and the heaven, and exclaimed, "Truly this man was the Son of God." Another centurion said, "Certainly this was a righteous man." (Mark xv. 39; Luke xxiii. 47.) The death of Christ was truly human; it was by the hands of sinful men, so that they themselves were witnesses of the fact, thus the divine purpose for which he died, an atonement for sin, harmonises with his being killed by men on the charge and ground of blasphemy, "because, he being a man, made himself the Son of God." His death is the death of death to all his redeemed family—he died that they might live; but death could not possibly hold him. Law claims were satisfied, magnified, and honoured, hence he rose again, quickened by the Spirit. The life and death of Christ is the manifestation of the love of God. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

To conclude. I have been unable to dwell much on the different facts thus brought to show the reality of our Lord's human nature, but sufficient, perhaps, to lead you to further meditation. Though we do not deny it, I believe we do not receive this doctrine as we ought. We lose much comfort and consolation in those times of soul exercises when we need a pure human sympathy, as well as divine support, and this Jesus only can impart; it arises partly, from not entering into the deep mysteries of redeeming love, as exhibited in the earthly life and human experience of our Lord himself, and, likewise, shall I tell you? from those satanic temptations which sometimes are suggested to the believer, "that these mysteries of the incarnation are not true." O what a trial has it been to my faith many times, while preaching and writing on this great theme, to find such suggestions as the following thrust into my mind, "that no part of the life of Jesus is true." "The whole record of the mystery of godliness is a great sham;" "that there is no reality in the scheme of redemption, no congruity in it, being only a cunningly-devised fable and an intricate delusion, and religion but a human and vain superstition." O these fiery darts, they can only be repelled by faith in the Son of God; it is our

only shield. **THE WORD OF GOD IS TRUE.** It is the foundation of our belief. God seals the testimony to the conscience, and witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Let us, then, make ourselves more familiar with the various facts in the earthly life of our Lord, it will nourish our faith and prove in the hour of temptation a prop against despair, for when hope sinks low and faith is tried, and love gets chilled, we shall find the human life of Jesus a cordial to invigorate every grace of the Holy Spirit, a balm for wounded hearts. "He made himself of no reputation." Jesus went through the most painful and humbling services for the redemption and salvation of his people. He was so truly and properly man as to be made like unto his brethren. He was found in the common form and condition of man; he submitted himself to the lowest degree of service and suffering; he went through a course of obedience to his parents and magistrates in all lawful things which his condition in life as a man necessarily imposed upon him, but to his heavenly Father he, as his servant, answered all the demands of his holy law, both in fulfilling its precepts and suffering its curse, and this obedience he paid even unto death, even the ignominious, painful, and accursed death of the cross, to show that he stood in the place of transgressors who were under the curse of the law, and that he came to redeem them from it for them. Such was the Son of God and the work he undertook in the nature and likeness of men. There was no other method by which sinners could be justified by the deeds of the law, for they had broken it, and therefore were under condemnation, but "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his only Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, damned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Brethren, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, I commend these things to your attention. The manner in which I have treated them may appear peculiar and too abstract, but I am persuaded you will find much solid food for faith in the contemplation of the several facts now placed before you. That which is profitable, not the speculative, is what I have aimed at, in order to lead you more to realise the blessedness of Christ's life for you, for, as Mr. Kent truly says :

"In all that Jesus did on earth,
His church an interest have,
Go trace him from his humble birth,
Down to the silent grave."

It will bring you into closer communion with him; in all your sorrows and distresses it will lead you to pour out your heart before him, for there is no condition or circumstance in which your spirit can be placed but what he divinely knows and has a thorough human experience of. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, to make the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings." "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people. "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." (Heb. ii. 10, 16, 18.) Amen.

"Now, concerning the collection for the saints," I cannot say with the apostle, as in another place, "Let there be no collections when I come," for our express object this morning is to have one. And as our object is good, I hope we shall have a good collection. "The poor," says our Lord, "ye have always with you, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good." We have now an opportunity of doing good to the household of faith. This is the first time we have asked you to help the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society. It is a noble institution; let us do something worthy of the cause we are pleading; for look at the facts which the secretary has laid before me. At the present time, there are 623 aged and poor saints of God receiving annuities of various amounts: 71, of £10 10s. yearly; 401, of £5 5s.; 141, of £2 8s.; and 10 in workhouses, at 2s. per week. Besides which, there are 42 inmates in the Asylum at Camberwell. This constant flow of charity requires a constant flow of supply in money; give as God has prospered you; it is a capital investment, I can assure you, for "he that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given he will pay him again." The cause of the poor is the cause of God, and what we do for them we do for him. Amen.

THE GRAND CONSUMMATION
OF THE
MEDIATORIAL KINGDOM
OF THE
LORD JESUS CHRIST.
THE AUTHOR'S FAREWELL SERMON

TO THE

CHURCH AND CONGREGATION MEETING AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL,
DARLING PLACE, MILE-END.

Delivered on Lord's Day Evening, December 22nd, 1867.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power."—"And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."—1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

I HAVE been speaking of the things pertaining to "the kingdom of God" in five previous sermons. I have aimed to set forth the rise of this kingdom, its nature, and some of its characteristics; I have said a few things touching the King himself and also his subjects. I have not adverted to its *external* progress, nor to its future universality; neither do I intend so doing at this time; for my topics confine me to that which belongs to the kingdom of grace *within*. And now, in order to bring this series of discourses to a fitting conclusion, let me ask your attention to a few thoughts on the glorious consummation of the Mediatorial Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The question before us is unquestionably stupendous, magnificent, and sublime. At first sight it would seem so bright and dazzling as almost to confound us, and to baffle any attempt to approach it; but seeing that we have here a scripture truth, it is therefore profitable for doctrine; and as it is a doctrine, some light, some instruction, is to be derived from it, so that the Man of God may be perfect. May the Lord grant us his help and blessing in the opening of our understandings, that

we may in his light see light, so that we may understand the Scripture, and behold wondrous things out of the Book of his Law.

We have before us one of the most remarkable portions of God's Holy Word, and therefore we shall do well to give it a little close attention. Our first inquiry is, what is the sense of our text? Here, on the very threshold, we meet with difficulties; not from any ambiguity in the text, for the context explains that, but from our pre-conceived notions of what we understand by the word kingdom—its being delivered—and the Son himself being subject to the Father. If it were possible to divest ourselves of prejudices in favour of particular theories, doubtless our minds would receive the light of truth both sooner and purer; consequently, we must deal with the supposed obscurities attributed to the subject which we shall attempt to elucidate.

In the first place, I do not understand that our Lord Jesus Christ will ever cease to be King of Saints and King of Glory, and therefore there will be no surrender of what he is *naturally* and *essentially*; nor can his Sonship be ever otherwise than what it ever was, co-essential, co-equal, and co-eternal with the Father. The sense of the text appears to me to be this:—that when time shall be no longer, all the ends of Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom *on earth* being accomplished, Satan's power completely and for ever destroyed, all the ransomed church everlastingly secured in the heavenly state, the whole of that dispensation and office power which the Son of God possessed will then be completed and exercised no more. God the Father will then be seen, known, and loved, as he is, without the intervention of a Mediator for we shall see God as he is, not as now, as through a glass darkly, but then face to face. God-Jehovah, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will be all in all, everything in everything to each individual member of the Church of God in its glorified state; the completion of which and its perpetuity will be the grand consummation of the Redeemer's mediatorial kingdom.

Having given you what I consider to be the sense of the text in its more prominent features, let us proceed to notice two or three particulars.

FIRST, let us inquire what is to be understood by *the end that is coming*, "Then cometh the end." The end

of Time—when Time shall be no longer—"The end of all things is at hand"—this time state of things will soon cease; it will soon cease with us who are now living, it will soon cease with all who are yet to follow us. The end of this world, with all its vicissitudes, temptations, sins, sorrows that afflict the saints of God; also the end of all ordinances and means of grace which they now need, and then shall be the consummation of the present mode of our Lord Jesus administering the affairs of providence and grace in this lower world; that is, after he has abolished every form of civil and ecclesiastical government, as they now exist; and all authority and power that men and devils have assumed in opposition to him as the head of all principality and power.

When this end shall be, our Lord has most emphatically stated "that is not for us to know." (Acts i. 7; Matt. xxiv. 36.) But certain it is that God has revealed that ere this period shall arrive Satan shall receive his final overthrow, personated by Gog and Magog; and it is equally certain that "the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. xxiv. 14.) Then the last judgment will be announced; it will be heralded by the shout of the Archangel and the trump of God. The Son of God will descend with great power and glory, he will come in all the majesty and grandeur of his Godhead; he will come without sin unto salvation; not as when he first came into our world, with all the weakness of humanity, the inconveniences of poverty and humiliation of his incarnate state, but with such magnificence and splendour as the world never yet saw, nor any heart conceived. He will be attended with thousands of his saints, he will be seated on his great white throne; the dead shall be raised, every eye shall see him, the books will be opened; the saints will hear his voice, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" the wicked and all who know not the Gospel will hear their doom pronounced, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" yes, the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all who forget God, these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. Then

this world as it now exists will be burnt up, and thus there will be a full and final completion of the present mediatorial dispensation. God cares but little for this world, except for his elect's sake; but before it is burnt up, at the great assembly of all mankind before the bar of God oh what a division will then take place, it will be an everlasting separation of the righteous from the wicked. The Son of God "shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, for the Lord knoweth them that are his: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." My friends, we shall all be there, we shall all see the great sight, each one of us will feel we have some personal interest in the proceedings of that tremendous day; the question turns upon each *even now*—ON WHICH SIDE SHALL I STAND? Let the solemn question riddle through your very soul, and if it should disturb your night's rest, it will do you no harm; it may do you good. Think it over.

We will now proceed in the SECOND place to inquire as to the *Kingdom to be delivered up*.

What is to be understood by the word *kingdom*? The term here does not signify mere kingship, reign, or the possession and exercise of kingly power; but dominion in the sense of *territory or realm*—that, in short, over which the king reigns. The kingdom of Christ is most extensive; it includes not only his church, but all things in the world, in subordination to his people's spiritual interests; for "he is the head over all things to the Church which is his Body." (Eph. i. 22, 23.) "He rules in the midst of his enemies." (Ps. cx. 2.) The government of the world is committed to Christ—"The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (John v. 22.) "All power in heaven and in earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) By him kings reign and princes rule. (Prov. viii. 15, 16.) "There was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages should serve him." (Dan. viii. 14.) "For all things are put under his feet." (Eph. i. 22.) It is of his reign over "*enemies*" that the Apostle is speaking; now, at the end of this world, when all things shall have been subdued to him, the kingdom will have been brought to perfection; the work which his Father gave him to do will have been finished. The whole elect of God shall

have been sought out, sanctified, called, redeemed from all iniquity, and gathered together into one; their enemies, even death itself, shall have been destroyed, and the whole scheme of providence and grace on earth shall have been developed and completed. This kingdom of grace and all things on earth subordinate to it, will be brought to a state of grand consummation; all the ends of Christ's mediatorial work shall have been accomplished, and the ransomed flock all brought home to glory, and their everlasting felicity fully secured. Happy day! glorious consummation!

Jesus shall soon collect his sheep,
And, when collected, safely keep;
Omnipotence preserves secure.
Each feeble soul by him enroll'd,
Under one Shepherd, in one fold,
Shut in, they shall go out no more.

In the **THIRD** place, let us inquire what is to be understood by *the Kingdom being delivered up to the Father by the Son*.

This portion of our subject we cannot so quickly dispatch as the former, for this is where we have to deal with one of the difficulties alluded to in my introductory remarks. It appears that some divines have thought that at the end of this world, Christ's mediatorial reign is to terminate altogether, and the government of the kingdom through eternity to devolve *on God*, essentially considered; that is to say, exclusive of the personalities of Father, Son, and the Spirit, "that after our Lord has effected the resurrection and transfiguration of the dead, he will immediately give up his judicial and mediatorial authority and power to God the Father, who will for ever after exercise an absolute dominion over the spirits of the glorified, without requiring, as now, the intervention of any Mediator as the living medium of intercourse and communication."

Now, there seems to me some confusion of ideas in the minds of those who have thus expressed themselves; I have given you the very words that were once spoken in this place by a friend of mine, a very able and well-known preacher in another denomination; and I have since met with the same opinions in the writings of Dr. Owen* and Dr. Pye Smith.† If I did not know

* Owen's Works, vol. xii., pp. 294, 295, 338, 339.

† Dr. Pye Smith, *Messiah*, vol. iii., pp. 257, 258; Dr. Pye Smith on Sacrifice, p. 92.

their sentiments better, I should be almost ready to suppose they thought that the personality, or at least the office characters of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the glory and honour he has derived from them, were to cease altogether on the completion of his mediatorial work on earth, which I believe is not what they intend. Indeed, the impression made by the discourse alluded to was, there would be no Jesus Christ in heaven; I asked my friend if that was what he meant; he said, "No, decidedly not."

My dear friends, let it be a fixed truth in our minds that the divine union which subsists betwixt Christ and his Church is eternal and indissoluble: neither things present, nor things to come, nothing in nature, above or beneath, can ever separate them from his love; and their final state is expressly called an entering into the ETERNAL kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Son of God will ever be the king of saints, the king of glory; the Church of Christ will ever be united to him as his body, and he to them as their ever living and glorious head. Instead of there being a "*termination* of the mediatorial reign of Christ over the Church," and of "the great *parenthesis* of the mediatorial administration," as some divines purport, the scriptures set forth, the grand consummation as "the marriage of the Lamb" and his bride the Church; the Church complete, the Church glorified, will be the married wife, a settled, unalterable, and perpetual relationship, where the husband will be everlastingly loved, praised, and adored throughout eternity; so that this does not point to an end or period being put unto the perpetuity of either his kingship or his kingdom; it does not in any way respect the final extinction of his kingdom, but *the consummate perfection* of it, for the subjects of it, the whole body of his elect, will be presented to the Father to be eternally glorified and crowned by him, and therefore Christ will never cease to reign nor ever be without a kingdom.

But further, our Lord's delivering up the kingdom to the Father cannot mean that he will return to his own personal station as the divine and eternal Son, for that would imply that he must have left his personal station, which he did not; he stooped, indeed, from his personal dignity, but he did not lay it aside. His divine and eternal Sonship was never lost or sunk; for at the

moment of his deepest humiliation, he possessed his personal dignity as the Son of God, and in fact, but for this, his humiliation would have been in vain, and without its merit and value. Neither does it imply that on delivering up the kingdom to the Father, that Jesus will cease to be king or mediator. The Kingdom which the Son of God possesses over his Church will never be given up.

Our Lord Jesus Christ delivering up the kingdom to God the Father no more proves that he will in all respects cease to be a king, or have any further reign or dominion, than the Father's delivering the kingdom to the Son proves that the Father himself ceased to be a king. The power and dominion which the Father gave to the Son *by virtue of his being the Mediator*, the Man Christ Jesus, is that, and that alone, which the Son will deliver up to the Father. Christ's natural and essential kingdom, which he has in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost, *will have no end*; and he in his eternal manhood will wear the honour of all his mediatorial work. As the Head of the Church he will for ever and ever live in unlimited authority and glory, and therefore, as I have just stated, in these respects, his throne and kingdom will never be delivered up, but for ever remain.

But let us come to the Scriptures, "to the word and the testimony;" if we speak not according to this word, we shall throw no light upon what we are discussing. God's word is truth; in his light we shall see light. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever—His name shall endure for ever—Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations—Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end—In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever—His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed—He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end—An entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,—and he shall reign for ever and ever." All these passages

refer to the reign of Christ as mediator, and fully and strongly express eternal duration, or strict perpetuity, the longest possible duration of which the things spoken of can admit.

The kingdom then, which the Son will deliver up to the Father is that which the Father gave the Son, namely, the dispensation in which Christ rules and exercises his authority in heaven, earth, and hell; as king of saints, king of nations, and head over all principality and power. During this dispensation, from the fall of Adam to the last sin that shall be committed on earth, is also the kingdom of grace. And when all the purposes of this office power which the Father committed to Christ shall have been fully accomplished, perfected, and completed by the actual, complete, and final conquest over every enemy, the Devil himself for ever shut up in chains and darkness, and the gathering in of the Church fully completed, the Mediator shall then appear and *give in to the Father a full account of his mediatorial authority*—"Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me; of all them which thou hast given me, I have lost none, but the son of perdition, he is lost, that the scripture might be fulfilled;" thus *presenting to the Father the kingdom in that state of consummation to which he shall have then brought it*, and receiving from him a clear testimony of his approbation. The purposes of the kingdom being accomplished, Jesus declares to his Father that the work which he gave him to do he has finished, and now he comes to him, saying, "Holy Father, keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one." Here, in these words, I regard we have the true and only method in which the Son will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. My own impression is, that this passage and others contained in the Intercessory prayer of our Lord, (xvii. John) was the basis, under the Spirit's teaching, upon which the apostle has founded the doctrine contained in our text. Jesus declares that the work given to him is most satisfactorily accomplished. He now comes to sit down for ever on his throne, with the Father, to enjoy the fruit, the rest from his pains, his labour, and his humiliation; and he desires that the Church for whom he suffered, and which he has redeemed with his own blood, should have his joy fulfilled

in themselves—the joy of satisfaction, the joy of complete, full, and final consummation.

We now pass on to notice in the FOURTH place,—*The subjection of the Son to the Father*. “Then shall the Son himself be subject unto the Father.”

This phrase is one of the fancied strongholds of the Unitarian, the Arian, the semi-Arian, and the Sabellian. I had intended *not* to enter this field of controversy, but I see I cannot avoid it; and as this is probably the last opportunity I may ever have of bearing my public testimony to the true and proper doctrine of the divine and eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, I shall have no hesitation in stating my views of this debated question of the inferiority of the Son to the Father. I am aware that “the Sonship question” is considered by some to be a strife about words, “each opponent,” it is said, “using a different word, but meaning the same thing.” Some consider it “a ministers’ question only;” others, that it is “quite a minor question.” Now, nothing can be a minor question that affects the foundation of our faith; for what is meant by Christ being the foundation and corner-stone on which the Church of God is built, is the right understanding and cordial receiving into the heart the true doctrine of the Person of Christ the Son of God, the Mediator of the New Covenant? This surely is a most important question, and well deserves our careful and prayerful study. As to its being a *ministers’ question* only, I reply, that whatever concerns the ministry must also concern those for whom the ministry is designed—the Church of God at large. Just let me remind you of what I stated at the re-opening of this place, in my sermon on the true knowledge of Jesus Christ being a divine revelation:* “That without right views of the person of Christ, as well as of his work, the apostles would have been utterly incompetent to have taught the truth as it is in Jesus; nor could the Church of God have been edified, or built upon either *incorrect* or *imperfect* views of so fundamental a doctrine.” Now, this cannot be a professional question for ministers only; it is one which most materially affects *the people themselves*. Its practical answer undoubtedly depends upon us very much to give, but we shall never be able to give an answer to any good purpose unless the question becomes more general in the

* See “The Truth as it is in Jesus,” Sermon No. 9.

churches, and it is one, in my opinion, about which it becomes the duty of *every member* to be fully persuaded in his own mind.

As to those who say "it is a strife about words," I reply, not so; words have their meaning, and despite the pertinacity of those who assert that they mean the same thing by speaking of Christ as the *Eternal Word*, as we who speak of Christ as the *Eternal Son*, this I as positively deny; they call themselves strict Trinitarians, which I cannot for one moment admit. Do, dear friends, be pleased to observe what I am about to state, and never mind what careless or unthinking persons say about controversy. This is for your life, your peace, and your hope, for at no time can a truth be uttered without its confronting some error. Now listen. It is well known there are many, particularly by some among the strict Baptists, who, because the Lord Jesus, in his human nature and miraculous conception, was called the Son of God (Luke i. 35), restrict his *Sonship* to that sense, as do also the Socinians, and affirm that in his divine nature he was not the Son but the *Word* of God. Now this to my mind is a fearful heresy, it is the pith of Arianism, and flatly contradicts the Scriptures (1 John ii. 23); and herein, remarks an excellent writer, "they who hold this heresy are led by human reasoning, and not by simple faith; they connect with their idea of Sonship inferiority to the Father, whereas in Scripture, if we honestly search it, we shall find it is just the contrary." Not *inferiority*, but equality with the Father, is the consequence of Christ being the Son of God. (John v. 18.) "The Jews sought to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." This was in their view blasphemy, for which they judged him worthy of death, because he said, "I am the Son of God." And even in human sonship, as I have elsewhere stated,* a son is of the very same nature as his father, and in that *nature* is equal. A son of man has as much the nature and properties of man as his father has; so has the Son of God in like manner the nature and properties of God.

I grant that *in the station* which a son occupies in the family of his father, there is *inferiority*, and necessarily so, from the very nature and fitness of things which exist in the constitution of the human race; but *this inferiority*

* "Truth as it is in Jesus," Sermon 13, p. 16.

of station in respect of the *Sonship of Christ* cannot in any way apply to his *personality* in the divine and ever-glorious Trinity; for with the Father and the Spirit the Son is co-equal as well as co-essential and co-eternal. Of this we have abundant evidences from Scripture, which I need not at this time bring forward, for I have already, in my sermon on "The Divine and Eternal Sonship" stated many arguments and proofs to that effect.* I grant also, that in human sonship there is inequality of years, so far as the manifestation of the personal subsistences of father and son are concerned, but not as relationship is concerned, for the paternity and the offspring are equal in point of *generation*. Now, in the divine Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ there is necessarily equal eternity; for how could Christ be God, or have the nature of God, and not be eternal? Whatever is in God, is in God from everlasting, and must be to everlasting, because God is incapable of change. If God was always the Father, there was always the Son. Human generation is a thing of time, as man is a creature of time. But divine generation is an eternal thing, as God is eternal. So is Christ said to have been in the beginning with God, to have been the eternal life with the Father, and "his goings forth to have been of old from everlasting." (Mic. v. 2.) An infallible proof of the pre-existence of his person as the Son of God. (J. T. Parker.)

What the mystery is of that generation, Scripture has not revealed, nor is it necessary that we should know it. I think it is impossible for man to know it. I believe it, though I cannot explain it. What I mean by it is, the Son of God's own eternal necessary self-existence in the bosom of the Father. I know the doctrine is reviled. But by whom? Only by those who deny that the Sonship of Christ is founded in his divine nature, holding that he is a Son by office and not by nature. Now, the Scriptures nowhere intimate that Christ is the Son of God by office, or that his Sonship is founded in his human nature, but they speak of him plainly and positively as the Son of God in the relationship of a Son to a Father; "the only-begotten of the Father," "*the* only-begotten Son," "*his* only-begotten Son," "my beloved Son," &c. As the Son of God, he comes of the Father by way of inexpressible generation, proper to himself only as being an eternal

* This Sermon can be had separately of the publisher, J. Gadsby.

generation, by communication of the same essence and properties; and a generation wherein the Father is not before the Son, but both are alike eternal. Now we cannot define to the satisfaction of carnal reason what carnal reason might happen to demand of us. The doctrine of the Trinity is divine, a mystery above the reach of reason, and can be known only by revelation. I am satisfied with being brought to *the acknowledgment* of the mystery; I seek for no explanation. "The mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," is, and ever will be, to man, a divine mystery. Nevertheless, it is a truth for my faith to receive and lay hold of, and whatever "full assurance of understanding" I may have of other truths as *revealed*, this of the divine and eternal generation of the Son of God I receive and acknowledge as the mystery of God *declared* in his Word, though not *explained*. (See also Appendix, page 69.)

And here let me also remark that in most of those passages referring to Christ as the "first-begotten," "firstborn," the word is employed not in reference to either his divine or human nature, but because of *the purpose* for which the Lord will come again into the world,—namely, as the Heir and Lord of all. In Heb. i. 6, Christ's first coming is spoken of as the act of the Father. Our Lord himself says (John viii. 42), "I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself, but he sent me." So of his resurrection and exaltation; "The Father raised him up and gave him glory." It is the Father who will send him again (Acts iii. 20.) It is the Father who will put all things under his feet. Here appears the glory of his Father's love in sending his Son, and the glory of the Son's obedience in voluntarily subordinating himself to the will of the Father, that he might be the mediator between God and man. As Mediator he acts from God to us, and from us to God. And this administration which he exercises as the Son of God and the Son of Man over men on earth, is the kingdom which will be delivered to the Father; the *purposes* for which the Mediatorship of Christ was exercised being fully accomplished. Not that the kingdom shall cease to be the Son's, but that all things shall at last be referred to the glory of God the Father.

This subjection of the Son to the Father must

therefore be interpreted and understood with great care, because of the subtle forms of error which are broached by some professed ministers of truth, especially those who hold the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ, for, generally speaking, they artfully conceal their pernicious notions under very sugary and savoury expressions about the person of Christ. The *Sabellian* form of error is, that the terms "Father and Son" are mere names, and will be no more when the mediatorial kingdom on earth shall cease. The *Arian* sense is, that Christ in his divine nature is inferior to the Father. The *semi-Arian* sense is, that Christ in his *Sonship* is not co-eternal with the Father, being only the Son of God in his *complex* natures; that is, he was not the Son of God until he became incarnate. Another form of error is, that the human nature of Christ will be absorbed into the divine; now, in my sermon on the Eternal Manhood of Christ, preached this night fortnight, I showed that the manhood of Christ will always continue, and that it is in his manhood he will be seen by the glorified Church of God. He went up to heaven in the veritable body which was crucified; it was identified by the disciples after his resurrection to be the same, and in that same body he will be seen when he comes a second time to judge the world; in the same body he will continue to be visible to all the glorified Church of God throughout eternity. The subjection of the Son to the Father is to be understood in respect of the termination of his official character as Servant of the Father and Mediator between the Church and the Father, and not of his Sonship in any respect whatever,—the sense is not that the Son ever was, or ever will be subordinate unto the Father as God, or subject unto him personally considered—for he is eternally co-equal with the Father in nature, power, and glory. I am aware this sense will not be received by those who look upon the Sonship of Christ as founded in his human nature, and therefore but an office character, and not a relationship; and however fine some may draw the line of distinction, and yet claim to be orthodox, it is impossible to avoid running into the Sabellian and Arian heresies, because they are on an *unscriptural* foundation; they confound the personality of the Sonship with the mediatorial capacity and functions which he undertook; and this I may say, so far as I can perceive it, is

the sum and substance of all the heresies, and the cause of all the confusion and strife that have existed on this subject; this is no trifling matter, for the drift of it all is, *a denial of the Son of God* as such, we prove it on all points, the moment we come to such a text as we have now before us; here it is, we see, their human reason comes short of the truth as it is in Christ. Now, dear hearers, do pray understand this, the words, "*The Son also himself shall be subject*," do not refer to his *nature or relationship* at all, for that would contradict all scripture—but look at the context yourself, and see if it does not mean that the official capacity and functions which the Son of God undertook in order to govern nature, providence, and grace in this world in his own name, will, when the end shall come, cease to be administered by him as Mediator, that kingdom being a vicarious one. It will not be then in *his* hands as it is now, as Mediator, but with the infinite and eternal Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There will be no more a delegated power, no more the intervention of the mediatorship, or of any means of grace whatever. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

But one word more upon this vital point, the person of Christ. Without a constant reference to the wonderful constitution of the person of Christ, as both God and man, it is impossible to understand and reconcile the apparently contradictory things which are spoken of him, as that he should be "one with the Father," and yet that "the Father should be greater than he;" that he should be "the root and branch of David"—that he should be *by nature* "Lord of all," and yet be *made* Lord by the Father—that he should have all in his own right and yet the Father should give him all—that he should swear by himself, that to him every knee should bow, every tongue confess, and be *ordained* of God to be the judge of quick and dead—that all things should be created by him and for him, and that he should be *appointed* heir of all things—that all power should be given him in heaven and in earth—that the Son himself shall be subject to the Father. Let us hear the Son himself: "I and my Father are one." "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not

the Father which sent him." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "I am the Son of God." "If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins." Brethren, if we are under the teachings of the Spirit, we shall not only hold the faith of God's elect in respect of the true and proper doctrine of Christ's Sonship, but we shall by faith in the mystery of his person as the God-man see all these difficulties vanish. All the varying statements are beautifully and admirably harmonised, because we see that some are spoken of him in his *divine* nature, so that he is the root of David; some of him in his *human* nature, as that he is the offspring of David, and others of him in the conjunction of *both natures* in one person, as the God-man Mediator, as in (Heb. i. 2), that God has "spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things." So in the text before us, the subjection of the Son himself to the Father does not refer to his person as the Son, for the relationship is one of nature and essence, but it refers to the dominion he held officially under the Father, of creation, providence, and grace, that fulness of authority which it pleased the Father should dwell in him, "all things are delivered unto me of my Father. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." He is Lord of angels and of men. The devils are subject to him. The things in heaven, in earth, seen and unseen, temporal and eternal, are all committed to Christ, because he is the Mediator, he is the Mediator because he is the Son of God, and when the end of his mediatorship shall come, the Son will no longer exercise his authority, it will fall into the hands of the Father, who first gave it into the hands of the Son. For the end of time being come, no more enemies to subdue, no more of the elect to save, the whole body of Christ being complete and glorified with him in heaven, God then shall be all in all.

I have detained you a long time on this portion of our subject, but its vast importance must be considered a sufficient reason. Our text is, perhaps, one of the severest touchstones we can have to test our own faith in the Son of God, or the hollow sentiments of those who in words exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners and the chief of ten thousand, but who, nevertheless, deny his personality as the eternal Son of God. Strange! strange it is that this glorious truth should be disputed and kicked

at by the professed followers of the Lamb of God. It is attested by himself,* it was acknowledged by his own disciples,† it was owned by devils,‡ it is attested by his own Father.§ It was declared by his resurrection from the dead, it was preached by the apostles. John wrote his gospel and an epistle, that it might be believed, and he declares that he who denies the Son is Antichrist. (1 John ii. 22, 23) and is not to be received. Oh, my dear friends, let us, in the strength of the Lord, hold fast the doctrine of God's own word, that Jesus is the Son of God. This truth is simple and plain to the sincere follower of the Lamb. What was the Eunuch's confession, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God;" and when Paul began his ministry, Luke tells us, "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is 'the Son of God.'" He preached Christ, because he is the Son of God. Here, then, is scripture example for preacher and people. We believe in Christ because he is the Son of God. If Christ be not the Son of God, we have no sure foundation for our faith. Let me ask you, what is it that you believe? You have often heard me quote the well-known lines of John Newton; I will repeat them once more; it is the last time I shall utter them in this place:

"What think ye of Christ? is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of him."

I must now, in the FIFTH and last place, briefly touch upon the concluding part of our text—*The Godhead becoming All in All*—"That God may be all in all."

This is the sublime sequel to the grand consummation of the mediatorial kingdom of Christ upon earth. The Church of God is now before the Throne of God and the Lamb. "These are they which have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst

* John ix. 35-37; x. 36; Mark xiv. 61, 62.

+ Matt. xiv. 33; xvi. 15-17.

‡ Matt. viii. 29; Mark iii. 11; Luke iv. 41.

§ Matt. iii. 17; Luke ix. 35.

any more, neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." One with Christ, one with the Father and the Spirit, their bliss is now complete and it is eternal. As God in Christ was their All in All when on earth, so now in heaven, Christ in God is their everlasting All in All. The Deity in Christ will be everything in everything to the Church around the Throne in heaven. Even in this time state the Deity is now the All in All, the sum of all good to the spiritual believer; for this he sighs, for this he longs, for this he prays; and the more he is enabled to realise the great fact, the more he feels it is his life, for Christ is his life; he lives now by faith on the Son of God, who loved him and gave himself for him. In the heavenly state he will see him as he is, in his glorified, eternal manhood, and he will be like him; the believer in his glorified flesh shall see God. God will be all in all to him as his glorious head. The Father, who was only known before through the Son, will be unveiled to his adoring view, and he will be for ever with the Lord. (Rev. xxi. 2. xxii. 5.) There will be without the intervention of a Mediator, to all the saints, immediate access to the throne of God. The infinite Jehovah, the eternal Three-One, the great I AM. The one living and true God, in their distinct personalities of Father, Son, and Spirit, will be the object of adoring wonder, admiration, and praise; in whose presence the saints will eternally be, and with whom they shall have uninterrupted fellowship, and a perpetuity of holy joy. God will be all things to them, without the use of such means and helps as they now require; he will be all their perfection and all their bliss. All the office characters which Christ sustained to his Church when on earth, as their Prophet, Priest, and King; as their Shepherd, Husband, Brother, Friend, will be as so many crowns on his glorious head, and will be the ground of renewed and animated songs of praise. Such will be the perfect consummation of the kingdom of God's dear Son that the whole scheme of salvation will then be seen to be the embodiment of the glory and perfections of the whole Deity. The splendour and brilliancy, the magnificence and glory of the place cannot be imagined; its unbounded pleasures, its complete bliss

and happiness cannot be conceived; we must die to know it. But, remember, none shall obtain admission there but followers of the Lamb.

"Pure are the joys above the sky,
And all the region peace;
No wanton lips, nor envious eye,
Can see or taste that bliss."

"For the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." The Church of God will see the glory of Christ, the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. The glory of the Father will be manifested in all its rich effulgency; the Church of Christ will then see God. To the Church the Deity will be all in all. The more the perfections and glory of the divine Eternal shall be seen, the more fully will the Church realise their bliss and the greatness of that redemption which has saved them from all their sin and woe. Salvation by free, sovereign, unmerited grace alone, will be the theme of their everlasting song. Christ, our Redeemer is now, on earth, the believer's all; but oh, how imperfect our faith, our love, our hope, and our peace; sin mars all our enjoyment, but in heaven all the work of grace will be complete, and divested of everything sinful and creature weakness; then our enjoyment will be perfect, for Christ will be our ALL. The Fatherhood of the Father will then be understood and loved in all its reality and blessedness; we shall enter somewhat into the knowledge of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God. The Holy Spirit in all his sweet, soft, and gracious influences will be experienced in their fullest extent, and to the utmost of each believer's capabilities. The glory of Jehovah will then be displayed in all its inconceivable magnificence, shining forth in all its fulness of majesty, grandeur, and brightness throughout the countless ages of eternity. God will be All in All to every humble soul who now feels and desires Christ to be their All in All.

But before I close let me just say a word or two to those good and gracious souls who feel they cannot take such lofty flights as we appear to have been taking this evening. They think, perhaps, we have ascended far above their comprehension, as with the wings of an eagle, and with an eagle eye have pierced the heavenly regions

and even eternity itself. They are desirous, too, of soaring heavenwards, but on the wings of a smaller bird, though it be to take a lower flight. The utmost of their longings have been, O that I had wings, like a dove would I fly away and be at rest. My soul longs for rest and peace. I would not live here alway; I wish I was done with the world myself and sin, I can truly say,

“Nothing but this my ardent plea,
Jesus, reveal thyself to me.”

To be found in Christ is my one absorbing thought and desire; to behold his face in righteousness is my earnest prayer, and to have that assurance, so as to say, I shall be satisfied when I awake in his likeness. Now, if this language be the sincere desire of thy soul, what precious proofs thou hast that thy heart is right with God, and that thy eternal state is most blessedly secure! It may be thou hast been unable to enter into those deeper truths and mysteries which have occupied our attention at this time, but this need not trouble thee for one moment, since thou art on the foundation—Christ the Saviour of sinners, Christ the believer's sure refuge, Christ the believer's all. *Not what we know, but whom we love*, is the true touchstone of a living faith. I know of no surer evidence of belonging to Christ than when the soul can appeal to him and say, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee; whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee.” Is this your case? Yes, you say, it is; and I can also say, there is no book, no friend, no minister, no ordinance precious to me without the presence and blessing of Jesus; I can enjoy nothing but as I enjoy it in him. I am dissatisfied with everything of creature pleasure or comfort if it have not the stamp of his approval. I thirst, but it is for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God.” Well, all I can say is, you are as near to heaven as you can be on this side eternity; your state is most blessed; already you are realising the glorious truth that God is your all in all; you have reached the summit of what the apostle has laid down in our text to be the grand consummation of the Saviour's kingdom in glory. God all in all, and all that is wanted to complete your bliss is an abundant entrance into that everlasting kingdom; this you may fully expect, for it is positively promised by the Lord himself.

The Lord grant of his mercy and grace that you and I may form part of that happy throng in that blessed world above, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. Amen.

Thus I have brought to a conclusion my sixth sermon on the kingdom of God's dear Son; and with it, my ministry in this place is now closed. I have laboured here, including a former period, rather more than five years, not without some spiritual fruit, I believe; but latterly so little, as not to justify me any longer in thrashing straw or ploughing upon a rock. Throughout my pastorate our little church has subsisted in love, peace, and unity; and for the sake of the few who have continued with me to this day, I take my leave of them with regret. I am bound to acknowledge that the Lord has given several testimonies to the word of his grace as dispensed by me, and very many by means of my printed sermons; so far I am convinced that the Lord has owned my ministry, and that he thrust me into this corner of his vineyard; and I am equally convinced that there is now no more work for me to do in this place. Some external good, I am happy to state, has been accomplished by means of funds supplied to us. The sick and the suffering poor have received £77 4s. 6d. in 808 payments; and £61 18s. 2d. has been expended in good, useful books and tracts for the Mile End Gate omnibus men, and others in the locality. Several good results have been known, in which it would appear that the Lord has condescended to use the efforts made to reach the minds and hearts of this neglected class of men. To God be all the praise.

And now, dear brethren and sisters in church fellowship, and also to you, my dear friends, who have worshipped with us, I bid you farewell. I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen.

The 730th hymn was sung, Gadsby's Selection,

"All hail the power of Jesu's name."

APPENDIX.

(REFERRED TO AT PAGE 60.)

AT the time this sermon was preached, I made some observations on what I considered to be a *key* to the differences that exist between some of the opponents to the views advanced in these pages on the divine and eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have designedly omitted the statement in the sermon, but have reserved it for an appendix. The reader is herewith presented with the substance of what was then expressed.

Dr. Chalmers says, "If the Scriptures be given us by inspiration of God, then all questions in religion resolve themselves into questions of grammar." I confess I am inclined to attach some importance to this remark, and would apply the principle it involves to the subject here in dispute—the eternal Sonship. For instance, take the words, "the first begotten," in the *active* sense instead of in the *passive* sense. My opinion is, that the distinction between the *active* and *passive* senses in those places where the word "begotten" is used, as applied to the Son of God, is not sufficiently observed by our objectors, or else it is designedly ignored. I have no need for illustration from any of their writings to set forth what I am advancing, but shall produce a quotation or two from authors well deserving our attention on this subject; the first is from Dr. Guyse, on Col. i. 15. "The first-born of every creature." "The words (*prototokos pases ktiseos*) rendered *the first-born of every creature*, signify also *born or begotten before all creation*: or, as *Isidore*, an ancient *Greek* writer observed, if the *accent* of the word (*prototokos*) be placed on the last syllable but one, instead of the last but two, it signifies not *passively* the *first begotten*, but *actively* the *first begetter*, or former of all things, and in proof of Christ's being so, it is added in the next words, *For by him were all things created*; and v. 17, it is said, not that *he was made*, but that *he is before all things*. (Vide *Isid.* lib. iii., epist. 31.) In the first way of understanding this passage, according to our translation, it relates to Christ's office, as head of the Church: in the second, it relates to what is usually called the eternal generation of the Son: in the third, it relates to his being the efficient cause, or the Creator of all things, and in all these views he is considered in the following verses."

Dr. Gill on the same text, Col. i. 15, "*The firstborn of every creature*, not the first of the creation, or the first creature God made; for all things, in the next verse, are said to be created by him, and therefore he himself can never be a creature; nor is he the first in the new creation, for the apostle, in the context, is speaking of the old creation, and not the new: but the sense either is, that he was begotten of the Father in a manner inconceivable and inexpressible by men, before any creatures were in being; or that he is the *first parent*, or bringer forth of every creature into being, as the word will bear to be rendered, if instead of *prototokos*, we read *prototókos*, which is no more than changing the place of the accent, and may be easily ventured upon, as is done by an ancient writer (Isidore), who observes, that the word is used in this sense by *Homer*, and is the same as *protogonos*, (*first parent*,) and *protoktises*, (*first creator*;) and the rather this may be done, seeing the accents were all added since the apostles' days, and especially seeing it makes his reasoning, in the following verses, appear with much more beauty, strength, and force; he is the first parent of every creature, *for by him were all things created*," &c.

The same esteemed author on Heb. i. 5, says: "Christ is the Son of God; not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; he is the true, proper, natural, and eternal Son of God; and as such is owned and declared by Jehovah the Father in these words; the foundation of which relation lies in the begetting of him; which refers not to his nature, either divine or human: not to his divine nature, which is common with the Father and the Spirit; wherefore, if his was begotten, theirs must be also, being the same undivided nature, common to all three; much less to his human nature, in which he is never said to be begotten, but always to be made, and with respect to which he is without father: nor to his office, as Mediator, in which he is not a son, but a servant; besides, he was a son previous to his being a prophet, a priest, and king; and his office is not the foundation of his Sonship, but his Sonship is the foundation of his office, or by which it is supported, and which fits him for the performance of it: but it has respect to his divine person; for as in human generation, person begets person, and like begets like, so it is in divine generation; though care must be taken to remove all imperfection from it, as divisibility and multiplication of essence, priority and

posteriority, dependence, and the like. Nor can the *modus*, or manner of it, be conceived. The date of it, *to-day*, designs eternity, as in Isa. xliii. 13, which is one continued day, an everlasting now; and this may be applied to any time or case, in which Christ is declared to be the Son of God; as at his incarnation, his baptism, his transfiguration on the mount, and his resurrection from the dead, as in Acts xiii. 33, see Rom. i. 4, and at his ascension to heaven, when he was made both Lord and Christ, and his divine Sonship more manifestly appeared; which seems to be the time and case more especially referred to here."

Dr. Guyse, on Heb. i. 5, says, "In the former part of this verse, God the Father speaks of what he had already done in begetting his Son; but in this last clause he speaks of what he would be to him. Accordingly, I take the *former* of these to relate to his *natural Sonship* by an eternal inconceivable generation, which was manifested by his resurrection, and the *second*, to his Father's *acknowledgment and treatment* of him as his *incarnate Son* and *Mediator*, and so the argument for the superior dignity of his person proceeds in this verse from his divine to his office character, and from thence to both these considerations of him jointly." (verses 6-9.)

These quotations, perhaps, are sufficient to support the view I have advanced. More might be easily added, but space forbids. My principal reason for giving them is in respect of the *tenses*. A learned critic observes upon Mic. v. 2: "The act of *coming forth* is expressed as *eternally acting*. The verbal noun implies the *present*; the other words, *that present to be eternal*." The same author, in speaking on Ps. ii. 7, says: "Hence his generation is spoken of as a permanent thing, of which it ever hath been, is, and will be said, '*This day have I begotten thee*;' or as it has been rendered, '*I am this day begetting thee*,' to denote an eternal, abiding, unbeginning, and never-ending act. The Hebrew is, and should be rendered, *Jehovah hath said to me, thou art my Son, I am this day generating thee*. For, 1. That which can be *now* said to be done *this day*, and might be so said *yesterday*, and may be said to *morrow*, and so on from eternity to eternity, if it could be spoken of any human act, would determine such act to be always acting, never acted; and therefore would oblige us to alter the expression, and say, *doing* in the present, instead of *done* in the preter tense. And

therefore, since this is spoken here of an *eternal Being*, since God himself said *so long since*, and *still* saith, and always *will* say,—I—*this day*,— even the meanest capacity will agree, that whatever act this is, which is thus spoken of, must be *always acting*, never *acted*, and therefore that the word, denoting this action, ought to be expressed in the present tense, and not in the preter, *I am this day generating thee*. 2. This is according to the *Hebrew* idiom, which has no present tense, but expresses it, sometimes by the preter, and sometimes by the future; and this the *Rabbins* themselves allow. Now, hence we must infer, 1. That there is in the Deity, *Father and Son*, two *distinct persons*, each completed by his proper subsistence; the Father is generating the Son; the Son is receiving his generation from the Father. 2. This act, if I may call it an act, being said to be *acting*, not *acted*, we cannot hence infer that the nature of the Father is divided, or another nature produced. And consequently, the Son of God, with respect to this generating, cannot be said to be a *divided Being*. 3. That the *Father* and the *Son* in the *Deity* are *co-eternal* and *equally self-existent* and independent." Coward Lectures, pp. 196, 197. Ed. 1729.

Thus, I hope, I have established my point,—that the *grammatical* construction of those Scriptures referring to the eternal Sonship of Christ, *if fairly received*, would prevent much misconception of this great truth, and I think it would also help to solve the difficulties of the controversy.

The reader may also observe that in the Appendix to my Sermons on the Unsearchable Riches of Christ, I made some remarks in defence of *the term* Eternal Generation as applied to the Sonship of Christ, and in the quotation given from the Rev. P. McLaren's writings, it will be seen that the argument there mainly rests upon what I have here endeavoured to point out, *a question of grammar*; so that that quotation, and these now presented, show the importance of the principle laid down by Dr. Chalmers. The whole question of Christ's Sonship, though pre-eminently theological, is, to a great extent, unquestionably metaphysical, that is, having relation to the first principles of thought, and therefore must be determined by the grammar of the language in which the Scriptures were originally written.

THE CHERUBIM OF GLORY
OVERSHADOWING THE MERCY SEAT,
AND
BEHOLDING THE PROPITIATORY.

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, MILE END,

On Wednesday Evening, October 16th, 1868.

REVISED AND ENLARGED.

“And over it (the ark of the covenant) the cherubims of glory overshadowing the mercy seat.”—HEBREWS IX. 5.

SIMILITUDES, metaphors, types and shadows, abound in the word of God, and form one of its most peculiar features; they contain so much of the wisdom of a divine revelation that no earnest Christian should neglect obtaining some knowledge of them. They differ altogether from the mythological learning which the world has produced; for in studying scripture tropology the mind becomes elevated and deeply imbued with the knowledge of God; but heathen mythology seldom fails to debase the mind of its reader and to spread its poison through every faculty of the soul. Infidel writers evidently scoff at the figurative language of scripture, for they have not scrupled to censure the apostle Paul for explaining it; and even amongst the writers and preachers of natural religion few appear to know much about its types and figures, or show any regard as to what they are designed to teach. This is not much to be wondered at when we consider what the Holy Ghost has declared by the mouth of the apostle Paul (1 Cor. ii. 14): “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” For my part, I consider that to be ignorant of these things is to be ignorant of divine truth, for in them God speaks to his servants; his mind, the thoughts of his heart are thereby revealed, and when under the

teachings of his Spirit their import is discovered, much strength and beauty is felt and perceived in the truth thus communicated. Indeed, my belief is, that an inexhaustible fountain of divine wisdom lies concealed within the sacred emblematical figures of the scriptures of truth, especially those of the cherubim and *sanctum sanctorum* of the Mosaic economy, showing to spiritual believers and strongly setting forth the important doctrine of a Triune Jehovah in all the work of man's redemption as accomplished by the divine and eternal Son of God.

With regard to the cherubim of glory spoken of in our text, their symbolical representation has not, I think, been clearly understood; no, not even by some of those whom we deem men of truth, for their explanations are contradictory, and to my mind unsatisfactory. Some have asserted, holy angels to be the mystical meaning, as Bunyan, Witsius, and many more of equal rank and fame; the posture of stooping, it is said, indicates their looking into the mysteries of redemption by Jesus Christ. This notion seems to have been suggested from the language of Peter, "Which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter i. 12); but this idea, I apprehend, has no real foundation, for no reference is there made either to the cherubim or to the propitiatory blood sprinkled upon the mercy seat. Besides, the making of any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above is expressly forbidden. (Exodus xx. 2.)* It is not in the nature of God to say and unsay himself in the revelation of his will to his creatures, and though the making of the cherubim as forming part of the mercy seat in the holy of holies was divinely authorised, yet I believe, and I hope shortly to show, that the design was for a very different purpose. Another esteemed author, the late Rev. R. M. McCheyne, of Dundee, tells us, "It is now generally agreed by interpreters that the cherubims were emblems of the church redeemed in heaven." Who these interpreters are it is not said, nor have I been able to ascertain, except in one instance, but I confess I was at first much taken with that opinion. He says: "1. They were of one piece with the mercy seat, even as the church is united to Christ. 2. They stood upon the mercy seat sprinkled with blood; they have no other standing. The

* "The Rhemists in their annotations on this place (Heb. ix. 5) do justify the setting up of images in churches from this instance."
—Dr. Guyse, *loco*.

blood that was sprinkled on the mercy seat sprinkled them also. 3. They gazed down upon the mercy seat even as the redeemed shall spend eternity in beholding that amazing propitiatory which brought glory to God in the highest and peace to guilty man. 4. They are the dwelling-place of God. 5. They sing, Thou hast redeemed us." All this seemed very plausible, and I verily thought that the true light now shineth on this mysterious subject; still I met with difficulties the more I pondered over the thoughts of this good man, though I think I obtained a clue by which I have arrived at what I now believe to be the mind of the Spirit. I was led to reflect that as the inner material of the mercy seat was of wood, and was emblematic of the human nature of the Redeemer, and the outer material being of pure gold, signified his divine nature, so in like manner the cherubim being all of one piece of metal with the mercy seat this would be emblematic of, and set forth the unity of the divine attributes of Jehovah beholding with complacency and satisfaction the blood of the God-man Mediator sprinkled upon the mercy seat. (Psalm lxxxv. 10.) The cherubim one with the mercy seat; the Triune Jehovah in holy covenant, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equally engaged and equally concurring in the shedding of blood for the remission of sins. It is the divine mind, or presence, that is here symbolised, not the form or image of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons; *that* must not be imagined, for it is a state or condition of mind and feeling, and not a substance that is represented; and if I might so say—it sets forth a state of reconciliation effected by the propitiatory, the divine attributes harmonising in the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God for the redemption of his people. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven." This is the view I now take of the cherubic mystery in the holy of holies, and the more I reflect upon it the more I feel confirmed in it. I may just mention that on one occasion I met, in a bookshop, with a Christian Jew, a preacher of the gospel. I asked him the meaning of the word cherubim, and whether it was a noun or a verb? Taking up a Hebrew lexicon and looking at the word, he replied, "It is a *verb*, not a noun; it signifies *motion*, not a creation; the act is bowing or beholding." I then felt convinced that the two ordinary in-

terpretations were incorrect, or at least imperfect, being founded on an image of something created. Thus by a gradual process my mind has been led to adopt the view which is here presented.

The Cherubic figure was a conspicuous feature of the Levitical Tabernacle. Of the form or shape, Moses has said nothing, but we find from Exodus xxv. 18-20, he was to make out of one and the same mass of pure gold a cover or lid for the ark of the covenant with two cherubims, one at each end of the mercy seat, standing in a stooping attitude, looking toward it, while they overshadowed it with their expanded wings. This posture gave to the whole work, viz. the ark, the mercy seat with its crown, and the cherubim, the form of a seat with a canopy or covering, representing the Throne of God, and was emblematic of his wisdom, love, justice, and power; or, in other words, of the glorious person and work of Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Evidently the Cherubim were mystical figures of the highest antiquity and of great signification. Those of Eden, the Tabernacle, of Isaiah's and of Ezekiel's visions all belong to the same original. The place they had in the holy of holies and their use sets them very high. Their appellation, as in our text, the cherubim of glory, does the same; indeed, it was the consideration of this that led me to suspect they could not mean either angels or the church in heaven; and the reasoning of the apostle, from the shadows of the law to the priesthood of Christ, who with his own blood has passed into heaven itself there to appear in the presence of God for us, sets the cherubim highest of all, leading us to infer without a doubt that they were symbolical of the unity of the attributes of the divine nature.*

By consulting Lev. xvi. 2 we find that the mercy seat was *over*, *upon*, or *above* the ark. Here was seen, on the great day of atonement, the manifestation of Jehovah's presence, the cloud of glory (a bright cloud irradiating the space above and between the cherubim), which was a well-known symbol of the divine presence. In v. 13 the mercy seat is said to be upon the testimony, "the

* Since this sermon was preached the author has had the opportunity of seeing several interesting treatises on the cherubim. Hutchinson, Parkhurst, Hodges, Bate, W. Jones, and Rely hold in substance nearly the same opinion as has been expressed above.

HeDUTH (says the learned Dr. Walter Hodges) plural, the interpretation of which is in this place, I think, *witnesses*, the representative emblems which were at each end of the ark, so under the mercy seat, as joint supporters of it." Hereby it is plainly, though emblematically, signified that all the divine persons or covenanters were the foundation of the grand scheme of redemption, and were equally engaged, or engaged themselves to support it, though the second person was illustriously distinguished in both his natures upon the mercy seat by a more particular representation, as he was the hero, the great captain of his people's salvation in this most astonishing work of wisdom, love, and mercy.

It may be as well to notice a few particulars of the cherubic mystery as hinted at in the scriptures. The first symbol was the tree of life, or tree of *the living ones*. On man being expelled the garden of Eden, a change of the symbol was made, representing the wrath of God against sin and the punishment due to it by cherubic *faces* and a flame, or appearance of fire in continual circulation, to keep the way of the tree of the living ones. Thus man in his natural state is represented as being debarred from entering in where the tree of life is to be found. God in his own pure essence is a consuming fire to every sinner seeking life and salvation without the atoning blood of Christ, or upon the footing of his own creature righteousness. In the Levitical *sanctum sanctorum*, cherubic faces are represented, and the appearance or manifestation of Jehovah's presence is promised upon the presentation of blood offered in sacrifice for sin. The veil of this inner chamber was also made with the figure of the cherubim. (Exod. 26-31.) These figures were what was called the testimony of *witnesses*. (Verse 34.) Again, in xvi. 33, 34, Aaron is to take a pot of manna and lay it up before the Lord (or to the faces of Jehovah). Then follows, "As Jehovah commandeth Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony" (or to the faces of the witnesses); the Holy Ghost thereby plainly teaching us that "before Jehovah" and "before the testimony" are meant the same thing: and because of the answers given from between the cherubim, the divine presence was said to *dwell* there or *inhabit* between. (Ps. lxxx. 1.) The manifested glory between the cherubim and over the mercy seat showed that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in the economy of redemption was "honourable and

glorious," and divinely accepted and approved; the cloud of glory being between the cherubim they are called by the apostle Paul the cherubim of glory.

In the temple made by Solomon we find that within the inner chamber, the *sanctum sanctorum*, he placed two colossal cherubim made of olive tree and overlaid with gold; the extreme tip of their wings stretched out touched the wall of each end of the chamber, and their wings bowing opposite each other touched each other, forming a canopy, beneath which stood the ark of the testimony with the cherubim of gold as made by Moses. And even the outer walls of this chamber were carved with cherubic figures, and palm trees, and open flowers, all of which were doubtless emblematic of the divine presence, sacred peace, and divine wrath appeased; palms being symbolical of peace, or, as I am disposed to think, of the tree of life in Eden, and sweet scented flowers, as it is said, to assuage anger. I have read somewhere that the wings of the cherubim touching each other set forth the sympathy of angels with believers, but I think this thought carries no weight; it may be a pretty idea, but is not the true one. I rather think the meaning to be the *mutual concurrence* of the GREAT ONES; their mutual concurrence in the great transaction of redemption, and mutual approbation of the propitiatory; the manifold wisdom of God, the holiness of his justice, the majesty of his power, all concurring with unmixed satisfaction and delight in witnessing to the blood of sprinkling as the divine propitiatory by which sinners are reconciled and brought again into the presence of Jehovah. The attributes of Jehovah, like the wings of the cherubim, spread over and cover the atoning blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, the language of which is as described by the Psalmist, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is COVERED." (Ps. xxxii. 1.) Covered by the presence between the cherubim, and by the overshadowing of the cherubim; thus "Jehovah beholds no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel."

The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel had each visions of the cherubim; and Ezekiel, as his manner is, minutely describes all that he beholds; he distinguishes everything in its smallest parts, everything is dressed in symbolical *actions*. Figures are borrowed from creation, in order to describe the scene in its most noble forms. Men, oxen, lions, and eagles support the chariot throne of God, to set

forth the dignity, power, elevation, and majesty of the divine appearance or manifestations, of the unity and universality of his government in heaven and on earth, and his goings forth in the economy of redemption. Yet who of us have not found, that though Ezekiel's vision is replete with wonders, exalted and sublime beyond degree, yet the scene he exhibits is far from making the same deep and heart-striking impression with that of Isaiah? The short description of his vision leaves a deeper impression than that of Ezekiel's, though it is more graphic and minute. Ezekiel's strikes our imagination with wonder, but the impression fades away. That of Isaiah affects the heart and conscience, the sense of which cannot be easily forgotten. "*Woe is me, I am undone.*" Ezekiel shows us something of heaven, but Isaiah brings us to God at once. With Ezekiel's vision, the brightness of the fire, the restless wheels, and the moving wings, we are amazed, dazzled, and confounded; but with Isaiah's we are solemnised, humbled, and silenced. Still I make no question that the cherubim which Ezekiel's represents, are complete, sublime, and majestic symbols of the divine manifestations, perfections, and movements in the accomplishment of Jehovah's will on earth as it is in heaven. God's providential dispensations and the ministrations of his redeeming grace, when surveyed by a spiritual mind, will be found to be marked with all the peculiar characteristics which the prophet has so luminously described: his description of the cherubim, be it remembered, is emblematic of action and qualities or attributes; not of the shapes or forms of things created, that is to say, not of any order of angelic or other heavenly being; for we must keep in mind the word "*cherubim*" is a verb, an action; not a noun, not a creation. Still less are we to imagine that they represent the configuration or number of the persons of the divine and glorious Trinity;* for, as already stated, the making of an

* Mr. Hutchinson, in his learned work on the cherubim, and Mr. Parkhurst, in his Hebrew Lexicon, have each given an engraving of the cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat, which I regard as somewhat objectionable; because, 1. *Printing* the similitude of Jehovah in covenant is as likely to prove corrupting and carnalising as *making* a graven image. 2. The representation is incorrect. Four distinct *heads* are pictured, whereas the Scripture speaks of *faces* only. 3. The engraving also represents the cherubim to be *standing* upright, with these heads *looking* down, whereas the Eastern posture of bowing is the incurvation of the

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image of any heavenly being is solemnly forbidden, and therefore would not be sanctioned or permitted. "Take ye, therefore, good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure." (Deut. iv. 15, 16.) So that the description of the appearance of faces, wings, feet, and hands are not to be regarded as representing the personal form of Him whom no man hath seen or can see; but they are to be understood as emblematic characteristics of Jehovah's government in the ordering of his providence and the operations of his love and grace in the hearts of his redeemed people; all which display the glory of the divine perfections as comprised in the triple repeated word "holy," in the vision of Isaiah—namely, truth, purity, love, goodness, wisdom, justice, and power.*

We have also the cherubim represented in the book of the Revelation. In the fourth chapter they are improperly called beasts; *the living ones* it should be; these are said to be full of eyes within, before, and behind. This is an additional description to that given by Ezekiel.† Here they represent neither the persons or manifestation of Jehovah, for they unite with all the heavenly hosts in paying worship to him. (Verses 8–11.) Nor can they represent angels, for in v. 9, they, with the elders, give thanks and honour unto the Lamb on the throne for their redemption to God by his blood;‡ it is evident, therefore,

body, by which, with the spreading over of the wings, the cherubim formed a regal canopy or covering over the mercy seat, as symbolical of the throne of Jehovah in heaven.

* I am aware that Drs. Goodwin, Gill, Kitto, and others have written very ingeniously upon the cherubim, as setting forth holy angels and qualities in gospel ministers. I do not entirely dissent from some of their views; but, with all due deference to these learned authors, I would ask, Is it not rising a little higher in the region of truth to suppose that Ezekiel sets forth what God *is* and what God *does*, rather than what the gospel ministry should be? Still there can be no objection to taking the views of those good men as *subordinate* and *secondary* to that which is more expansive and exalting, as given by the prophet.

+ This answers to the four faces of Ezekiel's cherubim, which would thus be full of eyes, before and behind.

† Dr. Cooke, in his dissertation on the cherubim, referring to this text, thinks that the relative pronoun "they" does not include the living creatures engaged in the song of redemption, but only uniting in giving an adoring response.—*Cooke on the Shekinah*, p. 392.

in my opinion, that in the book of Revelation, as in the writings of Moses and the prophets, it is not the form or shape of any living being in heaven, but the nature or state of being that is intended. To be full of eyes within, before, and behind, symbolises all sense, all intellect, all consciousness, turning attention every way—the power of beholding all at once all things within the reach of the understanding, discerning them with a clearness of perception which is the most perfect created semblance of the intuitive and boundless view of the omniscient mind. In John's vision the glorified state of Christ's redeemed in heaven seems to be foreshadowed and symbolised by the cherubic figure. The glorified will no longer be limited in their sight as now; every faculty of the soul will be increased and perfected. They will serve God with superior and enlarged reason, with great strength of affection, with powerful and energetic perseverance, and with swift, animated, and unabating obedience adapted to the heavenly and exalted condition to which they are raised; qualities and characteristics which seem to be signified by the emblem there used.

I hope I have made myself understood on this deeply interesting subject. We shall do well to give it a little closer study. God hath given us his written word. May he open our eyes, that we behold wondrous things therein, and may he give us to feel that we have a personal interest in the things which he reveals!

We must now return to the cherubim over the mercy seat. From this grand hieroglyphic, emblematical of the presence of THE GREAT ONES,* I therefore conclude that the ark, the cherubim, and the glory manifested in the *sanctum sanctorum*, on the presentation and sprinkling of the sacrificial and substitutionary blood upon the mercy seat, were mystical exhibitions of those great and eternal realities that had been originated in the high court of heaven, and of what was to be there completed by Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, the eternal Covenanters, on behalf of the church of God, who are redeemed from among men. By the stratagem of Satan, the enemy of God, his Christ, and his church, the human race was plunged from its original state of innocence, goodness, and happiness into a state of sin, guilt, misery,

* Moses speaks of the cherubim throughout as of living persons, the likeness of the GREAT ONES.

and death; made captives by him at his will, and inevitably banished from the presence of Jehovah. But ere time or nature had a beginning, the eternal Covenanters, Father, Son, and Spirit, had determined on the choice of a certain and specified number to be everlastingly saved from all the evil of their powerful enemies—Satan, sin, death, and hell. The great scheme originated in the mind of Jehovah, in the Person of the Father, who sent his only begotten Son into the world that his chosen ones should live through him. The Son of God became their Surety, he took their law place and stead; he took their nature into union with himself, and by imputation, their sin, so that in his Person, as their representative and substitute, their sin should be punished, and the full penalty of it be exacted, and thus he became their propitiation, an eternal covering. By virtue of this covenant, the Holy Ghost becomes the administrator on earth to the person of every one thus covenanted for; by him the good work of grace is commenced in the heart, maintained and completed until the great day of Christ. And until the salvation of the whole of God's elect family is perfectly consummated, the Son of God, as the High Priest of our profession, appears in heaven as our Mediator, Intercessor, and Advocate; as the King of glory he has sat down on the throne of the Majesty on high, until all his foes shall be made his footstool. When all this is accomplished, then will be celebrated the marriage supper of the Lamb. The whole church of God will be congregated around the throne, rejoicing, and exclaiming, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." All the heavenly host shall join, saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Then the four living ones shall unite in giving a confirming response by adding their solemn AMEN. What the splendour of this magnificent scene will be, is impossible for any mortal to depict or imagine. The enthronisation of the Lamb of God is revealed to us in symbolical representations, because the human mind, in its present state, is incompetent to conceive the greatness of Immanuel's glory; his work is honourable and glorious, his glory is great in the salvation of his church, for honour and majesty is laid upon him. The glorified

saints shall be eye witnesses of his glory, and shall share an eternity of bliss. May we not say, then, with the poet:

“ On wings of faith mount up, my soul, and rise,
View thine inheritance beyond the skies ;
Nor heart can think nor mortal tongue can tell
What endless pleasures in those mansions dwell ;
There our Redeemer lives, all bright and glorious,
O'er sin, and death, and hell he reigns victorious.”

Brethren! what shall we say to these things? To what practical issue can we bring them? Do they not intimately concern you and me? Most certainly they do. If we have no personal interest in those great transactions as set forth in the symbol of the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat, we are of all men the most miserable. The things of which we speak are not speculative or theoretical opinions and fancies, but are of that practical nature that nothing less than an experimental participation in them must be realised and enjoyed before the wounded conscience of the seeking sinner can find rest, ease and peace. It is admitted “all men are sinners,” that none can forgive sins but God—and if he should be strict to mark iniquity who should stand; yet there is forgiveness with him that he may be feared, but without shedding of blood there is no remission. Forgiveness of sin is founded on a complete satisfaction being made for it. There must be a propitiation. There can be no reconciliation without atonement. What if the sinner pays the penalty himself, yet no atonement is made to God, nor can he be saved, for the penalty is his punishment, and his sin remains unforgiven. For him to be saved, his sins forgiven, and he reconciled to God, a substitutionary death must be offered and accepted. With men this was impossible, but with God it was possible; and this hath actually been done in the person of Jesus Christ the Son of God. For his sake the believing sinner is forgiven and justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. For God to mark iniquity in the sinner and to provide salvation for him, would be altogether inconsistent and impossible; yet how often this thought takes hold of the newly awakened sinner, how can God be just and pardon sin? But God has marked sin, though not *in* the believer, but *for* the believer, *in* the person of his own dear Son; the believer is saved by *his* death and by *his* life; by his death, a sacrifice was made, an atonement constituted and a propitiation effected; by his life the right-

eousness of the law was fulfilled and honoured, which is imputed unto all, and is upon all them that believe in him. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) Thus the sinner that was in captivity to the law of sin and death is ransomed by the precious blood of Christ; the price of redemption, and the power by which it was obtained, flow through the atonement; hence it is said, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin." Thus God's holiness is vindicated, the majesty of the law is honoured, sin is fully punished and the sinner righteously saved. This is the method of salvation as revealed in the Scriptures of truth; there we see it is well established that all sin which is forgiven must be through the blood of atonement. No sinner can hope for forgiveness but through the atoning blood of Christ. If sinners are to have any experience in their own conscience of pardon and peace, they must rely on the merit of that blood as an all-sufficient atonement and an everlasting propitiation. Hence, a promise of pardon is made, and is held out to every sinner feeling his guilt, and seeking remission in the way of God's appointment: it is revealed to the believer, and the application of this mercy is made by the Holy Ghost. This hope in the gospel which is set before us must be sought for and laid hold of by those who feel the burden of sin and its exceeding sinfulness: it is the anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast: it is the door of God's mercy opened by the hand of justice itself for the encouragement of anxious, timid, doubting, fearing souls; this door will never be shut until the last elect vessel of mercy shall have found its way to the Saviour.

"The door of his mercy stands open all day
To the poor and the needy who knock by the way;
No sinner shall ever be empty sent back
Who comes seeking mercy for Jesus's sake."

"Ah!" says one, "I have been seeking pardon and peace many times, everywhere, and a long while; but have not realised what I so much desire. Sometimes I've thought I am all wrong, sometimes tempted to think that the Bible is not true upon this matter. Indeed! but are you quite sure that you have been seeking pardon in the right way? It may be you have been counting upon some merit you suppose you comparatively possess; urging, possibly, some plea of your own as your own mere misery, &c.;

or it may be you have placed a dependence on the means of grace rather than on the God of grace; coming to God and coming to the means of grace are two very different things. Perhaps you may have come to the means of grace with a *depressed* spirit, but not to God with a *broken heart* and a contrite spirit; or you may have been more anxious to have *your sins forgiven* than to have *your hearts cleansed* from the defilement of sin; more anxious for *peace* than for *purity*, that is, more anxious to be delivered from the terrors of the law than to be made meet for heaven; or perhaps you may have been led to rely upon your supposed faith, hope, or love, and thought peace would flow in through such a source. Many have been led by a false or imperfect understanding to make a Christ of their faith, their hope, or their love; but they are miserably mistaken. Christ is the object of our faith; but no act of faith, hope, or love can save a soul; they are the things that accompany salvation; pardon and peace comes to the seeking sinner through what Christ has done for us, not from what the Holy Spirit may have wrought within us. The blood of Christ is the sinner's only plea, not our misery, nor our sins; no, nor yet the bestowment of his gifts; they are gracious evidences truly, but they were never intended to be used as pleas, or to be the source of our peace. On the other hand, I have often seen persons under great concern about their sin, wretched and miserable beyond degree; but O what kind of concern was it? what was it that made them so miserable? It was not what they had done, but it was because they were 'found out;' their sin had indeed brought them into trouble, but with the sin itself they had no quarrel; their unhappiness had arisen from the loss of their good name and the place they once had in society. Now when the Holy Ghost begins his work in the heart, sin is the first thing the sinner falls out with; he hates it bitterly and hates himself for it, and has no rest until it is purged from the conscience. Now, you who think you have been seeking pardon and peace, but have not found it, and are ready to impute the fault everywhere but in yourself, think these things over, search and try yourself; you may not be the false professor which I have pointed out, but it may be you have been deceived, or at least misunderstood the method of grace. If the Holy Ghost has wounded you, he will surely heal you; he will lead you to the blood of sprinkling; he will show you that the sprinkled blood upon the mercy seat has been

accepted on your behalf; the cherubim of glory overshadow it, the Holy Ghost will witness with your spirit that all your sins are pardoned, for Christ has died, and you shall know "the blessedness of him whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered."

But now let us turn our attention to the Person of Him who has entered the holy of holies. The scene within the veil is awfully solemn and momentous; it represents the presence of God in his own essential glory and immutable perfections. The great business to be transacted is the salvation of his people; an atonement for sin is to be presented, and a divine acceptance is to be manifested. We see, dressed in garments clean and white, the High Priest, wearing upon his breast a plate of precious sparkling gems, on which is inscribed the names of the people for whom he acts and represents. He enters alone, for he only can dare venture into the sacred precincts; and not without burning incense lest he die; nor yet without blood, for without shedding of blood there is no remission. This blood is the blood of others, of bulls and of goats, upon whose heads the sins of the people have been confessed. This blood, therefore, represents sacrifice for sin by substitution. He, the High Priest, stands before the golden throne, as the *Mediator* between God and man; not as their substitute, in his own Person, for that is represented in the blood he has brought with him; nor as their intercessor, for that is set forth in the burning incense. He sprinkles the blood upon the mercy-seat, and the smoking cloud from the burning incense immediately covers it. The shekinah, or cloud of glory, is manifested between the cherubim as the divine acceptance and approval of the blood of propitiation, thus the blood spilt for sin is divinely covered, and is no more seen. Here, then, we see in these various complex figures types and symbols of human redemption, the Person and work of the great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Mediator of the new covenant, who in his own Person comprises the priesthood, sacrifice, and incense. He is the substitute of sinners, their advocate and intercessor, who by his own blood has entered the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for his people, and having an unchangeable priesthood; and who by his one offering hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified. We see in the construction of the mercy-seat, the golden cover, or lid, with its crown of

gold, enclosing the lid made of wood, that which sets forth the complexity of the Person of Christ the Son of God. He took our humanity into personal union with himself. The cherubim being of the same piece with the mercy seat sets forth the unity of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead divinely supporting and upholding the mercy-seat; the divine perfections were set forth in the mystic fourfold faces of the cherubim; their overspreading wings and their bending attitude over the blood of sprinkling signified, as before stated, their mutual approbation, and satisfaction with the blood of the covenant. The ark of the covenant, containing the Tables of the Law, with its *crowned* mercy-seat, and sprinkled with the blood, betokened the Son of God, the *King of glory*, in our nature, having taken our sin, it being laid upon him; the blood, the life of the substitute, was taken by him for us; it was shed for sinners—sin was expiated both by sprinkling and the acceptance, hence it became the propitiatory, and a throne of mercy or grace. Sin is no longer imputed to those for whom the blood was shed, for the transgression is forgiven because it is punished in the Person of the Mediator and substitute. The sin for which the blood was shed can no more be seen; for it is covered both by the advocacy of the Redeemer and the testimony of divine approbation.

It may, perhaps, be expected that something should be said as to what was symbolised more particularly by the compound figure of the cherubim, their fourfold faces, their being full of eyes, and the number of their wings; but very little more that is really profitable can be added, though it would be easy enough to say much if we were to enter upon Ezekiel's vision, let therefore a few words suffice. No doubt the cherubim which Moses made were of the same appearance as those which kept the way of the tree of life, and those which Solomon made, and those which Ezekiel and the apostle John beheld, though Moses did not describe their particular form, the omission of which seems to imply that their form was well known and their signification well understood at that time. My impression is, the *faces* represented the Personalities of Jehovah in *all the views* that can be conceived concerning man's redemption. Face and person are synonymous terms, this is well known: but observe, the *number* of faces are not to represent the

number of *Persons*; that is not what is meant. Neither do I use the word *heads*; it is not so said in Scripture, though most writers have done so. If we read Ezek. i. 10, we shall find the face of a man *in the front*, the face of a lion on *the right side*, the face of an ox on *the left side*, and the face of an eagle *at the back*. This appears to be the plain meaning of the words as they stand. Thus these faces would be seen full of eyes, before and behind. As the cherubim stood at each end of the mercy-seat opposite each other, the four different faces would be presented to the high priest as he entered the *sanctum sanctorum*. He would have a view of the full face of the lion on the one side, and of the ox on the other, also of the right and left side-faces of the eagle and of the man. Their being full of eyes, before and behind, appears to me to represent the omniscieny of the Godhead.* The four wings were doubtless significant—two were for vesture, and the other two were stretched upwards, but on their stooping to behold the propitiatory blood, their wings would meet over each other, combining, as I have said before, a regal canopy over the golden throne. The faces would picture the peculiar parts which the threefold personality in Jehovah exhibit in the covenant of grace. The *Bull* is an emblem of fire, as fire is of wrath; the first Person demands satisfaction for sin, and by this emblem, fire devoured the sacrifice, the figure of the sufferings and death of Christ. The *Lion* is an emblem of light, as light is of life; the second Person, by his humanity, fed the fire until he was consumed; when the fire was satisfied then it expired. The person of Christ, the God-man, by his death, conquered death and restored life to man, and thus he is the life and the light of men. The *Eagle* is an emblem of air or spirit, by the inspiration or breath of which man inspires and breathes forth. The Holy Spirit breathes celestial life in the soul. He supports and maintains it, and meetens the believer for heavenly glory.† Their wings

* If this idea be correct, it must, I think, be fatal to the scheme of those who hold that the cherubic figure set forth angels, or the Church of God in heaven. The attributes of Jehovah cannot be separated from the personalities of his being, though a separate symbol is used to set forth one in particular.

† In heathen mythology, which is more or less derived from the patriarchal symbolic figures, the faces of the Lion, Bull, Eagle,

meeting each other as they overshadow the mercy-seat, as I have repeatedly said, denote the divine attributes, mercy, truth, righteousness, peace, wisdom, power, and love, all joining in consent and harmony in the great work of a full and completed salvation. The divine attributes thus meeting together form a canopy of divine glory over the mercy-seat or throne of grace to which the humble suppliant may now approach without dread and fear; for until the sacrifice was accepted, the throne of the divine Majesty was a "seat of dreadful wrath and shot-devouring flame;" but now it is a throne of grace, a glorious high throne—"a glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary." (Jer. xvii. 12.) It is the seeking sinner's only refuge; it is the only place where mercy can be administered, and the believer find pardon and peace. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 24-26.)

"Mercy and truth on earth are met,
Since Christ the Lord came down from heaven;
By his obedience so complete,
Justice is pleased, and peace is given."

Thus we have set before us in the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat the great transactions in the council of heaven by the eternal three-one Jehovah to the view of man on earth. It is an hieroglyphical picture of the covenant of grace and the parties concerned in it. The wisdom, goodness, and justice of God are here transcendentally displayed in the punishment of sin and the justification of the redeemed sinner. It centres in the glorious person and substitutionary work of his Son Jesus Christ; in him all the rays of the Godhead meet and shine, for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; by him, in a sinless humanity, the law of God is perfectly fulfilled, magnified, and made honourable; by his death his

&c., are well known to be emblematic of qualities or character; and however fanciful it may appear, the same figures as employed in Scripture must be understood in like manner. Our concern is with *the truth* that is presented, not the figure itself.

people's transgression is forgiven and their sin is covered, for his blood is a full atonement and is the propitiation. What a complete, full, and satisfactory answer can be given to that most important question which a sinner asks when first awakened to the danger of his sin. "Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the most high?" Until the answer is heard in the court of the sinner's conscience, he feels the impossibility of his being justified before God on the ground of his own obedience to divine law, for he is already a sinner, was born in sin, has lived in sin, and is already under condemnation. This revelation of the law in the soul is commonly called a law work, for by the law is the knowledge of sin, and while this law work is going on there can be no peace, for the law not only demands perfect obedience, but it also demands a complete satisfaction, the death of the sinner. None can live on the terms of God's holy law, for it is broken, and all hope of being justified before God by any act of the sinner is utterly taken away; there is no escape but in the method of grace which the gospel reveals; here is a disclosure of God's mercy to fallen man upon such a footing as enables the guilty sinner seeking salvation to hope for forgiveness and to be accepted before God for ever. "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" by which we are to understand his active and passive obedience to the law of God in the room and stead of his people; this obediential righteousness being received by faith in Jesus Christ, faith in his life, as well as in his death, is by the gracious constitution of God in the gospel, imputed to, reckoned, made over, and placed to the forgiven sinner's account, as though he had actually wrought it out himself and had never sinned. The law has now no demand upon him; he is made free from it, and stands complete in Christ. Judicially considered, he is sinless, or in other words, righteous. The righteousness of Christ is a glorious robe covering every member of his mystical body the church; and "therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple."

Let us, in conclusion, notice some of the precious blessings arising out of the great facts set forth by the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat, or, in other

words, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Mercy and truth are met together in the person of Christ the Son of God; righteousness and peace have kissed each other; this is realised in the sinner's conscience; what a happy meeting, God and sinners reconciled! The first blessing is, *The gift of the Holy Ghost*. Jesus, having finished the work which his Father had given him to do, hath ascended upon high, and hath for ever sat down on the throne of his majesty with his Father; the Father sends the Spirit in the name of his Son to testify of these things to every member of the redeemed family; by him they are quickened, renewed in the spirit of their mind, called out of nature's darkness into its marvellous light, and manifested to be the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 2. *The way unto the Father is opened by the Son*. What an encouragement to every returning penitent sinner; every obstacle is taken out of the way, no price in his hand is wanted, the price is paid; no righteousness of the creature is required, for an everlasting righteousness is wrought out and brought in, so that there is forgiveness with God that he may be feared and that the sinner may live in his sight. 3. *A free access is opened up to all the saints*. Here at this throne of glory they may have converse with the great I AM, the eternal three-one Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; here the saints may pour out their hearts before God, and here each person of the ever-blessed and glorious Trinity reveals his love to them; here what blessed communications of divine truth are made to the understanding; here it is they grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Saviour Jesus Christ; thus it is they live by faith on the Son of God, living daily on his fulness, receiving grace upon grace, and daily experiencing the Spirit's renewing grace. 4. *A sure ground for hope is revealed*. Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; to be assured of everlasting felicity in the presence of him where there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore; to have a share of that heavenly glory by the gift of Christ which he himself had with the Father before the world was: what a glorious expectation for every saint whilst passing through much tribulation, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the

things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." What a theme for eternal rejoicing shall we have when arrayed in robes made white by the blood of the Lamb; with palms of victory in our hands, we shall sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Finally. From the vast undertaking that is here represented in the redemption of sinners, what an invaluable price, what a tremendous cost, is the ransom that has been paid, and what an Almighty power has been exercised to accomplish it. Hence we learn how great is the demerit of sin, its exceeding sinfulness. How can the believer love sin? how can he live in it? how shall he, if he be dead to sin, live any longer therein? He cannot, he will not, he must not. Oh, if any of you are not walking after the Spirit, you are not living in the Spirit, but are walking after the flesh; and if so, you are still under condemnation, not being in Christ Jesus; for they that are in Christ Jesus are new creatures; old things are passed away, all things are become new. Let, then, this thought press on the conscience of every one who names the name of Christ as a professing member of his mystical body, more especially the formalist and the secret backslider, and also the ungodly; let them beware how they slight and contemn the great doctrines of the gospel, salvation by grace, the substitutionary work of the Son of God, and the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, for "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy."

NOTE.

In Ezekiel, ch. xxviii., the Prince of Tyre is spoken of under the figure of an "anointed cherubim—a covering cherubim." The figure is evidently used as emblematic of the GREAT ONES which that proud and vain man wickedly pretended to. The entire prophecy is a bitter and most cutting satirical reproof for his false assumption. It is probable he used the figure of the cherubim as the insignia of himself in state matters.

THE RESURRECTION
GLORIES OF THE REDEEMER;
OR,
THE SACRED EVENTS OF THE FORTY DAYS
AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, MILE END,

On Lord's Day Morning, December 1st, 1867.

BEING THE TWELFTH OF A SERIES OF DISCOURSES ON THE LIFE AND MINISTRY
OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ON THIS EARTH.

“To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”—Acts i. 3.

THE Resurrection Glories of Christ were reserved exclusively for his church. They were of a character too sacred for the common gaze of men in general, and, therefore, they were concealed from the men of the world, but most graciously revealed to his disciples. Though there were no earthly witnesses to the Lord's resurrection, yet he has given many infallible proofs that he himself is the indubitable witness of the truth, that he rose again according to the Scriptures; and the text we have read expresses most emphatically that he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. The fact is also to be marked of the total absence of any record that in no instance did our Lord reveal himself to any person, Jew or Gentile, who was an unbeliever, or who did not follow him as a disciple. With the men of this world he never more conversed. He was seen no more of men, as men of the world. This fact, I say, is too significant to be overlooked. It is one that must never be forgotten by those who are his spiritual disciples, or by those who deem themselves his followers.

Our object is to take up the various events in the history of the forty days after the resurrection, showing, by the light of inspired truth, that he who had the mercy to lay down his life had power to take it again; and that the body in which he was seen during those forty days was the veritable body in which he was known when in the public exercises of his ministry amongst men generally. This point is in keeping with my other discourses on the Life and Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine of his real humanity is not, I think, sufficiently entered into by many believers, and hence there is often a lamentable deficiency in the character of their faith. Our remarks are not intended to meet the objections of speculative theorists; our object is *to feed* the Church of God whilst dwelling upon the recital of those events which marked the concluding part of the Redeemer's earthly history; this we will endeavour to do in as regular and orderly manner as the different records of the inspired narrators will enable us to do. May the Lord be pleased to give us his help and blessing while meditating upon so sacred a theme.

Those who examine the record of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and reflect upon its importance as a part of the history of the divine word made flesh, will be prepared to understand how God's name was infinitely glorified by the death of his own beloved Son. There is this peculiarity in the Resurrection of the Redeemer, that it is, perhaps, more than any other event in his history, bound up with the hopes of his disciples, and with the character of his church. The Bible, for instance, would be admitted by many who would be unwilling to receive the faith of Christians generally. The Crucifixion leaves no room for doubt upon historical grounds. But the Resurrection is a fact of another class; it is an alleged preternatural occurrence, upon the truth of which the character of the apostles is staked, and upon which, as a foundation, the Church of God stands. The Christian's faith cannot be separated from the truth of Christ having risen again. It is either a cardinal fact or else the grossest imposture ever palmed upon man's credulity.

We may also observe that we are not surprised at the apostle Paul putting the question before Agrippa, as he did: Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? The doctrine of the resurrection was the promise of God to the patriarchs of

Israel, whose twelve tribes were distinguished as serving God day and night. The promise was of the life that now is and of that which is to come; so that the distinguishing principle that exists between those who serve God and those who serve him not, is the belief of the resurrection of the body. In the old dispensation it was grounded on the promise of God. In the new dispensation it is grounded on the fact **THE LORD HAS RISEN**. This was the basis of what the apostles preached. Paul, in numerous instances, speaks of the resurrection of Christ. Peter speaks of believers being begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead as the blessed result which they now possess. For, as Paul truly argues: "If Christ is not raised, we are yet in our sins; our faith is vain, preachers are false witnesses, and, if in this life we only have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable;" for by it we cut off ourselves from the enjoyment of this present life, and deceive ourselves as to the future. But those who have faith, true-saving faith, the faith of God's elect, believe most cordially the doctrine of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, him whom Joseph and Nicodemus laid in the new tomb hewn in the rock; believers feel they have a joyful hope, a lively hope of eternal salvation, because it is secured by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; they feel that the resurrection is a cardinal truth, it guarantees to them their own resurrection, and is a pledge of their own future victory over death and corruption.

And we may say, too, not of our own resurrection only, but even of what lies beyond. Die we must. Jesus died; he rose, so must we. Bear in mind the great principle of the resurrection—the corn of wheat, when laid in the earth, dies, but it yields a future crop. The remembrance of our risen Lord will always press upon us the thought that the nature of his resurrection body must involve something, at any rate, remotely analogous to the nature of the future bodies of his glorified saints. Our hope, therefore, is a glorious hope; Christ formed in our hearts the hope of glory. Where he is we expect to be. He has said, and we believe it, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, ye may be also." Well, therefore, might Peter say, "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now

ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

I have made these remarks on the resurrection of our Lord in the hope that they may tend to cheer our hearts and animate us to take a deeper interest in the subject now to come under our consideration.

The *first* event to be noticed is the record of Mark, xvi. 9: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."* She was the last at the cross, but first at the tomb. The scene of the meeting was near the sepulchre; it was early, the sun had not risen far above the horizon; the guards had left, and were on their way to make a report to the chief priests of what had been done, what they had seen, and the terror that even under pain of death induced them to leave their posts. The angels now sat in the empty tomb, but Jesus was in the locality. The early dawn, the misty atmosphere, and the full-heaving hearts and pre-occupied thoughts of the women intent on embalming the dead body of their precious Lord, would very naturally preclude any expectation of seeing him alive. Yet unexpectedly Mary did see a person, who courteously addressed her, and inquired the cause of her weeping and whom she was seeking. She, supposing him to be the gardener, and also that his thoughts were as much occupied about her Lord as her own, said, without using any antecedent, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him." Then Jesus, again speaking, but in a tone of voice well known to her, said, "Mary." Instantly she recognised his person, and answered, "Rabboni, my great Master," and would have embraced his feet; but that the present moment might be improved to the advantage of others rather than the indulgence of her own personal feelings of surprise, joy, and affection, she was not then permitted. Jesus said, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." (John xx. 15-17.)†

* Dr. Kitto ("Daily Readings," Vol. VII.), states that the interview with Mary Magdalene was *after* that with the two Marys. If Dr. K. is right, then Mark is wrong; but what saith the Scripture? "When Jesus was risen he appeared *first* to Mary Magdalene."

† See the author's sermon on this text where the different points here referred to are taken up and handled at large. "The Truth as it is in Jesus," (No. 8).

To Mary Magdalene, therefore, Jesus *first* appeared after his resurrection. He had seen her weeping, and had heard the cause thereof, for the angels asked her why she wept, and she had said it was because they had taken away her Lord, and that she knew not where they had laid him. Then Jesus spoke, asking her why she wept, and what she is looking for. In those questions doubtless she saw but the kindness of an apparent stranger, and therefore would not so soon recognise her Lord, but when spoken to by name we see, as we well know by our own experience, how recognition is assisted.

We have not time to enter into the great doctrine of the divine relationship that exists between the Church of God and with Christ and the Father as couched in the first revelation of resurrection truth to Mary. "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." The mystical union between Christ and his church is a wonderful theme; it surpasses the wondrous intelligence of angels; it is one of the wonders of redeeming love which eternity itself will fail to unfold. To Mary Magdalene was the high honour accorded of seeing first her Redeemer, and to hear him speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Not only so, but to have the great and glorious doctrine of divine and eternal union applied to her own soul by the loving Saviour himself.

But to proceed. By the record (Matt. xxviii. 9) it would appear that the next appearance of Jesus was to the women who came with Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleophas, the mother of James and Joses, and also Salome and Joanna (Mark xvi. 1, and Luke xxiv. 10), as they were on their way running to tell his disciples what they had seen and what the angels had said to them.* Jesus met them and greeted them, saying, "All hail." He then permitted them to salute his feet, and received their worship. Women were the first persons after his

* Mary Magdalene, I think, must have tarried behind, which would account for the interview being *prior* to that with the other women returning from the sepulchre. We may also reasonably suppose that Mary Magdalene was an unmarried person and had no tie to require her elsewhere, and she would feel no desire to leave the spot where she had witnessed the scene of her Lord's burial; but the other women, being married and having naturally more of the social element, they hastened to bring the disciples word. Cleophas received, no doubt, the news from his wife.

resurrection permitted and honoured to worship Him whose name is above every name. We cannot in this place trace out and put in one connected historical statement all the circumstances attending and following the resurrection as related in the gospels; indeed, it would be a difficult task without being tedious to persons who are neither critics nor sceptics, and therefore we purposely omit the interview with the angels in the sepulchre, and the incident of the two disciples, Peter and John, going there; but we cannot but notice the busy affectionate regard which the Galilean women exhibited in preparing and carrying the spices for embalming the sacred body of their Lord. As soon as the Sabbath was ended they commenced their labour of love, and set off to the spot while it was yet dark. As they drew near to the sepulchre it occurred to them they were but weak in themselves and without the appliances which men usually employ, saying, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? and when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great." How often it is that when we contemplate apparent difficulties in the way of providence and duty, as we approach them we find they have been removed, or at least have no existence as we supposed. These good women, however, from finding the sepulchre open, concluded at first that the Lord's body had been stolen away; such, at least, evidently was Mary Magdalene's impression, nor did what was said by the angel remove it. So true it is that if the love of Christ has once had its place in our hearts, neither angels nor men can ever supply its absence and remove false fears; only the person of Christ himself can assure the heart and set it at rest.

But how much these gracious women must have been soothed and cheered when Jesus met them, and when he said, in a joyous tone, "All hail," wishing them all health and prosperity, as the words mean. Words of kindness, oh how cheering, when the heart is filled with woe. In the midst of their grief and excitement, hasting with all speed to communicate the surprising intelligence which, perhaps, they could scarcely credit, they are intercepted by the loving Saviour himself. Then they were assured beyond a doubt it was their veritable friend, the risen Jesus. Their first act was to adore him as their God and Saviour, and he graciously received their worship; he silenced their fears, and gave them a message to carry to

his brethren, the disciples. He spake of them there as his brethren, though none, excepting John, had behaved like brethren, for they had all forsaken him and fled on the dark and doleful night of his betrayal. But the loving Lord harbours no resentment; he knew the flesh was weak. It was from no want of love, but they felt their weakness, and were filled with fear. The message was taken, though it was not credited at the time; the news seemed too good to be true.

We must bear in mind that Peter and John, on hearing of the empty tomb, went immediately to the sepulchre. The incident that is related shows how full the minds of these two disciples were of everything that related to the death of their Lord and Master. We must also bear in mind that to Peter expressly was there a message sent that the Lord had risen, and that the disciples were to expect to see him in Galilee. We are also to bear in mind that in the evening the eleven disciples in their meeting, on receiving the other two disciples from their journey to Emmaus, were eager in relating the appearance of Jesus to *Peter* in particular, and that it is also stated by itself in the account given by the apostle Paul. This would make it a notable fact; the more so, because no evangelist has recorded it. Why so? Because the interview was strictly private and too sacred in its character to be seen by other eyes, and to be recorded in words common to all readers. Peter himself makes no allusion to it. No; there are certain events, incidents, and circumstances which happen in the course of a believer's experience which no human eye must see or human ear hear. The transaction is alone with God and the soul. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joys. Peter had sinned deeply, had wept bitterly; his grief and his anguish was commensurate with the love of his heart. What passed in that sacred interview no third person can relate, but it did take place. None but a broken-hearted Jesus knows what a broken-hearted backslider feels. Peter was not only restored to society, but also restored to his Lord. If the Lord had not restored him he would have been lost to society, but Jesus sought him out, comforted his heart, assured him of his forgiving love, and healed the wounds that sin had made. He who knew all things knew that Peter loved him sincerely, but no mortal on earth will ever know what

then took place, nor need we inquire ; we have no vain curiosity. But this we would impress upon all who deeply feel the wound they have caused by forsaking the way of truth and righteousness : The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways. Sin is its own punishment. Sin stings the sinner with bitter remorse, compunction, and sorrow ; but remorse and grief do but keep open the wounds ; they never heal ; and until the Lord of life and love shall come with his healing balm there can be neither comfort nor hope. Few and rare are the sympathies of Christian brethren in such cases. It is partly from pride, ignorance, and mortification that erring brethren are left unattended to. We say nothing against their being excluded from nominal membership—propriety and the word of God may demand that ; but too often they are cast out like a broken vessel, and no attempts are made to restoration. But it is our mercy to know it is not so with our loving Lord ; he looks after his wanderers. It was one of his first concerns after his resurrection to look for Peter. He knew where to find him ; and when they met it was a sacred meeting indeed—one weeping for grief, the other, it may be, weeping for very love. Love makes a lover weep, as well as grief. We have known well what it is to feel love and grief the heart dividing in one's own soul. Those sacred emotions are known only to such who have felt and realised deeply the love of Jesus. A bursting heart can only be healed by the Lord himself, and this he always does in secret. These meetings with God and the soul are sacred even to God himself. He has never revealed to any of his servants the secret griefs and comforts that have passed between the penitent returning backslider and the compassionate heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pass on. By the middle of the day, the chief priests, the Sanhedrim, had received the report of the soldiers, the Romans testified the fact, the Jewish leaders accepted it and shuffled it into silence ; but the friends of Jesus required fuller confirmation—some doubted. Even the two disciples going to Emmaus were of that number. It was the middle of the day, most probably after the interview with Peter, that Jesus stepped up to these men as they were thoughtfully walking ; one of whom was Cleophas, not Cephas, nor yet of the eleven. He had heard what his wife had related, but seems not to have attached much weight to it. They were still filled with sadness ; it

was seen in their countenance; it was heard in their mournful voice, and, doubtless, many a deep, heavy sigh and groan escaped them as they passed along. Jesus knew their thoughts, he knew how sad they were, he knew the occasion of their grief; but he, as the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, was touched with their sorrows and their grief. The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He spake unto them of the things pertaining to God, he chided them for their slowness of apprehension, but he opened their understandings, and they understood the Scriptures. Their hearts burned within them while he talked with them by the way, as he opened up to them the Scriptures. O what a resurrection glory was this! The heart made to glow with love to him that died; such love as they never had felt before, such views of truth as they had never seen before; and all this mingled with such social freedom of friendliness that emanated from union of heart in the things of God. O how delightful this union of soul! None but believers in Christ know what it is, this knitting together in love of souls of a kindred spirit in the things of God—Christian experience and providential dispensations. These disciples, how marvellously they discovered their divine Lord, in the simple act of blessing the evening meal.

Yet there is nothing particularly surprising in the fact that the two disciples failed to recognise the Lord, though their hearts burned while the Scriptures were opened up to them by this remarkable stranger. We are told, "their eyes were holden, that they should not know him," so that, by a divine interposition, they were prevented from recognising the Lord till he was pleased to reveal himself. Mark even says that he appeared "in a different form" to two of them. What Mark expresses in one form of words, Luke expresses in another; both, however, asserting the same simple truth that the Lord exercised a power, whether belonging to him in respect of his divine nature, or of his most sinless, pure, and now glorified humanity, by which, whensoever it seemed good to him, his holy body suddenly ceased to be seen, or appeared without those lineaments that were necessary for recognition. His voice, style of speech, countenance, all unrecognisable. Our own experience is, and that of all

believers, that the presence of our Lord to our hearts is sovereignly mysterious, spiritual, evanescent as to duration, yet heart-warming, as near like this visit at Emmaus as like is like.

We may, therefore, take great consolation from the fact that the social and spiritual manifestation of Jesus to these two disciples is that which is graciously continued still to every member of his living family.

But now let us return to the narrative. These travellers return from Emmaus, and know where to find the eleven gathered together, by appointment, no doubt. The new comers are greeted with the joyful tidings, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." And they, too, in their turn, have a testimony to give to their friends, more full and explicit than any that had yet been delivered of that eventful day. Mary Magdalene, the other two Marys, Joanna, Salome, Peter, these had seen the Lord. It was really a fact; he had risen indeed; it could not be doubted. But the visitors had not only seen the Lord; he had walked with them, he had communed with them. They were instructed by him, sat with him at mealtime, received bread from his hands, and heard him bless the food; the peculiar manner of which and the unveiling of himself at the same moment discovered the great truth of which they were before unconscious, except that their hearts burned with love to him while he opened to them the Scriptures. But, lo! a fuller testimony was yet to be given. Even while the eleven are examining the two witnesses, and searching every particle of their testimony, Jesus himself appeared amongst them, and, with words of peaceful greeting, showed unto them both his pierced hands and wounded side. They were at first terrified, for the doors were closed; and yet they saw their Lord standing before them. Yes, in that very body which was nailed to the cross and which the soldiers pierced. It was not a bodiless spirit, for there was his flesh and his bones, which no disembodied spirit possesses. But if seeing is believing, handling is more assuring. So the half faithless and excited disciples are desired to handle him and to feel him; and not only so, a special sign of human nature was used to bring final conviction. He asked for something to eat; they gave him fish and honeycomb. It was taken by him, to show that he had the power of eating it, though not the need of it. His body was truly human, as much

so as theirs, though his was sinless and uncorrupted by death. The Lord was pleased to eat, in the presence of them all, and then they believed with all the fulness of a fervent, lasting, and enduring faith.

There was, however, at this meeting, one absentee, Thomas, and for all the overwhelming testimony of the assembled believers, yet he would not believe. He himself must have ocular demonstration; he, too, must have a personal manifestation. So the unconvinced Thomas seeks for outward and material evidences, and for seven days he was left unsatisfied and unblessed. His wilful unbelief was the great barrier of his joy and peace. I suspect pride was at the bottom of it all. One and another had seen the Lord, Mary Magdalene, Peter, James, and the two visitors to Emmaus; they had had special interviews, but he had not; therefore, unless he could positively prove to his senses the actual wounds of the Lord's body, he would not believe. So he could have no fellowship with the other disciples in the comfort arising from the fact that the Lord had risen, and therefore was left isolated in darkness and unbelief. We cannot but see, however, how sovereignly the Lord manifested himself to some and not to others. In Mary Magdalene's case one could almost divine the reason why she should be so favoured as to be blessed with the first sight of him to whom her love and gratitude was a constant burning flame, the sense of which she had never lost. Some reason, doubtless, existed in the mind of the Saviour, why she, who was the last at his burial, and the first to be at the grave with the preparations for embalming him, should have the comfort and joy of seeing her risen Saviour first. In his lifetime, she spared no expense to testify her love to him who had done so much for her, and now all her sorrow is turned into joy; for at the earliest possible moment of time, the Lord visits her, and pours heavenly consolation into her wounded heart. Peter was likewise favoured; but we will not further intrude into the particulars of that sacred interview. The apostle James had also an interview before the rest of the apostles, but of what nature, when, or where, it is not recorded. The apostle Paul merely states the fact. (1 Cor. xv. 7.) Unless it was James who was with Cleophas, which is not unlikely, as he was his son, and they probably went together to see a friend, and to spend the night at Emmaus, but on the unexpected discovery of

the risen Saviour, could no longer remain, but hastened back to Jerusalem, to communicate the surprising tidings of what they had seen and heard.

We read in John's record how, on the day when the Lord renewed his appearance to his assembled disciples, he appeared in the same supernatural way; and we mark with adoring wonder how the personal test which the doubting apostle had required, was offered to him; and it is with thankful joy that we hear that outburst of inspired conviction that now recognised the risen Jesus; not so much the humanity as the divinity—"My Lord and my God" is now the assuring exclamation, a divine assurance from a personal manifestation. Such an assurance many thousands of believers have since needed, and, in a spiritual sense, no other is of lasting service to the Lord's doubting ones. We see in this instance, too, the sovereignty of our Lord. He withheld from Thomas, for a whole week, the manifestation of himself in a private or personal intercourse. Had Thomas been with the disciples at the first, doubtless he would have been spared the loss and pain which his absence entailed upon him.

Thus far the second general appearance of our Lord to his disciples. It is idle and vain to raise questions as to the intervening time in which he was unseen, and which is not recorded. It is our wisdom to be silent, and to suppress foolish curiosity. One thing is probable: the fact of these two meetings with the disciples fixed the first day of the week to be observed as the Christian Sabbath for divine worship.

We come now to "the *third* time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead, and on this wise showed he himself." It would appear that the disciples had gone into Galilee, as they had been instructed, that some time had elapsed, and the disciples were disbanded, and some had arranged to return to their former occupations. Peter proposed to six of the brethren to hire a boat, and recommence fishing. They consented, and went at once to business. They chose a favourable time for their work, but there was no success; all night they toiled, but caught no fish. In the morning, a stranger appears on the beach, and he inquires, if they have any meat; it is generally supposed, fish to sell, so-called meat; but I am inclined to think the question was meant as to their personal want of food to eat, as well as of fish for trading. The stranger directs

them to cast the net on the other side of the ship, which they did, all which shows the homely, simple way of life of those times. The suggestion was easy to adopt. They had nothing to lose by following the advice of a stranger, and who might possibly be a buyer. The wonderful and miraculous draught, however, at once arouses their attention. Such a sudden contrast. They look again at the stranger with wonder and amazement at their unexpected success. John sees the divinity, as well as the humanity, of his Lord. The Lord is known by the operation of his hands. John immediately communicates with Peter, saying, "It is the Lord." At once Peter rushes impetuously to meet his Lord. He cannot wait another moment. Boat, fish, companions, water, everything is left, so that the shore shall be reached, and he pay his adoring acknowledgments to his beloved Lord.

The other points to be noticed at this time of Jesus showing himself are his instructions for bringing the fish to land, in which Peter assisted, the circumstances of the morning meal, and the subsequent conversion. However strange and perplexing, the fire of coals, fish laid thereon, and bread, it shows the kindness of the human heart of Jesus to provide for the bodily wants of his wearied disciples in their first toil for their daily bread. No doubt the fire and food were miraculous. He tells them to come and dine. They make no question as to his personality, "knowing that it was the Lord;" they as well knew his human form and his divine acts as ever they did, and they were not wanting in interest of anything that he did or said; indeed, I doubt not but that every movement was closely observed, and that they listened with absorbed attention to every word he uttered. They had not forgotten the message which Mary Magdalene had delivered: he was to ascend to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God. He had before given intimations of this on the night of the institution of the supper—he had told them the purpose for which he was going, it was to prepare a place for them, that where he was they were to be also; so that they were in expectation of his departure, and probably, there might come over them some feeling of mysterious dread and trembling, apprehensive that, perhaps, this might be the time. It is at this meeting that John and Peter are seen again in their wonted relations of warmest and clinging love to their Lord and Master. We see him gradually and mysteriously withdrawing; we see

the elder apostle following the command of his Lord; what heart-searching questions, put to Peter personally, "Simon, lovest thou me?" Three times he had denied the Lord, and thrice was the question put. Poor Peter's heart is ready to burst with grief—what a momentous crisis in a believer's experience; the touchstone of a sincere believer, "Lovest thou me?" O for grace, as Peter had, to appeal to the Lord as the heart-searching and the rein-trying God, the omniscient God. "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Believer in the Lord Jesus, we don't ask you how much you know, or what others think of you; but what does the Lord know of you; it is a matter between God and your conscience as to whether you can appeal to your Saviour God that he knows that you do love him in sincerity and truth.

To return. This interview with the seven disciples was not the last. The Lord had promised to meet them in the place where they had now met. And here, no doubt, all had assembled, hourly expecting the complete fulfilment of a promise of a further revelation. Probably on a mountain which the Lord had appointed, perhaps Tabor; he manifested himself not only to the eleven disciples, the women that usually followed him, but also to the five hundred *brethren* spoken of by Paul. This interview must have been of the deepest solemnity and sacred interest, and tends to set forth the majesty of the risen Lord in a manner far more distinct than had ever yet been witnessed; some, it appears, doubted: even the evidence of their own senses was insufficient. It was here, on the mountain in Galilee, to the congregation of five hundred, that Jesus declared the unlimited power he possessed in heaven and on earth; it was here he commissioned his apostles to disciple, and to baptise his followers in the name of the Three-One God, assuring them of his continual presence: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;" as much as to say, his local and bodily presence was not to be looked for: this is what I believe is meant, though I know thousands of good men think differently. Be this as it may, we are all confident of this one thing, that Jesus spiritually is with his people alway, even to the end of the world, that period when the last ransomed sinner shall have been gathered to the fold of Jesus, even to the hour when his mediatorial kingdom shall be merged in the eternity of his everlasting reign of God being all in all.

One farther and last interview is yet to be vouchsafed, and that of a higher and of a holier character than has yet been witnessed. Pentecost was drawing nigh, Jesus and his disciples return to Jerusalem, no doubt, by his command; and probably, in the well-known "Upper Room," where they had assembled six weeks before; there he appeared to them for the last time; in what mysterious manner we know not; but being in the midst, he reminded them of his former prophecies, and that all things must be fulfilled in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning him; then it was that he opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures; he then gave them a charge as to the great doctrines of salvation to be preached in his name; they were to abide in Jerusalem, until they were endowed with power from on high. How full must have been their hearts of mighty presentiments and exalted hopes. Again they asked the strange question as to his restoring the kingdom of Israel. Was this to be the much expected time? What carnal conceptions they had of spiritual truths; even then their minds were upon things temporal, instead of that which is eternal. Such enquiries were solemnly silenced; it was not for them to know the times and seasons which the Father had reserved in his own power; they are to be the Lord's witnesses; they are not to expect an earthly kingdom, but to prepare others for a heavenly kingdom. Jesus, having now given them his farewell instructions, as the messengers of his gospel, he led them out, from this upper room, as far as to Bethany; no doubt they followed in mysterious and solemn silence through the streets of the city, until they had passed over the brook, and reached Bethany, the locality of his much-loved friends, Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus; once more he seemed to desire a visit to this dear family, and to give them his parting blessing, as their ever faithful friend. Pardon my imagination, but I cannot think he chose Bethany for the sake of its rising ground or its green grass; the Bethany family was most dear to him; their house had been the scene of his friendship, and where he had often enjoyed a quiet retreat after the fatigues of preaching and journeys, and now he leaves the place embalmed with the sacred recollection that from there he ascended unto his Father, and their Father, to his God and their God. His disciples were now enriched with heavenly promises and benedictions, and while he

was blessing them with uplifted hands, he was parted from them ; they beheld him still rising and blessing them, until a cloud received him from their sight, and angelic voices addressed to them those words of mingled warning, consolation, and prophecy : " Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven." Thus the Lord of glory closed the period of his bodily presence on earth. It was a dignity suitable to the occasion, that angels should be present when the Lord of angels ascended to the throne of his Father. They attended him at his birth in Bethlehem ; they ministered to him when in the wilderness, after the temptation, by them he was helped in Gethsemane ; and at his sepulchre, they had the charge over his body ; and now having ushered the King of Glory into the portals of heaven, they return as the heralds of peace and consolation to the bereaved disciples, who immediately, and for the first time, worshipped him in a spiritual and believing manner, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy ; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.

Thus, dear friends, I have endeavoured to set forth, something of the resurrection glories of the Redeemer, by contemplating the various events of the forty days in the life of our Lord on earth, after his resurrection. What a halo of glory surrounds his first appearance to Mary Magdalene. The whole scene was one of surpassing interest, beyond the power of words to describe, or the art of the painter to depict ; she had beheld the angels, they had spoken to her and she had told them her grief. Jesus presented himself at that moment, she saw him standing, the question is repeated, and the same reply, with a declaration that strikes our admiration, and that one thrilling word as *he* spake it " Mary," how it surprised her into instant conviction, and he stands revealed before her in his resurrection glory ; he had left his weakness on the cross, and had now risen triumphant over death, hell, and the grave ; Mary is no longer to regard him as the object of her love on earth, but the object of her worship in heaven, whither he is about to ascend : a moment before she believed not the truth of his resurrection, though asserted by angels ; now her faith must be raised to the mystery of his ascension to the right hand of God in heaven.

Our Lord's second appearance was to the two Marys, Salome, and Joanna. This was another resurrection glory; they were permitted to hold him by the feet, and they worshipped him as their divine Lord. His pierced feet gave ample evidence that it was the same body of him who was crucified, and to whose personal wants they were accustomed to minister; here we see his unabated love and friendship, his love is still the same; the services of affection which these women had rendered are rewarded by an interview of character which has a glory entailed upon it as long as the world shall stand, and memory holds its seat, for this little company of godly women had the first honour of joining together in the worship of the risen Saviour.

What a heavenly glory surrounds the personal interview with Peter. Peter had been faithless, Jesus had turned and looked upon him; that one look broke his heart; now that the Lord is risen, he hastens to the place where Peter is to be found, it is to soothe, not to reproach; to comfort, not to condemn; this is a resurrection glory which to the present hour is a source of consolation to every sincere returning penitent who may have in words, or in actions, denied their Lord and Master.

The two brethren who journeyed to Emmaus, and the account they give of the Lord explaining the scriptures, and manifesting himself, reveals a glory the like of which had not been known before; in a spiritual manner these visits have been repeated many times since to believers, and it is one of those resurrection glories which many have often desired to experience again and again.

Those two manifestations which the Lord vouchsafed to the disciples generally, show us how it is that he appears amongst us still; not bodily, it is true, but his spiritual presence is confirming, comforting, and strengthening. How condescending, compassionate, and assuring are all his words; mysteriously and sovereignly he comes with peace, removes our doubts, and sets our aching hearts at rest.

The third time when he showed himself has a peculiar glory about it; there is more in it than human tongue can utter. We cannot but observe the altered bearing of the risen Lord, so different from that when, before death, he joined in the social circle with all the familiarity of a friend, he wept with those who wept, and submitted himself to the scorn, reproach, and persecution of those who hated him.

Now, there is a marked reserve in all his intercourse with his disciples ; there is a mysterious obscurity and a dignified abruptness in his movements; there is a depth and an authority in his discourses, brief as they all are, which give to his carriage and conduct a degree of majesty which they had not felt or seen before. Hence we see no more the unreserved familiarities which human friendships allow. No longer to be viewed as the Son of Man, by men, but by the church as the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

“At one time he says, ‘Touch me not;’ at another, ‘Handle me and see.’ When it so pleased him, he was visible, yet not recognised ; or invisible, and ‘vanished out of sight:’ or, if as incorporeal, when ‘the doors were shut he stood in the midst.’ He was no longer subject to infirmities, want, or suffering. We shall behold him during the forty days which he remained on earth, going in and out as a spirit might do ; yet his open wounds are palpable to sight and to touch ; his flesh and bones are not those of a spirit. Now he permits his person or his voice to be known ; then again the disciples believe them to be another’s, according to his own desire and absolute will. He breathes the Holy Ghost upon them with an authority mysterious and solemn beyond his wont ; yet he eats in their presence, to show clearly that his risen body is not a phantom. He is no longer their companion on journeys, or their teacher by parables and familiar discourses. He exists apart—they know not where ; meets them suddenly by the way, or in Jerusalem, or Galilee, and as suddenly withdraws himself. He appears already on the move within his higher kingdom. The brows which were so lately crowned with thorns will soon wear the heavenly diadem. ‘There are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial ; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.’ They seemed to be united unspeakably in the person of the risen Saviour.”*

But time rolls on ; it warns me that I must not linger upon these precious facts, for other duties require us else-

* This masterly description is extracted from pp. 766-7 of an invaluable work, “The Messiah,” published by Murray. The author of it kindly presented me with a copy at the time I was preparing my twelve Lectures on the Life and Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.—C.G.

where. But before we quite dismiss the subject, let us ask what are the *Lessons* which we may learn from the several facts thus put before us? The first is—

That as Jesus, when he rose and left the dead, completely separated himself from the world, so must all who are buried with him by baptism, rise with him into newness of life, and separate themselves from the spirit of this world. This is the main point of the Christian life; separation, complete separation from the world, and living unto God. This is the power of Christ's resurrection, and which the Apostle Paul so ardently longed to know, "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." What is this, then, but for the believer to become as dead to the world in spirit, as Jesus was in body to the men of the world then living, they were dead to him as he was dead to them; he was never more seen by them; he never more spoke to them; he was forgotten by them, esteemed as a dead man out of mind; if he bodily passed through the streets, he was unrecognised by the men of the world, they knew him no more; he was in the world, yet the world knew him not. So should it be with his disciples. We are not of the world, though necessarily in it; our occupations in life bring us into the business of life, and it is the order of God's providence; yet we are commanded to come out from among them, to be separate and touch not the unclean thing; and wherefore? Because we are henceforth to live unto God; we are not to partake of their spirit; we are not to enter into their pursuits, nor their pleasures, nor are we to follow their maxims; we have professedly left the spirit of the world; it is no longer our master. The believer in Christ lives in another atmosphere; he lives on other food, he lives by faith upon the Son of God, he has fellowship with him in his sufferings; the world hates him and treats him with scorn, looks upon him as a dead man, as one having no part in the things of this life, takes no interest in him, and passes him by as one soon to be buried in oblivion; with him they can have no fellowship of soul, nor he with them. Now, dear friends, do you know what this deadness to the world is? Is the world thus dead to you, and are you thus dead to the world? This is a most searching question. Are you entangled with the world, or are you completely separated from it?

That is, in its spirit, pursuits, pleasures, and privileges; or, at least, are you desiring so to be? Unless such is the case, you know nothing of the power of Christ's resurrection, nor have you fellowship with his sufferings, nor are you made conformable to his death; you are living in the flesh and cannot please God; for they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in these things.

2. *That as Jesus, after his resurrection, spoke only of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, so must his disciples order their conversation one with another in this world.* They who live in the Spirit must also walk in the Spirit. To have our conversation in heaven is to speak only of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. This is what the fellowship of the saints should be. The risen Saviour is an example for all his followers. The things pertaining to the kingdom of God—what are they? Certainly they are not the externals of religion, nor yet the circumstances of God's house; too often, alas! these matters, and sometimes other things even not so good as these, form the topics of conversation among the professing people of God. O what barrenness of soul is evinced where the things pertaining to God are not spoken of! "Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard." To speak of the things pertaining to God is to speak of the things that accompany salvation, so far as we may know them by our own experience and the teachings of God's spirit; Christ and his salvation, the glory of his person, his work, offices, and the adorable characters he sustains, are things that pertain to the kingdom of God; the kingdom of God is within, and consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. All this has to do with what is called the work of grace in the soul; things known and felt in the heart; what God is to us, and what God is *doing* for us. What interminable topics of conversation for believers who are living in accordance with their privileges and hopes. Blessed fellowship! We talk of the communion of saints, but where are the saints who have this communion? Brethren! "what manner of communications are these that ye have one with another?" Will it bear inquiring into, and comparing with that of the two disciples as they were walking to Emmaus? They talked together of all these things

which had happened. What things? Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, his death and resurrection, and the interest and hopes they had in him. Dear friends, when you get together, talk about these things; you will attract the presence of Jesus, he will join your company, and cause your hearts to burn with love. But lastly—

3. *That as Jesus, after he had risen, gave many infallible proofs that he was alive, so ought all his followers to give ample and unmistakeable testimony that they are living unto God.* When Jesus died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth—he liveth unto God. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God. We are henceforth not to live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” We must give proof that we are living unto God by our walk and conversation amongst one another, we are to love as brethren; we are to walk in wisdom towards them that are without. As strangers and pilgrims we are to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, having our conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against us as evil doers, we may, by our well doing, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. No man can live unto God by his own power. To know the power of Christ’s resurrection is to have an experience of divine power wrought in the soul by Christ himself. The inner life of the believer is that which he derives by the faith of the Son of God; he looks to him daily for the support and maintenance of every grace; and when there is the true life of God in the soul, there will be infallible proofs manifested in the outward life. Life in Christ is Christ in the Life. The fruits of the Spirit are seen in those who walk in the Spirit. Dying to self and living to God is the life, walk, and triumph of faith. We are to live above ourselves, and above the world; this is the infallible testimony, both before the world and before God, that we are living unto him; much of it, indeed, is a hidden life, but its proof is infallible. God seals the testimony by his Spirit, dwells in the heart by faith, and thus the believer is enabled to glorify God in his daily calling and conscience, without partaking of the spirit of the world; he is dead to it, but alive unto God.

Christian professor, have you any of these infallible

proofs that your religion is a living one? To have a "name that thou livest and art dead" is an awful and a dangerous delusion. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked."

NOTE.

OUR text speaks of *many* infallible proofs which our Lord gave of his being alive after he had risen. We do not, however, find more than *ten* instances, at the most, distinctly recorded. The order may be thus stated:—*Five times on the day of the resurrection*—viz., first to Mary Magdalene; then again to Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses (besides Joanna and Salome, who were in all probability with them); to Simon Peter alone; to the two disciples at Emmaus; to the assembled disciples (Thomas excepted) in Jerusalem. *Five times afterwards*—viz., to the assembled disciples in Jerusalem, Thomas being present; to the assembled disciples at the sea of Tiberius; on the mountain in Galilee to the eleven, and the five hundred spoken of by the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 6; to James, mentioned in the same account, verse 6; and to the Apostles on the day of Ascension, Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 4-12.

We are not to understand from this statement that these were the only instances of the Lord's appearances to his disciples, for in John's Gospel xxi. 25, we read: "And there are also *many* other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written, every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." This, I think, is to be understood of the things which Jesus did after his resurrection, as appears from the latter part of the verse, which would then agree with our text, Jesus did many more things besides what is written. The phrase "the world itself could not contain," is to be understood of the opposers and unbelievers in the person of Christ the Messiah, and of his resurrection, who would not *receive* the testimony that should be written; and nothing would be more natural and obvious to suppose, for the evidences, or proofs, were of a character which they could have no means of judging; except upon the *ex parte* statement of the disciples themselves, for they only had seen the risen Jesus. With true believers it is otherwise; the evidences, as recorded, are quite sufficient for them to receive.