

CHRIST'S LIFE THE FOUNTAIN OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE.

A SERMON,
BY CHARLES GORDELIER.

PREACHED AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, DARLING PLACE, NEAR
MILE END GATE,

On Lord's Day Evening, May 17th, 1863.

“ Because I live, ye shall live also.”—JOHN xiv. 19.

THE beloved disciple who records this statement of our Lord seems to have had its truth powerfully wrought in his own mind ; for he commences his gospel by declaring, first, the eternity and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ ; then, second, that the same person, Jesus Christ, whom he calls the Word, is the creator of the universe ; and then, third, he proclaims this great truth, “ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” (John i. 4.) Now, I believe that this great and precious truth he learned from the Lord's own words, as in our text : “ Because I live, ye shall live also.” Indeed, the whole of the writings of this inspired divine may be briefly comprehended in this : CHRIST THE LIFE ; CHRIST THE LIGHT. And this, let me tell you, is the sum and substance of the believer's experience, for there is no light without life, and there is no life without Christ.

We cannot fail to notice that the beginning of John's gospel, the last-written portion of the inspired books, corresponds to a certain extent with the commencement of the Book of Genesis ; showing that the inspiration by which the pen of the apostle was guided is precisely the same as that which guided the pen of the prophet Moses.

The Alpha and Omega of Scripture is the one and the same Spirit. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i. 21.).

Again, in the epistle to the Hebrews: (i. 1-3:) "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world," "and *upholding all things* by the word of his power," proving that the Lord Jesus Christ possesses life in himself in its very essence.

It is plain, then, to the spiritual understanding that Jesus Christ is at once the source and support of all created life. God the Father is the fountain of life. So is also the Son. So is also the Holy Spirit. These three persons, in the unity of the divine essence called God, is the only being who is self-existent, uncreated, and eternal. All other beings depend upon him. He depends on none. All other beings had a beginning. He had no beginning. From his existence all other beings have derived their existence. He is, in the highest and completest sense, the Living God—JEHOVAH—the great I AM.

Neither is there any difficulty to the spiritually taught disciple of the Lord Jesus to identify the Jehovah of the Old Testament with the Jesus of the New. The same God who appeared to Moses in Horeb, appeared to John in Patmos. The *same* God that proclaimed his name to the Prophet, "I AM THAT I AM," proclaimed his name to the apostle, "I AM HE THAT LIVETH." "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev. i. 18.) In Jehovah Jesus, then, all life has its derivation from Him. He is the first that gives Life. He is the Original of Life. From him issues, as from a fountain, the life of every living thing that can be discovered in the universe of God. The psalmist, in surveying the wonders of teeming life in all creation, exclaims, "With thee is the fountain of life." (Ps. xxxvi. 9.) The vital principle of all animated creation is essentially, necessarily, and originally, in Jesus Christ; he is the spring and source of all kinds and degrees of life, whether it be vegetable, animal, rational, spiritual, or eternal.

It is easy to ask the question, What is life? Like as it is easy to ask, What is light? but neither of these questions can be answered with any satisfaction. Philosophers have puzzled themselves with attempting to describe *the essences* of these substances, but have failed. The *essence* of life and light cannot be known by the human intellect; but the Scriptures have revealed the *source* of both: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Jesus Christ is the source of all spiritual life and light; he is the fountain of life to all true believers; this is the point we have in hand.

By referring to the commencement of the chapter, you will perceive that the disciples were troubled about the immediate and unexpected death of their divine Lord. He assures them, though the world will not see him any more, yet they will; and because he lives, and his spiritual presence will ever be with them, therefore they shall live also. The life of every believer is bound up in the life of Christ by covenant and eternal union. He is the head of his body, the church; he communicates life by his Spirit to all his members: "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish." He gives it because it is his prerogative to give; they shall never perish, because their life is hid with Christ in God. Their life stands in a continual dependence upon his life, for he is the vine, and his members are the branches. There is, therefore, a certainty, a blessed certainty, in the doctrine of our text, for our Lord hath made the life of believers in him as certain as it is certain that he himself liveth.

Again, Christ is the life of the believer by virtue of his union with him in the covenant of grace. As Christ is the head of his body the church, so he is their life; he the head, they the members. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, having blessed the church with all spiritual blessings in him before the foundation of the world, blessed them with life in him, for this is included, spiritual and eternal, and this life is in his Son.

Now, the proof of this truth lies in its *manifestation*. Every believer is united to Christ by a true and living faith. Faith being a living principle imparted to him *in consequence* of his eternal union with Christ, it is not the source of his life, mark you, but it is a link, as it were, in the chain by which he is eternally secured to Christ Jesus,

his covenant head. By virtue of his faith in him, he is *manifested* to be a child of God, as the apostle Paul very truly says: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26.) It is not their faith that makes them children; no, for God the Father, in his purposes of love, grace, and mercy, sovereignly chose the persons of every believer in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Eph. i. 3, 4.) And in the fulfilment of his purposes of grace and providence, as they are born in this world, he sends his Spirit to quicken them; he regenerates them, gives them life in Christ Jesus; and because he is their life, they are renewed in his image, the life of Christ being manifested in their mortal bodies by his Spirit which liveth in them; so that indeed it is not so much that they live in Christ as it is that Christ lives in them.

Having, by way of introduction, attempted to show you, in the *first* place, the *connexion* there is between the life of Christ and the life of the believer, we will proceed to notice, in the *second* place, that

Christ is the Believer's Life.

1. *By his own gift.* He is the fountain of life. In him was *the* life. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." As Christ is life itself essentially, so he is the dispenser of it: "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish;" "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." And in the most emphatic manner he declares himself to be *the bread of life*: "I am the bread of life:" "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Thus, from these and other portions of God's Word which might be quoted, especially in the gospel and the epistles written by the apostle John, we perceive that Christ is the believer's life by his own gift. The *instrumentality* employed is his own truth, the word of God, the gospel of the grace of God, the word of truth: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." (James i. 18.) It is effected by the immediate operation of God the Holy Ghost. The *method* of his operation may be, and commonly is, *circumstantially* different; but in every case it will be found to be by means

of the truth of Christ. He is truth, the essential truth of all the words of this book—the Bible. By the power of his Spirit, the soul is quickened; the understanding is enlightened; the affections are enlivened; and there is thereby in the believer a spiritual, supernatural, and heavenly life: the result is, that he lives to God, has peace in Christ, and is blessed with a hope of eternal life in him.

The channel of this life is faith; and faith is the gift of God; it is the link that connects the Saviour and the believer. The exercise of faith is the believer's act; but its bestowment is free, and it is irresistible; in its nature it is unquenchable; though damped it never dies, for it is wrought in the heart by a divine power, and by no possible means can the enemy of our peace ever eradicate it. It is never taken away:

“ Whom once he receives, his Spirit ne'er leaves,
Nor ever repents of the grace that he gives.”

Being united to Christ both by covenant union and by a true and living faith, they live because he lives; they stand by faith, but their standing is in him, not in themselves, for their faith is in him; their life is dependent on his; it is received by faith; they live by faith; they walk by faith: “For the life believers now live in the flesh, they live by the faith of the Son of God.” This life is a hidden life; its essential principle is hid with Christ in God, as in a garrison, secure, and defended by a power superior to all its antagonists.

2. *Christ maintains the life he gives to his people.* This life in the believer, though imparted from Christ, is like himself: it is the same in its nature; it is divine; it can never perish. As sure as Christ cannot perish, so sure the believer cannot perish; it is eternal life that is bestowed—a gift, not a loan, as many of our time-gifts are: a gift by which we are enriched in every thing by Christ. It can never be diminished, for it is always fed and nourished from the life in Christ. The believer lives upon him by the secret communications of his grace and love, and he can say with the poet:

“ Quickened by thee and kept alive,
I flourish and bear fruit;
My life I from thy sap derive,
My vigour from thy root.”

No true-born child of God can ever die. The life of

every believer being eternally secured in Christ, his covenant head, his damnation is utterly impossible. It is out of the question altogether. Satan suggests it often to the poor, weak, trembling soul; but it is only to distress it and worry it; and he influences the general preachers of the day to preach it. What? A child of God to-day, and a child of the devil to-morrow? Is this like God, think ye? No; it is the doctrine of devils; and so is the kindred lie—a child of the devil yesterday, and a child of God to-day. No, never; it cannot be. 'Tis true, God's children are all *by nature slaves* of the devil; but when by grace divine they are called out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel, they are manifested to be the children of light, and are *redeemed* from all sin and iniquity, and are no more to be found in the service and captivity of the devil. But the children of the wicked one, they are left lying in the wicked one; no divine change ever passes over them. 'Tis true, many are converted apparently from the ways of sin, folly, and shame, and appear as if they were "the living in Jerusalem;" but their hearts being unrenewed, their evil heart of unbelief remains what it ever was; they hate the doctrine of God's sovereign, eternal, electing love; they despise the broken-hearted, humble saint of God; they scorn an experimental acquaintance with the "truth as it is in Jesus" they denounce it as living upon frames and feelings, and call it a morbid state of mind. This, their ignorance, is the veil with which Satan has blinded their eyes. What is the life of Christ in the true believer but frames and feelings; but does he live upon his frames and feelings? No, certainly not; he lives upon Christ. How can a believer in Christ live upon his faith, his love, his hope, his joy, his peace, or any other grace with which he may be blessed? Why, if the poor soul had to live upon these things, gracious gifts as they are, it would soon find its spiritual life decay, and it would soon have reason to suspect its life would soon die out. I have no doubt, many gracious persons try to feed upon what is done *in* them, instead of what is done *for* them; but the Spirit of Truth eventually leads them out of themselves, and teaches them to look for all *in* Christ, and to live only upon him, and that continually, for God gives his people no stock in hand. My dear friends, if God has begun a good work in

you, you will have exercises of soul about it; and these exercises of soul will produce frames and feelings which you can neither hinder nor smother. There is no true religion without frames and feelings. They are signs of life. I mean, of course, spiritual frames and feelings, not carnal frames and feelings: "For to be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." Professors of religion dead in sin, buried in nature's grave, have no frames and feelings of a spiritual kind, no exercises of soul, no experience; or else why do they ridicule vital, experimental religion? No part of their profession has any vitality. There is a great deal of bustling busy-ing, plenty of bodily exercise, there is the form of godliness, but without its power. No lack of chapels and churches, no lack of full assemblies, no lack of conversions, no lack of money to have every thing done on an extended scale, and at a railroad pace. But all this is nothing else but the wood, hay, and stubble of outside religion, built upon *the name* of Christ for a foundation; some things they say and do, doubtless, are very good in themselves, and may fairly be considered the gold, silver, and precious stones of their building; but the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is; for it shall be revealed by fire; every man's work shall be made manifest. Man's work in religion and God's work in the heart of a believer are *essentially* distinct and different. God's living child is imitated by man; it looks like a child, it is dressed like a child, but it has no life; it is only a doll. By a little contrivance they can make it move its eyes, make a noise, or even to move along for a few minutes; but the action is mechanical and artificial; there is no animation. The religion of thousands is nothing more than this—a mere doll, a plaything. They are mightily pleased with it, and will carry it about with them everywhere, even take it to bed with them. They have a notion, but it is only a notion—a notional religion, a rational religion, a carnal religion, but not a spiritual religion. Oh, how true it is:

"Notion's the harlot's test,
By which the truth's reviled;
The child of fancy finely dressed,
But not the living child."

But to proceed. I was saying, no true-born child of God can ever die; his damnation is utterly impossible

To assert the contrary would be to give the lie to the solemn words of our Lord Jesus Christ which he uttered in his mediatorial prayer to his Father: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) Now what glory was this, think ye? why, the glory that he had with the Father before the world was, his primeval glory. (See v. 5 of the same chapter.) I ask you now, what can such language imply? what is the blessing couched beneath this precious truth? Why, the eternal and everlasting security and salvation of every elect vessel of mercy, to be sure! Deny it who can; no one will, but the blind leaders of the blind. You see, it is by the express wish of Christ, and, considered mediatorially, *it is his demand*, that all believers, those who are united to him, given to him by God the Father, should be brought home to glory. *All* shall be with him in heaven. It is his glory that not one of them is lost, or ever can be lost; none can ever perish. "All his saints are in his hand;" that is an Old Testament truth. None can pluck them out of his hand; this is a New Testament truth. How blessedly the word of God declares their eternal security, and assures them of their final perseverance. Trembling, doubting, fearing believer, thinking that thou wilt never hold out to the end! see here what a firm foundation is laid for your hope and for your comfort. How can you die while Jesus lives. He supplies you with all spiritual existence by virtue of his own life, inherent in himself. This life is inexhaustible.

"Millions of happy spirits live
On his exhaustless store;
From him they all their bliss receive,
And still he giveth more."

Surely he will be true to himself, true to his own promise: "He that hath begun the good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Those who have once truly believed in Jesus can never totally or finally fall away. "They are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation." Nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Again, let me repeat the blessed truth: "I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never

perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Now what can faith say to this? Oh, say you, the poet shall speak for me; say on:

" Enough, my gracious Lord,
Let faith triumphant cry;
My heart can on this promise live,
Can on this promise die."

Let us now, in the *third* place, inquire *how this life is sustained*. This is an important part of our subject; it is a matter of *experience*, the believer's experience, and it is necessary that you and I should know something about it, or else, if we do not, we are in an awful state, "we are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Oh, pray do look and see where you are standing; is it on the sand of your own fancies or on the rock of God's effectual calling? I assure you, when I look within, I sometimes feel afraid confidently to decide; but still, when tempted to doubt, I can adopt the words of dear old Berridge: "Lord, if I am not right, make me right; and if I am right, keep me right."

1. Then as to *how* the believer's life is sustained. For we must observe, that though Christ has given his sheep eternal life, and because he lives they live also, yet he has not given them *self existence*. That is one of his attributes which he has not communicated to his creatures. His glory is, that he is the self-existent God, and his glory he will not give to another. Were it so, that his creatures were made self existent, where would be their dependence, where would be their union, how could they draw their blessedness from him; independency of existence would isolate every creature God has made from himself. Blessed be God, his creatures have no self existence; they have no stock of life in hand; their existence is drawn from his life, and this is experienced in the true believer by the continuous communications of divine grace, like as the vine branch and its tendrils exist and thrive by its deriving sap continuously from the root. Believers are thus supplied from their ever-living head; they are his members, and while he is their divine head, they will be ever supplied with life from him, for their life is in him. Faith, hope, love, joy, and peace, are

fed, sustained, nourished, thrive, and grow from "the supply of the Spirit of Christ." These graces of the Spirit, though once feeble, become strong, vigorous, and lively. Because Christ lives his saints live. Their life is hid with Christ in God; it cannot be touched by the adversary, it is not dependent on the believer himself, none can keep alive his own soul; his sin, his weakness, would soon injure it. It is a life of grace, grace for every need, grace for every grace, all grace is made to abound, being derived from his fulness.

2. We will now look for a moment *at the means* by which this spiritual life is sustained. We find various means are used by which God communicates his grace to his people, and hence is derived the term, "means of grace," so often employed to designate the various methods by which our souls are nourished and supported. "Who holdeth our souls in life." (Ps. lxi. 9.)

The *first* mean the Lord employs to sustain this spiritual life, is *his own word of truth*. The word of truth is the food of the soul. What else can the soul of the believer feed upon. God's word is faith's food. Christ is the truth; they live on Christ, Christ's truth in the word. It is the aliment of the spiritual life. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." There is no life without Christ. As the soul was quickened by the word of truth, so the soul is nourished from day to day, from hour to hour, by the word of truth. This blessed book is the storehouse of God's truth, every variety of food to suit the different stages of spiritual life. The doctrines of the gospel are designed to be the food of believers. There is milk for babes, strong meat for the men in Christ. There is doctrine and duty, precept and promise, counsel and encouragement, solemn warnings and severe rebukes, with personal and national examples of the power of God's truth. And whether the word is read in private, in the family, or in public, it becomes, under the ministration of the Spirit, the instrument of upholding and maintaining the inward and spiritual life. Meditation on God's word has ever been proved the believer's sweetest channel of spiritual life.

The *second* mean by which spiritual life is sustained is — *prayer*. Prayer is said to be "the Christian's native

air." And truly so, for as the air is essential for the animal life, so prayer is essential for the spiritual life; he cannot, he would not, he must not live without it; it is his intercourse with God. Prayer is the believer's atmosphere. It has been well said, "a prayerless soul is a Christless soul." Prayer, whether ejaculatory or statedly secret, is a gracious habit of the soul, and I may say it is an excellent thermometer of the soul. How near we live to God, or how much we draw from him, can always be tested by how much and how often we draw near to him. Prayer is the believer's great privilege, his sanctuary in trouble, and his cure for all griefs. Here it is he draws new life from Christ.

Through prayer, communion with the Lord is obtained by the believer. By communion they find their spiritual life is maintained and strengthened. Where there is a holy fellowship with God, every grace of the Spirit is nourished and in lively exercise, and there will be less of earthly fellowship. Communion with God causes the soul to be withdrawn from the world. Souls who have tasted the sweets of finding access to the heart of Jesus have no relish for the things of the world; it is in communion with our beloved Lord we prove our union. 'The more we have communion with him the more we realize our union to him; here we learn more of him, his beauties, his love, the wonders of his love; here we learn to live upon him, upon his word, upon his work. The more we are brought to feel our dependence upon him, the more blessed we find it is to feel our need of him, and are ever desirous of being with him, longing for his company, saying:

"Talk with me, Lord, thyself reveal,
While here o'er earth I rove;
Speak to my heart, and let me feel,
The kindlings of thy love.

"With thee conversing, I forget,
All time, and toil, and care;
Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,
If thou, my God, art there."

Oh, my friends, it is want of communion with our God that makes a soul go gadding about seeking entertainment from every frivolous amusement; tea-parties, large companies, public meetings, afford the soul no profit. These things may be very well in their place, but the

hungry soul will find no account in them ; they may seem to have a religious bearing or tendency, but the soul who lives on Jesus cannot live on the husks which the swine do eat. " I will," says Jesus, " cause them that love me to inherit substance." This is what the true believer wants ; substance, not circumstantialia. The outward things of religion are not his life. He feels it is in communion, in answers to prayer, or rather, in prayer, that the life-giving, life-sustaining Spirit of Christ descends upon him and is received.

The *promises* of God are another mean of sustaining the spiritual life. The soul is often cast down, but a good word often maketh it glad. Exceeding great and precious promises is the character the apostle has given them, and so the soul finds them. Special promises applied with power to the soul by the Holy Ghost, raising the soul above earth's trials, giving new life, helping it in trouble, giving peace in the midst of tribulation, inspiring hope, strengthening faith, sweetening prayer—all this is proved to be the method the Lord takes to maintain and impart life to the soul. He speaks to the heart through the promises of his grace, and new life is inspired through all the faculties of the soul.

Even the exercises of the soul, whether through the dispensations of God's providence—dark, crooked, and rough as they sometimes are—or those operations which are carried on in the soul, in leading the soul to God : these are also made the means of spiritual life. Hezekiah was a notable instance of this kind ; and in reviewing the method of God's grace and providence, he owned it was, " In all these things is the life of my spirit." And Mr. Newton, in writing as to how his prayer was answered by crosses, says :

" These inward trials I employ
From sin and pride to set thee free ;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st seek thy all in me."

I might also refer you to the ordinances of God's house, as means by which the soul is sustained. It is in the ministry of the word, which the Spirit employs through the ministering servant, by which the soul is fed. This is very evident, from the variety of blessing we often see dispensed at one time to several persons by the one

speaker. I will," says God, "abundantly bless the provision of my house, and satisfy my poor with bread." There is the public worship on the Sabbath; the prayer meeting; the week-night services; not forgetting the Supper of the Lord, the symbols of his body and blood—all these remind us that Christ is our life.

Even we derive life, or rather life is strengthened, by church fellowship. It is not a custom or a fashion, grown up out of the common usages of society, but it is an institution authorised in the Word of God, and is made a provision for further promoting the life of God in the soul. The work of God in the heart, when made the subject of discourse, and not the occurrences or circumstantials of church meetings, is well calculated to feed and nourish the life of God in the soul.

As long as the believer is upon earth, Christ is in him the life of grace. The in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit *secures* it, and the witnessing of the Spirit *assures* it; and when he reaches the heavenly state, Christ will be with him as the life of heaven itself: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." The life of grace on earth will be the life of glory in the heavenly state—the same manner of existence, always deriving and receiving from the fulness of Christ.

Not only is the spiritual life of the believer sustained by virtue of his union with Christ, his glorious head, but the *corporeal* life of every member of the church of God, after death, in the resurrection morn, springs from and is secured by the life of Christ: "His resurrection from the dead is the pattern and pledge of theirs; as sure as his dead body is raised and lives, so shall theirs; their bodies as well as their souls are united to Christ." The soul without the body is not the person of the believer, and it is the person of the believer that is secured from natural, spiritual, and eternal death, by the obedience and death of his risen Lord; and by virtue of this union with Christ, which death does not and cannot dissolve, their dead bodies shall be raised and live again: "Corruption shall put on incorruption, mortality shall put on immortality." "Blessed is he that hath part in the first resurrection." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory."

As to our life in Christ, and living on Christ, I would

only remark, the more close the union with him, the more communion with him, and the more vigorous and healthy our spiritual life. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, look ye to it, how live ye on Christ? Professors of the name of Christ, do you know anything about this life you have been hearing of? look ye to it. If you have only a name that you live and art dead, your profession will leave you where it found you—a life in the flesh; and what good will it do you? You who are strangers to God and strangers to yourselves, have you never thought about this life? Remember this one thing: there is no life without Christ. I repeat it: **THERE IS NO LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST.** May the Lord command his blessing, even life for evermore. Amen.

THE SUBSTITUTIONARY WORK OF THE SON OF GOD.

A SERMON, BY CHARLES GORDELIER.

PREACHED AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, DARLING PLACE, NEAR
MILE END GATE,

On Lord's Day Evening, Nov. 29th, 1863.

“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.

WAIVING all reference to the circumstances under which this epistle was written, or even the immediate connection of the text, I would at once call your attention to the great fact, how much the love of God is displayed to poor sinners seeking salvation. The gospel reveals how it is they may be pardoned and freely justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.

All mankind are sinners, all are under condemnation; but how few there are who are sensible of either their guilt or their danger. To most persons, sin has no terrors; they love it, they roll it under their tongue as a sweet morsel, and dream of unabating happiness in the practice of it. They have no desire for salvation; this their way is their folly; like sheep they are laid in the grave, and have no hope beyond it.

Yet it has been that when the sinner is awakened to a sense of his condition before God, he sees and feels sin to be an awful reality, a new light has shone into his understanding, and he begins to have a sense of his danger; now he feels the need of pardon, but his inquiry

is, "How can a just and holy God pardon sin, seeing he hath said, 'He will by no means clear the guilty.'" (Exod. xxxiv. 7.)

This grave question is answered in the great doctrine contained in our text. Sin is pardoned, God's law is honoured, and the sinner accepted, through the substitutionary work of the Son of God. The language of the psalmist is to the same import, when he exclaimed: "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." (Ps. cxxx. 3, 4.)

By the term, the substitutionary work of the Son of God, is to be understood the atonement he made to God for sin, by the sacrifice of himself. For the Lord Jesus Christ, in his character and person as the Holy Lamb of God, to take upon himself the curse and sufferings of a broken law instead of sinners, and thereby delivering them from all condemnation, is something so extraordinary and wonderful, that it outshines all the glories of creation, and even the mysteries of providence—

"God in the person of his Son,
Hath all his mightiest works outdone."

The substitution of an innocent person for a criminal is of very rare and uncommon occurrence in a court of law. It is too costly and too expensive to be frequently permitted. To give up the innocent for the guilty would be a moral waste—weaken the operations of justice, and would destroy the connection between crime and punishment. The *principle* is, however, admitted in minor cases of offence, as when a *fine in money* is accepted in lieu of personal imprisonment. But personal substitution is evidently the great truth set forth in the words of our text: "For he hath made him to be sin, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Peter, to the same effect: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." What is this but the substitution of the innocent for the guilty? Let us then—

I. In the FIRST place point out the circumstances which appear to invest the subject with a heavenly wisdom, and to render this grand doctrine of divine substitution the ground of our adoring gratitude and praise.

1. *The supreme power must interpose, it being the only*

authority to dispense such a proceeding as would allow the substitution of an innocent person in lieu of the guilty, and to accept the sacrifice for the punishment.

To illustrate this point, I need scarcely do other than recite a few passages, out of many; the first that strikes us is, the remarkable words of our Lord, in his youth, to his mother: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business." It was the Father's business in the great work of redemption, that his Son should not only take our nature into personal union with himself, but that also, in that nature, he should begin to fulfil all righteousness. This is also seen from the following scriptures: "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, so I do." (John xiv. 31.) "I came into the world not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me, and this is the will of him that sent me, that whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting life." (John vi. 40.) "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John xvii. 4.) So that our Lord in these, and other similar phrases, plainly set forth that all he did was by the intervention of his Father, and so confirming the faith of his disciples with the highest authority.

2. *That such a transaction should be valid and proper, it should have the full consent of the party who undertakes to suffer for the guilty,*

Or else there would be an increase of irregular proceedings; for, if reason requires that laws should not be made unless fit to be executed; and if, when they are made, wisdom suggests that a departure from them would be improper, much more would every principle of law and equity be violated by the compulsory punishment of the innocent. Now Jesus, in various places, has shown that his sacrifice was from his own willingness: "He gave himself for us." "I delight to do thy will." "Father, not my will but thine be done."

3. *The substitute must be wholly innocent from the offence for which he intends to expiate for the guilty.*

For if the substitute were not free, he must pay the penalty himself; if he owes his life to justice, it cannot be accepted instead of the life of another which has been forfeited. Now, "Jesus Christ the righteous" is the propitiation for our sins; "being holy, harmless, and undefiled,

and separate from sinners," his substitution could be accepted. His own declaration is sufficient: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John xiv. 30.) Of the over-punctilious Pharisees he demanded, "Which of you convinceth me of sin." (John viii. 46.) Jesus was without spot in his person and character. The law was honoured by his life, its majesty vindicated by his death; and the result was, the sinner most honourably acquitted and eternally saved.

4. *The substitute ought to be in nature common with him who is the really guilty—man for man—brother for brother—flesh for flesh—spirit for spirit.*

The more closely he is related, the more he has in common, the more natural does substitution appear reasonable. It is more fitting that one man should be admitted as a substitute for another man, than for a being of a higher nature or order of being to take the place of one that is inferior. Here "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels;" he passed by the nature of angels that he might take ours—sin only excepted; he took our nature in order that he might take our sin, but did not take our sinful nature. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. He became perfect in his mediatorial work through suffering, and therefore he is able to succour and to sympathise with those who are tempted.

5. *The substitute should be able to vindicate the law by which he is to suffer.*

He must have a sense of its righteousness, otherwise the more noble and illustrious his character and the more extraordinary his interposition, the more men's opinion would be divided between approbation of his character and disapprobation of the law by which he suffered. For if the person suffering the penalty were to complain of the law which exacted it, the honour or glory of the law would be lost,—the law would be dishonoured in the estimation of men. But in the case of Jesus we find, that never had justice so glorious an advocate; nor did it ever have such a victim for a sacrifice. So glorious was his person and character, that his sacrifice set forth the law of God as righteous; he magnified it and made it honourable.

But I must pass on more rapidly with these various

points of substitution; and, therefore, cannot dilate on them as might be desired. Notice then—

6. *Substitution should be an act wisely undertaken as well as being prompted by goodness.*

Of this we are sure, that in the eternal covenant of grace, the plan of salvation was as much ordered by infinite wisdom, as it originated in infinite love. For if Christ, who is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, salvation, and redemption, we are sure the Father's wisdom and his love, was co-equal in ordering all things, and sure.

7. *There ought to be a superiority, or at least, an equivalent, between the substitute and the person released from the penalty of his offence.*

This is seen and felt in the believer in Jesus, he is not his own, he is bought with a price; henceforth he liveth not to himself, but to him who loved him and died for him.

8. *It would not be satisfactory if there were not some after compensation, or better result, proceeding from the death of the substitute.*

This is most truly the case in the work of redemption. Man, in his primeval state, was liable to fall, and did fall. In the new covenant state there are no contingencies; falling, or liability to fall, is out of the question. The believer's standing in Christ is fixed, eternally fixed, on more secure grounds than ever they stood, or could have stood under the first covenant. The church of God being blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, have a superior standing, in consequence of the exalted position which they hold with Jesus Christ, their ever-living head. And what a compensation, what a reward, what everlasting glory redounds to the Lord Jesus for all his sufferings, crowned with glory and honour: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." (Isa. liii. 10, 11.) The church of God given to him as his bride, and to be ever with him in eternal glory. His mediatorial joy and crown was, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." (John xvii. 24.)

But let us, before we proceed to notice the several terms of our text in particular, make a few brief remarks on the meaning of *Atonement* and *Redemption*; we shall then be better prepared to enter into the two profound doctrines couched in our text. These are things which the angels desire to look into; they are the deep things of God. O, may the Lord help us to speak as the oracles of God, so that the church of God may be edified, Christ exalted, and God in all things glorified.

The words *Atonement* and *Redemption* are often used by many persons in an indiscriminate manner, as though they were synonymous terms; but a little consideration will, I think, show that they are not. The redemption of the soul is precious; (Ps. xlix. 8;) there is not a more important subject can occupy the thought of man. It is the greatest blessing God can bestow. It is the forgiveness of sins by the death of Christ: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;" (Eph. i. 7;) that is, the guilt and shame is put away by the atonement of Christ, and which is here called redemption. Redemption and Atonement are two distinct subjects, though both procured by Christ's death. This will be seen in several scriptures, though expressed in a variety of forms, as in our text. (1 Peter iii. 18. 1 Cor. i. 30. Gal. iii. 13. Eph. ii. 13. Col. i. 14. Titus ii. 14. Heb. vii. 25. 1 Pet. i. 18. Rev. v. 9., &c., &c.)

Atonement is offered to God *for* man; Redemption is the blessing conferred upon the believing sinner. The Atonement was to satisfy divine law and justice; Redemption liberates the pardoned sinner from its curse. Redemption has to do with sinners on earth; Atonement with God's government in heaven. Atonement has regard to the honour of God. Redemption the captivity of the sinner. Atonement is expiation; Redemption is the deliverance from both the penalty and the power of sin. The Atonement was effected at once when Christ offered his sacrifice on the cross, but Redemption is the application of the benefits of his death to individual believers to the end of time. The Atonement may be viewed apart from Redemption, but Redemption can never be viewed apart from Atonement. At your leisure consult the several passages just quoted, for they all show that the Redemption of the believer is effected through the Atonement made by Christ to God the Father.

Of *the nature* of the atonement, and of *the extent* of it, I shall not, at present, remark upon; as any observations that may be called for on these points, will be made in their proper place, under the next heads of our discourse.

We will now proceed to notice in the SECOND place,

II. The condition and character of the persons here stated to be benefited by this divine act of substitution.

The apostle Paul in writing this Epistle to the Corinthians, has named specially the persons to whom he wrote,—“the Church of God which is at Corinth;” by which we are to understand, not all the people of Corinth, or its citizens generally, nor yet all the people in whose hands his epistle might happen to come; still less does he mean the whole race of mankind; therefore, the pronouns, *we* and *us* employed in the text, are to be understood of the church of God, in which, of course, he includes himself. These are the persons, and the only persons, who are benefited by the substitutionary work of the Son of God—the church of God in all ages, and through all time. By keeping this point in view we shall, if taught by the Spirit of truth, be able to keep clear of the God dishonouring, and self-contradictory doctrines of the present day, which assert that “Christ died for all men, but saves only those who believe.”

The apostle in writing to the churches at Galatia, expressly states that the Scripture hath concluded all under sin. In writing to “the beloved of God in Rome, called to be saints,” (for it seems there was no organised church there,) he brings forward the scriptures, which declare “There is none righteous, no, not one, there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God.” “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. iii. 10, 11, and 23.) Here is there a very grave charge brought against human nature. The whole race of mankind is under condemnation, and under a sentence of death.

Now the honour and truth of God is deeply involved in this charge. For if it be not true, then the grace of God that is manifested in the Gospel is superfluous. The death of Jesus Christ has then answered no purpose. The Bible can be no more than a history of the Jews, and a view of their opinions as men; and it would come to this, there is no religion at all, and we who preach or profess the Gospel,

are found false witnesses for God. But we are not found false witnesses for God. Yea, rather let God be true, and every man a liar. All men are sinners! "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." And when it pleaseth the Holy Ghost to quicken our souls, and to convince us of our sin, we then feel the sentence of death in us; and so far from justifying ourselves before God, we are brought to feel, and to confess before him, "Behold! I am vile;" and every one so taught is brought to "the place of stopping of mouths." He is brought in guilty before God, and to find that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

Thus it is we see that the ground of the apostle's argument is so strongly expressed in our text. Observe the foregoing part of the chapter. Sin is described as a burden, under which we groan, we have felt it so, we long for its deliverance; and knowing the condemnation, called in the 11th verse: "the terrors of the Lord," we are the more desirous of preaching unto you the salvation, which is by Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sin: "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." You will see, by reference to the 11th verse, on to the 19th, that this is the bearing of the apostle's interesting and important argument.

But further, let us not be satisfied with only the truth doctrinally, there is also an *experimental* acquaintance with the truth now under consideration, and without which we shall be miserably deceived. Have not some of you been convicted of sin in your own consciences? Has not sin been revealed to you as exceeding sinful? How came guilt, like a rushing stream, to be carrying you on, as it were, down to the gulf of perdition and dark despair? was it a device of your imagination? do you think it came from the infernal regions to begin the work of misery now, or do you think it was a ray of heavenly light into your dark dead soul? whence came the consciousness of your sinfulness? I again ask you, What was it that induced you to seek relief, in humble earnest prayer, at the footstool of mercy, or in the reading of God's Word? What led you to the house of God, hoping to hear words by which you might be saved? This was it! It was the testimony of God's Spirit in your conscience; it was the testimony of

God's Spirit with his word ; it was the testimony of God's Spirit in the ministry of the word, all working in you the feeling sense that you were a sinner, and that you could be justified only by the righteousness of Christ! My friends! the word of God, our own conscience, what we see and hear in the world, all prove the universality of man's depravity, all prove the fact that ALL men are sinners. ALL men, by nature, are sinners, are under condemnation, and are under sentence of eternal death.

III. I pass on to notice in the THIRD place, the character and personal merits of the Substitute, who, though he knew no sin, was made sin.

Here we approach an ocean of divinity. We enter into our little skiff and scud along the shore for a little while, admire a few ripples, then fancy we have been doing business in the great waters, seen the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. O, how shallow is all our knowledge about redemption. Redemption! how vast its benefits ; Atonement! how great the sacrifice. Substitution! what infinite wisdom in the plan. The love of Christ! it passeth knowledge. The love of God! God is love. Amazing themes! too high for mortals to scale, too deep for angels to sound. They are unutterable.

“ Justice was pleased to bruise the God,
And pay its wrongs with heavenly blood ;
What unknown racks and pains he bore ;
Then rose ; the law could ask no more.”

But we have to speak more particularly upon the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew no sin. Had he known sin, that is committed it, or had been infected with it, he could not have saved a single soul. A man in debt could not pay the debts of others. A condemned criminal would not be accepted as bail for an accused person.

“ For he who would for sin atone,
Must have no failings of his own.”

A sinner could not save a sinner. The ransom of a captive must be paid by one having the full price in his hand, and the power to redeem from all bondage, or else failure and abortion would disgrace the attempt everlastingly. But the Lord Jesus Christ in his own person, possessed all might, power, and riches for the ransom.

“Great was the price to Justice due,
When Jesus would redeem his bride;
Nothing but precious blood would do,
And that must flow from his own side.”

Yea, great as was the price, he was equal to the demand in every way. In his own person as God-man, he possessed all the power that eternal redemption required. In his manhood being perfectly sinless, and his perfect obedience to God's holy law, he possessed the exact price that divine justice demanded. In his voluntary offering of himself as a sacrifice for sin, the full penalty of a broken law was paid and accepted. He was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners. He had no practical or personal knowledge of sin, either in thought, word, or deed. His human nature being created by the Holy Ghost, and his Person being God, it was a moral impossibility for him to sin. So far as mere knowledge extends, he knew what sin was, as that evil which his soul abhorred, and which he came to take away; for he taught the spirituality of God's law, and how it extended to the thoughts and intents of the heart. No one could know so well the nature of sin.

The character of the Lord Jesus, “who knew no sin,” evidently means, he had no participation in it, no personal experience of it, it had no place in him. He was not ignorant of its nature, but he was conscious of its non-existence in himself. It does not regard what he discerned in others. Being the Son of God, he is necessarily of the same nature as his Father; hence he is holy in his nature, in all his works, and in all his ways; and the human nature he took was created by the Holy Ghost; he condescended to take that, but not our sinful nature; the dignity of his person could not possibly admit of his contamination with sin in his compassion for sinners. There is nothing derogatory in the goodness of a king in lifting a beggar from the dunghill, and setting him among the princes of his people, though there might be a question as to his wisdom and the propriety of the act. But this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was guided by infinite wisdom, as well as originated in infinite love. He, as our merciful High Priest, has compassion on the ignorant and the outcast; but this, far from being a reflection on his wisdom and goodness, it enhances both, and exalts his character far above all blessing and praise.

By man, wicked, perverse, rebellious man, Jesus was charged with sin; but the charge he repelled, and demanded, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii. 46.) "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Peter ii. 22.) At the close of his life on earth, he declared, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John xiv. 30.) Had he been sinful, or liable to it, he could not have saved others; an atonement would have been needful for himself; his own death would have been no atonement, but simply the penalty for himself. Atonement by the sinner for himself is an impossibility; none can by any means redeem his brother. The principle of an atonement was in this, that for the purpose of making peace where offence existed, an unblemished sacrifice had to be made of life for life, blood for blood. This was effected by the mediation of the Son of God in the union of his two natures, the divine and the human. His human nature was perfect, and "being found in the fashion of a man, he numbled himself, and became obedient to the death of the cross."

" His life was pure, without a stain,
And all his nature clean ;"

and as his person was divine, here was its excellency, and hence our everlasting security: "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him was no sin." (1 John iii. 5.)

IV. We have now to consider, in the FOURTH place, The great act of grace displayed by the Father in the substitution of his Son for sin.

This is a wonderful theme to contemplate. The Father, knowing, foreseeing our state as sinners, the ruin of all the race of mankind by the sin of the first man, our federal head, did, in the infinity of his wisdom, love, grace, and mercy, provide salvation for guilty, hell-deserving rebels, by the substitution of the life of his Son instead of the souls he had created: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 16, 17.) The great grace of the Father is also spoken of by the apostle Paul, and used

as an argument from the great to the less, Rom. viii. 32 : "He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him for us," &c. ; to whom ? The claims of divine justice in his own person.

The greatness of this grace further appears in Christ Jesus stooping so low. He left the bosom of the Father, the glory that he had with him before the world was : "Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus, who, though he was rich, yet he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.) "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed ; and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. liii. 4-6.) So that all the sins of all his people were laid upon him by the act of the Father's grace.

Then the question returns : How could Christ be made sin, seeing he, personally, knew no sin ? Not practically so, but by imputation. Sin was punished in his person, because he voluntarily took it upon himself. In the covenant of grace he became the Surety of his people ; and thus undertaking their redemption, it was necessary that he should become their Substitute. He was made legally answerable for our sin, and the Father accepted the bond. Now see how this is taught by the Holy Spirit in the Mosaic law. (Lev. xvi. 21, 22.) It is in respect of the *one offering* of the two goats on the day of atonement. No sacrifice which God commanded Moses to institute, so circumstantially sets forth atonement ; it was a most comprehensive type of Christ, for it shadowed forth not only *the means* by which expiation for sin was effected, but also *the result* of that expiation, namely the removal of guilt ; the *slain* goat exhibited the death of Christ, and the *scape* goat represented his bearing away the sins of his people and also their free discharge. For by virtue of the union betwixt Christ and his people, they were both implicated ; the sins of the people are expressed by the hand being placed on the head of the *scape* goat, he represents *the actual* sinner ; but the Lord's lot, upon which no sinful hand is laid, and therefore represented *the innocent one*, he it is that *is slain*, he it is that is *the actual sufferer*. The in-

nocent one is made to be the substitute for the guilty, while the guilty one is sent into the wilderness *free*, and is left at large.

Here is, then, a more striking exhibition of the substitution of Christ in the sinner's stead than can be found in any illustration from the classics, which our men of learning so proudly bring forward. Jesus Christ, by taking the sinner's law place, became, by imputation, **SIN**; for we must bear in mind, the two goats are but one offering; the one signified atonement; the other, redemption. "He was made to be sin." Sin was represented in his body on the cross. He suffered death as a sinner. The wrath of God against sin was inflicted on him as punishment for sin: "He suffered, the just for the unjust;" "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." As the surety and substitute of the whole election of grace, Christ suffered all the vengeance due to all their sins; it was a complete and full atonement, and therefore they are for ever freed from its curse and penalty. His sinnership was by imputation taken by himself. *The value* of his atonement was not in the amount of human pain and suffering he endured, though it was necessary that his human nature should suffer; but it was in the fact of his person being the eternal Son of God. It was this that gave a dignity and an infinite worth to his sufferings. Had his Sonship not been eternal, his sacrifice had not been an equivalent. Hence he became the author of eternal redemption. Sin is atoned for, God's law is magnified and made honourable, the sinner is righteously acquitted and honourably saved, Christ is exalted, and is now for ever sat down on the right hand of God.

V. Now we have to consider, in the **FIFTH** place, The end accomplished by the transfer of sin to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is stated in the text: "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Elsewhere, the apostle says, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) We are made righteous in the same way as Christ was made sin,—by imputation. In our own persons, by nature, and consciously so, we are sinful creatures; but in the person of Christ, as united to him in the covenant of grace, we are, in the eye of the divine law, righ-

teous, accepted as such by God the Father, being "made accepted in the beloved." (Eph. i. 6.)

This righteousness is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit; by his effectual working in us, this truth is applied to us, and is received by faith; hence the believer adopts the language of the prophet: "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." (Isa. xlv. 24, 25.) Christ being in his person and life perfectly holy, harmless, separate from sinners, needed no righteousness by the works of the law; he undertook obedience to it on our behalf. This obedience was the righteousness which he wrought out and brought in, and is imputed to us by the Father. His death was also piacular, as well as vicarious; it was the penalty paid by him for our sin. And as it was impossible that he could be holden by death, seeing that he, personally, was not a sinner, and had paid the penalty demanded by the law, so he rose again. His resurrection, therefore, is the ratification of his own personal righteousness, and becomes, therefore, in every point of fact, our justification. He rose again for our justification. (Rom. iv. 25.) Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again. Thus it is that the obedience, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is our justification before God the Father. God looks upon his people as always standing complete in the person of his Son. "Ye are complete in him."

"In him the Father never saw
The least transgression of his law.
Perfection, then, in Christ we view:
His saints in him are perfect too."

This matter of our justification is of the utmost importance to the believer in Christ. He should see that he is well grounded in it. For there are certain men crept into the professing church, who, with all cunning craftiness, are drawing away disciples after them, and stealing away the truth as it is in Christ; saying that the resurrection of Christ is the only act that avails the church of God. Now, what is this but denying the Lord that bought them? O, beware of these so-called Plymouth brethren, or Bible Christians, as they are sometimes named! They are wolves in sheeps' clothing; they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Their apparent spiritual tone of mind and softness of manner deceive the simple

hearted, but inwardly they are found to be ravening wolves. See how they bite and devour one another!

"But," says the inquiring but believing sinner, "how am I to know that I am righteous?" I answer, *Faith* is the instrument which God employs in receiving the truth. It is called the righteousness of faith, because *faith* alone is used in its application. It is not the righteousness of love, hope, or desire, but of faith. If you are seeking to be justified by the righteousness of Christ, it is because you feel your need of it. Go on seeking. They that seek shall find; and may the Lord enable you to lay hold of the hope set before you. He will certainly reveal his love and grace to you ere long. You shall realise the fact that your sins are all pardoned for Christ's sake. You will then perceive you are made righteous in him. This is realising *how* it is done. It is a glorious thing to feel that I am a pardoned sinner; but when I learn how it was procured, I have a boundless cause of joy, and can sing with the poet:

"I'm safe! I'll shout, O law and sin,
Ye cannot bring me guilty in;
For Christ was crucified!"

Now, besides the point which we have just been considering,—our character and standing before God as the end accomplished by the atonement of the Lord Jesus,—there are also other actual or positive benefits derived therefrom, such in which we have a personal consciousness of; and these may be comprised in one word,—the *Redemption* itself. This is threefold,—past, present, and future. The *first*, whereby we are freed from the power of God's law and justice, and all the consequences of sin and death. It consists in the forgiveness of sins: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." The *second*, from the power of inbred sin, the working of sin within us; from the causes of sin, from the love of sin, even sin itself. This is through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." The *third*, the redemption of our bodies from the power of the grave, whereby we are put in full possession of all the blessings of redemption at the last great day of the resurrection, when our persons will be received into heaven; the re-

union of the spirit with the body will be the perfecting our bliss and capability of enjoyment, and we shall be for ever with the Lord, he "having obtained eternal redemption for us."

In concluding this discourse on the great doctrine of Christ's substitution for the redeemed sinner, we would observe:

1. *The immaculate purity of God's law and government over his rational creatures.* "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity." So pure that even the heavens, the angelic intelligences, are not clean in his sight. It was his own purpose that his people should be redeemed from all sin, that they might set forth the praise and glory of his grace.

2. We also perceive *the nature and evil of sin.* This we may not only see, but also feel, when, under the teachings of the Holy Spirit, we contemplate the holy character of God. Sin gives God a flat denial of his right to govern. Sin dares to assert its own power against God. Sin refuses to obey God. Sin insults God by contradicting his law. Sin leads the sinner from God, to hide himself from God, to hate God, to love darkness rather than light, to hate holiness, and to love filthiness, to prefer serving the devil, turn his back upon God, and to say to him, "I desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

3. From the doctrine of Christ's substitution for the sinner, we perceive,—*repentance cannot expiate sin.* 'Tis true sin must be repented of; it must be forsaken; it must be confessed; it must be deplored. But repentance is not the procuring cause of pardon; it does not regain God's favour; nor does it recompense the injury done to God's broken law. A debtor's sorrow for his debt could not pay it. Nevertheless, a godly sorrow for sin is pleasing to God, and it is made the means of putting us in a fitting frame of mind to receive God's mercy and pardon with thankfulness, joy, and love.

4. We may also infer that *the sacrifice of Christ does not supersede the necessity of repentance.* The believing sinner cannot but be a penitent sinner. He has a broken and a contrite heart for his sins, and this God will not despise. He dwelleth with him who is humble and contrite of heart, and trembleth at his word. A view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the holy majesty of

God, will, under the gracious teachings of his Spirit, lead the sinner to repentance,—a godly sorrow for sin; a repentance that needeth not to be repented of.

My friends! let me ask you, What do you know of this repentance? Has it led you to seek a righteousness founded on the substitutionary work of the Son of God? Cherish no fond hopes of your own merit, nor yet of your mere belief of the truth. If you kindle a false fire, and walk in the light of your own kindling, you will at the last die in the dark, and rise in eternal sorrow.



BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD.

JOHN i. 29.

ARISE, ye saints of God, arise;
Tune all your powers to praise the Lord.
Come, take your stand beside the cross,
And say, "Behold the Lamb of God."

He left his throne, and dwelt with men,
To save his church from sin and woe;
His life he gave, and thus became;
The sin-atonement Lamb of God.

His sacrifice for sin avails
For all who plead his precious blood;
His power to save through time prevails,—
The high, exalted Lamb of God.

Hail! sacred Lamb! We praise thy name;
Our hearts and lives to thee we yield;
We'll spread abroad thy wondrous fame,
And say, "Behold the Lamb of God."

C. G. 1833.

THE BELIEVER'S DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD.

A SERMON,

BY CHARLES GORDELIER.

PREACHED AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, DARLING PLACE, NEAR MILE END GATE,

On Lord's Day Evening, Sept. 25th, 1864.

"For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man."—ROM.
vii. 22.

THIS is the language of every sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It arises out of his experience of God's gracious work in the heart. For having been taught by the Spirit of truth to see the spirituality of God's law, that it is holy, and the commandment is holy, just, and good ; made to feel the evil and bitterness of sin, and to know something of the power, bondage, and curse of a broken law in his conscience, he is then led under the same teachings to see that in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ God's holy law has been perfectly fulfilled on his behalf, and that a complete atonement has been made for him, a poor helpless guilty sinner. Thus it is he is brought into the liberty of the gospel, and by a sweet testimony in his own soul that he has been redeemed from the curse of the law by the precious blood of Christ, he feels he is no longer under the law as a covenant of works, but serves God according to the rule of the gospel ; for through the law he is dead to the law that he may live unto God, not in the oldness of the letter, but in newness of the Spirit ; he walks not after the flesh but after the Spirit ; hence he has a joyful sense of what the apostle has declared : "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." For the

law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made him free from the law of sin and death.

But the language of our text is also used by the mere professor, the hypocrite, the man who talks the gospel, but who does not live the gospel. He uses it that he may pass current in the religious world as one who knows the truth ; but alas, he knows nothing of its power, whatever he may know of the letter. He is like the electro plated articles now used in many places instead of real silver. He has all the appearance of one of God's people, but within there is no genuine work ; he has never been brought into the furnace of those heart-searching trials which distinguish the false from the real ; he pretends to delight in the law of God, but he does not, he has no real love to it ; he cherishes sin in his heart ; it is true he curbs it occasionally, but only lest it should discover him and disgrace him, and so lose his position in society, for this, indeed, is now what is so much craved after in the professing church. Unlike the true believer, he knows nothing of the conflict within, of which the apostle describes in this chapter. Appeal to his conscience ; press him close as to his experience, and you will find that the language of his lips is not the language of his heart, and the first plausible pretext he can find he will quit your company.

But we will leave the hypocrite for the present ; it is with the believer we have to do ; and here let me say, that this delighting in the law of God is a good sign of a gracious heart ; it is the character of the man of whom David expressly says : " Blessed is the man that walketh not in the council of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Here we see Old Testament truth is the same as New Testament truth. Old Testament saints and New Testaments saints unite in the same language, for they have the same experience ; and this is our mercy, we, who have been favoured with the light of God's truth, and to know something of its unction and power, know what it is to delight in the law of God after the inward man. The true believer in Jesus sees it as being the beauty of holiness. He is pleased with it. He regards its pure and spiritual precepts as being right and good, and he finds an unspeakable satisfaction in being conformed to it.

Such was the experience of the apostle Paul; it was the life and power of God's truth wrought in his heart: it was not merely a matter of the understanding; it was not by any intellectual or reasoning process obtained at the feet of Gamaliel; but it was the result of the great promise of the new covenant: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God and they shall be my people." (Jer. xxxi. 33.)

Now, in attempting to say a few things on the passage before us, I confess there is something, at first sight, almost contradictory, or at least paradoxical, in the way the apostle speaks at different times respecting the law of God. Paradoxies, however, if I might so say, belong to the religion of Jesus. Many things are matters of the believer's experience which cannot always be readily understood by the mere theorist. Some truths indeed are not so opposite to each other as at first might be supposed, for, on a little closer examination, they are found to be but parallel truths, running side by side; as for instance, the Galatians seemed to have thought that the law was in opposition to the gospel; and the apostle, in order to show that it was not, asks the question, "Is, then, the law against the promises of God?" He replies, "God forbid." (Gal. iii. 24.) And he shows that the gospel which he preached was founded on the same principle, which as far back as Abraham's time, had been laid down by Jehovah as the rule for man's acceptance with him, that the way for men to find righteousness with God was not by the merit of any *works* to be done, but simply in the exercise of a certain *faith* prescribed; still, though the law and the promises are distinct things and have their separate uses, yet they are not contradictory to each other, for both have the same divine origin from him who is of one mind: the gospel does not set aside the law on all accounts, but in fact establishes it; (Rom. iii. 31;) nor does the law disannul the promises, but is subservient to them; and while it is strictly true that "the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," they are, though distinct in their principles, in nowise opposed to each other, for Jesus himself says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil;" (Matt. v. 17;) and I trust, that under the Spirit's teaching, we shall see what the apostle's

meaning is in the text before us, and that we shall be able to understand how entirely his several statements agree. O may the Lord grant us in our own hearts to feel how true it is that the believer in Christ, though not under the law, but delivered from it, yet does, from his heart, love it, and delight in it.

Now in order to understand the subject before us, there are three matters that claim our consideration.

I. What is this law of which the apostle speaks?

II. What is the believer's position in relation to that law?

III. What are the exercises of his heart towards it? and then conclude by making a few inferences by way of improvement on the whole.

I. *What is this law of which the apostle speaks?*

We have no occasion to go far for an answer, the text itself supplies it. It is, unquestionably, the law of God; in other words, the revealed will of God, the Creator, as given to his creature, man. Man, as a created being, endowed with rational faculties, is doubtless under the government and providence of his Creator. God claims obedience from him; and in his first estate no more was claimed from him than he could render. The first law was that which was given to Adam in Paradise: "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat." Simple as this law was, it was sufficient to serve the purpose for which it was given. It was a test of obedience; it was a test of love. So long as he loved his Maker, so long would he refuse to touch the tree; but when he took thereof and did eat, he gave evidence his love was gone. The disobedience existed in principle before its development in action. The heart fell from God before the hand was raised in rebellion.

From the time of Adam's fall, other laws were given; these were but parts of the original. The principle of love being gone, man was without the guiding influence of his life; he became vain in his imagination, and his foolish heart was darkened; aiming to be wise, he became a fool. Still, fallen as he was, God would not leave him to his own destruction, in following his own pernicious ways, and therefore multiplied other laws, more particular, more defined; for now, having become ignorant of God, he needed specific injunctions and specific prohibitions;

“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” (Isa. xxviii. 10.) All these were parts of his law; sometimes more fully expressed than at other times, but the substance of the original law was ever the same. A close observation of the age in which the patriarchs lived will demonstrate this; from the time of Cain to Enoch, from Noah to Job, from Abraham to Moses.

Then came the law of the ten commandments, the law that came by Moses, frequently called the *moral* law; called so in distinction from the ceremonial or Levitical law; the word *moral*, though not found in Scripture, is used by divines chiefly for distinction's sake. The apostle Paul says, “We know the law is spiritual;” and so every believing sinner finds it. No man, until he is renewed by the Holy Ghost, can have any true knowledge of the nature of God's law.

But what is the nature of this law of Moses? We find it to be everything that God would have men to do, expressed under a few heads. Here are enjoined duties toward God and toward our fellow-men. There is also expressly forbidden all sins against God, and all sins against our fellow-men. In Micah vi. 8, we find the substance of all these points is comprised thus: “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good? and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Then, again, as is shown by the Lord Jesus himself, all that has been enjoined, both in the law and by the prophets, is contained in this summary: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Here is the whole will of God respecting man's conduct towards himself and towards each other. The apostle Paul puts it in the same way: “Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Rom. xiii. 8–10.) To the same effect is the apostle John, throughout his First Epistle. Thus we see, from the

course of the argument which we have taken, we have come back to the first principle, where we started—The love of God is the principle of perfect obedience. Now, this law of God has never been altered or relaxed ; it has remained immutable ; it is holy, just, and good. Man has altered ; hence his position in relation to that law has placed him in another condition. This will lead us to notice the inquiry proposed in the SECOND place.

II. *What is the believer's position in relation to that law ?*

This inquiry can only be answered thus, The believer has been taught by the Spirit that the law is spiritual, and that he is carnal, sold under sin ; that the law is holy, just, and good ; he has been taught to see and to feel that he cannot obey God's law in any part ; having failed, more or less, in some part, therefore is guilty of the whole. Is there any hope of escape from the guilt incurred ? Nay, verily, for if life could have been given by the law, verily righteousness should have been by the law. (Gal. iii. 21.)

But the believer feels under its curse. Can he make an atonement ? No ; for death is the penalty ; he has already forfeited his life, and the word of God is, he "will by no means clear the guilty;" all human attempts are fruitless. But will not future obedience suffice ? No. What, then ? "A fearful looking for of fiery indignation from a righteous judge that shall devour him." This is that which is so emphatically called "the terrors of the law." How it bows a man's spirit down to the earth ; often it is, his "soul chooseth strangling rather than life." His soul draweth near to the gates of despair and death.

Now it is at this point that the good Spirit leads the distressed and burdened soul to seek life and salvation in the gospel. Under his gracious teachings he finds there revealed, that God has accepted the obedience and sufferings of Jesus on the sinner's behalf, for he has magnified the law and made it honourable by his perfect obedience ; he sees that divine justice has been satisfied in the death of Christ, for he has paid the penalty of a broken law, and that now nothing more is demanded of either the Surety or the sinner ; he sees that he is freed from the law as a covenant of works ; the gospel is now his hope of salvation and his rule of life both towards God and towards man: "For, says the apostle," I, "through the law, am dead to the

law, that I might live unto God." (Gal ii. 19.) Here is something apparently paradoxical in this statement; let us look at it for a moment. By referring back to the 17th verse you will perceive the apostle is showing that the doctrine of justification without the works of the law was in no wise opposed to the doctrine of sanctification, but of absolute necessity to true holiness; here, in this 19th verse, which we are now looking at, he brings his own case for proof, "for I, through the law, am dead to the law," that is, not seeking life and righteousness by it, nor yet to fear its accusations, charges, curses, and condemnation; but he was dead to the moral law as in the hands of Moses, though not as in the heart of Christ; for thus it was he lived unto God. He then asks, Was then that which is good made death unto me? He replies, God forbid. Here is, then, in the experience of the believing soul a wonderful death and a remarkable life, yet both through the law.

By referring to the chapter from whence we have taken our text, from the 10th to the 13th verse, we shall be able to discover a little of what the apostle means about being dead to the law—it is not a temporal death, for he was then living; it was not a spiritual or eternal life, for that he never had in Adam, that is, naturally; but he is dead to the law as a covenant of works, as a condition of life, for this was the covenant under which Adam stood. As the believer is dead to the law, by virtue of not being under the first covenant, he is, therefore, dead to sin; so far as it is not to bear rule over him, for he is not under the law, but under grace. (Rom vi. 14.) To be dead to sin, through being dead to the law is a mystery to unbelievers and carnal professors, and so is being dead to the law through the law, but "they are all plain to him that understandeth."

But let us look at this matter a little closer. For in looking at the believer's position in relation to the law of God, to which we have just now proved that he is dead, we have also said, that he lives unto God. How can he live unto God and yet be dead to his law? What is this life? In the first place it is not a natural life; it is not a legal life; it is not an external life, a mere pharisaic life; but it is a spiritual life, a life imparted by the Spirit of God, by which the soul is quickened, enlivened, and enlightened. In other words, it is the understanding and the

affections renewed and put in exercise towards God in Christ. Being united to Christ by a true and living faith, he has peace, hope, and joy, from a sense of pardoned sin applied to the conscience by the power of God the Holy Ghost. He is thus brought to live in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, to mind the things of the Spirit, and being spiritually minded he has life and peace. Mind you, I am speaking of *the result*, not of *the process*; the first is, as a matter of fact, always the same, the other may be sooner or later, as a matter of the believer's experience.

This life of the believer consists in living in the strength and power of the Spirit, therefore called a law. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made him free from the law of sin and death."

"When Jesus' gracious hand,
Has touched our eyes and ears;
O, what a dreary land,
This wilderness appears.
No healing balm springs from its dust,
No cooling streams to quench the thirst.

"Yet long I vainly sought,
A resting place below;
And that sweet land forgot,
Where living waters flow.
I hunger now for heavenly food,
And my poor heart cries out for God."

Such is the experience of the believer when renewed in the spirit of his mind. As natural life is evidenced by *breathing, motion, appetite, and sense*, so is the spiritual life. The believer lives in conformity with God. He that dwells with God, walks with God, will aim to be as he is, without it there is no communion with him. He walks before God as a child. He walks with God as a friend. This is the position of the believer in relation to the law of God. He walks in love.

III. We have now to consider in the THIRD place. *What are the exercises of the believer's heart towards the law of God?*

Liberty from it? No. To live as though there were no law? No. He delights in it; he feels delivered from it, that is, from its curse. He looks at it as God the Father looks at it—as Christ looks at it—as the Holy Spirit looks at it. Yes, he loves the law of God, and he can say with

David, "O, how I love thy holy law." "I delight to do thy will, O, God, yea, thy law is *within my heart*." "I delight in the law of God." He delights in the law of God because it is God's law, and because he believes it to be holy, just, and good, and he delights to walk according to it in the spirit of the gospel, namely, by the constraining influence of the love of Christ. "The law of God is *in his heart*; none of his steps shall slide." (Ps. xxxvii. 31.)

But so far as striving to inherit eternal life by the perfect performance of any one single duty he has no delight in it whatever, for he feels every effort towards that end is but an experience of its killing power. "The law worketh wrath."

" In vain we ask God's righteous law,
To justify us now;
Since to convince, and to condemn,
Is all the law can do."

Nor yet has he any delight in it so far as any personal merit is concerned; for if it were possible to effect a justification by the works of the law, it would set aside the great end of Christ's death. It would set aside faith altogether. To trust, therefore, to one's own doings, or to plead them before God, as the reason of our justification in his sight, is to make the death of Christ and Redemption by it, altogether a vain thing. In fact, it is an appeal to the law for acceptance with God; whereas, God hath set forth his own son to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood. (Rom. iii. 25.)

Now I am aware there are several passages in Scripture which, apparently, speak very differently to all this. How shall we reconcile them? for instance, in Ezek. xviii. 5, 21, 27: "If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, if he hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, he shall surely live, saith the Lord." Certainly it would appear to some persons as if eternal life was to be obtained by one's own obedience, but look at the connection, and I think it will be seen that that is not the meaning to be attached to it. The *life* there spoken of is *not eternal* life, but the blessings of *the natural* life. The entire chapter shows that God is vindicating himself from the unjust charge, wherewith the Jews in

exile had reproached him, and the rewards and punishments refer to those wherewith God ordinarily marked the obedience or disobedience of his peculiar people.

Take another instance, in fact two; the gospel by Luke records both. In the 10th chapter we read of a certain *lawyer* coming to Jesus with, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life." Jesus sent him to the law, "This do, and thou shalt live." Then in the 18th chapter we read of a certain *ruler* who came with, "Good master, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life." He too was sent to the law, "Thou knowest the commandments," &c. Now, some will be ready to say, Surely this was as much as to teach, in both cases, that if they would enter into life eternal, they must keep the law and earn by their own doings, salvation as their reward. But no, look at it again, read both narratives through, see the issue; see for what it was that Jesus sent both the lawyer and the ruler to the commandments. It was to show them that, by the law, neither of them could be justified. They came to him thinking that some "good thing" which they should do was to save them. They wanted to go to the law for their salvation. Jesus proves to them both that in *that* way there was no salvation for them. To the *lawyer* he proves that he had *not loved* even *his neighbour* as he ought. The *ruler* he convicts of *not loving God* as he ought. So that when Jesus pointed these men to the law, and said, "Do this, and thou shalt live," he meant, in real truth, to say, Prove that you *have* kept the law, or can keep the law, then, and not till then, speak of doing some good thing to gain eternal life. Your hope is in vain; appeal to the law, you will find it condemn you.

In these, as in all other instances, it will be found that the doctrine of God's word is consistent with itself. The law was never given for man to save himself by keeping it. From the time of Adam's disobedience, God has never called upon man to save himself from eternal life upon the footing of his own doings. As I said before, the law was a law of love, it has never altered, nothing could alter it; God is unchangeable, and love is the fulfilling of the law. Man's disobedience has brought the curse upon himself, he has become dead to it; but the gospel gives him life, life in Christ Jesus, and now that he lives to God, he finds the law is just what it was before the fall, a law of love.

Under this law he now serves God, not in the oldness of the letter but in newness of spirit. In other words the gospel is the believer's rule of conduct; the love of God being shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, he is under the constraining influence of the love of Christ. As for his soul's justification before God that is altogether another matter; he looks to the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ for redemption, not on the footing of his own performances; these are but filthy rags.

“ The best obedience of my hands,
Does not appear before thy throne;
But *faith* can answer thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord has done.”

But to proceed. Having somewhat cleared our way by removing some of the obstacles that commonly prevent persons from laying hold of the hope set before them in the gospel, we would observe, that the very position in which the believer stands towards the law of God is productive of those feelings that cause that law to be a delight to him. Instead of its being a terror to him, as it was in the hand of Moses, he beholds it with delight as in the heart of Christ—a law of love; his claim to heavenly and eternal blessedness is securely established, his hopes are fixed, firm, and bright. He is perfectly free from all fears, apprehensions of guilt; he no longer trembles at the strictness with which once the law menaced him. His standing in Christ, his covenant head, renders the law delightful in itself. He is not only one in covenant union with the eternal three, but he is also one with the law of God, both in its nature and in its tendency; loved with an everlasting love, drawn with an everlasting love, kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, he cannot but be delighted with that law of love which has united him in the bonds of an “everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.” He is no longer a slave under a legal dispensation, but is redeemed from the curse of the law by the death of Christ, that he might receive the adoption of his divine sonship, and have fellowship with God his Father.

“ To see the law by Christ fulfilled,
And hear his pardoning voice,
Changes the slave into a child,
And duty into choice.”

The exercises of the believer towards the Son of God is also seen by the *peculiar* manner in which he delights in it. It is *after the inward man*. By the *inward man*, is to be understood the "new man;" which may be viewed either as the new principle of grace in itself considered or the soul itself considered as renewed. The phrase is peculiar to the apostle Paul, and occurs only in 2 Cor. iv. 16, and Eph. iii. 16. Analogous phrases, "the new man," as opposed to the "old man," (Rom. vi. 6; Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 9,) confirm this view. The use of the terms "inward man," "the law of the mind," "the Spirit," "the spiritual man;" as opposed to "the law in the members," "the old man," "the flesh," "the natural man," shows that the former all indicate the regenerated soul, or as the seat of the Spirit's influences, and the latter the soul as unrenewed. As it is the soul, when in union with the body, that constitutes *the person*, so when the soul is regenerated, it is the believer's *self* that has undergone the divine change; it is *he* who feels it; *he* has the *consciousness* of it. This is the "I" which is to be understood as being represented when the apostle speaks of himself as, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me;" and this is the "I," the renewed self, that delights in the law of God. It cannot but be so from the very constitution of the case, for there is an homogeneity of nature in the Spirit that renews the soul, and in the soul that is renewed. This is how it is that John declares he that is born of God cannot commit sin. Whatever may be the conflict between the two principles of grace and sin, or laws, as the apostle terms them, in the person of the believer, he, being made spiritual, renewed in the spirit of his mind, can clearly distinguish between the nature of each principle working in him; for, being spiritually discerned, he is able to *know*, *as well as to feel*, the power of sin and the reign of grace. And when he says, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," he means his self,—his renewed self. You can understand the clear distinction he makes between his flesh and his spirit as to the two principles or laws which have a conflicting rule over him. "So, then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin."

Now, dear friends, what can you say about this repre-

sentative pronoun, "I"? Will this little pronoun, "I," be sufficient for you to use as indicative of your feelings toward the law of God? Can you adopt the language of the apostle, as the result of the Spirit's work in your heart, and say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man?" If so, happy are ye. God has begun a work in your soul that he will never leave; he will carry on his work of faith with power to the day of Jesus Christ.

Where God's work is begun, God must be loved, and all belonging to him must be loved. If the believer loves God, he loves his will. God's will is his law; God is love; his law is love. The believer delights in it,—loves it. It is the love of God that actuates his inward man; they are of one nature. What a spring of happiness is here! Here is the supply of the Spirit of Christ constantly flowing out in the affections of the believer towards God, delighting in his law, rejoicing in it. To him it is a perfect law of liberty. He has the joy of salvation; for it is a full salvation as it is a free salvation. He has pardon, justification, acceptance, everlasting life, glory; all bestowed upon him by virtue of God's choice of his person in Christ; confirmed to him by the obedience and death of Christ, and brought to a personal participation of these blessings by the operation of God the Holy Ghost. This is the man who says, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man."

Having considered the chief points comprised in our text and its connection, we will now conclude by making a few inferences by way of improvement.

1. *That it is the distinguishing characteristic of the true believer in Christ that he delights in the law of God.* The love of Christ constrains him. His grace has enabled him to take his yoke upon him; he finds it easy, and the burden light. His commandments are not grievous. He says, with David, "Thy law is very pure, therefore doth thy servant love it." He has David's heart and mind. He prays for a clean heart when feeling the foulness of the old-Adam heart and its desperate wickedness. He prays for a right spirit to be renewed within; the former spirit under which he was governed was all wrong, and, while it was so, everything went wrong in his own soul and between him and his God.

When this is done, and, indeed, while it is being done, he then delights in the law of God after the inward man; for he has no fear of its curse. The law of God is in his heart.

2. *That a true delight in the law of God is an unspeakable blessing.* It proves God's gracious work in the soul. It is a good sign; for he hates *all* sin; he loves *all* God's will. He feels, though carnal by nature, yet by grace divine, he loves the spirituality of God's law. He knows it is holy, just, and good. He knows where God is he shall be:

“ The holy to the holiest leads;
From thence his hopes arise;
And he that in his statutes treads
Shall meet him in the skies.”

3. *That to delight in the law of God after the inward man is a clear proof of the believer's conformity to the image of the Lord Jesus.* Being united to the Lord Jesus Christ by a true and living faith, as the branch of the vine is united to the root, he daily and constantly draws all supplies from his fulness, grace for grace. He looks to Jesus for all grace, power, goodness, and willingness to serve him with the mind; though with the flesh, on account of its weakness, yet against his own inclination, his better judgment, he serves the law of sin. He finds, just as Jesus said it was, “The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

4. *That those who delight in the law of God prove it by their general consistency of temper, habits, and deportment of life.* This is too plain to be denied. By the fruit, the tree is known. “Herein,” says our Lord, “is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” “Jesus gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” Therefore, he that thinks the gospel leaves him liberty to walk before the men of the world, or his household, according to his fleshly inclinations and habits, knows nothing truly of the gospel.

5. *That it is unjust to charge such persons who delight in the law of God, according to the apostle's doctrine, with holding loose principles, or to suppose that such sentiments promote licentious conduct.* I think it right to protest against the calumnies that are so foully spread against

the truth of God, as well as against those who love it. The prejudice that is created against the truth and the people themselves, is extraordinary. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that the calumnies which pharisaic preachers and others spread in regard to persons who hold the views I advocate, and also in regard to the places where it is preached, do not so much arise from their sincere belief as it is that their object is to *make merchandise* of the people whom they thus prejudice; it is to scare them away from the places where the truth as it is in Jesus is preached, and to get them into their own houses. (2 Pet. ii. 3.) We are called antinomians, and I know not what else besides; but it is the hoarse bark of the wolf to frighten the sheep of Christ, and to hound them away from the fold of the true gospel. Friends, beware of these sleeky professors of religion. It is you they want to catch. It is these places they want to shut up,—I speak their own words.

6. *The man of the world* never delights in the law of God. Unregenerate, carnal, worldly in all his views, spirit, maxims, and policies, he is governed by principles in entire opposition to the gospel of Christ. Man of the world! I appeal to your conscience. You know I am speaking the truth.

The self-righteous Pharisee, he never delights in the law of God, though seeking life and salvation by it. Proud and boasting of his own doings, he is misled by the blindness of his understanding.

The licentious hypocrite, he, too, never delights in the law of God. He says he does; but he is false. Look at his conduct! What is his character at home and abroad? He knows he loves sin; he knows he is ever trying to hide with his cloak of profession, and, apparently, a sound creed, a deformed and ugly image of the man of sin. But God's curse is upon him, and it will find him out.

May the Lord bless his own word to his own people, establish them in the faith, and lead them to know more and more, by sweet experience, what it is to delight in the law of God after the inward man. Amen.

THE
DIVINE AND ETERNAL SONSHIP
OF THE
LORD JESUS CHRIST
ASSERTED AND DEFENDED.

A SERMON,
BY CHARLES GORDELIER,

PREACHED AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE RE-OPENING OF HEPHZIBAH
CHAPEL, DARLING PLACE, CAMBRIDGE ROAD, NEAR MILE END GATE,

On Lord's Day Evening, April 17th, 1864.

“That 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.”—JOHN v. 23.

HAVING read the chapter whence the text is taken, you scarcely need to be reminded of its connection; but it will be proper to observe that these words are the words of him who spake as never man spake; they are the words of the incarnate God, words enjoining a most solemn duty upon all who name the name of Christ. And when we remember the object for which this gospel was written, (see 20th chap., 31st verse,) we must acknowledge our text possesses a most significant importance. These words are recorded to the intent “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

You will perceive from the 18th verse, that the Jews, in their zeal to defend the doctrine of the Divine Unity, contended against Jesus for asserting his divine Sonship, his co-essentiality and his co-equality with his Father, and for which they conspired his death. It was, indeed, a zeal *for* God, but not according to knowledge. Misled and puzzled with the traditions of the elders, they understood not the Scriptures which pointed out Jesus of Nazareth to be “he which should have redeemed Israel.” Not searching the Scriptures which testified of him, they missed the mark, and consequently failed to see in his Person, his doctrine, and in the works which he did, Jehovah incarnate. Sufficient testimony had been adduced to the natural senses of these stubborn Jews, that

Jesus was the Christ of God; but they refused the evidence. These builders rejected this "stone" for their foundation; they fell foul upon it; "they were snared, taken, and broken," and to this day the veil remains upon their hearts.

Corresponding with the blindness and opposition of the Jews, there have been, throughout all ages of the Christian church, men who have wholly or partially rejected and opposed the doctrine of the True and Essential Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, more or less, the church of God has been deceived and injured by this old leaven of the Pharisees; hence it has always been needful to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Arians, semi-Arians, Sabellians, Socinians, and others, who, either from a selfish love of advancing their own notions, too proud to stoop to the simple teachings of Scripture, or purposely lying in wait to deceive with cunning craftiness, have insiduously incorporated heresy with the truth. In some instances the mischief has worked silently and unperceived for a time. In others, it has quickly shown itself rampant and destructive to all vitality in religion, not shrinking openly to blaspheme the name of the Lord Jesus.

Now, there are times and seasons when the foundation truths of our faith should be more explicitly stated and positively asserted than in ordinary. The present occasion, our first anniversary of the re-opening of this place, appears to me a fitting opportunity; and, as the subject is of the utmost importance, let me bespeak your patient and candid attention; and I pray that he whose office it is to testify of Jesus may not only open our understandings to understand the truth as it is in Jesus, but that we may each have a sweet, experimental proof of his love and goodness, and that he may complete his work of faith with power. Our subject is the most exalted we can conceive of; and if we have been led by the Spirit to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, we shall not fail to have the most exalted views of the Person of our ever blessed Lord and Saviour.

As to the plain meaning of the words before us, it appears to me thus: *The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is to be regarded, esteemed, loved, revered, praised as co-essential and co-equal with the Father; the same attributes that are ascribed to God the Father, such as his self-existence, eternity, omnipresence,*

omniscience, omnipotence, and also his wisdom, truth, love, and goodness, are also to be ascribed to the Son of God. The man who hath low views of the deity, eternity, and self-existence of Jesus Christ, hath low views of God the Father; for Jesus Christ and the Father are essentially ONE; and whatever is affirmed of the Father is also affirmed of the Son. But, further, as there is no God but Jehovah, subsisting in the personalities of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so he who withholds proper homage and worship from one, withholds it from all. He who would refuse to honour the Father, could not be said to honour God; and, in like manner, he who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father. Let me ask, Has not the Father declared that the Son shall be honoured? He who refuses to do it, disobeys the Father, for they are equal. He who denies the one, denies also the other. The same views and feelings which lead us to honour the Father, will also lead us to honour the Son; for the evidence of the self-existence of the Son, his deity, and his eternity, is the same as that of the Father. It is, therefore, to my mind, an absurdity to talk of honouring attributes in the Father, and not in the Son; and I cannot but regard this vindication of our Lord, of his personal honour and deity, as being worthy of the gravest consideration.

I shall now attempt to consider the text in its various aspects, and shall then endeavour to draw such inferences as I think the subject will legitimately warrant.

We cannot, of course, consider the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ without the particular relation which it bears to the doctrine of the Trinity in the Unity of the Divine Essence; and here let it be understood, I shall not attempt to explain or establish any point upon the principles of *human* analogy. I look upon the system of analogical reasoning on this subject as the fruitful source of all those wide-spread and pestilential errors which have troubled the church of God. I may, perhaps, occasionally refer to some of the analogies employed; but, so far as my own argument is concerned, I shall endeavour to keep close to the word of God, receiving it in its plain and unadulterated sense.

The proposition now before us is, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, should be honoured even as the Father, because,

1. *That he is of the same indivisible nature and essence of subsistence with the Most High, the self-existent and ever-living God, God the Father.*

Our Lord is expressly spoken of and called the Son of God, and the only-begotten Son of God, and even God's own proper Son, the Son of the living God, all of which import his being of the same nature with his Father. Now, those who reason from analogy know very well that in all created life the offspring is of *the same nature* as the parent; but human analogy fails to explain the doctrine of Christ's Sonship, for the Lord Jesus Christ is called the only-begotten Son of God, which necessarily implies more than a son by creation or adoption. Certainly it cannot refer to his extraordinary conception as man, because it is spoken, not of the flesh or human nature, but of the **WORD** that was made flesh. To say that the only-begotten Son of God is meant of the extraordinary conception or birth of Christ as man, is to say that Christ is not the Son of God the Father at all, but of the Holy Ghost, for that was his work; and, consequently, Christ is not the Son of God at all with them who deny the Holy Ghost to be God; and this is a plain contradiction of the words themselves, which expressly declare that Christ is the only-begotten Son of God. The word only-begotten properly respects the nature or essence, and not at all the peculiar manner of the miraculous conception. It evidently signifies one alone begotten of that nature; such a Son as God has never another. Hence it is (Rom. viii. 32) that Christ is called God's own proper Son, which he could not possibly be if he were not of the same nature or substance with God the Father; for it is plain, he that is of another substance is no proper son, no *own* son at all; but God the Father being Christ's *own proper Father*, and Christ *his own proper Son*, this necessarily imports that Christ is God's Son, and God Christ's Father, in the most proper acceptation of the words. And if it were not so, God the Father would not be a proper Father, nor a Father from eternity; to assert which, says an old divine, would lead to atheism, for unto us believers there is but one God the Father. (1 Cor. viii. 6.) Take away God the Father, and you take away the One God. But further, Christ is such a Son of God as to have all the perfections of God the Father in him, essentially considered as God. Christ is an eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Son. He is such a Son of God as is himself "the only wise God;" and therefore we must, indeed, we cannot but, conclude that he is such a Son as is co-essential and co-eternal with his Father.

Oh! says one, you are a believer in a "begotten God!" No, my friend, I am not, nor are any who hold the doctrine I am setting forth; but I am fully aware of the mischievous intent of those who make this charge. Not only is it unfair that such an inference should be drawn from the views thus taken of Christ's Person, but, generally speaking, those who so assiduously and so industriously circulate this foul slander know full well we hold no such belief. It has been contradicted times out of number; and if truth could but perform its office, we should be told that being foiled in establishing their own pernicious fancies and having their designs unmasked, they have recourse to scurrilous falsehoods and abusive language to serve their own private ends and party spirit.

But we will go on to observe:

2. *Christ the Son is of the same indivisible nature with his Father, because the same attributes of God the Father, considered as the only true God, are ascribed to him.*

Jehovah, by the prophet Isaiah, (chap. xlv. 6,) describes himself thus: "I am the first and I am the last." After the same manner Christ also describes himself to his servant John: "I am the first and the last." (Rev. i. 17.) So that the Lord Jesus Christ the Son, essentially considered, is absolutely the first Being as well as God the Father. There is none other before him or after him. He is an eternal, independent, self-existent Being, the only Potentate and sovereign Lord of the Universe, having life in himself, and "upholding all things by the word of his power." This description belongs to Christ, necessarily and evidently, as he is the first and the last. He who is the first must needs be eternal, because he hath no beginning, but hath always been, eternally and essentially. Christ is the first Being, not the first creature, as the semi-Arians assert. He is an independent Being. He is God of himself; that is, he owes his being to no other, for if he did, he could not be the first; because, if his being were from another, the other must be before him, else the effect would be before the cause. Christ, as the first Being, must needs have life in himself; because there was no other to give him life. He is life, essentially, necessarily, independently, and eternally. Thus it is that Christ is said to have life in the same manner that God the Father has it—as the Father hath life in himself. (John v. 26.) So that however perfect, however glorious the Father's life is so every way perfect and glorious is the life of the Son;

it being essentially the very same life, because it is the life in and of himself, and no being but One can so have life; for the second and every other being has life from the first. Therefore Christ, having life in himself, is the first and the last, the only independent Being. He is thus distinguished from all creatures; for they derive their life from him, and thus is he proved to be the one true God with the Father.

3. *Christ the Son is of the same nature with the Father, because he has the same glorious names, titles, and attributes expressly ascribed to him that are ascribed to God the Father.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ is not only expressly, but properly and absolutely, called God. He is called God, without limitation or restriction, John i. 1: "The Word was God," or, as Wycliffe has it, "God was the Word." Acts xx. 28: "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." 1 Tim. iii. 16: "God was manifest in the flesh;" and in Heb. i. 8: "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." These passages plainly indicate that Christ is God, not only in name, but in being essentially so. He is expressly called "the mighty God;" (Isa. ix. 6;) "God blessed over all. Amen;" (Rom. ix. 5;) "the great God;" (Tit. ii. 13;) "the true God." (1 John v. 20.) So that these expressions which are here applied to Christ are the same as those which declare the Father to be God.

But again: Christ is most properly called God, because the essential name of God—Jehovah—is expressly given to him in many places of holy writ, as in Isa. xl. 3; Jer. xxiii. 6; Gen. xix. 24; Zech. x. 12. Therefore Christ is the very same God with the only true and most high God; for Jehovah is but one essence, or one God. God's name alone is Jehovah; (Ps. lxxxiii. 18;) Christ's name is Jehovah; therefore he is God. Jehovah is that very name, the glory of which God will not give to another. (Isa. xlii. 8.) But Christ has the glory of that name, therefore he is not another being, but is, essentially considered, the very same God that the Father is. Christ has all the essential properties that God the Father has. What is proper to God the Father is proper to God the Son. Is God the Father everlasting? so is Christ. The true God knows all things; so does Christ. (John xxi. 17.) God is infinite, everywhere present; so is Christ. (Matt. xviii. 20.) He is the Almighty, who is, and was, and is to come; immu-

table, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And where texts speak of Christ having an inferior or subordinate condition, these will be found to have reference to his human nature only, of him considered in the office or capacity of Mediator.

4. *Jesus Christ the Son of God is of the same indivisible nature or essence with the Father, because it is expressly declared in God's word that they are ONE.*

Our Lord Jesus himself says so: "I and my Father are One;" that is, one being, one substance, essence, or nature. In this sense the Jews understood him, and they believed that thereby he made himself such a Son of God as was of the very same nature with God; and therefore it was that they deemed it blasphemy, and declared that he was worthy of death. Now, if they had misunderstood the sense which Jesus intended to convey, surely he would have corrected their mistake, and he would have told them plainly that he did not mean to make himself equal with God. But Jesus does not say they mistook his meaning, but goes on to vindicate and defend what he had said in the very sense the Jews had taken it, namely, that he was one with the Father in nature or being, "because he did the works of his Father." He told them emphatically that "whatsoever things the Father did, these also he did likewise." (Verse 19.) Now this could not be said of any nor of all the creatures which God has made; therefore we find he exhorts them, from the plain and full argument of his doing the same works the Father did, that they would know and believe that "the Father is in him, and he in the Father;" that is, essentially, there being a mutual in-existence and co-existence in and with one another, else it would not prove his assertion, namely, that he did the same works the Father did. Further, that Christ the Son is of the very same nature with God the Father, is also proved from Jno. viii. 19, where it is said, "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also. Hence, I conclude, it necessarily follows that THEY ARE ONE. How can it be otherwise, if he who knows the one should certainly know the other also? for in no two other persons, that is, a father and his son, can it ever be said, that if we know the one, we necessarily know the other. Certainly not; for every man has the whole nature of man distinct in himself and dividedly from another man. Therefore, if by knowing God the Son we know God the Father, it is because they are one and

the very same undivided nature. Now this truth appears to me most evidently proved from 1 John v. 7; "And these Three are One." You see they are expressly said to be one, and, therefore, "they are ONE"—one in being, nature, essence, substance. The Three here spoken of are not one Person, for they are three Persons. There cannot be any other view of Father and Son but as of two Persons. They are not barely in agreement or consent, as three partners in a business firm, for then it might be said, as in the 8th verse, "and these three *agree* in one;" but it is not said so, but that "THEY ARE ONE." There is a plain distinction. The three that bare witness or record in heaven are said "to be One," that is, one and the very same God; for the record that is borne by the *three* in heaven, is in verse 9 called the *witness* of God; not witnesses in the plural, but in the singular. The same evidence we have in the command for believers' baptism, to be administered in the *name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

I hope I have made myself explicit on this important point. I have tried to do so. To understand divine truth in a divine light, we must give up all human analogies and carnal notions of it.

5. *That Jesus Christ is the same God with God the Father, essentially considered, because he doeth the same most mighty works, and after the same manner that God the Father doeth them.*

These works to which I refer are such as are truly divine, God-like; such as no being but a being of infinite wisdom, power, perfection, and goodness, can possibly do, and such as are expressly and properly in the word of God attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ, as they are to God the Father.

The works of creation and preservation are ascribed to Jesus Christ. He is the great Creator of all things. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." (John i. 3.) "All things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Heb. i. 10.) And it is also said: "He upholds all things by the word of his power." (Heb. i. 13.) So that it is certain that Christ hath not only done these bright and mighty works which none but God can do, but he did them in a God-like manner as God the Father did them, as immediately, as easily, as irresistibly, and as independently. Look at

the miracles which he wrought in his incarnate state. One word from his mouth, one touch of his hand, sometimes without either; whatever Jesus willed, his almighty power performed, for he is God alone.

To suppose that Christ was only an instrument in the work of creation is most absurd. It is a contradiction of God's word, and it is blasphemous. Are we not expressly told that God **ALONE** made the heavens and earth. Therefore he had no instrument. "He spake and it was done." (Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9.) "All things were made by him" and for him, for his honour, use, and service. He is the last end of all things, but not so are instruments. I wonder sometimes that men who deny the Son, do not say that God the Father is only an instrument in creation; for all things are said to be by him. (Heb. xi. 36.) Those who receive God's word as there revealed, can easily believe that all things were made by Christ, and for him; and that "whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise." His eternal power and God-head are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

6. *That Jesus Christ is essentially and eternally the same with God the Father, because his personality is identified as the same throughout the history and work of redemption.*

In the epistle to the Ephesians (i. 4) the apostle speaks of the Church of God being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Now, I cannot believe that God chose his people in a Christ that did not pre-exist—a mere name. A nominal Christ is surely not the Christ of God, though he appears to be so according to many professors. The good pleasure of the Father's will which he purposed in himself was not prospective in regard to the Person of his Son. No, surely, for his eternal purpose he purposed *in Christ*, (Eph. iii. 11,) a proof of Christ's existence before his incarnation; and in verse 12, we read: "He *trusted in Christ*." Was this a Christ only in purpose, or a Christ then in being, think you? Evidently the Person of Christ is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father, or the Father could not have chosen his people in him. He was the Son of God before he became the Christ, the anointed of God the Father. The personality of his Sonship is the basis of his mediatorship, and hence he is the author of eternal redemption.

Passing by several notable passages, we will just observe

on Zech. ii. 10. The Lord speaking by the prophet of the fulfillment of Eph. i. 10, (God's eternal purpose,) saith: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come, and I dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD." Here, you perceive, it is God who speaks. And to what period does he refer? Certainly to no other than the incarnation of himself; the going forth of Jehovah in personal acts for the gathering together of his people and for their redemption.

Turning now to Luke ii. 11, when the birth of the Saviour was announced to the shepherds by the angel, he said: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is CHRIST THE LORD," not *a* Lord, but *the* Lord—the Lord of glory. (1 Cor. ii. 8.) Here is the character, the Person, and his one name declared to be *he* who is, and was, and is to come; the personality of Jesus as the self-existent God being too plain to be denied on the principles of language. Here, then, is the identity of the same person as foretold and expected; they did not refer to what he was to be, but to what *he is*, both in Person and character, the infinite I AM—he, "the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (Rev. i. 8.)

Now refer to Matt. xxviii. 6. Again we have angels' testimony to the identity of Jesus the Lord: they speak not of his body merely, but of his Person entire, they do not deem him as a dead man placed in the grave, but they speak of him as what he is, *i.e.* what he ever was—THE LORD: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay"—his Person—his own act and deed in lying in the grave. Ah! my friends, there is more divinity in that angelic sentence, than has ever been uttered by mortal man; for in it I see the God-man, during the period of death, still the willing substitute of his church, entering the portals of the grave to pay the last mite of their penalty to a broken law.

Then, again, in Acts ii. 36, and 1 Cor. ii. 8, we have the testimony of two apostles, who speak of him who was crucified as "the Lord of glory;" "both Lord and Christ;" and observe, too, in Eph. iv. 8-10, his ascension to heaven is spoken of as being the same as mentioned in Psalm lxxviii. 18, and his descension is spoken of in the same manner; both of his own will, which no creature could do, or could be—both die and lie in the grave of his own self. Jesus must have been the Lord of life and

glory to have overcome death; and his triumphant entrance into heaven is celebrated in Psalm xxiv. 7-10: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." So that throughout the Scriptures, from the period of God the Father choosing his people in Christ, to the time of his incarnation, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, all combine to fix the identity of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ the same with God the Father, essentially considered, the same God as the Father. In the contemplation of these great truths, we unite with the apostle in exclaiming: "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

I pass on to notice also, under this head, that the great and glorious *work of redemption and complete salvation*, which is said to be God's work, is likewise said to be the work of Christ. There is no other salvation for men but that of Christ: "There is none other name under heaven given among men." (Acts iv. 12.) Beside him there is no Saviour—he is God. (Isa. lxiii. 11.) And when he would pour in the consolations of his grace to the troubled and overwhelmed heart, he bases the promise upon his immutableness, and declares of himself: "I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel,"—the true spiritual Israel. It is God who hath chosen his people to grace and glory, so has Jesus. None can forgive sins but God only. Christ does forgive sins; therefore he is the only true God. It is God alone who quickens sinners when dead in sin; Christ is that great God who quickeneth whomsoever he will. Believers are called the sons of God by virtue of God the Father's love; Christ has the same power. (John i. 12.) He gives to his people eternal life, and he wills of himself their eternal glorification with him and the Father. (John xvii. 24.)

7. *That Christ the Son is the same in Essence with God the Father, because the very same things which are positively spoken of the Most High God in the Old Testament are attributed to Christ in the New Testament.*

There can be no difficulty to the spiritually taught disciple of Christ in ascertaining that he who is called Jehovah in the Old Testament is the same as he who in the New Testament is called Jesus, the Christ. If in the Old Testament we find expressly ascribed such and such things to the great Jehovah, the only true God, and the New Testament declares these very things of Christ, it must needs follow that Jesus is the only true God. Let us just mention a few instances out of many where they occur. He who proclaimed the law on Mount Sinai was Jehovah, the Most High God. Now, it is certain that Christ was he who did so. (Acts vii. 37, 38.) The psalmist tells us that he whom the Israelites tempted and provoked was the Most High God. (Ps. lxxviii. 50.) The apostle Paul tells us expressly that it was Christ they tempted. (1 Cor. x. 9.) Therefore, Christ is the Most High God. Again, Psalm x. 2 holds out the great God in his eternity and unchangeableness, and as the Creator of all things; and the same attributes are ascribed to Christ in Heb. i. 10-12. Isaiah tells us that "the Lord of Hosts, besides whom there is no God, is the first and the last; (Isa. xlv. 6;) and John the divine tells us expressly that Jesus "is the first and the last;" therefore he is the Lord of Hosts, besides whom there is no God. "He who ascended up on high and led captivity captive," the psalmist calls God and Lord. And the apostle Paul assures us that he who ascended is he who descended into the lower parts of the earth, and he who descended is the same who ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, (Eph. iv. 7-9,) which is certainly meant of Christ Jesus. And again, searching the heart, trying the reins, &c., are prerogatives which the great Jehovah ascribes to himself by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah; (Jer. xvii. 10;) and this is what Jesus as the Son of God precisely declares of himself: "All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." (Rev. ii. 23.) This argument must needs be good with all those who take God's word as they find it, and his interpretation of it. What is spoken in the Old Testament of the only true God,—God himself interprets of Christ in the New. That in Isaiah xl. 3-5, is spoken of the great Jehovah, the Lord our God; and whosoever denies it to be spoken of Christ, contradicts all the four evangelists, for they apply it to him. Surely none can deny

the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only living and true God, if they believe God's own explication of the word. If our hearts are humble we shall receive it and believe it. We cannot be deceived in so doing.

8. I come now to consider the last part of my argument, and which has a close proximity to the doctrine of my text: *That Jesus Christ is the same in nature with God the Father, because the same worship must be paid to them both.*

Not only worship, but the very same divine worship in all the parts and degrees of it must be given to the Son as to the Father. This is clear, I think, from the very words of my text. Whatever divine and excellent worship the most holy men do or can pay to God the Father, *that* worship in all its height and excellency must be given unto the Son, or else we directly deny the doctrine of our text. Here is no distinction of religious worship, nor any inequality or inferiority in the worship that is given to the Son and God the Father; but quite the contrary; we are to worship them both alike. The Son we must worship, even as we worship the Father; and unless we thus honour the Son, we honour not the Father. Their honour is inseparable. Divine worship is that honour and service we give to God, as to a Being of infinite perfection, as our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, and the fountain of all our happiness. Jesus Christ is a Being of infinite excellences; he is our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and the fountain of all divine fulness and happiness; therefore he must be worshipped. He must have paid unto him all the internal and external acts of worship. God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Christ is God, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth, even as they worship the Father; and like as the Father seeketh such to worship him, so does our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence it is he says: "All men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father."

Again. We must *believe* in Christ, the same as we believe in God. This our Lord says himself: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." And this is also the Father's will, that "we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John iii. 23.) Have we hope in God? Jesus Christ is expressly said to be our hope; that is, he in whose death and righteousness alone we hope for salvation. We have not our hope in Christ merely for the

things of this life, for then we were of all men the most miserable; but we hope in Christ for the things of that glorious life—the hope that is full of immortality. Therefore Christ is God; for to hope in any creature, would be to bring a curse upon us and not a blessing.

Further, we must love Christ *supremely*, in all sincerity, and above all, with our highest love and affection; and it is certain we can love but one being so. Therefore, this is to be regarded as undoubted evidence that we believe Jesus Christ to be the only one true God. Besides, the external part of divine worship must be given to Christ. As we must “offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay our vows unto the Most High,” (Ps. l. 14,) so we must give honour, glory, dominion, praise, and blessing to Christ; (Rev. v. 12;) therefore he is the Most High God. And not only must we *praise* Jesus Christ as God, but we must also *pray* unto him as the only true God, and him only. Now, it is most clear that we must pray to him. We find the apostle Paul often prayed to him; Stephen died praying to him; and in 1 Cor. i. 2, we find it to be a mark of a true believer, and that such persons are reckoned among the saints of God “who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,” and how many of the people of God can use the language of dear Mr. Hart:

“That Christ is God I can avouch,
And for his people cares;
For I have pray'd to him as such,
And he has heard my prayers.”

Now, if Jesus Christ be only a creature, that is, a being substantially distinct from, or made by, the only true God, then we must either worship him who is not God, which is idolatry, or we must cease praying unto him, and we ought never more to use the benediction: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” We must never more pray to him for mercy, for salvation, if he be not the Most High God. We must never more pray: “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good work.” “We must worship the Lord our God, and him only must we serve.” We cannot deny divine worship to Christ, for he is God alone, and God only must be worshipped; therefore, Christ is the one and the very same God as the Father. Amen.

My dear hearers, I shall now relieve your attention from this part of the argument. Much more, indeed, might be adduced from God's most holy book that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is co-essential and co-eternal with God the Father; but sufficient, perhaps, has been stated for a public discourse of this kind. I will, therefore, proceed to notice some practical inferences, which I think are fairly deducible from the several points laid down.

1st. You may plainly perceive that *I regard the Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ as being founded on his Deity, and not on his humanity.* This I hold to be the mind of the Spirit. This view of this most vital question, I am well aware, is objected to, and opposed by a large portion of our brethren in the ministry, who are received into the churches as men of truth, piety, learning, and principle; but we have nothing to do with men's opinions or characters where truth is at stake. The truth of God must be dearer to us than all besides. The faith of God's elect must be earnestly contended for. I am well aware, too, there is great mystery, much difficulty, singular complexity, in the controversy upon the subject. Most truly it is said, "*Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh;*" and sure I am, *with controversy, the mystery is still greater.* For what is the fruit, in many instances, of the numerous controversies on the Sonship of Christ? Division of the brethren, and, in some cases, personal hate. It has produced such bitter strife and confusion, gross misunderstandings, and wilful perversions of each other's meanings, as remind us strongly of the Ammonites and Moabites, who, after they had blunderingly slain their Edomite ally, turned to, and "every one helped to destroy another." (2 Chron. xx. 23.) Nevertheless, the controversy has its uses. It discovers those who are on the Lord's side, and it brings into closer sympathy those who hold the unity of the faith in the bond of peace. Now, sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will be in no danger of such evils, if they but carefully attend to the following things: 1. To *receive the truth* as it is in Jesus, *in the love of it*; and 2. To *rest upon it* as the only rock on which they are to stand. This I am sure they will do if they have been renewed in the spirit of their minds, and are under the teachings of the Holy Spirit. "Every word of God is pure;" "They are all plain to him that under-

standeth." They must totally reject the methods men invent by attempting to explain divine truth upon human principles. For more than sixteen hundred years, men of this stamp have been blindly feeling after some analogy, which has no existence but in their own brain ! By this, they seek to illustrate the doctrine of Christ's Sonship, and thus they have forsaken the safe guidance of revelation. Now, if we will but attend to the word of God, and take it in its plain and obvious sense, apart from all human prejudices, we shall perceive that, in regard to the Person and character of the Lord Jesus Christ, all human analogy fails.

In the first place, to use the words of an excellent author, Dr. Leonard Woods: "The relation of Christ to God the Father has no real and strict analogy. It is, in various respects, unlike the relation of any created being to God. The relation of a created being to God commences in time ; but Christ was with God in the beginning, never without him. The relation of a creature originates in the derivation of his being from God. But the relation which Christ, considered as "The Word," bears to the Father, rests primarily upon his participation of the same divine nature. So that it is the relation of one who is essentially equal, and in every respect to nature, identical. Whereas, the relation of every created being to God is the relation of one essentially and infinitely inferior. The relation of Christ to the Father has no strict analogy to the relation which any created being bears to another. The relations among created beings are indeed made use of to set forth the relation of Christ to the Father ; as, for example, the relations of a son and a servant. But Christ does not strictly stand in the relation of a human son to his father, or of a human servant to his master ; although these relations make known some of the properties or effects of Christ's relation to the Father. The Bible makes an essential difference between the peculiar relation of a son and that of a servant ; and represents the one as exclusive of the other. If, then, Christ were a servant, in this appropriate sense, it would be incompatible with his being a Son ; or if he were a Son, it would be incompatible with his being a servant. But he is spoken of as both a servant and a son ; which is sufficient to show that he is neither the one nor the other, in the strict and literal sense. In other words, there is no literal and strict analogy between the relation of Christ to his Father and that of a human son

to his Father, or of a servant to his master. Though some of the effects and circumstances of the relation may be similar, the nature and the ground of it are materially different."

I need make no apology for this quotation; it not only expresses my view in better words than I could put it, but it shows clearly that human analogy cannot explain God's truth, and I think it strengthens my argument. I would only make another remark, in the second place, and that is, the *constitution* of the Person of the Redeemer is a *departure* from all analogy. From one class of texts we learn, that he was a true and proper man. The phrase "Son of man" is frequently used in the gospels, but mostly by himself. Other texts exhibit him as possessing all the properties of Deity. Here analogy entirely fails. In no other instance were natures and attributes, so widely different, ever united in one Person. He whose name is Wonderful is wonderful in his Person. With reference to one part of his character he is God, by whom all things were created. With reference to another part of his character, he the same Person, is called a child, a man. And when he was called "the Son of God," he not only admitted it, but approved the faith of those who thus called him, and pronounced them blessed, for their belief was the result of divine communication. (Matt. xvi. 17.) Yes, the God-man Mediator, Jesus Christ, is truly wonderful in himself; for whatever he is in himself, he is all that to him who is united to him by a true and living faith. He has life in himself; he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and yet he died and was buried. He is God over all, blessed for evermore; and yet he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Now these representations of Christ that the Scriptures make, are a proof that there is no analogy, as to the constitution of his Person, between him and any other being.

I have detained you, perhaps, too long on this topic; but these remarks, I hope, will show, that men, who regulate their opinions respecting Christ by analogy, fall into one or another of the false notions so commonly entertained; and I think it will be seen what reason we have to be on our guard against this fruitful source of error. Every attempt men make to bring the work and character of Christ to bear a strict analogy to the character and work of any other being, is stamped with weakness, and will lead us away from the truth and the simplicity which is in Christ.

But, again, see how the folly of human analogy is ridiculed in the Scriptures of truth. Hear what the Lord himself saith by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah: "To whom, then, will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" (Isa. xl. 18.) And: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee." (Ps. l. 21.) Now, my friends, I ask you, is not the doctrine of my text, well sustained by the *divine forbidding* of all human analogy? It demands "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." O ye who fancy yourselves so wise, so clever in the argument that a Father is anterior and superior to a Son, blush for shame! No more impugn and corrupt the doctrine of Christ by human traditions. Think me not too severe when I say, consider this, ye that yet forget the unity of God, "lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, when his wrath is kindled but a little;" "for ye have not spoken of him the thing that is right." "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father."

2nd. You will perceive, also, from the view I have presented, that *it is opposed to those who hold the notion of the Person of Christ as the Son of God only in his complex existence as Immanuel—God in our nature; in other words, that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God till he became the Son of man.*

I regard this notion as mere human fancy, unsustained by the authority of God's word. Doubtless there are many sincere believers in Jesus, who think it is the truth; but it appears to me, they take too low a ground. Their rock is not our rock; and holding, as I do, the absolute essentiality and eternity of Christ with God—God in Christ, Christ in God—I could not receive it. My text forbids it. How can I honour the Son even as I honour the Father, if I limit the existence of his Person as to *time*? Before the fulness of time—"the period when the Son of God became incarnate"—he must have existed; for it is said, "God sent forth his Son." How could it be said he was *sent*, if he did not already pre-exist? His being made of a woman under the law was but the *condition* in which he was to come; a condition that was necessary in which Redemption was to be effected. The *sending* does not imply *inferiority*, any more than the sending of the Holy Spirit; but simply means the *manifestation* of the purpose for which he came, viz., "to destroy the works of the

devil." And therefore it is that I consider unless I believe and avow both the eternity and the immutability of Christ's Sonship, I cannot honour the Son even as I honour the Father.

3rd. If all men are to honour the Son even as they honour the Father, then I conceive, that *they who hold the notion of the pre-existence of Christ's human soul cannot honour the Son even as the Father is to be honoured; because they consider the Son only as a creature of the Father, though they ascribe to him a pre-existent state before all other creatures.*

The pre-existence of Christ's human soul is a notion which I nowhere find in the Scriptures expressed or implied. 'Tis true, many who hold the view of Christ being "the first of all creatures," say many excellent things of his Person, character, and work, as do those of whom I have just been speaking; but, "to the law and to the testimony." "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Harsh words, 'tis true, as applied to persons who profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth; but inasmuch as the notion they hold is opposed to the self-existence of Jesus the I AM, it must be rejected as spurious and heresy. Well does Mr. Hart say:

"Notion's the harlot's test,
By which the truth's reviled;
The child of fancy, finely dress'd,
But not the living child."

I beg pardon for calling their idea of the human pre-existence a *mere doll*, but really I believe it is nothing more.*

* Since the first edition of this sermon was printed, I have had the pleasure of meeting with some remarks on pre-existerianism in a sermon by Mr. Philpot, on Prov. viii. 20, 21, No. 364 Penny Pulpit, 6th edition, which I take the liberty of inserting here, as not only confirming my own view, but as concisely setting forth in a strong light the perniciousness of that human notion.

"The dream of the pre-existerians 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 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

But lest I should make any one sad whom the Lord would not have made sad, by leading them to suppose that, because they are either under such teachings, or suppose they hold such views, and yet have felt sure in their own minds they have the witness of the Spirit that they are born of God—are united to Christ by a true and living faith, and that he is all their salvation, and all their desire—I would just say to such, far be it from me to bring a cloud between you and the Sun of your soul, by representing that all who differ from me are not partakers of saving grace. I have met with many who professed the dogma which I am condemning, who did not really believe it; arising, as I discovered, from a misconception of the peculiar idea involved. For years I verily thought I was a believer in the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, but was surprised to hear myself contradicted and told I was no Pre-existerian; and on looking more into the matter, I found it was the pre-existence of Christ's Person, founded on his self-existence I believed in, not of his human soul. I had mistaken the one for the other. This, I believe, is the case with many of the Lord's dear people, and even with some of his own sent servants in the ministry of the gospel.

Still, there is one word of caution I should like to give. Beware of men. We have had, and still have, writers and preachers who lead souls astray, and cause much confusion in the church of God by their snaky way of preaching the Person of Christ. One time they profess to teach Christ's eternal Sonship, and anon, they go off and preach either modern pre-existerianism, or some other notion intimating Christ was not the Son of God till he became man. They delight in self-made paradoxes, a little truth here, and a little truth there, and saying many pretty things about Christ; but all the while the poison of Arianism, or some other ism, is under their tongues. Their complex statements perplex, puzzle, and bewilder the minds of many, and, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect, and *cheat* them out of the truth. There can be no objection to men honestly changing their views, if they think proper; but it is discreditable if men,

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."

doing so, continue to publish and sell their contradictory writings at the same time. They may have their *pocket reasons* for so doing, they may obtain a position in certain cliques and circles, but such chameleon methods of teaching cannot promote the spiritual interests of the Church of God. He that honoureth not the Son, honour-eth not the Father which sent him.

4th. *That the Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, being founded on his Deity, and not on his humanity, therefore this is the only true and proper basis upon which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, can be honoured as the Father.*

The apostle, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, (viii. 6,) says: "But unto us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." What a declaration is here of the unity of God and of Jesus Christ. The eternal, self-existent I AM, who is, and was, and is to come, the only Creator, Preserver, and Lord of all. This glorious and divine Being, so infinite in his perfections, pervading the whole universe of creation, visible and invisible, is revealed in the inspired writings as an incomprehensible and divine Spirit, and that they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. In that same blessed book it is revealed that this divine and glorious Being is displayed and made known to us in the distinct Personality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, yet indivisible in the unity of the divine nature or substance. *The Person of God the Father is God, in the relation of a Father, sending and bringing forth his own infinitely perfect and most glorious image. The Person of God the Son is the same God, in the relation of a Son, proceeding from the Father. The Person of God the Holy Ghost is the same God, in the relation of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son in eternity.* This great mystery, of three Persons in One God, is plainly declared in the sacred word. Each of them is Jehovah the Most High God. All the three Persons, thus displayed, give us, as I receive it, a complete idea of the only true God. The only true God is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He is revealed to us in the great scheme of Redemption by the personal acts or goings forth of Jehovah. First, we have God the Father sending forth his Son in the nature of man; then we have the Son manifesting the name of the Father; and the Son is revealed by the Holy Spirit. All this is accomplished in

the mind and heart of each believer in Jesus, through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, under his effectual teaching. Sometimes we perceive the same offices ascribed to other Persons in the sacred Trinity; by this, we mark more particularly the divine unity and essentiality of the Godhead. We believe in Christ; our sins are pardoned by Christ, and on account of Christ; we are saved by Christ; we pray to God through Christ; we praise God in Christ; we love, honour, and serve God in Christ; we know God only through Christ; we know God only *in* Christ; we are drawn to God by Christ, for none can come to the Father but by him: "He is the way, the truth, and the life." Thus, it is *by our own experience* of coming to God—loving him, knowing him, serving him—through Christ, that we attribute all the divine perfections of the Godhead to Christ, even as unto the Father. For he is God alone; besides him there is no God. We worship God in Christ. We ascribe all the glory of our salvation to him, as unto the Father. Thus it is we honour the Son even as we honour the Father, the one God over all, blessed for evermore. Amen, and amen.

Before I close this discourse, I must tax your patience for two or three more minutes; for there are one or two remarks I wish to make.

The first is *to the man who professes to believe that Jesus Christ is NOT co-essential and co-eternal with God the Father.*

My friend, I will give you credit for desiring to know Christ, to serve him, and to promote the knowledge of his name and will in all sincerity, and in truth; but though you may do so, yet if you are not well-grounded in the fundamental truth of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will certainly fail to accomplish that which you are seeking. A right position, remember, if wrongly taken, will produce a wrong result. Your analogical reasoning is no substitute for the Spirit of Truth. "Who teacheth like him?" Your vain imagination has produced a creature Jesus, in opposition to the "Christ of God." If Jesus himself asserts his self-existence *prior* to his incarnation, *during* his incarnation, and *since* his incarnation,—as he does in Exodus iii. 14, John viii. 58, and Rev. i. 8—how shall mortal flesh dare to contradict and pervert the words of the infinite I AM, and add words to the inspired record that derogate the Person of the Son of the living

God, misleading and deceiving the saints of the Most High, by offering honour to a creature whom they ignorantly worship. Your whole scheme is of human invention, and must come to pieces under the hammer of God's truth. Consider what I say, and may the Lord lead you into the truth as it is in Jesus.

“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.”

My second remark is *to the sincere and humble believer in Jesus*, who, without entering into questions which he thinks only minister to strife and not to edification, has committed the keeping of his soul to Jesus, as unto a faithful Creator.

Dearly beloved, what a solid basis you have in the doctrine of the Essential Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, for your salvation. This is the rock on which Christ builds his church; here, then, rest all your hope, your faith, your love. The powers of hell may attempt to shake you, but their rage is in vain; they shall not prevail. You may, perhaps, sometimes fear and quake *in yourself*, but not in Christ; for you are safe and eternally secure in him. He is the Rock, his work is perfect, and you may say:

“On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.”

And, my brother or sister, feeling your standing so secure on such a Rock as this, what solemn weight attaches to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ as expressed in our text. You are called to honour the Son even as the Father; you are called the children of the Lord God Almighty; then walk as the children of the light, sons of God, holy and without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. For as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so are we to talk in him.

“No big words of ready talkers,
No dry doctrine will suffice;
Broken hearts and humble walkers,
These are dear in Jesus' eyes.”

My last remark is *to the poor seeking soul*, desiring to find Christ, believing him to be the only refuge where he

can hide his guilty head from the storm of divine wrath that seems about to pour down upon him.

Poor soul! you have been driven out of all your hiding places, by the terrors of a broken law working wrath in your conscience. You are come seeking life and salvation by the death of Jesus Christ. You shall have it! Do you believe in God. Believe also in Christ. He who comes to God must believe that he—yes, Jesus Christ—is God alone. He alone can save you; his own arm brought salvation. Salvation is of God, not of a creature. Trust in him as God, the Son of God, not as the Son of man, or you will fare no better than the poor Syro-Phœnician woman; for so long as she called upon Jesus as the Son of David, all was dark, there seemed to be no hope for her, he answered her not a word; but when she came to him as the LORD alone, and dropped every plea of her own, saying, “Lord help me,” that moment she took hold of God’s strength, she touched his divinity, and obtained all she sought.

Are you indeed coming to Jesus? What is it that leads you to fix on him? “O,” say you, “*I feel I am such a sinner, that only such a God as Christ is can save me?*” You are right; and he will save you. The Spirit has already opened your eyes. It is he who hath planted faith in your heart; he is leading you to Christ. You have been drawn by the love of the Father, and soon you shall find,

“If you are returning to Jesus, your Friend,
Your sighing and mourning in singing shall end.”

Brethren, “These things have I spoken, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him, that is, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” (1 John v. 13, 20, 21.)

And now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three Persons in one triune Jehovah, be ascribed equal and undivided honour, praise, glory, and adoration from this time forth and evermore. Amen and amen.

ADDENDA.

I HAVE no wish to revive controversy, but I think it desirable to make a few additional remarks upon the important question of the Eternal Sonship. It is well known that there are many good and gracious persons who regard the eternity of Christ's Sonship only as it respects the covenant of grace; they look upon the scheme of man's redemption originating in the mind of God before time, as an episode or parenthesis, in his eternal existence; that the personalities of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, are assumed names, and originated, for distinction sake, with that transaction only. That this notion has been put forth by some excellent men whose writings are deservedly held in estimation, I am well aware; but I feel persuaded it is contrary to the mind of the Spirit, and to the doctrine of the true and proper Sonship of Jesus Christ; and I cannot but think that while, *superficially* considered, it appears defective and to come short of the truth as it is in Jesus,—*essentially* considered, it is radically erroneous and subversive of the truth; and that the tendency of such a theory has not been sufficiently observed. To my view it inevitably leads to Sabellianism, if not to Unitarianism; yet anything approaching either of those schemes, I am sure, is utterly repudiated by the persons to whom I refer. I cannot for one moment admit that God's mercy, in respect of the fall, was the occasion or the origin of the names of the personalities in the Godhead. The covenant of grace was truly a revelation of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons. It was a lifting up of the curtain of God's love upon the stage of time, a display of his mighty acts, whose goings forth, in the salvation of his people, have been from everlasting; a display to the church of the nature, glories, and eternity of the Three-One God. Surely the Scriptures do not countenance the opinion that the ever-blessed Trinity assumed to themselves names for acting out the several offices which each personality undertook in the work of redemption, as the consequence, or result, of that gracious compact? We read of God sending forth his Son, and of the Son manifesting the name of the Father, but in both instances the pre-existence of each personality in the relationship of Father and Son is implied. To suppose that a relationship did not exist until it was declared (as in Ps. ii. 7) or manifested (as in John xvii. 6) is without foundation.* The declaration and manifestation of the divine relationship arise from the fact that THERE WAS A SON—THERE WAS A FATHER—or how

* See opinions of several authors, quoted pages 27, 28.

could there be a declaration of such a relationship? A declaration of names only is something so unreal, so visionary, as to be unworthy of the character of God, and altogether unworthy of belief. Now, it is granted by our objectors, that the *personalities* are eternal; but we assert that *the relationship* of the Father and the Son is their distinct and peculiar proper personality, and that *that* relationship is eternal. How could the covenant of grace be formed by the eternal Three in the relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as revealed, unless those relationships had a reality, and had pre-existed in the personalities by which they are designated. The question has been asked, Supposing there had been no fall of man, no covenant of grace, no redemption to effect, would there have been no Son of God, no God the Father, no God the Holy Ghost? and the answer has been emphatically, No. Now, this appears to me to involve a most grave and serious error, leading direct to Unitarianism; for if the personality of the Father be a name only, or coeval only with the covenant of grace, then there was a period in eternity, that is, antecedent to the covenant, when the Father was not the Father; if the personality of the Son be a name only, or coeval only with the covenant of grace, then there must have been a period in eternity when the Son was not the Son,—that is, when the Son was not in being, for his Sonship, according to this hypothesis, must have had a beginning; and if the Sonship was constituted only in the covenant transaction, then the Sonship is simply official,—a name only, and no personality at all; for there can be no basis for the Sonship without the personality. If there be a personality at all, it must be a reality, not a name, or else the Son of God is degraded below the brute creation; for we read, Gen. ii. 19, 20, that “Adam gave names to all the cattle and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof.” That is, the creatures were in nature what they were designated. We also read that “God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.” Because it was so, the light in itself is day, and the darkness in itself is night. Thus when God said, Ps. ii. 7, “Thou art my Son,” the meaning is, *I am thy Father*. Are we to be told that the Sonship is only a name, and not a relationship? How contrary to all the principles of common sense! God calls Jesus his Son because he is his Son, a Son of the same nature as himself, the Son of himself, his own proper Son; not a mere name, for the name of a son is no son at all. Take away the Sonship, the personality is taken away, for *it has its name from its nature*, and, as just stated, that nature is eternal, and therefore the Sonship is eternal. So, on the same premiss which is taken as to the Sonship, the personality of God the Father is brought down to

be a mere office or name; the divine Fatherhood to the Church of Christ is nothing but a name, instead of a relationship; the covenant union between Christ and his Church with his Father a mere fiction, and the believer's experience of these heavenly truths the veriest delusion. The same line of argument may be pursued as to the personality of the Holy Spirit; so that we arrive at the conclusion that the personalities of Jehovah are nothing more than mere names, or at most *manifestations*, or different kinds of operations; thus throwing us back upon the old errors of Sabellianism, till at last, step by step, we are precipitated into the gulf of Unitarianism, one God—no Trinity of Persons. I therefore cannot but regard all views which give *data* to the Sonship of Christ as essentially erroneous, detracting from the personal glory of the Son of God, and as undermining the very basis of our common Christianity, the doctrine of our Lord's eternal generation; for on that fact is grounded the glories of his mediatorial work and character, as set forth in the Scriptures of Truth. Let this plain question be put—Is the Sonship of Christ the foundation of the covenant of grace? or, is the covenant of grace the foundation of his Sonship? If the latter, on what principle? Certainly it does not exalt the person of the Son of God; it spoils him of his crown; and the bearing to which this view inevitably leads, is to reduce him to the level of mere creatureship. As elsewhere stated (see Sermon 16 p. 40,) I regard the mediatorial work of Christ as founded on his personality, being the Son of God eternally pre-existent with his Father, antecedent to any of the covenant designs of Jehovah to save man.

I have not space here to carry out the argument as this great question well deserves, but close my remarks by simply declaring my unhesitating belief that Christ Jesus is, and ever was, the Son of God, in his own distinct personality, from all eternity. That had man never fallen, had no Church been chosen in Christ, or even this world had not been formed, the eternal God in the personalities of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, would have self-existed in essence, nature, and relationship, in co-equal and co-eternal union, power, and glory.

QUOTATIONS REFERRED TO AT PAGE 25.

* Dr. J. A. ALEXANDER, of Princeton, America, on Ps. ii. 7, says:

“The essential meaning of the phrase, *I have begotten thee*, is simply this, *I am thy Father*, and *this day* is not to be understood as limiting the mutual relationship, though it might refer to a certain point of time for the formal recognition of it.

The declaration of our Lord's Sonship at his baptism, was but the recognition of that relation which had existed anterior to the period of his incarnation."

Dr. HODGE, of Princeton, on Rom. i. 3, 4, says :

"Christ is called the Son of God because he is consubstantial with the Father, and therefore equal to him in power and glory. The term expresses the relation of the second to the first person in the Trinity, as it exists from eternity. It is, therefore, as applied to Christ, not a term of office, nor expressive of any relation assumed in time. He was and is the Eternal Son."

Dr. GOUGE on Heb. i. 5, Section 62, says :

"This manifestation of Christ's divine generation in set and certain times, by visible and conspicuous evidences, doth no whit cross or impeach the eternity and incomprehensibility thereof. For to declare and manifest a thing to be, presupposeth that it was before it was manifested ; neither doth it necessarily imply any beginning of that before ; no more than those phrases in Ps. xc. 2, Prov. viii. 25.

"The full meaning, therefore, of the apostle in alleging this testimony, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' may, for perspicuity's sake, be thus paraphrased, as if God the Father had said thus to God the Son : Thou, and thou alone, art my true proper Son, not by grace or adoption, but by nature and eternal generation ; and now I do in this last age of the world declare thee so to be by thine incarnation, doctrine, works, resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven, whereby it manifestly appeareth that thou infinitely dost surpass all the angels in heaven."

The late Dr. SAMUEL HOPKINS, of America, Vol. I., page 308, says :

"They, therefore, who do not believe the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ, because it is mysterious and incomprehensible,—and to some it appears to be full of contradiction,—will, if they be consistent with themselves, for the same reason reject the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in one God."

The above quotations may serve to show that my views are not unsupported by men of truth, learning, and celebrity ; to which may be added from among others the names of Drs. Owen, Goodwin, and Jacomb. The work of the latter on the 8th chapter of Romans, especially, contains an elaborate argument against the opposers of the eternal Sonship, and confutes their errors in a most masterly and scriptural manner.

October, 1866.

C. G.

THE
UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.

THREE SERMONS,
BY CHARLES GORDELIER,

PREACHED AT THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF HIS MINISTRY AT
HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, DARLING PLACE, NEAR MILE END GATE.

On Lord's Day Morning and Evening, April 16th, and
Lord's Day Evening, April 23rd, 1865.

I.

The Unsearchable Riches of Christ.—EPHESIANS iii. 8.

I SELDOM hear a text announced from the Epistle to the Ephesians, or attempt to speak from one in this portion of God's word, but what I feel something like when one is approaching the extensive grounds of some baronial residence. The surrounding scenery, the beautiful park, the splendid trees, the majestic pile of buildings, the magnificent suite of rooms into which one is conducted, the gorgeous furniture, its paintings, library, and the abundance of everything there is to supply human desires and taste, all combine to overwhelm one with a profound sense of the riches and greatness of the noble owner—that is, as to his worldly possessions; and, on the other hand, one equally feels the poverty and nothingness of one's own position.

Now, I make no doubt but that every believer in Jesus, when under the teachings of the Eternal Spirit, feels there is something very rich and sublime in this Epistle to the Ephesian "saints and faithful in Christ Jesus." The apostle, in a very eminent degree, was inspired to treat on such subjects as to bring believers into an acquaintance with the deep things of God. And when, under the rich anointing of the Holy Spirit, the soul is led to trace his adoption in Christ Jesus to the predestinating love of God the Father, and blessed with all

spiritual blessings in heavenly places in him before the foundation of the world, he is constrained to acknowledge, "Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Like the love of Christ, it passeth knowledge.

We must not forget, however, that this epistle, so full of elevated thought and feeling, was written in the prison-house at Rome. Yet, though the apostle was an "ambassador in bonds," the word of God was not bound; his tongue, like the pen of a ready writer, speaks fluently of the transcendent excellency of the hopes and privileges of the church of God, their triumphs and glorious state of ultimate blessedness. He enters deeply into the depths of those things which are "hid in God," so far as they concern us; he brings them out, opens, explains, and sets them forth, showing whence grace and glory originate. He then goes on to show the eternal personal and unconditional election of the church in Christ, their glorious covenant head. This is shown by some of its immediate fruits and effects, as stated in the second chapter.

Then in the third chapter the apostle descends from the ancient mountains of everlasting love and free grace to speak of Christ as the eternal Head, the glorious, all-sufficient Redeemer. In the 4th verse he refers to his own personal knowledge in the mystery of Christ; and, observe, he says it was a revelation made known unto him. He knew nothing of Christ only by revelation: the only true and saving knowledge a poor sinner can have in this world is by a divine revelation. Now, how does this statement affect you? Most of you know something of Jesus Christ, but how came you by it? Did you get it in the Sunday school, by rote? Did you acquire it by dint of study, by reading and hearing? or do you possess it by a revelation from God himself? Oh, pray do not let this vital point pass without strict examination. It matters not how long you may have made a profession of the name of Christ, you are still a poor lost perishing sinner if "God has not revealed his Son in you." There must be an inward work; there must be the power of truth on the conscience wrought by the Spirit of God. There must be a feeling sense of what he has done in the soul; a notional or rational reli-

gion will not do. An experimental acquaintance of the truth as it is in Jesus is the only religion worth having; for, as Mr. Hart truly says,

“Vain is all our best devotion,
If on false foundation built;
True religion's more than notion,
Something must be known and *felt*.”

But let us return to the apostle; see how this knowledge has humbled him in the dust of self-abasement. He has come down from those Alpine heights with a profound feeling sense of his own nothingness; he breaks through the rules of language to express himself—“less than the least of all saints.” Oh, this is blessed experience, when self is laid low and words fail to utter thought and feeling; and this will be the case whenever we are led by the Spirit to take exalted views of Jesus, his glorious person and his glorious work. Dr. Watts knew something of this when he wrote,

“The more thy glories strike mine eye
The humbler I shall lie;
Thus while I sink my joys shall rise
Unmeasurably high.”

Now to our text; and may he whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto us help us to take right views of the subject before us; in his light we shall see light; without it, we shall be but stumbling in the dark, for there is no light in ourselves.

Our text speaks of Christ, his riches, and their unsearchableness.

I. FIRST, let us, with the help and blessing of the Lord, attempt to say a few things on THE PERSON OF CHRIST. This is too important a point to pass over with a glance or cursory remark. I regard it as a foundation truth, one on which every believer should see that he is well grounded. Mr. Newton has well put it in those oft-repeated lines of his—

“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.”

By the Person of Christ is to be understood the Son of God who became incarnate, he who from all eternity was the Son of God the eternal Father—God's own Son, his

proper Son; (Rom. viii. 3;)—such a Son as he has never another, as Jesus himself said he was. (John iii. 16.) He was truly the Son of man; he was also truly the Son of God. I am aware there is no question among Christians respecting the truth of Christ being a son, but about the nature and manner of his sonship there have been some fierce and bitter controversies, and will be as long as Satan is permitted to exercise his influence over the sons of men; but still truth must be maintained, notwithstanding the temporary inconvenience occasioned by it, or the heavy cross that stands connected with it; a man had better lose his dearest friends than lose his conscience. I hold *the doctrine of Christ's eternal Sonship, irrespective of his becoming incarnate, or of the covenant of grace, to be a truth of God's Holy Word* of high import, and a most fundamental truth. Oh may the Spirit of truth help me to state my views clearly, forcibly, and concisely.

Now let us search the Scriptures; for it is there we must derive our testimony of the person of Christ; if they affirm it not, we dare not believe it; if they do affirm it, we dare not reject it. Consult Psalm ii. 7: "The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;" here is plainly a declaration of Christ's eternal generation; a declaration of his personality as a SON, not of his Deity, for that does not enter into the question: "thou art," not thou shalt be; "this day," eternity, for God has no other day in respect of his self-existence than that of eternity; "ever is his time," "one eternal now;" with us time is past, present, and future; therefore this scripture which I have quoted I regard as a revelation of the truth that Christ is the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father. I do not say a revelation of the mystery as to *how* it is that Christ is the Son of God; that I do not attempt to explain, it is not revealed, therefore cannot be explained; I am content to receive it as a revealed truth; and if men will find fault because they do not get everything explained to their own liking and fashion, they must be regarded as aiming to be wise above what is written.

Again, Jesus Christ, in several places of holy writ, is expressly stated to be the *only* begotten of the Father. (John i. 14, 16; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9.) In these five passages the words *only begotten* show, as I have just

said, such a Son as he has never another; and they also show that Christ is of the same name and essence with his Father; his Sonship is derived from that fact; his name, the Son of God, is both a name of nature and a name of relationship; hence the doctrine is founded on his Divine nature, not on his human nature, for he was the Son of God before he was born of the Virgin. The notion, therefore, that many good-meaning men hold and teach, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God only in his complex person, is without foundation in God's truth; it appears to me their view is extremely defective; not only so, it is erroneous, and is calculated to sap the comfort of all the work of Christ and the characters he bears to his church; and so also the view which many entertain, that Jesus is the Son of God *in relation only to the Covenant of grace* in man's redemption is defective; not so radically defective as the one just condemned, I admit, but, inasmuch as it gives *data* for the Sonship, it necessarily is opposed to its eternity, and therefore is not founded on truth.

But, further, we have several testimonies, which bear ample witness to this great truth, that the Person of Christ is the Son of God. In the days of his flesh, he was known to be of the root and offspring of David, as to his human nature; but as to his divine nature, he was attested to be the Son of God. John the Baptist said, "I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God." (John i. 34.) Nathaniel said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God." (John i. 49.) Peter said, "Thou art the Son of the living God." (Matt. xvi. 16.) The Roman centurion acknowledged, "Truly this was the Son of God." (Matt. xxvii. 54.) The eunuch confessed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts viii. 37.) Martha said, "Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." (John xi. 27.) Did not the devils themselves own the truth? (Matt. viii. 29.) And what is this witness they bear to? The Divine Sonship. This truth is attested by the Father himself. (Matt. iii. 17, and xvii. 5; and again 1 John v. 7, 8.) Jesus himself asserted it, and for so doing he was accused of blasphemy, condemned, and crucified for it. (John xix. 7, and Mark xiv. 64.) The apostle Paul, in writing to the Romans, (i. 4,) says Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power:" meaning, "He was determinately avowed, openly proclaimed, and convincingly demonstrated to be so, ac-

according to the manifest proof that was given of it, by the immediate exertion of his own divine power." (Guyse *loco*.)

Now, dear friends, may this truth be fully impressed upon your understandings by the power of the Holy Ghost. The Sonship of Christ is the foundation truth of every other truth requisite to be known for life and salvation. Christ himself is the *personal* foundation, and this truth is the *doctrinal* foundation. Upon the fact that Christ is the Son of the living God is built the faith of God's elect. It is the eternal rock on which his church is built, and the powers of hell shall not prevail against it.

Surely we shall do well to examine this momentous truth a little closer; it is the root, the trunk of that tree of life whose branches bring forth precious fruits, that feed and nourish the church of God, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Observe,

1. Christ is the Coeternal Son of God. He was eternally a Son; there never was a time when he was otherwise, or began so to be. The Father is eternal, and always a Father; then the Son is eternal, and always a Son; the Son of Himself. (John xvii. 5.) If we admit the eternity of God the Father, we must admit the eternity of God the Son; the one must be coeval with the other, whatever some men may assert to the contrary. Indeed, it is a truth in nature which cannot be denied, that the relation of parent and offspring necessarily coexist, though its manifestation or development be not acknowledged till the usual time arrives for the recognition of that relationship. I make this remark because of the pertinacity with which some oppose the eternity of Christ's Sonship, on the ground that the person of a son is posterior to that of a father. Such an objection seems to me absurd. If a relationship exist at all, it must be on the ground of personality; and if the relationship is coexistent, then the personality is coexistent. Apply the argument to the doctrine of Christ being the eternal Son of God,—I think we cannot escape the conclusion that it is a truth expressly declared in God's holy word. O may the Spirit of truth help us to receive it. Let us beware of human fancies, human reason, human analogies, for they are unsafe guides to the mysteries of divine truth.

2. Jesus himself affirms his own eternity as the Son of God; see the 35th verse of the 8th chapter of John, containing a discussion on this very subject: "The Son abid-

oth ever." The words are in the present tense, and the sentence is by itself; for the word *but* is in italics, denoting that it was supplied by the translators. These words, "*The Son abideth ever*," I take them to mean HIS SONSHIP EVER HATH BEEN AND EVER WILL BE, the sense being equivalent or similar to "I AM," "I AM THAT I AM," the eternally self-existent Son of God; being, in other words, nothing more nor less than the doctrine of Christ's eternal generation, against which some men of late have strenuously cavilled and sadly misrepresented. But, brethren, you must bear in mind we are speaking of the *personality* of Christ's Godhead, not of the Godhead abstractedly considered—a point which should be kept distinctly in view; for this is what most of our opposers like to keep out of sight, so that they may plausibly fasten upon us the odium that we are believers in Deity begetting Deity; a monstrous notion truly, but one which originated nowhere but in their own brain. It is indeed very sad to witness the painful misconstructions and perversions that have been made of the testimonies put forth on this subject by men of truth; still more is it sad to behold good men, as I believe many to be, defending their erroneous and defective views with a zeal unworthy of their character as men of God and ministers of the gospel of Christ. If we are taught by the Spirit to hold fast the Unity of the Godhead in the Trinity of Persons, I am quite sure we shall be kept free from confounding Satanic error with Divine Truth. But one remark more. Though the eternal nature and essence of Jesus Christ as the Son of God is fully asserted in the word of God, but nowhere explained, yet his office-character as the God-man Mediator is most gloriously revealed, and it is that which most of all concerns us. Pray, then, that the eyes of your understanding may be opened to perceive and to keep in view this important and most proper distinction in speaking of the Person of the Lord Jesus.

I should like to have gone a little fuller into this part of our subject, but time fails; and I must refer my hearers, if they desire more information, to my sermon on the Sonship of Jesus, preached on the former anniversary. They will find several points discussed there which we cannot here, because I must hasten to the other branches of my text; consequently, I must leave unnoticed now any remarks on the coessentiality and coequality of

Christ, the Son of God, with the Father. I trust, however, sufficient has been said to set forth the scriptural view of the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as shall enable us to apprehend something of the glories of those unsearchable riches which are treasured up in him, our ever-blessed Mediator and Redeemer.

The next subject we have to notice in connection with our text is, the great fact of the Son of God taking our nature into personal union with himself. "In the beginning was the Word;" "God was the Word;" "the Word was made flesh;" "God was manifested in the flesh." God became incarnate. Not assuming a human shape, but a real assumption of human nature: "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same." "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham;" "He was made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law."

And observe, too, the flesh he took was not sinful flesh. *His* bodily nature was pure and sinless; he came in *the likeness* of sinful flesh, and for sin," and, in so doing, condemned sin in the flesh. The *reality* of his flesh was as much so as is ours. The necessity for the Son of God to take our flesh was because sin was committed in it, and sin must be punished in that same nature, or else the person of the sinner must be utterly lost to all eternity. But such was the love of God to man, he sent his Son into the world, not to condemn it, but to condemn *sin* and save the sinner. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. He took our law place. The guilt of our sin was transferred to him, placed to his account by imputation; and so Jesus, having become the Surety of all whom the Father had given him, became also, "in the fulness of time," their substitute. "He bore our sins in his own body," and sin was punished in his holy, immaculate Person on Calvary's bloody tree; thus it was he became the propitiation for our sins. Justice was satisfied, and could no longer demand the sinner's life. This is the joyful news of the gospel: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" he having abolished in his flesh the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, and thereby "redeemed us from the hand of him who was stronger than we." And every believer in this great truth, trusting to that atonement then made to God for sin, is eternally saved, and

shall have everlasting life. O what a grand display did Jesus make of the heart of God to that highly-favoured seeker of divine truth, Nicodemus, when he said to him, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." It was "to damn" sin in his own flesh, but to save the sinner. Is there a poor soul here this morning distressed on account of sin in his conscience? Look at this blessed truth. Jesus died for sin. Sin is forgiven on his account. God pardons sin for his sake. What are you looking to for peace? Seek it here; it is the blood of Jesus that can alone take away sin. O may the Spirit apply his truth with power to your soul, and enable you to say, in the weighty words of old John Latchford:

"My sins were his, upon him laid;
He all their weight sustain'd;
My debt, how vast! which yet he paid,
And my deliverance gain'd."

But I must proceed. Jesus, in taking our nature, took the whole of it, soul and body. He had verily a human soul as well as a human body. How could he have been a man else? Impossible. When he took our flesh, he took its entirety, body and soul, sin alone excepted. As he grew in bodily stature, so he grew in the rational and moral faculties of the soul. He "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man." (Luke ii. 52.) This scripture confutes at once the notion that Christ's human soul pre-existed before time, and was with God in a glorified state. Of course, one scripture would not satisfy an objector; no, nor more would a thousand; but a sincere lover of God's word is quite satisfied with a single declaration upon it. The pre-existence of Christ's Person as the Son of God in eternity is a blessed truth revealed in God's word; but it is quite a distinct matter from his human soul's pre-existence. That notion, though some think they honour the Lord by it, would, if followed out to its legitimate bearings, bring the whole scheme of salvation, as well as the Person of our blessed Lord and the wisdom of God, into dire contempt. I have, however, no time to go into that dispute now. The life of Jesus on earth plainly reveals the fact of his human

nature being in all points, sin excepted, as we are. This divine nature being conjointly with his human nature in one Person, is that deep mystery which the apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, calls *great*: "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh." This is the truth, and this is godliness. Any other view of Christ's Person is not godliness; it is not the truth as it is in Jesus. I dare say some think this is severe language. No, not at all. We will not give place to Satan's lies for one moment. Let this suffice for the present.

Perhaps some may say, Was it really necessary that the Son of God should become incarnate? Yes, it was. I am not surprised at the question; for no one, unless under the teachings of the Spirit, can have the remotest idea of the real evil and danger of sin, and therefore they see not the necessity of its being put away by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ; neither do they feel the deathliness of sin within. The exceeding sinfulness of sin is only known and felt by the sinner when quickened by the Spirit; then it is he feels that satisfaction must be given to the injured Majesty of heaven, the offended God. He believes God's law is holy, just, and good; he feels condemned by it in his own conscience; and as the honour of God must be vindicated, the punishment of sin must be inflicted, either in the person of the sinner, or of a substitute whom God would accept. But where can such a proviso be found? Where can redemption be looked for? Who, of all God's created intelligences, could devise a scheme of salvation for lost man? No, not one. There was not even a single intercessor on behalf of the human race. (Isa. lix. 16.) Angels might have looked on; they might have pitied our lost condition; but, great in power as they are, and swift to do God's will, their pity and compassion would not have rendered us any real service in the ruin of our nature; and granting, just for one moment, the refined Arian scheme to be true, that the human soul of Christ was with God before time, and that he voluntarily came forward as our Surety to undertake our redemption! would God, think ye, trust the work of our salvation in the hands of a creature? No, certainly not! For, you must be reminded, these pre-exterians assert that Christ was the first of God's creatures; and, though they are desirous of giving

him the pre-eminence in all things, yet, let me tell you, such a God as they make him to be is but a creature after all. A creature God forsooth! O my friends, such a Saviour as they make Jesus to be is not the Christ of God. Do you think you could trust your soul's salvation in any one's hand short of God himself? I am sure you would not. This is bringing the matter to a practical issue. Salvation, as revealed in God's word, is one which is worthy of the nature of God; it is in harmony with all his perfections; it so displays the wisdom, grace, love, and goodness in the gift of his dear Son that the soul becomes absorbed in profound admiration, and can only say what an apostle himself had before said: "Thanks be unto God for his UNSPEAKABLE gift."

Bear with me a little longer. I see time is running on, and we are only on the margin of our subject yet; but we must not think the time lost in discussing these vital points. Your life is bound up in them; and this is it, sin is an evil and bitter thing. God will punish it, he will by no means clear the guilty, except upon the righteous and honourable principles of law and justice. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." This is God's unalterable and wise decree. I say wise decree, for if man may sin and yet be permitted to live, then either sin is not so sinful as it is said to be, or God's holiness is of such a character as to be, or may be, in some way compatible with it; but this is not the case. God is of purer eyes than to behold evil. HE IS GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS; and hence it is for the comfort and salvation of every believer in Jesus that sin is condemned. It is man who has sinned; it is man who must be punished. If man is to be saved, it can only be by a method of God's devising. "His understanding is infinite." He alone could find a ransom; and this has been done; done in the Person of God's own dear Son. He became the Surety of his people; he took their sin, he took their nature, and by bearing their sins in his own body on the tree, as their Substitute, he has perfected for ever the salvation of all those whom God the Father hath sanctified. Therefore, as it was in human nature sin was committed and in that nature must be punished, so by the human nature could deliverance be effected; neither angels, nor archangels, could effect it, or else they would have been sent to accomplish it. No; their nature and their services are passed by, and these being the highest order of

God's creation, there was none to help; "therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him." So God sent his only-begotten Son into the world to take our nature, (such a nature as was possessed by the first man Adam before he fell,) pure, uncorrupted in itself, created by the Holy Ghost himself. (Matt. i. 18-20; Luke i. 35.) In this sinless flesh, the Son of God perfectly obeyed his Father's will—the law which we had broken. Yet, in the selfsame body, spotless, harmless, holy, as Jesus was in himself, he suffered for sin; he was made sin, all the sins of all his people being charged upon him; and by his death for their sin they are for ever freed and justified from all things of which they stood condemned, and are made the righteousness of God in him. (Rom. viii. 3-4; 2 Cor. v. 21.)

I hope I have made myself clearly understood on this great doctrine of divine substitution. To have a right apprehension of the unsearchable riches of Christ, we must not only have right views of his Person as the Son of God, but also of his work as the Mediator of the New Covenant. These are vast and amazing themes to contemplate. Angels cannot comprehend them. Man cannot explain them; yet it is blessed to feel that when God does reveal them to us by his Spirit, they are very precious and the choicest food of our souls. Some say they are dry doctrines; I believe them; for God never poured out upon them the bedewing influences of his Spirit. Their names may perhaps stand as members of the professing Church below, but I fear they have neither part nor lot in the mystical Church of Christ. It is quite possible for such to hold a position in the Garden of the Lord both gratifying to themselves and their friends. But alas, alas! they are but stakes in the ground, having no root; they are not trees of the Lord's right hand planting. O my hearers, beware of having a name to live while you are dead.

And now, dear friends, in drawing this part of our subject to a close, I would only say I am quite aware objections are made to the statements advanced this morning, on the Son of God taking our nature into personal union with himself. It is called the personal union because the two natures are centred in one Person. Christ took our *nature*, not our *person*. That would be preposterous to suppose; his own personality, that is, his individuality,

consciousness, and independency, remained unchanged, unaltered. The Son of God was a perfect Person before his incarnation; but, in order that man should be redeemed, he was pleased to take the manhood into union with the Godhead, without making any personal addition to himself. Thus, though he is God and Man, he is but one Christ. I might illustrate this point thus: When believers in the Lord Jesus are renewed in the spirit of their minds, they are made partakers of a divine nature, but this new nature imparted to them makes no addition to their personality. Their own individuality, consciousness, and identity remain unaltered; each possesses two natures, the old and the new, yet but one person. So the Lord Jesus Christ in his Person possesses by his incarnation a duality of natures; and nothing can be more clear in Scripture than that Christ is not only truly man, but also that he was truly the Son of God before he was made the Son of man, perfect and complete in his Person, as is the Person of the Father or the Holy Ghost. He was the Son of God before he became incarnate. This the apostle again and again asserts. HE, a Person, speaking of Christ, God over all. (Heb. ii. 14-16.) And just let me add one remark more, and that is, I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ in his divine nature is, ever was, and ever shall be, the eternal Son of God; that had he not taken our nature, he would have been still the eternal Son of God. It was not his incarnation that made him the Son of God; it was not the covenant of grace in respect of man's redemption that made him the Son of God. As the self-existent God he is ever the same—the I AM; he who spake to Moses out of the burning bush. If sin had never existed, or man had never been formed, the Person of the Son of God would have been coessential, coeternal, and coequal with God the Father and the Holy Ghost. What is revealed to us of his Person and mediatorial work in redemption, arises out of the priority of the fact that Jesus Christ is the one true God who made all things. This is the truth, and no lie. (1 John v. 20.) Our God made man; but they who declare their man made God, utter the greatest falsehood that Satan ever invented.

Objections are made, too, to the use of the words eternal generation, eternal Son, etc.; but if the words used express our meaning, why should our opposers find

fault? Are we only to use such words as are coined in their mint? The Israelites had to go down to the Philistines to have their tools sharpened, because there was no smith in the land; (1 Sam. xiii. 19, 20;) but, blessed be God, we are not in such helpless bondage. The Lord being our helper, we trust his truth will ever be defended with those weapons as he may be graciously pleased to furnish us with, even the two-edged sword of the Spirit, and not on what are framed by themselves and hammered out on their anvil.*

Thus we have attempted to say a few things upon the Person of Christ as the Son of God. This is an inexhaustible and delightful theme, and we feel how poor are all our scanty thoughts; yet let us hope they will help your conceptions of his unsearchable riches. We have also said a few things on the nature of his great work as Mediator. These two great subjects will form the basis for establishing the two remaining points of our text for this evening's consideration,—his riches and their unsearchableness. Whatever has entered into this discourse of the nature of controversy, is with a desire to place truth in a right light and souls on a right foundation, and not for the sake of controversy. I hope ever on occasions like these to be enabled to bear my humble testimony to the true doctrine of the Person and work of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God.

Let me ask you before I sit down, what think ye of Christ? Have you ever felt his love ruling in your hearts by the power of his Spirit? You may rely upon it, that if God has begun a good work in your hearts, the love of God will be shed abroad there, prompting you to know more of him, leading you to walk as he has commanded; and more than this, he has engaged to carry on that work in you amidst all the hindrances that cast your spirit down, and causes you to feel sometimes as though your profession was without principle. How did you feel when you were singing those sweet lines?—

“Oh, could I know and love him more,
And all his wondrous grace explore,
Ne'er would I covet man's esteem,
But part with all and follow him.”

I felt them very precious to my own soul. I desire to know nothing among men but Christ, and him crucified; and

* See Appendix.

this is the way to it, to love Christ, to know Christ, to preach Christ, to hear Christ, to follow Christ. Jesus is precious to those who believe; but his preciousness arises out of what he is in himself and what he is to them, not from their belief. A theoretical knowledge will not make him so. See to this, dear friends. Keep it in view; be not satisfied with a mere profession in religion. If you have no experimental acquaintance of the truths you profess, your religion will come to nothing. The only safe religion is that which God begins and works in the heart. Where this exists, there will be a sense of one's own ruined condition as a sinner before him, a sense of one's own helplessness, a sense of one's own nothingness, and that CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL. May the Lord help you to know and to feel the power of his truth, for his name's sake. Amen.

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.

II.

The Unsearchable Riches of Christ.—EPHESIANS iii. 8.

It is said that young sheep like to smell the breath of the old sheep. I believe it is true; and I am quite sure in spiritual things young believers in Christ like to hear old believers speak of the Lord Jesus.

“His name, like precious ointment shed,
Delights the church around.”

And it is equally true that old believers like to hear the young believer talk of Jesus. How I enjoyed the singing of that 171st hymn just concluded; it did my soul good to hear our young friends singing,—

“Take Him for strength and righteousness;
Make Him thy refuge in distress;
Love Him above all earthly joy,
And Him in everything employ.”

That one verse contains a body of doctrinal, experimental, and practical divinity which all of you will do well to think over. Now, I know some of you young folks love the name which you have been singing about. Do you never forget that verse; have it with you everywhere; it will prove suitable for you in every condition of your life. I have found it so for thirty-six years; and I am quite sure whoever has sung that hymn from the heart this evening will sing the praises of Jesus in heaven.

The words which I have read as a text we had under consideration in the morning. We first spoke upon the Person of Christ as the Son of God, and then entered upon the threshold of that sweet truth, the Son of God taking our nature into personal union with himself. These two points are to be considered as the foundation of all that is to be said on the second and third heads of our subject. Let us now notice the SECOND head.

II. THE RICHES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. By the word riches we ordinarily understand wealth, opulence, abundance of that which is valuable, etc. Thus we employ the word riches in reference to the Person of Christ. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.

Observe, 1. *His riches are grounded on his Sonship.* The riches of Christ are peculiar to his Person as the Son of God. These riches are blessedly adapted to meet the wants of the most needy and bankrupt sinner. Man's nature is so constituted as to need everything that Christ *is* and everything that Christ *has*. Sin has certainly ruined every man and woman; but, if sin had never entered this world, if man had remained perfectly obedient, innocent, and thereby immortally happy in this world, as God's creature, still he would have possessed nothing but what he derived from the fulness which is in Christ. Man at his best state is altogether vanity. (Ps. xxxix. 5.) He is nothing, he has nothing in himself; he is less than nothing.

Now, the believer in Jesus when quickened by the Holy Ghost is made to feel his own nothingness, neediness, and helplessness. This is his first step in the divine life; he is made to look out of himself to the Lord Jesus for everything both for time and for eternity.

"Stripp'd of all his fancied meetness
To approach the dread I AM,
He is led to see all fitness
Centring in the worthy Lamb."

"For in him," saith the apostle in writing to the Colossians, ii. 9, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." (Col. i. 19.)

These stores of divine grace, without which the believer could not exist a single day,—no, not a moment,—are all treasured up in Christ for his supply, safety and security, by virtue of the covenant of grace between the eternal and ever-blessed Trinity as it is declared in that precious epistle whence we have taken our text, i. 3, 4: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen

us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

This brings us to notice,

2. *The riches of Christ are displayed to the Church of God in the Mediatorial character and offices he sustains.*

His mediatorial character is seen in the united natures of his Person. All the blessings of the covenant of grace flow through the Person of the Mediator, from the gift of the Father, and are applied by the Holy Spirit to the heart and conscience of the believer. His Godhead and his manhood united in one person fitted him for Mediator. A mediator is one person undertaking with a personal interest a cause existing between two parties. Such was the Lord Jesus Christ; he was eminently fitted for such a work, and such a work was needed. Man by nature is a sinner, a rebel, a creature, and fallen from the state in which he had been created,—a rebel against God's government, a sinner against God. It was man that could not be reconciled to God his Creator, though God in himself is holy, full of love and goodness. Strange as it may appear, it is man the offender that is to be reconciled. It reminds one of a Spanish proverb, "The man who has injured you will never forgive you." Yes, it is the enmity of man the offender that has to be removed. He seeks no reconciliation; for "when we were enemies," that is, in a state of enmity, "we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." This is the testimony of God the Holy Ghost by the mouth of the apostle Paul. (Rom. v. 8, 10.) Now, none but the Lord Jesus Christ was able and willing for such a work. He was God-man in one person. (Col. ii. 19.) And who could be so fit to bring God and man together as he who was himself both God and man? who so fit to negotiate the work of reconciliation and salvation, as he who could act between both? Such was the Lord Jesus Christ; possessing both natures, it showed his fitness for the work. He is truly God; he is truly man. He was the only person that could be sent on the errand of mercy to accomplish man's redemption; the offices he holds in the church show his fitness for the great work, and his fitness is grounded on his Sonship. As we in the common concerns of life appoint a person to hold a certain office of responsibility and trust in consequence of his *previous* fitness personally considered, so Jesus became the Mediator of the covenant by virtue

of his previous fitness as the Son of God. It was not the covenant of grace that made him what he was, but it was made the means of displaying what he was,—the eternal Son of the eternal Father; neither was it the fact of his being sent in the likeness of sinful flesh that became the ground of his Sonship. Before he was sent he was the Son of God, but he was not the Son of God because he was sent; his Sonship belongs to his divine person, not simply to his work. Jesus was a Son long before he was sent; from eternity he was God's own Son, (John i. 14,) as several scriptures plainly declare and intimate; but men, who have their own creeds to uphold and their own parties to serve, seem as though they would resist the Holy Ghost, and give God's word the lie. These remarks on the mediatorial character of Christ will now enable us to proceed to the consideration of the riches he possesses in his offices of **PROPHET, PRIEST, and KING.**

1. His *Prophetical* office. This embraces the several characters he bears to the church of God as their teacher, guide, and counsellor. Here his riches are set forth in his word as being most ample and abundant. (Ps. cxlvii. 5.) "His understanding is infinite;" (Isa. xl. 14;) "There is no searching of his understanding;" (Col. ii. 3;) "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" (Isa. liii. 11;) "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities;" (Eph. i. 8;) "He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence;" (Eph. iii. 10;) "The manifold wisdom of God;" (Job xxxvi. 22;) "Who teacheth like him?" (1 Cor. i. 30;) He is of God made unto us wisdom; (1 Cor. i. 24;) the wisdom of God. These passages refer to him as God; as man, it is expressly said of him, "Grace is poured into thy lips;" (Ps. xlv. 2;) "He was filled with wisdom;" (Luke ii. 40;) His wisdom astonished his enemies: "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" (Matt. xiii. 54.) Jude speaks of Jesus as being "the only wise God our Saviour," 25th verse. Thus we see the attribute of wisdom is a part of his riches that constitute him so eminently suited for the church of God, both on earth and before time. As our wonderful counsellor, how his wisdom shone in the plan of salvation when he undertook our cause! Who but the Son of God could take the book of the mystery of our

redemption, and open every seal? The council of peace was between the Father and the Son. By wisdom, infinitely glorious, was the plan of salvation contrived; and by power, infinitely glorious, was it effected. Here we see in the most extensive sense the beauty of that commonplace phrase, "Knowledge is power." Not only by the wisdom of God were the worlds framed, but we see innumerable millions of the lost race of mankind are eternally saved by a wisdom which bespeaks God for its author. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Romans xi. 33.) Here is an ocean without a shore, without a bottom. This wisdom maketh wise unto salvation; it descends from above; it is imparted to his creatures for the accomplishment of his own designs, the glory of his great name, the eternal salvation of his church, and to enrich them in all knowledge. This was a matter of the apostle's earnest prayer both for the Ephesians and the Colossians, that they might have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that they might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, (Eph. i. 17, 18; Col. i. 9.) As their divine teacher, who teacheth like him? Who can impart the wisdom of God, but the God man? How can the divine mind be communicated to the human soul, but through the union of the divine and the human natures as they dwelt in the Person of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. O, what riches are here dwelling in Christ, wisdom and knowledge in all their fulness, *treasuries* of wisdom and knowledge. *All* the treasures, and all these to be available to and for the church of God before time, through time, and throughout eternity; every step in our divine life is directed by infinite wisdom; it guides our way through all this mortal existence, "wisdom profitable to direct," and skill to act, both come from and through Christ the Mediator. He who gave Bezaleel skill to execute works of art for the service of the Tabernacle, gives knowledge to the ploughman for casting seed into the ground, (Isa. xxviii. 23, 29.) It is owing to this great truth, "Christ is of God made unto us wisdom," that the apostle James instructs the church: "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to *all men liberally* and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." Thus through life we are assured, "The wayfaring man though a fool shall not err therein."

The riches of Christ's *prophetical* office provide for every possible contingency or emergency of the wilderness state.

2. His *Priestly* office. This may be said to be the chiefest, the most eminent of the characters Jesus bears to the church of God. This is his great work; here is the most conspicuous element of his mediatorship. It embraces his priesthood, his sacrifice, his propitiation, his advocacy and intercessorship. First, let us consider the *constitution* of his office; this I think will help us to discover something of those riches which characterise him as our great high-priest. At your leisure consult the 7th chapter of Hebrews. The apostle uses the analogy of Melchisedec's unknown ancestry to set forth the eternity of Christ's priesthood; and, after asserting Jesus was not made a priest either by man or in this time state, he uses these remarkable words, "*made after the power of an endless life*," and quotes, in proof, Ps. cx. 4; "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Now, if I understand the apostle's meaning, by the same anointing as by which he wrote, he speaks of Christ's eternal generation. "The power of an endless life" can have reference only to his possessing "life in himself;" (John v. 26;) "In him was life," (John i. 4.) The *power* of an endless life consists in possessing life in its essence, which is peculiar to God only, and this life is in his Son, for he is the Son of God; having therefore an untraceable priesthood, after the similitude of Melchisedec, and by an act of God the Father, in the covenant of grace, declared to be a Priest for ever, not merely in perpetuity, as some aver, but from eternity. His priesthood being as dateless as his sonship, for I regard the words, "Thou art a Priest for ever," as being coeval with those, in point of *existence*, as, "Thou art my Son, this day," &c. (Ps. ii. 7.) But it may be asked, why so tenacious of Christ's eternity? what has it to do with his Priesthood? Much every way; it shows a fulness of power, of merit, of mercy, as displaying such riches in his Person, as our great, high-priest, as to superabound over all the ruin and misery of man's fallen condition. If Jesus had not been our Priest before sin had its origin, we had been left poor indeed; but, O the exceeding riches of his grace, ample provision was made in the constitution of his office by his Person being eternal. The church of God was ever eternally secure in him. He was the Anti-Phineas, turning away the wrath

of God from his people. He is our propitiation, he is our peace, he has made peace by the blood of his cross. Oh the riches of this propitiation; he stood in the breach, he stayed the plague of death; his merits being all sufficient, and grounded on the nature of his Person. The *reality* of his great work in our behalf, when in such imminent danger and ruin, became his riches to us as our priest. His propitiatory work saves us; otherwise, God had been a consuming fire, and it is indeed of his mercies that we are not consumed. But we must not stay longer here. Jesus displays his riches to us in his priestly office, in that he is also our sacrifice. Oh, here are riches indeed: "By one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified." He is our offering as well as our priest. He entered within the veil with his own blood, not the blood of others. Holy in himself as priest, holy in his person, his sacrifice is perfect and complete. He presented an offering which God our Father accepted, and was well pleased with. By the sacrifice of himself, sin was condemned in his flesh, and for ever put away. God's law was honoured and magnified, divine justice was satisfied, the sinner is saved, and glory redounds to the name of Jesus, whose name is above every name. Oh, the riches of that blood to avail for the propitiation of an offended God, to avail for the pardon of sin of so many millions of the human race; it is beyond our utmost conceptions. Oh, have you ever felt the wrath of God against sin in your own conscience? have you ever had a sight of the numerousness, the enormity, the infinity of your own personal sins? and have you ever had a faith's view of the blood of Jesus cleansing you from ALL sin? If so, did you not feel his blood most rich, most precious, that it should take away all guilt from your conscience? Oh, yes, I am sure you did; it was the greatness of his Person as the Son of God that gave such merit, such efficacy, such power to his atoning blood; such riches as will provide for all the ransomed church of God while time shall last; and when they have ceased sinning, still his blood will be as rich as ever, and will be the theme of their adoring gratitude and praise. As in Rev. i. 5, "Unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

And, oh, how sweetly the riches of his priestly office are proved by the church and enjoyed, in the fact of his

being their intercessor. The church in this militant state needs such an intercessor as Christ is, his Person as God-man mediator so well qualifies him for this indispensable office. He ever liveth to make intercession for all who come unto God by him. As sinners in ourselves, how could we hope for acceptance at the throne of mercy but by virtue of our great High Priest pleading for us in the high court of heaven? for so long as we are upon this earth we are within gunshot of the enemy of our souls, and shall always need the assistance, the powerful assistance, of our ever-living intercessor. We are constantly offending, but he is constantly interceding. Oh, the exceeding riches of his grace. The much incense of his prayer avails. He has prayed for us, and therefore our faith fails not; we are strengthened with strength in our souls by reason of his intercession. As man, he knows our weaknesses, he knows all our complaints; as God, he has all power in heaven and in the earth. He has power also with his Father; he pleads his own sacrifice. He pleads our cause when we have not a word to plead, and succeeds in carrying it to a safe and glorious issue.

And no less glorious are the riches of his priestly office displayed than in his being our righteous advocate with the Father. Oh, to have such an advocate in the high court of heaven, when the poor sinner is overtaken by sin, tripped up by the devil and thrown down in the mire of his guilt. Defiled and loathsome as we are, to whom can we go but to Jesus our advocate? where can we go but to the throne of mercy? But, oh, that cruel enemy of our souls, Satan, he is there to resist us, to oppose us, to accuse us; and it is all true what our indictment styles us. We are already self-condemned, but Jesus is our advocate; he rebukes the enemy of our souls, and sets us free from condemnation. Oh, wondrous riches of our advocate; his merits as "the righteous" advocate are made over to us; we are cleansed, clothed afresh, set at happy liberty. Satan is nonplussed and defeated. Then again, there is an ungodly world and a false professing church. How they accuse the true child of God! Ever and anon the poor soul is shamefully aspersed and misrepresented, thrust as it were in the stocks and cruelly treated; but Jesus is our advocate, he appears on our behalf, he bids us wait patiently for him, and not to fret because of him who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Oh,

the riches of his advocacy; he brings forth in his own good time our righteousness as the noon-day light, and enables us to set the world and carnal professors at defiance, and to rejoice in him as our ever-abiding friend and pleader.

3. *His Kingly Office.* This embraces his *Government, Providence, and Protection.* Here we have the mediatorial character of our blessed Lord displayed in its widest and fullest extent. The worlds of nature and of grace are under his dominion, and from him have their support. His power and authority is over all creatures, whether under the earth, on the earth, or above the earth. Heaven is his throne. Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. The riches he possesses in his mediatorial offices as Prophet, Priest, and King are underived, eternal, coexistent, and inseparable. It would be fearful to suppose that Jesus was invested with his different offices at different times, or that he acts at one time according to one, and at another time according to another. We have already concluded that the eternity of his Person is the foundation of his riches as Mediator, and therefore from the very first he must have been possessed of the powers of all his offices; and in every part of his work they must have all come into operation: "For it pleased the Father that in him," his Son, "should all fulness dwell;" "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." At no time was he without it, and therefore perish the thought that any given point of time should make Jesus what he is. Let it, therefore, be borne in mind that his mediatorial dominion and his propitiatory sacrifice are inseparable. He sits a Priest upon his throne. Numerous are the Scriptures which set forth Christ as King, but a few shall suffice here: Heb. iv. 14; x. 12, 13; Zech. ix. 9; Song iii. 11; Isa. xxxiii. 17; Ps. cxlix. 2; Isa. vi. 5. The government is laid upon his shoulders. All power is given unto him both in heaven and on earth.

We might pursue this theme to an inconceivable extent. It cannot be fathomed. The majesty of his kingdom is glorious; it is derived from his Person as the Son of God. As it behoved Christ to suffer, so it behoved Christ to conquer; "for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." His threefold offices complete his mediatorial work and character. He is a perfect and complete Saviour. As the Priest for the sins of

God's chosen, he has made ample and all-sufficient atonement; our ransom is effected, and there is now no condemnation. As our Prophet, the glad tidings he publishes and makes known to the wounded conscience, that the curse of the law and of sin has been removed. As our King, he gives effect to all he has done by applying the word, for without the word of a king there is no power; then it is the heart believes. It is the regal authority which Christ possesses that gives such power to his sacrifice and intercession. To this end was his incarnation. (John xviii. 37.) And, oh, how this fact brings his personal dignity into near relationship with the subjects of his spiritual kingdom! Not only was it necessary he should reign over men, devils, and angels; but, to qualify him for ruling over man, it would appear requisite that he should possess human nature. The height of his personal dignity as the Son of God seems to preclude the possibility of this relationship to his subjects; but by the mystery of the incarnation this obstruction is taken away; by the Son of God taking into union our nature with his person, he became also the Son of man: "The Word was made flesh." He who, as God, was so far removed above all that was human, was, as man, qualified for possessing and exercising all the tender sympathies of humanity. He, as man, is touched with a feeling sense of our infirmities, and, as God, is fitted to rule in the hearts of his people with all the sensibilities of a brother beloved. We may, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, "because the King is near of kin to us."

Time would fail altogether to refer to his riches, in particular as our King. His *extensive knowledge* of all his subjects is amazing, and is truly comforting. He knows all their names, the places of their abode, their circumstances, and all their wants: "I know all the fowls of the mountain." (Psalm l. 11.) Oh what *wisdom* he possesses to direct and dispose of all our intricate affairs; what *power* to execute, what *might* and authority, what dignity, what unbounded compassion, tender mercy; what loving-kindness and bountifulness. All these regal qualifications meet in the Person of Messiah, the Prince of peace, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Of his dominion there shall be no end; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion "endureth for ever throughout all generations."

Such, therefore, being the nature and character of Christ as our King, we, who are the favoured subjects of his kingdom in grace, cannot but rejoice in his divine administration. (Ps. cxlix. 2.) He rules by love and in love. He controls all events in the world for the welfare of his body, the church. The world itself, with all its nations, their national, political, and commercial affairs, are all under his government; their destinies are subjected to his will and authority; the principalities and powers of the air, the spiritual wickedness that rules in high places, are all under his surveillance, and render obedience to his almighty fiat. His church is under his government; the spiritual enemies of our souls, such as pride, unbelief, self-will, evil desires, and all the corruptions of our nature, are kept in curb by his controlling influence. He lifts up a standard against Satan, that great enemy of our souls' peace, comfort, and progress in the divine life; he is a chained enemy, and is ever held under restraint. Even death itself, the last enemy, even he shall be destroyed by the brightness of his coming, for he is the King of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, mighty in battle.

And O how the riches of his regal character are displayed in his *Providence*: "He opens his hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing. (Ps. cxlv. 16.) While he graciously supplies his church with all their gifts, graces, and blessings as needed, he cares for all their personal necessities. Poor tried child of God, with that solitary piece of money in your pocket, how often your heart has ached in looking at it, not knowing what way to take, what to do for the best. Jesus, your King, has his kind eye over you. He will direct you and bless you. O look, look again: "He overrules all mortal things, and manages your mean affairs." Think not that your trifles are beneath his notice. O no; he made every grain of sand; he knows their number, and every grain has its appointed place. All your trials are known to him; they are dealt out to you in weight and measure by his infinite wisdom—

" They come in his appointed hour,
Clad with a high commission'd power,
Perform the purpose of his heart,
Engender good, and then depart."

Remember, he is the mighty God of Jacob; still the same God to you as he was to Jacob. O to be favoured

with the spirit of wrestling prayer, in the long, dark night of trial, affliction, and poverty. May it be yours to say and know, "Happy is he that hath the mighty God of Jacob for his help." (Ps. cxlvi. 5.) Yes, if your circumstances are ever so miserable in the world, yet in Christ you have peace. He bids you remember it: "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but,"—O that blessed but!—"in me ye *have* peace." You have it now. "Ah," say you, "I wish I could feel it." Well, I wish you did; but you *have* it for all that. Come, be of good cheer, Jesus is your King; he has overcome the world; the sorrows of this life shall not take away your peace, though you are disturbed about it. All your needs shall be supplied from his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. God grant you, by his Spirit, a sweet application of his promise to your own soul, for his name's sake.

Further, how delightful to consider that, as Jesus is our King, he is our *Protector*. Speak we of power? His arm is strong. The Angel of the Lord encampeth round them that fear him, and delivereth them. He surrounds them with defence from every foe, spiritual, sensual, or worldly. He guards all his pilgrims through the desert. He is their sun and shield. Our enemies are numerous, lively, and strong, but he has a fulness of power. The Lord God is a man of war; he is competent to deal with every kind of foe, subtle as they may be; he comprehends their mischievous designs and devices, and will overthrow them in the midst. Remember, he is called King of Saints, the highest title of king. He is your king. He will act as your king. Are you timid? Does not this encourage you? Are you desponding? Does not this animate you? Are you faint and weary? He will give you strength. He will go before you, and lead you on in the way of his steps.

3. The riches of Christ are pre-eminently so, by the witness which is borne to them both in the Word of God and in our own experience.

John the Divine says, (i. 14,) "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." Here is the double testimony which every true believer in Christ possesses. What God's word says, the soul may rely on; and when the Spirit applies it to the conscience, the soul is sure to believe it; indeed, there is no true belief of God's word but in this way. Come, my hearer, is

this the way you are made to know God's word to be true? There is no true knowledge of Jesus Christ but by a divine revelation of God the Father, and by the application of God the Holy Ghost. No salvation without it—no condemnation with it. Jesus is full of grace and truth. How rich he must be! What unnumbered millions of the human race have been enriched by him, in all grace, love, and goodness, and will ever continue to be, through all time and to all eternity; and yet he is as rich as ever. His bounty has not impoverished him. He is as full of truth as he is of grace. He is to be trusted for everything:

“Take him for strength and righteousness;
Make him your refuge in distress;
Love him above all earthly joy,
And him in everything employ.”

You must excuse the repetition of that sweet verse. It can do you no harm to hear it again; for, if your experience corresponds to the precious doctrine it contains, your salvation is as sure as God's throne.

He is full of grace and truth; and the apostle adds, “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” O how suited is such a rich Saviour to such poor miserable sinners as we are! We are nothing without him; but by him we are enriched in every grace and gift—acceptable to God the Father through him—perfect in his righteousness, strong in his strength. All grace is made to abound toward us. *Adopting* grace. “The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and, because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Here, you see, is the realization of our union to Christ our Head and Elder Brother; a union of relationship. What riches can a poor soul want more, if he is made thus to feel his adoption in Christ? How easy, then, to trace the source of it to the predestinating love of God the Father, choosing his Person in Christ, blessing him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in him before the world began; and if, as geologists say, this world was in existence many thousand years before man was placed on it, then how glorious they unwittingly make the grace of God to appear! What treasures of grace in Christ are thereby displayed! His church secured in him,—all their persons, their grace, and

their glory, all treasured up in him, ages and ages before the world began. And O, the riches of his *pardoning* grace! Did you ever have a revelation made to you of the infiniteness of your sins?—inconceivably numerous, and yet his pardoning blood has swelled above the sea of your sins, follies, and thoughts. His blood availing for all your sins, all my sins, and the whole of the sins of an elect world—millions upon millions. O how rich the grace! Thus it has ever been—thus it now is, and ever shall be, world without end. Sweet theme for the poet and every blood-bought child of God. They can sing—

“Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be saved to sin no more.”

3. Look, too, at the riches of his *sanctifying* grace. How it has cleansed our spotted souls from deepest dye; again and again it cleanses the conscience. And remember, too, the riches of this grace are to be viewed as the *personal* acts of Jesus, not the influence of our knowledge. Sweet as may be the knowledge of this truth, our knowledge is not the influence, not the power, by which we are freed and set at liberty. It is a personal act of God's Spirit upon the soul. O, then, how rich the grace! Repeated acts of transgression as often cleansed. This is not to allow the believer to live in sin, No, God forbid! but to save him from its commission. Sin would damn him, but grace shall save him. It separates him from the world, its company, its influence, its maxims, and its pursuits. Jesus is rich in sanctifying grace.

4. He is rich also in *justifying* grace: “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.” (Isa. xlv. 25.) In his sight as God only, no flesh can be justified. O the riches, therefore, his people possess in him as Mediator! In him, as the God-man, they have righteousness. His justifying grace is that free gift which hath abounded unto many offences. Here we see the exceeding riches of his grace: “For if, through one man's offence, many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, *hath abounded unto many*. (Rom. v. 15, 16.) O the glorious contrast between our federal head, Adam, and our ever-living Head, Jesus Christ. Adam's one offence beggared us all; but, by the righteousness of

Christ, believers stand for ever justified from all things. Satan condemns, conscience condemns, ungodly men condemn, worldly professors condemn, but Jesus acquits: "Who is he that condemneth? It is God that justifieth; it is Christ that died." Believer, here is your standing, here is your safety. If you are walking after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, there can be no condemnation to you. Walking after the Spirit may be said to be an outward sign, a proof of an inward and spiritual grace—a grace as free as it is rich.

5. *Preserving grace.* Preserved until called. The ministry of angelic hosts is employed to secure the persons of those who shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. i. 14.) Satan seems aware of this. How low he drags some into the depths of iniquity. What easy fools some of us have been to his delusive snares. Some have been snatched as brands from the eternal burning, and they can sing with Kent—

"Preserved in Jesus when my feet made haste to hell;
And there I should have gone, but thou dost all things well;
Thy love was great, thy mercy free,
Which from the pit deliver'd me."

6. *Persevering grace.* Here the riches of our Saviour God again appear. Midst numerous snares and gilded baits—with a tendency of one's old nature to draw us back to perdition—the unyielding opposition of one's old master the devil, grace is given to persevere to the end. The saints' final perseverance is guaranteed in the covenant of grace, backed by many exceeding great and precious promises. "The righteous shall hold on his way." "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." I know many of God's dear children, if not all at times, sometimes think that this sin, or that temptation, will overcome them. It is true they are weak, but Jesus is strong; and we are confident of this very thing, "that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

"Whom once he receives, his Spirit ne'er leaves,
Nor ever repents of the grace that he gives."

7. *Crowning grace.* Here the riches of Jehovah Jesus are displayed in unsullied brilliancy to all his people: "The Lord will give grace and glory." (Psa. lxxxiv.) "I give unto my sheep eternal life." "Father, *I will*

that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me"—(John xvii. 24)—his mediatorial glory and his primeval glory as the Eternal Son of God. Our Redeemer possesses both and dispenses both. His people shall eternally behold him crowned with glory and honour, crowned with many crowns. He possesses a fulness of glory. He has it in himself: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; in his glorified presence there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore." O the glories that await the church of God: "The eye hath not seen, nor hath the ear heard, nor hath it entered the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." We must die to know it. Crowns of joy and everlasting songs await each believer as he enters the pearly gates of the heavenly city. O, then, to see Jesus as he is. This will make amends for all the tribulation and anguish endured in this world. We shall lose sight of it all in one glance of the altogether loveliness of his Person.

"His grace will be our song and boast,
And Christ our all in all."

But I see your time is gone. I must hasten to a conclusion. My third head, the *unsearchableness* of Christ's riches, I cannot enter upon to-night, and I have one or two more things to say yet before I can dismiss this portion of the subject.

There is in Christ "*durable riches* and righteousness. Riches and honour are with him." His fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment, that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures." (Prov. viii. 21.) Now, the sum and substance of all that Christ is and can be to his people may be summed up in three words—LIGHT, LIFE, and POWER. These are durable riches, substance; it is the essence of true religion, and there is no religion worth the name if it be without these primary elements. My friends, look to yourselves, see that your religion consists of light, life, and power. If it have not, depend upon it, it is the wrong sort, it will never take you to where Christ is; and let

me say too, light, life, and power are the characteristics of the ministry which God employs in his church. Wherever there is a deficiency of these elements in the preaching of the word, be it ever so sound in the letter, you may rely upon it, God is neither blessing the word nor owning the preacher as his servant. He may be a man of God, but not his servant in the Gospel. I do not, of course, mean by light, life, and power, mere intellectual acumen, loudness of voice, and forcibleness of manner. These are but natural gifts and proper in their place; were I possessed of them I could not be sufficiently thankful, but I must contend for a vital religion, a vital ministry, apart from everything that may be naturally good in itself. Nothing less will satisfy me, nor ought it to satisfy you. Now in Christ there is a fulness of spiritual light, of spiritual life and spiritual power. It is associated with and derivable from his threefold offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. When Christ reveals himself to us as our Prophet, we have light, for he is light in his essence, he is the light, the true light. Every believer renewed in the spirit of his mind, is translated from darkness to light, and is made light in the Lord. Have you any such light as this—light *in* Christ, light *from* Christ, a light *to* Christ? Thus is it when Christ is made known to us as our Priest; his sacrificial death is our life. Not only so, but he is life too in its essence. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John i. 4.) Now, do pray observe this, the life in Christ becomes to us our light; therefore whatever light you have see that it is derived from life in Christ. Light without life is a very poor sort of religion, I assure you. "True religion is more than notion, something must be known and *felt*." You will ask me what I mean by power—active energy, life in activity, the Spirit of God energising the soul, it is the kingly office of Christ carried out by the Spirit under his authority. It is the soul's experience of the demonstration of the Spirit with power. If you are believers united to Christ by a true and living faith, you will know what I mean. I have my own way of expressing the truths I preach, but truth is ever the same, no matter the phraseology of the speaker. A man may be a fool, even a maniac, but if he be a child of God he knows what is light, life, and power. A few days since I was told of a poor female, a maniac; after her death, Hart's hymns, which had been

in her possession, was found to have had written on the title-page, "Light, Life, and Power." When I heard it I said, "Oh how striking! the very characteristics of his hymns." Poor creature! she was bereft of reason as to this world, but her soul was perfectly sane; she knew the light, life, and power of God's truth, and I could well understand her feeling as to so express it in regard to that all but inspired book. Naturally, I expect, the poetic conveyance of truth to her soul was *underanged*, for I well recollect another similar case, poor John Batt. He was a lunatic; his mind was sadly out of tune with rational things, but upon soul matters, provided they were expressed in the language of Hart's or Kent's hymns, he was perfectly conscious, and exhibited superior intelligence in spiritual truths and a deep-felt experience. It was my mercy to be well acquainted with both those choice books, and it was my privilege, and there were but few others who had it, to hold sweet fellowship with this poor lunatic in this peculiar channel. Here you have, then, an illustration of the nature of divine things, how distinct and separate it is from things of this world or the religion of the flesh. The religion of the present day, that is, its public profession, is made very attractive, both to the eye, the ear, and the carnal judgment; but the circumstantialia of God's worship and of the profession of his name may be made as worldly and as fashionable as any matters of business. Indeed, it is my sad lot to see that it is "*business*" which has very largely crept into religion, but, ah! there is no light, life, and power in all this. I grant there is much activity, but no life; mechanical activity, not spiritual life. I dare say you think me very harsh, but I speak the truth and lie not.

But one word more, and I have done. What riches there are in Christ as the salvation of his people, his glory is great in our salvation. What a fulness of salvation! "With the Lord there is plenteous redemption." (Ps. cxxx. 7.) "He saves to the uttermost all who come unto God by him." (Heb. vii. 25.) He saved his church before time by becoming their surety. This shows how great his riches are; for who would accept a surety but where his sufficiency was undoubted and well known? Jesus is able; he is mighty to save; he is an all-sufficient Saviour. All-sufficient was his one offering when he, as the substitute of his church, made a full expiation for all

their guilt. Saved with an everlasting salvation. Saved in time from the power of inbred sin, salvation within as well as salvation without. O the riches of his mercy and his power! There is an illimitableness both as to his grace and his ability. It reaches, too, over and beyond the most extreme case of misery and danger that can be supposed. God's uttermost cannot possibly be reached by the loftiest stretch of the human intellect. The uttermost of Christ's salvation and the uttermost of the sinner's ruin are without comparison or parallel. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's thoughts above ours;" and the riches of his grace are quite as much above our sin, misery, and poverty. We may know all the depths of our own evil, as did Hezekiah, but it is impossible ever to know the extent of the heart of Christ. The most desperate case of deep sorrow, whether of soul or of circumstances, can be met by a single promise of his grace. A line of a hymn, one word, one look, will hush the storm of the soul into a calm.

"One look from that dear Lord whose brow compassion wears,
Will much of heavenly bliss afford, e'en in this vale of tears."

But I think I can hear some poor disconsolate soul saying, "Ah, sir, you have said many glowing things about the person of Christ and his riches, and I believe it all; but it does not remove the sense of my deep misery. I have heard all you have said for this hour past, but not one word has reached my case." Poor soul! you are indeed in a low place. I would that I could draw you out. I see where you are, and the plight you are in. You are not so much half starved as that you are half dead. It is not so much the food of the gospel that you want as it is some cordial dropped into your fainting soul; you want strength in your soul. May God help you. God only can give it. O cry mightily to him, "he will come and save you;" he has bound himself to do it. David has been where you are, and he has recorded it for your encouragement: "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me and strengthenedst me in my soul." (Ps. cxxxviii. 3.) But you say, "I am weary with crying, I have no more strength." Well then, look and look again, help will come. Jesus himself has been there before you; he knows your case. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. His bodily weakness was extreme; his

nervous power was quite gone when he fell on the ground in Gethsemane. I am sure you have never been so low as that, or ever will.

“What he endured no tongue can tell.”

He sustained a weight which none but an incarnate God could bear. Jesus knows *where* you are and *how* you are. “When your spirit is overwhelmed within you,” as in deep waters drowning, sinking under, still he knows your path. (Ps. cxlii. 3.) He can see through the depth of your sorrows. He knows where to find you, and will send you help and deliverance. You will yet say, “Thou which hast showed me great and sore troubles shalt quicken me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth.”

“He knows how weak and faint thou art,
And must appear at length;
A look from him will cheer thy heart,
And bring renewed strength.”

I must now leave the subject for further consideration, if the Lord will, till this night week. I must pass over such inferences as might be suitable for closing this discourse. I fully intended to have said something as to the riches of the various characters Jesus bears to his people as their Shepherd, Husband, Friend, and so on, as well also of the various similitudes that are used to express what he is to us as the Bread and Water of Life, our Dwelling, our Sun and Shield, but may perhaps refer to them when we attempt to take up the remaining part, “the *unsearchableness* of his riches.” “I commend you to God and to the word of his grace.” Let us conclude with a word of prayer.

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.

III.

The Unsearchable Riches of Christ.—EPHESIANS iii. 8.

THOUGH this is the third time I have called your attention to these words, I trust your patience is not exhausted. The text contains a most glorious and inexhaustible subject; and, if our hearts are kept in tune by the sacred Spirit,

“No sweeter subject can invite
The sinner’s heart to sing.”

We proposed to treat our subject under three general heads: 1st. The Person of Christ; 2nd. His riches; and 3rd. Their unsearchableness.

We have spoken in the first discourse on *the Person of Christ*, as the Son of God; in the second, we touched a little upon *his riches*, (chiefly those of his mediatorial character,) which concern us; but I found it impossible to say all I intended; the subject grew so much in my mind while speaking. I therefore announced taking the third head, *their unsearchableness*, for this evening. O that the Spirit of all truth would again help us to see the beauties of our beloved Lord, and the unbounded love of his heart in becoming what he is to us, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. There is something very exhilarating when, through the Spirit, we are enabled to contemplate such divine realities. It fills the soul with heavenly raptures. We can then fully enter into the feeling of the poet when he sang,

“O could I speak the matchless worth,
O could I sound the glories forth,
Which in my Saviour shine,
I’d soar and touch the heavenly strings,
And vie with Gabriel while he sings
In notes almost divine.”

We come now to notice, in the **THIRD** place, the *unsearchableness* of Christ's riches.

The riches of Christ, as I have already intimated, are those blessings which God the Father hath bestowed upon his church, in the Person of Christ his Son, and are revealed to us in the gospel through the Spirit. They are called riches on account of their excellency, fulness, and variety. They are bestowed in such abundance as to supply all our wants, and dispensed in such manner as to be suited to all our necessities.

The riches of Christ are called *unsearchable* riches. By unsearchableness, we mean they are *undiscoverable by human reason*, and, as far as they can be known, can only be known by revelation. The men of this world cannot know them; they desire not to know them; "they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." (Job xxi. 14.) Hence it is, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Hence it is, too, they are called "mysteries,"—"the deep things of God." The apostle says, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." (1 Cor. ii. 7.) In the chapter in which our text stands, (verses 3 and 4,) he tells you it was by revelation that the mystery of Christ was made known to him. It is utterly impossible for carnal reason to know anything of the unsearchableness of Christ's riches; for it is written: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.)

As the riches of Christ were unsearchable to reason, so we find they were but imperfectly known to the prophets in other ages, and, in fact, unknown to the Gentiles, (like the light of some distant planet, which has been long travelling to our earth, and but recently perceived,) so Christ is more fully displayed to us in the gospel of the New Testament than in that of the Old Testament. Doubtless, the spiritual Jews, in the Levitical dispensation, understood much of Christ, both in the ceremonies of their religion and in their wilderness life; indeed, the

apostle states as much, as you will find in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians x. 1-4.

“The types and shadows were a glass,
In which they saw the Saviour's face.”

The riches of Christ are of *priceless* value. There is no standard or comparison by which they can be estimated. We are “bought with a price;” “None can redeem his brother.” “Rivers of oil and thousands of rams for a burnt-offering, nor the gift of one's first-born, could never take away sin,” (Micah vi. 7,) and ransom us from the bondage of God's law; but the blood of Christ has redeemed unnumbered millions of the human race. Worlds could not save a lost soul. It is a question that has never yet been answered: “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark viii. 37.) Who, then, can conceive of the love of God in the unspeakable gift of his Son, by whose precious blood so many millions of the human race have been redeemed.” (1 Pet. i. 19.)

“Great was the price to Justice due,
When Jesus would redeem his bride;
Nothing but precious blood would do,
And that must flow from his own side.

“Not gems nor gold could bring our peace,
Nor the whole world's collected store,
Suffice to purchase our release;—
A thousand worlds were all too poor.”

The value, then, of Christ's riches can be known only by knowing him. His riches and his Person are inseparable. The one cannot be known without the other. The knowledge of Christ is knowing something of his riches; the more we know of him, the more we shall discover the unsearchableness of his riches. This will lead us to notice,

1. *His riches are unsearchable, being grounded on his eternal Deity.* In my last discourse you may remember I stated, “the riches of Christ were grounded on his *Sonship*,” how they came to us through his Mediatorship; and by virtue of that relationship to his Father and to us, as being our divine Head and Elder Brother. This time we have not so much to refer as to what his riches are, as to the great fact that they are unsearchable; and this I say, that, being grounded on his eternal Deity, they are unsearchable. Our Lord Jesus Christ in his divine

Person, essence, nature, and glory, is eternal, incomprehensible, omnipresent, and omnipotent. Now, we have before shown that the Son of God is eternal by virtue of that the Father is eternal, and therefore no more need be said upon this at present. It may not appear very obvious just at this moment what we mean by his riches being grounded on his eternal Sonship, and their unsearchableness being founded on his eternal Deity; the distinction, I hope, will be seen by-and-by. Pray for illumination; pray for me, that I may be able to make known unto you something of these unsearchable riches. It is impossible to *comprehend* them; but, under the Spirit's leadings, we may apprehend, that is, take hold, of a part, though we cannot grasp all. You are of course fully aware that I hold the Scriptures teach that the Sonship of Christ is founded on his divinity, not on his humanity. His divinity being essentially eternal, his personality is eternal, his Sonship is eternal. There is no material difference, it is true, between the terms Sonship and his personality; for the one is as the other; yet to us believers there is, in some respects, a distinction as to the benefits we derive from his Sonship, and from its being eternal. You may remember, perhaps, I said in the first discourse (page 5) his name, "the Son of God," is "both a name of nature and of relationship." It is in view of the latter, of *relationship*, what he is to us in that relationship, that we have what are considered the riches of Christ; and it is in respect of his *nature* being eternally divine, that we have the fact on which is founded the *unsearchableness* of his riches. This is a weighty subject. It may seem abstruse to some, but it is far from being unprofitable to consider. If the Son of God is not eternal, as some assert, then his riches are not unsearchable. If the Sonship of Christ is founded on his incarnation, as some believe, then his riches are not unsearchable. If the Sonship of Christ has only respect to the covenant of grace, as is very commonly entertained, then his riches are not unsearchable. In either case, in which the eternity of Christ's Sonship is denied, we have *data* upon which we can fix. Say, for argument sake, Christ's Person, as the Son of God, is founded on his complex nature; then his riches date, say, some 1860 years back. We have a beginning of a human calculation. I may be told, "We believe his divine nature is eternal." Yes, I know that,

my friend; but you separate his divine nature from his Personality as the Son of God, for which you have no warrant. You are without a foundation. This is not the truth of God as revealed in his word.

And so I regard the opinion of those good men who hold that the Person of the Son of God is coeval only with the covenant of grace. Here, I think, as I have said before, is a very defective view of Christ's Person. He is the Son of God, irrespective of that great transaction. What! would there have been no Son of God, no God the Father, no God the Holy Ghost, if there had been no covenant of grace? O, I think we are not laying a right, a sufficient foundation for the unsearchableness of Christ's riches. Can they be bounded by the extent of his mediatorial work? Assuredly not. It is not the covenant of grace that gave rise to the existence of the ever-blessed Trinity of Persons in the Godhead; but it was the revelation of that covenant which discovered to us the previous constitution, if I might so say, of Jehovah, as the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, out of which and from whom originated the great scheme of man's redemption. Many divines deny this; but men of science would not talk thus. If they discover a planet, either by the help of some powerful optical instrument, or from its light having at length reached our earth, they would tell us the planet had existed long previously to their perception of it. I grant readily that all the blessings with which the Church is blessed in Christ their Head are coeval with the predestinating love of God the Father; but *the Person* of Christ is *anterior* to his Mediatorship, not *posterior*, or even coeval; and, therefore, the unsearchableness of his riches is over, and above, and beyond the boundary of the covenant of grace. Tell me the period when the covenant was made; tell me the number of the elect, the number of their blessings; then we have some approximation to the height, the depth, the length, and breadth of the riches of Christ.

But, again. If the Sonship of Christ is founded on *the pre-existence of his human soul*, then his riches are not unsearchable; for if these wise men after the flesh, who declare Christ's human soul to have had a pre-existence before all other creatures be correct, they must necessarily limit the extent of his riches; for with them the human soul is the foundation of their fancy Son of God. This they

assert to give some pretension to his eternity. Now, if men are so wise as to be able to trace out an unrevealed fact, as this their dogma, then they are able to trace the age of Christ's riches. This, we know, is out of their ken. Secret things belong to God; but things revealed, to us and our children. To my own mind, I see the only correct view we can take of the unsearchableness of Christ's riches is from the fact of his Sonship being eternal. He is the only true and wise God. Limited views of his Person must confine us to limited views of his riches. O, my friends, why should our faith fear to tread on such high and holy ground as we are now attempting? I admit the theme is deep, it is high. What can we know? Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; we cannot attain unto it; our best thoughts are but poor. It is impossible to grasp it; it is infinite; but still we may, if only for a few minutes, survey a single drop of this eternal ocean, and see in it worlds of beauties, as revealed to the eye of faith. The divinity and eternity of Christ's Sonship and Person can be the only sure ground of his riches being unsearchable, unfathomable, inexhaustible, unknowable. All other views are contracted, and savour of human systems. I remember once hearing an anecdote of a Mexican ambassador visiting the treasurer of the Spanish kingdom. The chancellor showed him a large chest filled with coined gold. The ambassador began to dig with his hand, to find the depth of it. "What are you doing?" asked the Spaniard. "O," replied the Mexican, "I am trying to find if there is a bottom." "Of course there is," said the other. "Ah, but," rejoined the Mexican, "my master has a treasury which has no bottom. He has mines of gold in his possession. Yours will soon be spent—his will last for ever." I leave you to make the application. We will now pass on to notice,

2. *That the glorious attributes of Christ's divine Person display the unsearchableness of his riches.*

I feel to be venturing on holy ground; but we are not alone. Prophets and apostles have been before us; we have his word for our guide, and therefore we may approach this great subject, though with the most profound awe and admiration.

The apostle Paul, in 1 Cor. i. 30, says of the Church of God in Christ Jesus, "Who of God is made unto us

wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." O what a revelation is here of Jesus Christ! What he is unto us by virtue of his Godhead, not his manhood; for, perfect as he was in his human nature,—holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens,—yet that is not the source of his riches being unsearchable. They come to us unquestionably by virtue of his Mediatorship—the God-man. The union of our nature to his Person makes them available to us; but it is in his Person, being the eternal God, that they are unsearchable.

Let us try, by a step at a time, with the help and blessing of the Lord, to get a nearer view of this amazing truth. Christ is of God made unto us *wisdom*. The wisdom of God made available to us by him. He is our wisdom. Being blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, we are blessed with wisdom, a fulness of wisdom; "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." O what heavenly wisdom was needed for such a scheme of mercy as is revealed in the gospel! *The wisdom of God in a mystery*. The more it is pondered over, the greater, the deeper, it appears; because the more we search, the more vast its unsearchableness appears. It is utterly impossible for the finite to grasp the infinite. O what wisdom is revealed in the method by which God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus! Wisdom in originating the plan; wisdom in executing it; wisdom in displaying it; wisdom in exercising his love, sovereignty, and goodness; wisdom to us as our wonderful Counsellor, our Prophet, and Teacher; and, as it is of his fulness that every member of his church receives grace for grace, so wisdom is communicated to every member by the eternal Spirit as he needs it.

Another step. He is made unto us *righteousness*. I do not mean that righteousness which he wrought out and brought in, and which is imputed to all, and is upon all them that truly believe—namely, his actual obedience; for that is our justification in fact: but I mean that righteousness which he possesses in his divine essence as God. "*Who of God is made unto us righteousness.*" Here is a vast ocean before us indeed, every drop of which would require eternity to fathom. The church of

God have their righteousness in him. (Isa. liv. 17.) "In Jehovah have I righteousness and strength." (Isa. xlv. 24.) He is the source of all holiness, goodness, justice, and truth; the spring of all our holiness, and every grace proceeding from it, by which we walk worthy before the Lord unto all well-pleasing, is in God. His name is *that*, because it is the perfection of his nature. It is a name of nature, and fully expresses his Divine nature; and it is also a name of relationship, as well as of his Person. This is his name whereby he shall be called, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Jer. xxiii. 6.) We are made partakers of this divine nature by the Spirit, in being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed, of the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; and all believers vitally united to Christ as their ever-living Head are called by the same name. (Jer. xxxiii. 16.) This righteousness is unsearchable. As utterly impossible as it is for the creature to measure and know the Creator, so is it impossible to search and comprehend the righteousness of his Person.

We travel but slowly yet: another step. He is made unto us, of God, *sanctification*. This I regard as the third element in our salvation. To sanctify is to set apart, to separate to holy purposes. I regard this, therefore, as meaning that God is in himself *all that* for which God chose the church in Christ. Chosen in Christ that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, to the praise and glory of his grace who accepted us in the Beloved. We are separated from the spirit of the world, from the evil one, by an act of grace, the essence of which he is the centre and circumference, to be partakers of that very nature; for this is the will of God, even our sanctification—(1 Thess. iv. 3)—to the glory of God the Father. Believers feel in themselves that they are a mass of evil and pollution. This they do not know till, separated by the grace of God; the Spirit of God reveals the holiness of God's nature, and, the believer being renewed in the spirit of his mind, he loves it, he longs for it, it is the nature he desires to have. It is the glory of God; he is glorious in holiness. Every believer is sanctified by the Holy Ghost. The *treasury* of this rich grace is in Christ, who of God is thus made to his church sanctification, to the glory of God the Father.

Christ is of God made unto us *redemption*. Here is the grand climax of the whole. Here Christ is displayed in the several acts of Jehovah, going forth for the salvation of his people, even from everlasting; God the Father originating the plan in his infinite wisdom and grace; God the Son possessing all power to accomplish the work in his own Person; God the Spirit applying the work of salvation to the hearts and consciences of the sinners thus saved. Our redemption is effected by the joint act of the Sacred Three, through the mediatorial work of Christ the Redeemer, "who is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." It is in Christ we have redemption, through his blood, according to the riches of his grace, which in another place is spoken of as the *exceeding* riches of his grace—far beyond the uttermost of all the requirements of the church of God. Now, the unsearchableness of all these riches was felt by the apostle himself when he said, "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." They are unknowable, inexhaustible, ever flowing to us by Christ Jesus; yet his fulness is as infinite as ever; for with him is *plenteous* redemption. And it is as certain and absolute as it is plenteous, "for Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation."

But to proceed: You have observed in all these points to which we have referred, they are what may be considered as the main features of what Christ is to his church, objectively and subjectively; *objectively*, their highest wisdom being to know him, to be found in him, to have an experimental sense of their interest in him, of what he is to them in his various relationships he bears to them, by virtue of his being their Head and Husband, and their Representative; *subjectively*, in him, not in themselves, nor yet in anything done in them or by them, but whatever they are as believers, they are that in Christ Jesus alone: for his riches, as they dwell in himself, are communicable to them. Whatever they have from him, he is all that to them; for he is the Freeholder, if I might so say; they are but copyholders. What we are and have, we derive from him. Our being enriched by him leaves his riches still his own; they are none the less; their immensity is as infinite as ever.

The riches of *all his attributes* are *unsearchable*, natural and moral. His Eternity, Spirituality, his Omnipotence, his Omnipresence, his Omniscience, and Infinity are all vast treasures peculiar to himself as the mighty God; yet, incomprehensible as these attributes are to us finite creatures, these are all exercised in behalf of and for the church of God, through the mediatorial work of Christ, their covenant and ever-living Head. None by searching can find out God; "his greatness is unsearchable." His perfections belong to his nature as God, and are incommunicable to the nature and being of a creature; yet every believer may rejoice in this great truth, that all the attributes of the Godhead are in Christ, and are his unsearchable riches. Have you never found certain seasons in your experience, when no arm but that of the great God could help you? You have committed your soul to him as your Redeemer, and in him you could feel your eternal salvation secure; but, apart from that, sometimes circumstances have been such that none but the mighty God of Jacob could act and rule for you, and you have been assured of it, realized it as a fact, it has become a part of your history, and you could say with the poet,

"To accomplish his design
The creatures all agree;
And every attribute divine
Is now at work for me."

Then as to his moral attributes; I mean those which are communicable to the creature man, and by which he is distinguished from all other creatures. I do not mean his rational or intellectual qualities, but such as mercy, love, goodness, truth, justice, holiness, &c. O what an inexhaustible source of these divine perfections is treasured up in Christ, as God. These he possesses without measure. "He is rich in *mercy*;" "from everlasting to everlasting;" rich in mercy to all who call upon him in truth. "Yea, our God is merciful;" rich in mercy from the very fact of his great love wherewith he loved us. His *love*, how great! it passeth knowledge. He gave himself for us. Being divine, it is unsearchable; yet, though it passeth knowledge, blessed be God, it does not pass our experience. We are to know the love of God, and so be "filled with all the fulness of God." His *goodness* is as unsearchable as his greatness. It must be inexhaustible, for all are assured of it. O taste and

see that the Lord is good! The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble. (Nahum i. 4.) His goodness is as large as his power—infinite. The Lord God is abundant in goodness. (Ex. xxxiv. 6.) It endureth continually. (Ps. lli. 1.) His *faithfulness*, how unchangeable and inexhaustible! the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He is faithful that hath promised, immutably so; and thus we have strong consolation; for it is impossible but that Christ is, or can be, in himself, ever faithful to his promise and to his saints. His truth, justice, and every other attribute flowing from the holiness of his nature, are all alike unsearchable; but they are those riches of which believers are made partakers in measure, and which constitute their graces, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, as they are sometimes called. Not a gift or a grace do they possess but what is derived from the fulness which is in Christ.

3. I pass on to show that Christ's riches, as *the God-man Mediator, are unsearchable*. What Christ is in his Person as the Mediator, in the union of his two natures, he is all that to the Church of God. All the blessings of the covenant of grace flow through that medium, and are divinely imparted to them.

Access to God. "By whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, made nigh by the blood of Christ;" a people near unto him; bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. We have fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, a privilege unknown to the highest archangel. His saints, his separated ones, and his sanctified ones, are brought so near unto him as to be on terms of the dearest friendship; nay, more, a divine and eternal union exists, such a oneness as exists between Jesus and the Father—an unspeakable union, such a union as I believe in and rejoice in, but I cannot fully describe it.

Peace with God. Jesus is our peace; he is our propitiation. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. v. 1.) O the blessing of peace, peace in ourselves, peace with one another; harmony of sentiment, of feeling, of action, of purpose, showing the security and rest possessed, which constitute peace. All this, and more too, we possess in having peace with God, a peace which is as eternal as it is secure. Such a peace we have in Christ, though in the midst of tribulation. It

is his gracious assurance, in the world we shall have tribulation, but in him we have peace—a peace which the world cannot give nor take away. Where this peace is possessed and enjoyed, it bids defiance to the storms without. To be miserable in the world, and yet to be happy in Christ, is the blessed result of having peace in Christ, peace under sorrow for sin. My dear hearers, do you know anything of this peace in your own hearts? Whatever you may possess in this world to make you outwardly happy, yet, if you are without this peace with God, peace in Christ, you are still a poor, miserable creature, blind and naked to all intents and purposes, having no hope, without God, in the world. But O! if you are possessors of such a divine peace, rejoice in this blessed truth, this peace is inexhaustible, it is eternal, unsearchable. Peace when the Assyrian Death shall come. His grim visage will not disturb us, for in Christ we shall rest in peace.

The Promises of God. “All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” (2 Cor. i. 20) Peter calls them “exceeding great and precious promises.” (2 Peter i. 4.) Here we see their certainty, their fulness, and value. What a valuable treasury there is in the Word of God, even when read merely with the eye of the rational judgment, but when by the Spirit of God only a single promise is applied to the heart of the spiritual believer, what an inexhaustible fulness there is! It can be made like the single meal of the Prophet; the believer can go in the strength of it for many days, ay, even a life-time. Some of you can testify to the value of God’s promises, even a single one. Tell me, for what amount would you part with one single promise that has been made dear to you, and on which you hang your hope? “Part with it?” say you; “no, not for thousands of worlds.” Well, then, if a single promise be so dear to you, what must all the promises of God be to his whole church? O what an inexhaustible fulness, what unsearchableness!

“If such the sweetness of the streams,
What must the fountain be?”

Christ is the ocean of all the promises of God. His riches are unsearchable.

His sympathetic care. Jesus having been in all points tried as we are, he is able to succour those that are

tempted; and his knowledge and ability will last as long as his Person. In his manhood he was made perfect through suffering; (Heb. ii. 10, 18;) by virtue of his Godhead and Sonship, the riches of his sympathy with his suffering members are inexhaustible, unsearchable, illimitable, an ever-flowing fulness to the Church of God. His love is as large as his power; it is constantly exercised, without measure, without end. He has left in the world "a poor and afflicted people, and they shall trust in him." "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;" such a one that could be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities, being in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15.) What a blessed subject for the poor distressed child of God to contemplate!—the sympathy of Christ. No sorrow of the soul but what he is perfectly acquainted with. By virtue of his human nature, and by reason of his divine nature, he can and does communicate his sympathetic care. Whatever griefs distress thy soul, they distress him; he has gone through it all, he knows all your care, he careth for you. Have you a broken heart for sin? He died of a broken heart; it was sin that broke his heart; no sorrow was like his sorrow. Though he personally knew no sin, but only representatively, yet he felt the reproach of it. He said, "Reproach hath broken my heart." His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Jesus knew and felt the weight of sin charged upon him. It may be, you have been so overwhelmed with charges against you as to feel yourself verily guilty, and ready to believe that you are really the vile person represented. When Warren Hastings, Governor of India, was impeached, the great Edmund Burke was employed to plead against him, and he laid out the charges in such a telling manner (for he was a most masterly orator), that Hastings, when he laid his head on his pillow at night, notwithstanding his own consciousness to the contrary, actually did, for a time, really believe he had committed the crimes that were laid against him, and he looked upon himself as the greatest villain that ever lived. But, however, truth did its office, in spite of Burke's eloquence, logic, and rhetoric. He arose, put facts together, prepared his defence, and was acquitted. Now, this is just the case with many a

poor soul; charges, grievous in nature and numerous, are brought against him and represented in such a light as to force the poor creature to believe it all, as if true. But the enemies' eloquence, logic, and rhetoric are not always on the side of truth. But, supposing they were, Jesus will plead; he sympathises with you; he himself has been falsely charged and accused and condemned. Come, poor, soul, have you been here? Jesus has been here before you. He feels for you, he will help you. Hear his blessed word: "For the oppression of the poor, and for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord. I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." (Ps. xii. 5.) Take no heed to Satan's lawsuit; Jesus is your Advocate. Your cause is safe in his hands; he will be sure to succeed. His sympathies are with you, and, whether it be sin in the conscience that accuses, or whether you suffer from an ungodly world, or the false charges of carnal professors of religion, Jesus' heart is as large as your distress. You may safely confide in him; reveal everything to him, pour out your heart before him, and you shall find his resources so ample that all your enemies shall be found liars unto you, and you shall tread upon their high places." "Ah," says one, "but my sorrow rises from quite another source. I have pinching poverty. I know not how to meet the demands of my family. I am continually disappointed in my efforts to obtain the bread that perisheth, and I fear the cause of God will suffer through my inability to owe no man anything." O yes, I know full well these are searching trials, weighty crosses. Poverty saps the comfort of every earthly blessing, but our Lord knew poverty and bodily privations to a fearful and sad extent. He knows all the feelings of thy heart, and will provide for all thy needs, according to his will, from his divine and all-sufficient fulness. O commit your way unto him; trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass. He will not mock your distress. You have the mighty God of Jacob for your help. His sympathies for the poor and distressed are unfailing in goodness, power, and timeliness. They are unsearchable.

In the promise of his presence. Jesus has promised his Church through all time, in every place, the assurance of his presence: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." He is with us in his house;

with us in fellowship with his people; when we pass through the waters of affliction he is with us; with us in every place, individually as well as collectively. In the enjoyment of his presence is fulness of joy, whether in his house or in our homes. His presence sweetens every loss, soothes every pain. When he speaks to the heart, it kindles with his love. Then the face of nature changes:

“Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,”

if he be with us. This promise of his ever-abiding presence is like his Person, eternal, unsearchable in its riches.

In our completeness in him. Our completeness in Christ is by being made rich in him. Through his poverty, by his personal obedience to God's law in our flesh, we are made rich, eternally rich; completely righteous before God, without blame in love. How vast, how unsearchably great must be the righteousness which, as ample clothing, completely covers the transgressions of every member of his mystical body, the Church:

“In him the Father never saw
The least transgression of the law.
Perfection, then, in Christ we view;
His saints in him are perfect too.”

In the merit of his blood. O the inexhaustible fulness of blessing there is here. On the foundation of his divinity alone rests the merit of his atonement. His blood and righteousness, as man, are our riches,—as the God-man, our unsearchable riches. Look again at the number of sinners saved, a vast multitude, a number which no man can number—in the number of each individual's sins, and the extent of their guilt. His blood cleanses from all sin, all your sins, all my sins, all the sins of all the Church of God, from the first sin of Adam, through all time, down to the last sin that shall be committed by the latest elect vessel of mercy that shall be living upon this earth. Every believing sinner must feel how rich, how precious, must be that blood which has cleansed his soul from thousands of sins; and when he reflects how it has cleansed millions of sinners, how unsearchably rich and precious must it appear! The more it is gazed upon, the more infinite does it appear. And remember, too, the riches of his blood are to be the theme of the church's song in heaven: “Unto him that loved us, and washed

us from our sins in his own blood." (Rev. i. 5 and v. 9.) A never-ceasing song, because the riches of his blood will never cease. How can it be else than what it is? Duration will not diminish its value, but only add to its infinitude, and thus it will ever remain unsearchable.

In the riches of his glory. O, this we must die to know; the glory of his primeval state before the world was. No man hath seen God at any time in the fulness of his glory. The glories of the heavenly state can be but imperfectly known by any created being. What can angels know, what can the first glorified spirit know, of the riches of his glory? Vast, incomprehensible, unsearchable! Yet on earth all our personal needs are supplied from his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus. His riches in glory are not the less by the supply of our needs on earth.

4. Consider, in the next place, *what unsearchable riches there are in all the characters Christ sustains to his Church.* Time will not allow of more than alluding to them by name. The primary offices of Prophet, Priest, and King have already been dwelt upon. These I refer to now, and which are only a sample, are—our Shepherd, Husband, Friend, the Life, the Truth, the Way, our Hiding-place, Physician, Balm, Rest, and many others. Not a day can pass, not a circumstance can happen, but what the believer, who is truly alive to divine realities, feels Christ is precious to him in all the characters and similitudes which set him forth. He is the chiefest of ten thousand, the altogether lovely.

" His beauties we can never trace,
Till we behold him face to face."

The wilderness condition of the believer makes him feel the necessity of looking to Jesus for everything that he is. There is not a title Jesus bears, but he bears it for the believer's sake. His are not nominal or honorary titles, but *essential* ones, essential to every believer who is taught to know the plague of his own heart, his own nothingness, weakness, and emptiness. When, like wandering sheep, we stray from the fold, we have our Shepherd's care: "He restoreth my soul." In all time of our soul-sickness, he is our health and cure, his blood is our balm. When weary and worn in the desert, he is our hiding-place from wind and a covert from the storm, the

shadow of a great rock in a weary land, our sun and shield, our eternal rest.

What shall we say of Christ's riches as being unsearchable, when we contemplate him as the Bread of Life, the Water of Life, the Tree of Life,—our meat and drink, our clothing, dwelling, companion, our light, heat, comforter, guide and guard. There is nothing in creation for the good of man, but Christ is that to the believer; unsearchably so, for he is our all and in all. Can you join with me in saying,

“He's all that's good and great,
All that I can admire;
All that's endearing to my soul,
And all my soul's desire?”

And who can tell the height and depth of those vast treasures of spiritual blessings which are in him; unbounded fulness of pardoning grace, of justifying grace, of sanctifying grace; of light, hope, joy, peace, consolation, comfort; a provision for every contingency of human life and want? “In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Whether upon earth or in heaven, Christ is everything to his Church; everything in its fulness; such an abundance as is unbounded, unsearchable.

The riches of Christ are unsearchable, for he possesses in himself *eternal life*. The gift of God is eternal life,—this life is in his Son. “This is life eternal that they might know God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.” He that believeth on the Son of God hath life. “I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish.” (John x. 2, 8.) “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” (John xvii. 2.) “This is the promise which he hath promised us, eternal life.” (1 John ii. 25.) These passages show that he is life in its essence; “in him was life, and the life was the light of men.” If Christ be our light, it is because he is our life. I have said it before and I repeat it, for it is a vital truth; thousands of flourishing professors, highly-esteemed in the world, know nothing of this life. Light is not life; it is not the knowledge or *form* of truth that contents the living soul; it is the *power* of truth. He needs it every day, every hour, every moment. See, then, that what you have of

light comes from the life in Christ. We live in a day when religion is popular; preaching is made so flexible and plausible as to suit any and every body. Crowds of professors are to be found everywhere, provided there is no searching the conscience. Doctrinal and experimental truth is eschewed, as old-fashioned and as being behind the age; but I tell you plainly, where there is no doctrinal and experimental truth in the preaching, there is no gospel at all; there is no life in it. I know it from long, sad experience.

The riches of Christ are unsearchable; for *in him is eternal salvation*. He is the author of it; he is the procurer of it, the dispenser of it. The church was eternally saved from Adam's apostasy, the curse of it,—saved from the present conquest of inbred sin, from the working of outward sin, from the guilt of past sins, and the curse of future sins. Often he chastises for sin,—that is our mercy; it is to save us from its power, from the love of it, from the guilt of it. "He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him. "Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." "There is none other name under heaven whereby men can be saved."

The riches of Christ are unsearchable; for his is *the heavenly inheritance*. This is Christ's own gift. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) This gift of eternal glory is over, and above, and beyond the purchased possession. Perpetuity of life and earthly happiness are what Adam and his race would have possessed, supposing he and they had never sinned. They would have enjoyed converse with God, and have delighted in him as their Creator and Lord, but not as their Redeemer. Here they have in Christ a superior life, a superior position, a superior relationship. He is their inheritance; in him is a fulness of glory; for all spiritual blessings are in him. It pleased the Father to give his adopted sons the kingdom of grace, and to Christ the kingdom of glory. Being heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, we have in him eternal glory. It is ours; we have an everlasting possession, everlasting enjoyment. We shall have crowns of everlasting joy upon our heads. This is the portion of all the redeemed. His riches are inexhaustible; "for of

him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Before I conclude, I must advert to one subject specially, which has only been done incidentally, and that is, the *characters* to whom these riches are available. There are riches in the Bank of England sufficient to make every one in this congregation easy in their circumstances, independent of labour for life; but if we have no title, no claim to those riches, of what avail are they to us? Now, these riches that we have been speaking of are designed for the express use of certain characters,—believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are persons who before God are justified, their sins pardoned; they are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, made the children of God, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ. Let me ask you, in all love and faithfulness, have you any such hopes as these?

These persons have had their hearts renewed, their affections and their dispositions regenerated and sanctified by the power of God the Holy Ghost. They have been made new creatures; they feel themselves to be new creatures. Old pursuits, pleasures, aims, and purposes have passed away, and all things have become new. They are enriched with the gifts and graces of God's Spirit; their affections are set on things above; they seek those things where Christ sitteth. O my hearer, has such a change been wrought in you?

The conduct of these persons proves that they have their conversation in heaven; the life agrees with the heart. If the heart is alive to God, it will be dead to the world. Where these unsearchable riches are partaken of, not only are they rich in faith, hope, love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, but they are also rich in good works; for so they were created unto them in Christ Jesus, and God hath before ordained that they should walk in them. Professor of the name of Christ! let me ask you, can you prove your calling and election thus? Does your deportment in life, before God and men, agree? If so, in the world you will demonstrate it by living godly, soberly, and righteously in this present world. (Titus ii. 12.) In your family you will exhibit the Christian temper, and service for God. In secret you will know something of communion with God. Sound sentiments respecting Christ and the way of salvation can never save you; there

must be union to him, a believing in him, and a receiving from him, or else your souls can never be enriched from his fulness. Examine yourselves upon this momentous subject. It can do you no possible harm—it may do you eternal good.

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; you who are relying on his finished work for life and salvation, what glorious privileges, hopes, and blessings belong to you! All that Christ is, all that Christ has, is yours. What think ye of Christ? Is he not, as the late Dr. Hawker used to say, “a most glorious Christ”—glorious in his Person, glorious in his riches, glorious in their unsearchableness, and glorious in his salvation?

“His worth if all the nations knew,
Sure the whole earth would love him too.”

The half has never been told; no, not a thousandth part. What can finite mortals say of the Infinite. Seeking sinner, our efforts all fail in setting forth such a Saviour as Christ the Lord; but you will do well to consider that the efficacy of his atonement rests alone upon the foundation of his divinity. It is the eternity of his divinity that gives eternity to redemption. It is upon the foundation of his divinity alone that the seeking sinner can venture to believe in him, and rest his hopes for life and salvation. Believers in Christ can rest upon no other foundation than that Jesus is God, for the faithful and sure performance of the promise of his ever-abiding presence with his people to the end of all time. Trusting in this great truth, we commence our third year in this place, praying we may have some demonstration of the Spirit with power, while we attempt to preach Christ and him crucified, and contend earnestly for the faith of God's elect.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,” unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen, and amen.

Before I sit down I must ask your attention to one little matter, and that is, as to my sentiments generally. Having of late been subjected to both misunderstanding and misrepresentation, I deem it requisite on this occasion

to declare briefly the chief points, or rather the outline, of my Articles of Faith. When this church was about being formed, 5th January, 1864, and on my being called to the pastorate, I then prepared the following summary:

"I believe that the Holy Scriptures contain every Article of Faith and Practice needful to be known for salvation. That there is One God, whose name is Jehovah, revealed in the distinct Personalities of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, coessential, coeternal, and coequal in nature, power, and glory. That man, by disobedience to divine law, fell from his original innocence, and has thereby become totally depraved. That God, in his infinite love and wisdom, by a covenant of grace, devised a scheme of mercy, whereby a certain and specified number are everlastingly saved from all the consequences of sin, and by which the honour of divine law is fully vindicated and righteously maintained,—the Father, in the good pleasure of his will, choosing and predestinating to eternal life the persons thus saved, the Son undertaking their redemption by his atonement, and the Holy Spirit regenerating, sanctifying, and preserving them in this time state. That there will be a general resurrection of the dead, and a final judgment by the Son of God; the wicked will go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. That believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, being delivered from the law as a covenant of works, are henceforth to walk in all newness of life according to the rule of the gospel; that they should be united in the fellowship of the gospel for the worship of God, observing the ordinances of his house, as set forth in the New Testament, namely, baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper, and that they should promote the knowledge of the gospel, by all scriptural means, for the salvation of their fellow-men."

These sentiments are those which I have been enabled, by grace divine, to hold for more than thirty-six years. I believe them to be the verities of the gospel. They are the substance of what I have ever taught since I was thrust into the ministry; and I trust, the Lord being my helper, that I shall not shun to declare the whole counsel of God.

APPENDIX.

THE term "Eternal Generation," (p.14) I am aware, is liable to be both misunderstood and misrepresented; and it could be wished that our early divines had found some other word less obscure and more adequate to represent their idea; but it is no easy thing to find words that could not possibly be misconstrued, especially when persons are disinclined to accept the meaning intended, or if it crosses their own preconceived notions; but as it is, I see no reason why one should forego the use of a term which has become current amongst those who do receive the meaning conveyed. It has been well said, "The mind and meaning of a writer should be taken from his known doctrine and general drift; and though all writers are liable to express themselves on some points obscurely, or at least not satisfactorily to every mind, yet there is such a thing as making a man an offender for a word, and imputing to him, from some misunderstood expression, views of doctrine quite contrary to his generally known and avowed sentiments." The word "procession," for instance, in reference to the Holy Ghost and the Father, is subject to the same misconstruction as eternal generation, and yet it is strictly scriptural; for it appears, in reference to the word "procession," that both Arius and Sabellius, (third century,) admitted the word, but perverted it. Arius held that the Son and the Holy Ghost proceeded as creatures from the Father. Sabellius held that they proceeded as offices of the Father, or, as it were, developments. "The mistake of both," says Mr. Peter M'Laren, "arose from supposing procession to infer motion *ad extra*; while the orthodox understood it as wholly beginning and ending within the Godhead. Of course, from beginning and ending, we exclude all idea of any era, or of time when; referring merely to the mutual aspect of the Persons. The action in *proceeding* is immanent, not emanative."

The distinction here pointed out by this learned author

as to the word procession is important, and applies equally to the term eternal generation, to which he also refers and he thus states it: "Allowance must be made for obscurity of idea and of speech in this matter; our ideas must be inadequate and obscure. No word can be used in precisely the same sense regarding the Creator and his creatures. They are finite in duration and in being; he is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable. It must suffice that the idea is correct, through inadequate and obscure. Our conceptions and words are images of creatures, and yet we have none else to use. Were God himself to reveal all the truth as it is, it would be unintelligible, for no human words would be perfectly applicable. Whatever a man knows, he can express; and whatever man can express, man can comprehend; but nothing else.

"But groping as best we may, we may attain certain ideas of God, correct though obscure. God made man in his own image, we may assume, in his spiritual as well as his moral nature; for God speaks of his image in man, even after the fall had blotted out the moral likeness; as in 1 Cor. xi. 7; James iii. 9. It is commonly granted that the fall erased no faculty from the essence of men. It is also granted generally that the powers of the soul may be reduced to two, understanding and will. * * * Of course the moral attributes fall to be classed under the will.

"Both these, the intellect and the will, are capable of immanent action. The immanent action of the intellect is a proceeding of a thing conceived and understood so as to become objective to the intellect, while still within it. The concept, the idea, has a certain real existence, whether it be uttered or not; so the distinction is granted between *verbum cordis* and *verbum vocis*: the idea not uttered, or uttered.

"This procession, Augustine believed, (fourth century,) represents to us the generation of the Son, who is called the Wisdom and the Word of God. Others, indeed, as Tertullian, (third century,) perceived and taught the same thing; but Augustine set himself formally to defend the doctrine, which is, therefore, generally traced to him.

"It is the *proprium* of the Son to be 'begotten of the Father.' There are two meanings attached to the word generation,—one large, common to all corruptible things, denoting a change from nonentity to being, the beginning

of existence; the other of more limited application, denoting the origin in the same species of one living being from another. The origin of beings in a different species, as of worms in animals, falls under the first and large meaning, but not under the second and limited meaning.

"In those living beings which proceed from possible to actual being and life, both senses of the word generation are found. But the generation of the Son of God is not in this category; in God there is no changeableness; with him there is no '*potentia passiva*,'—no power to become what he is not, or to receive what he is not, or to suffer change in what he is or has proper to himself. With God, then, generation is the origin in the same species of one living being from another. But the species of God comprehends but one nature; and, therefore, to say that the generation of the Son of God is the origin in the same *nature* of one being from another, is of the same power, and is truly called generation. The origin of the manhood or human nature of our Lord was not generation by the Holy Spirit; for the human nature of Christ was not of the same species with the Holy Spirit; it was created by the Spirit.

"Voetius, to the question, Wherein does creation differ from eternal generation? answers, 'The procession of the Son from the Father is an acting, necessary, natural, emanative, eternally, within God,—a real relation signified by action. Creation is action of free-will, producing change, temporal, to without God, and external, and, considered in regard to God, is a relation to the creatures not real but nominal.'*

"We have used the words, 'one living being from another,' because we could find no other expression; but though the Son is another Person, he is not another nature from the Father; though '*alius*,' he is not '*aliud*.'

"We must join the two ideas, generation and conception,—understanding from the two, the origin in the same species as in generation, and the origin wholly within and immanent, as in the conception of an idea in the mind; and this procession of the Word, it must be remembered, is eternal, without beginning. The two expressions,—the conceived Word, and the begotten Son,—define the manner of substance of the Second Person in a

* Vol. I.—Prob. de Creatione i.

way that no expression alone could do it. The word of our heart, or wisdom, or an idea, is immanent, conceived, and, as it were, begotten within us; but then it is not another person. A man's son is another person, in the species of his father, and as truly subsisting as his father; but then a son is a different essence and being from his father. But the Second Person of the Trinity being scripturally named both the Wisdom and the Son of the Father, we join both ideas, and out of them compound one, if not clear, yet intelligible and practical."—*The Glory of the Holy Ghost*, by Rev. Peter M'Laren, pp. 19–21.

The author of the book containing the above extract has kindly favoured C. G. with a MS. copy of a portion of his work, intended for a second edition, from which the two following paragraphs have been selected, and are added here as tending further to explain and to elucidate this great subject, so little understood and so much misrepresented.

"My idea is, as it were, begotten within me; it is of me, and in me; but it is not another person. My son is another person, and is of me and from me; but he is not in me, he is outside of me. But God, be it repeated, for it is the thing which the assailants of eternal generation strangely forget, God has no outside. He that is God's begotten Son is everlastingly in God, as truly as my idea is in me; and he that is God's Word and Wisdom is as truly distinct from God's Being and God's Spirit, as my son is distinct from me. The Second Person of the Godhead is both the Wisdom and the Son of the first; another person though not another thing, *alius*, though not *aliud*."

"This procession of the Son, is natural, necessary, and eternal. The Father was not before the Son, God's being was not before his knowing. His word was in him, and of him from all eternity. We cannot conceive the Father as *ever* being without the Son, of God *ever* being without his Wisdom; both are eternal, eternally distinct, eternally one. This was the archetype of two of the elements of human nature, the *I am*, and the *I think*."