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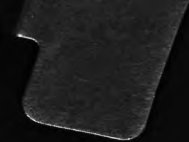
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Out of His Fulness

*REV. ANDREW MURRAY*

London: Seeley, 1884.





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**OUT OF HIS FULNESS**



# OUT OF HIS FULNESS

## ADDRESSES

DELIVERED IN AMERICA

BY THE

REV. ANDREW MURRAY

AUTHOR OF

"WITH CHRIST IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER," "ABIDE IN CHRIST,"

"THE HOLIEST OF ALL," "HUMILITY," "WAITING ON GOD,"

ETC. ETC.

*"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"*

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# I

## The Self Life

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”—MATTHEW xvi. 24.

**I**N the 13th verse we read that Jesus at Cæsarea Philippi asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” When they had answered, He asked them, “But whom say ye that I am?” And in verse 16 Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said unto him, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Then in verse 21 we read how Jesus began to tell His disciples of His approaching death; and in verse 22 how Peter began to rebuke Him, saying, “Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee. But Jesus turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If

any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

We have heard about the compromise life, and the question comes up, What lies at the root of it? What is the reason that so many Christians are wasting their lives in the terrible bondage of the world, instead of living in the manifestation and the privilege and the glory of the child of God? And another question perhaps comes to us, What can be the reason that when we see a thing is wrong and strive against it, we cannot conquer it? What can be the reason that we have a hundred times prayed and vowed, yet here we are still living a mingled, divided, half-hearted life? To these two questions there is one answer: it is *self* that is the root of the whole trouble. And therefore, if anyone asks me, "How can I get rid of this compromise life?" the answer would not be, "You must do this, or that, or the other thing," but the answer would be, 'A new life from above, the life of Christ, must take the place of the self life; then alone can we be conquerors.'

We ought always to go from the outward to the inward; let us do so here, and think not of outward things which are called self-denial, but of that inner principle which is the root of all. Let us consider from these words of the text the one word, "self." Jesus said to Peter, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny *himself*, his own self, and take up the cross, and follow

Me." That is the mark of the disciple ; that is the secret of the Christian life—deny self, and all will come right. Note that Peter was a believer, and a believer who had been taught by the Holy Spirit. He had given an answer that pleased Christ wonderfully: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Do not think that that was nothing extraordinary. We learn it in our catechisms ; Peter did not ; and Christ saw that the Holy Spirit of the Father had been teaching him, and He said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas." But note how strong the carnal man still is in Peter. Christ speaks of his cross ; Peter could understand about the glory, "Thou art the Son of God" ; but about the cross and the death he could not understand, and he ventured in his self-confidence to say, "Lord, that shall never be ; Thou canst not be crucified and die." And Christ had to rebuke him, "Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou savourest not the things that be of God." You are talking like a mere carnal man, and not as the Spirit of God would teach you. Then Christ went on to say, "Remember, it is not only I who am to be crucified, but you ; it is not only I who am to die, but you also. If a man would be My disciple, he must deny self ; he must take up his cross and follow Me." Let us dwell upon this one word, "self." It is only as we learn to know what self is that we really know what is at the root of all our failure, and are prepared to go to Christ for deliverance.

Let us consider, first of all, the nature of this self life, then note some of its works after that, and ask the question, "How may we be delivered from it?"

Self is the power with which God has created and endowed every intelligent creature. Self is the very centre of a created being. And why did God give the angels or man a self? The object of this self was that we might bring it as an empty vessel unto God; that He might put into it His life. God gave me the power of self-determination, that I might bring this self every day, and say, "O God, work in it; I offer it to Thee." God wanted a vessel into which He might pour out His divine fulness of beauty, wisdom, and power; and so He created the world, the sun and the moon and the stars, the trees and the flowers and the grass, which all show forth the riches of His wisdom and beauty and goodness. But they do it without knowing what they do. Then God created the angels with a self and a will, to see whether they would come and voluntarily yield themselves to Him as vessels for Him to fill. But, alas! they did not all do that. There was one at the head of a great company, and he began to look upon himself, and to think of the wonderful powers with which God had endowed him, and to delight in himself. He began to think, "Must such a being as I always remain dependent on God?" He exalted himself, pride asserted itself in separation from God, and that

very moment he became, instead of an angel in heaven, a devil in hell. Self turned to God is the glory of allowing the Creator to reveal Himself in us. Self turned away from God is the very darkness and fire of hell.

We all know the terrible story of what took place further; God created man, and Satan came in the form of a serpent and tempted Eve with the thought of becoming as God, having an independent self, knowing good and evil. And while he spoke with her, he breathed into her, in those words, the very poison and the very pride of hell. His own evil spirit, the very poison of hell, entered humanity, and it is this cursed self that we have inherited from our first parents. It was that self that ruined and brought destruction upon this world. All that there has been of sin and of darkness and of wretchedness and of misery, and all that there will be throughout the countless ages of eternity in hell, will be nothing but the reign of self, the curse of self, separating man and turning him away from his God. And if we are to understand fully what Christ is to do for us, and are to become partakers of a full salvation, we must learn to know, and to hate, and to give up entirely this cursed self.

Now, what are the works of self? I might mention many, but let us take the simplest words that we are continually using, — self-will, self-confidence, self-exaltation. Self-will, pleasing self, is the great sin of man, and it is at the root of all



that compromising with the world which is the ruin of so many. Men cannot understand why they should not please themselves and do their own will. Numbers of Christians have never gotten hold of the idea that a Christian is a man who is never to seek his own will, but is always to seek the will of God, a man in whom the very spirit of Christ lives: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God!" We find Christians pleasing themselves in a thousand ways, and yet trying to be happy, and good, and useful; and they do not know that at the root of it all is self-will robbing them of the blessing. Christ said to Peter, "Peter, deny yourself." But instead of doing that, Peter said, "I will deny my Lord and not myself." He never said it in words, but Christ said to him in the last night, "Thou shalt deny Me," and he did it. What was the cause of this? Self-pleasing. He became afraid when the woman-servant charged him with belonging to Jesus, and three times said, "I know not this man, I have nothing to do with Him." He denied Christ. Just think of it! No wonder Peter wept those bitter tears. It was a choice between self, that ugly, cursed self, and that beautiful, blessed Son of God; and Peter chose self. No wonder that he thought, "Instead of denying myself, I have denied Jesus; what a choice I have made!" No wonder that he wept bitterly. Christians, look at your own lives in the light of the words of Jesus. Do you find there self-will, self-pleasing? Remember this: every time you please yourself, you deny

Jesus. It is one of the two. You must please Him only and deny self, or you must please yourself and deny Him.

Then follows self-confidence, self-trust, self-effort, self-dependence. What was it that led Peter to deny Jesus? Christ had warned him; why did he not take warning? It was self-confidence. He was so sure: "Lord, I love Thee. For three years I have followed Thee. Lord, I deny that it ever can be. I am ready to go to prison and to death." It was simply self-confidence. People have often asked me, "What is the reason I fail? I desire so earnestly, and pray so fervently, to live in God's will." And my answer generally is, "Simply because you trust yourself." They answer me, "No, I do not; I know I am not good; and I know that God is willing to keep me, and I put my trust in Jesus." But I reply, "No, my brother, no; if you trusted God and Jesus, you could not fall, but you trust yourself." Do let us believe that the cause of every failure in the Christian life is nothing but this. I trust this cursed self, instead of trusting Jesus. I trust my own strength, instead of the almighty strength of God. And that is why Christ says, "This self must be denied."

Then there is self-exaltation, another form of the works of self. Ah, how much pride and jealousy is there in the Christian world; how much sensitiveness to what men say of us or think of us; how much desire of human praise and pleasing men, instead of always living in the presence of God

with the one thought, "Am I pleasing to Him?" Christ said, "How can ye believe who receive honour one of another?" Receiving honour of one another renders a life of faith absolutely impossible. This self started from hell, it separated us from God, it is a cursed deceiver that leads us astray from Jesus.

Now comes the third point. What are we to do to get rid of it? Jesus answers us in the words of our text: "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross, and follow Me." Note it well,—I must deny myself, and take Jesus Himself as my life,—I must choose. There are two lives, the self life and the Christ life; I must choose one of the two. "Follow Me," says our Lord, "make Me the law of your existence, the rule of your conduct; give Me your whole heart; follow Me, and I will care for all." Oh, friends, it is a solemn exchange to have set before us; to come and, seeing the danger of this self, with its pride and its wickedness, to cast ourselves before the Son of God, and to say, "I deny my own life, I take Thy life to be mine."

The reason why Christians pray and pray for the Christ life to come in to them, without result, is that the self life is not denied. You ask, "How can I get rid of this self life?" You know the parable: the strong man kept his house until one stronger than he came and cast him out. Then the place was garnished and swept, but left empty, and he came back with seven other spirits worse than

himself. It is only Christ Himself coming in that can cast out self, and keep out self. This self will abide with us to the very end. Remember the Apostle Paul; he had seen the heavenly vision, and lest he should exalt himself, the thorn in the flesh was sent to humble him. There was a tendency to exalt himself, which was natural, and it would have conquered, but Christ delivered him from it by His faithful care for His loving servant. Jesus Christ is able, by His divine grace, to prevent the power of self from ever asserting itself or gaining the upper hand; Jesus Christ is willing to become the life of the soul; Jesus Christ is willing to teach us so to follow Him, and to have heart and life set upon Him alone, that He shall ever and always be the light of our souls. Then we come to what the Apostle Paul says, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." The two truths go together. First, "Not I"; that is the denial of self. Then, "but Christ liveth in me"; that is following Christ.

Look at Peter again. Christ said to him, "Deny yourself, and follow Me." Whither had he to follow? Jesus led him, even though he failed; and where did He lead him? He led him on to Gethsemane, and there Peter failed, for he slept when he ought to have been awake, watching and praying. He led him on towards Calvary, to the place where Peter denied Him. Was that Christ's leading? Praise God, it was. The Holy Spirit had not yet come in His power; Peter was yet a carnal man; the Spirit willing, but not able to

conquer; the flesh weak. What did Christ do? He led Peter on until he was broken down in utter self-abasement, and humbled in the depths of sorrow. Jesus led him on, past the grave, through the Resurrection, up to Pentecost, and the Holy Spirit came, and in the Holy Spirit Christ with His divine life came, and then it was, "Christ liveth in me."

There is but one way of being delivered from this life of self. We must follow Christ, set our hearts upon Him, listen to His teachings, give ourselves up every day, that He may be all to us, and by the power of Christ the denial of self will be a blessed, unceasing reality. Never for one hour do I expect the Christian to reach a stage at which he can say, "I have no self to deny"; never for one moment in which he can say, "I do not need to deny self." No; this fellowship with the cross of Christ will be an unceasing denial of self every hour and every moment by the grace of God. There is no place where there is full deliverance from the power of this sinful self in our flesh. We are to be crucified with Christ Jesus. We are to live with Him as those who have been baptized into His death. Think of that! Christ had no sinful self, but He had a self, and that self He actually gave up unto death. In Gethsemane He said, "Father, not My will." That unsinning self He gave up unto death that He might receive it again out of the grave from God, raised up and glorified. Can we expect to go to heaven in any

other way than He went? Beware! Remember that Christ descended into death and the grave, and it is in the death of self, following Jesus to the uttermost, that the deliverance and the life will come.

And now, what is the use that we are to make of this lesson of the Master? The first lesson will be that we should take time, and that we should humble ourselves before God, at the thought of what this self is in us; put down to the account of the self every sin, every shortcoming, all failure, and all that has been dishonouring to God, and then say, "Lord, this is what I am." Then let us allow the blessed Jesus Christ to take entire control of our life, in the faith that His life can be ours.

Do not think it is an easy thing to get rid of self. At a consecration meeting, it is easy to make a vow, and to offer a prayer, and to perform an act of surrender, but as solemn as the death of Christ was on Calvary—His giving up of His unsinning self life to God,—just as solemn must it be between us and our God—the giving up of self to death. The power of the death of Christ must come to work in us every day. Oh, think what a contrast between that self-willed Peter, and Jesus giving up His will to God! What a contrast between that self-exaltation of Peter, and the deep humility of the Lamb of God, meek and lowly in heart before God and man! What a contrast between that self-confidence of Peter, and that deep dependence of Jesus upon the Father, when He said, "I can

do nothing of **Myself.**" We are called upon to live the life of Christ, and Christ comes to live His life in us ; but one thing must first take place : we must learn to hate this self, and to deny it. As Peter said, when he denied Christ, " I have nothing to do with Him," so we must say, " I have nothing to do with self," that Christ Jesus may be all in all. Let us humble ourselves at the thought of what this self has done to us, and how it has dishonoured Jesus ; and let us pray very fervently, " Lord, by Thy light discover this self ; we beseech Thee to discover it to us. Open our eyes, that we may see what it has done, and that it is the only hindrance that has been keeping us back." Let us pray that fervently, and then let us wait upon God until we get away from all our religious exercises, and from all our religious experience, and from all our blessings, until we get close to God, with this one prayer, " Lord God, self changed an archangel into a devil, and self ruined my first parents, and brought them out of Paradise into darkness and misery, and self has been the ruin of my life and the cause of every failure ; oh, discover it to me." And then comes the blessed exchange, that a man is made willing and able to say, " Another will live the life for me, another will live with me, another will do all for me." Nothing else will do. Deny self ; take up the cross, to die with Jesus ; follow Him only. May He give us the grace to understand, and to receive, and to live the Christ life !

## II

**Waiting on God**

“ My soul, wait thou only upon God ; for my expectation is from Him.”—PSALM lxii. 5.

**T**HE solemn question comes to us, “ Is the God I have a God that is to me above all circumstances, nearer to me than any circumstance can be ? ” Brother, have you learned to live your life having God so really with you every moment, that in circumstances the most difficult He is always more present and nearer than anything around you ? All our knowledge of God’s word will help us very little, unless that comes to be the question to which we get an answer.

What can be the reason that so many of God’s beloved children complain continually, “ My circumstances separate me from God ; my trials, my temptations, my character, my temper, my friends, my enemies, anything can come between my God and me ” ? Is God not able so to take possession that He can be nearer to me than anything in the world ? Must riches or poverty, joy or sorrow, have a power over me that my God has not ? No. But why, then, do God’s children so often complain that their circumstances separate them from Him ?



There can be but one answer, "They do not know their God." If there is trouble or feebleness in the Church of God, it is because of this. We do not know the God we have. That is why, in addition to the promise, "I will be thy God," the promise is so often added, "And ye shall know that I am your God." If I know that, not through man's teaching, not with my mind or my imagination; but if I know that, in the living evidence which God gives in my heart, then I know that the divine presence of my God will be so wonderful, and my God Himself will be so beautiful, and so near, that I can live all my days and years a conqueror through Him that loved me. Is not that the life which we need?

The question comes again, Why is it that God's people do not know their God? And the answer is, They take anything rather than God,—ministers, and preaching, and books, and prayers, and work, and efforts, any exertion of human nature, instead of waiting, and waiting long if need be, for God to reveal Himself. No teaching that we may get, and no effort that we can put forth, can put us in possession of this blessed light of God as all in all to our souls. But still it is attainable, it is within reach, *if God will reveal Himself*. That is the one necessity. I would to God that everyone would ask his heart whether he has said, and is saying every day, "I want more of God. Do not speak to me only of the beautiful truth there is in the Bible. That cannot satisfy

me. I want God." In our inner Christian life, in our everyday prayers, in our Christian living, in our churches, in our prayer-meetings, in our fellowship, it must come to that—that God always has the first place; and if that be given Him, He will take possession. If in our individual life every eye were set upon God, upon the living God, every heart were crying, "My soul thirsteth for God," what power, what blessing, and what presence of the everlasting God would be revealed to us! Let me use an illustration. When a man is giving an illustrated lecture, he often uses a long pointer to indicate places on a map or chart. Do the people look at that pointer? No; that only helps to show them the place on the map, and they do not think of it,—it might be of fine gold; but the *pointer* cannot satisfy them. They want to see what the pointer points at. And this Bible is nothing but a pointer, pointing to God; and—may I say it with reverence—even Jesus Christ Himself came to point us, to show us the way, to bring us to God. I am afraid there are many people who love Christ and who trust in Him, but who fail of the one great object of His work; they have never learned to understand what the scripture saith, "He died, that He might *bring us unto God.*"

There is a difference between the way, and the end which I am aiming at. I might be travelling amid most beautiful scenery, in the most delightful company; but if I have a home to which I

want to go, all the scenery, and all the company, and all the beauty and happiness around me, cannot satisfy me; I want to reach the end; I want my home. It is always the end a man aims at controls his life. And God is meant to be the home of our souls. Christ came into the world to bring us back to God, and unless we take Christ for what God intended we should, our religion will always be a divided one. What do we read in Hebrews vii? "He is able to save to the uttermost."—Whom? "Them that *come to God* by Him"; not them that only come to Christ. In Christ—bless His name—we have the graciousness, the condescension, and the tenderness of God. But we are in danger of standing there, and being content with that, and Christ wants to bring us back to rejoice as much in the glory of God Himself, in His righteousness, His holiness, His authority, His presence, and His power. He can save completely those who *come to God* through Him!

Now, just a very few thoughts on the way by which I can come to know God as this God above all circumstances, filling my heart and life every day. The one thing needful is: I must wait upon God. The original is,—it is in our Dutch version, and it is in the margin too,—"My soul is silent unto God." Why ought there to be this silence of the soul unto God? A soul conscious of its littleness, its ignorance, its prejudices, and its dangers from passion, from all that is human and sinful,—a soul conscious of that cannot but say, "I want

the everlasting God to come in and to take hold of me; to take such hold of me that I may be kept in the hollow of His hand for my life long; I want Him to take such possession of me that every moment He may work all in all in me." That is what is implied in the very nature of our God. How we ought to be silent unto Him, and wait upon Him!

May I ask, with reverence, What is God for? A God is for this: to be the light and the life of creation, the source and power of all existence. The beautiful trees, the green grass, the bright sun, God created them all that they might show forth His beauty, His wisdom, and His glory. The tree of one hundred years old—when it was planted God did not give it a stock of life by which to carry on its existence. Nay, verily, God clothes the lilies every year afresh with their beauty; every year God clothes the tree with its foliage and its fruit. Every day and every hour it is God who maintains the life of all nature. And God created us that we might be the empty vessels in which He could work out His beauty, His will, His love, and the likeness of His blessed Son. That is what we need a God for, to work in us by His mighty operation, without one moment's ceasing. When I begin to get hold of that, I no longer think of the true Christian life as a high impossibility, and an unnatural thing, but I say, "It is the most natural thing in creation that God should have me every moment, and that my God should

be nearer to me than all else." Just think for a moment, what folly it is to imagine that I cannot expect God to be with me every moment. Just took at the sunshine; have you ever had any trouble as you were working or reading a book in the light the sun gives? Have you ever said, "Oh, how can I keep that light, how can I hold it fast, how can I be sure that I shall continue to have it to use?" You never thought that. God has taken care that the sun itself should provide you with light; and without your care the light comes unbidden. And I ask you, What think you? Has God arranged that the light of that sun that will one day be burned up, can come to you unconsciously and abide on you blessedly and mightly; and is God not willing, or is He not able, to let His light and His presence so shine through you that you can walk all the day with God nearer to you than anything in nature? Praise God for the assurance; He can do it. And why does He not do it? Why so seldom, and why in such feeble measure? There is but one answer: you do not let Him. You are so occupied and filled with other things, religious things, preaching and praying, studying and working, so occupied with your religion, that you *do not give God the time* to make Himself known, and to enter in and to take possession. Oh, brother, listen to the word of the man who knew God so well, and begin to say, "My soul, wait thou only upon God."

I might show that, as this is the very glory of

the Creator, so it is the very life Christ brought into the world, the life He lived, and the very life Christ wants to lift us up to in its entire dependence on the Father. The very secret of the Christ-life is this: such a consciousness of God's presence, that whether it was Judas, who came to betray Him, or Caiaphas, who condemned Him unjustly, or Pilate, who gave Him up to be crucified, the presence of the Father was upon Him, and within Him, and around Him, and man could not touch His spirit. And that is what God wants to be to you and to me. Does not all your anxious restlessness and futile effort prove that you have not let God do His work? God is drawing you to Himself; your heart often longs for Him. This is not your own wish, and the stirring of your own heart, but the everlasting divine magnet is drawing you. These restless yearnings and thirstings, remember, are the work of God. Come and be still, and wait upon God. He will reveal Himself.

And how am I to wait on God? In answer I would say: first of all, in prayer take more time to be still before God without saying one word. What is, in prayer, the most important thing? That I know that I have the ear of Him to whom I speak. We are not ready to offer our petition until we are fully conscious of having secured the attention of God. You tell me you know all that. Yes, you know it; but you need to have your heart filled by the Holy Spirit with the holy conscious-

ness that the everlasting, almighty God is indeed come very near you. The loving God is longing to have you for His own. Be still before God, and wait, and say, "O God, take possession. Reveal Thyself, not to my thoughts or imaginations, but by the solemn, awe-bringing, soul-subduing consciousness that God is shining upon me; bring me to the place of dependence and humility."

Prayer may indeed be waiting upon God, but there is a great deal of prayer that is not waiting upon God. Waiting on God is the first and the best beginning for prayer. When we bow in the humble, silent acknowledgment of God's glory and nearness, ere we begin to pray, there will be the very blessing that we often get only at the end. From the very beginning I come face to face with God; I am in touch with the everlasting omnipotence of love, and I know my God will bless me. Let us never be afraid to be still before God; we shall then carry that stillness into our work; and when we go to church on Sunday, or to the prayer-meeting on week-days, it will be with the one desire that nothing may stand betwixt us and God, and that we may never be so occupied with hearing and listening as to forget the presence of God.

Oh, that God might make every minister what Moses was at the foot of Mount Sinai! "Moses led the people out *to meet God*," and they did meet Him until they were afraid. Let every minister ask with all the earnestness his soul can command, that God may deliver him from the sin of preach-

ing and teaching, without making the people feel first of all, "The man wants to bring us to God Himself." It can be felt, not only in the words, but in the very disposition of the humble, waiting, worshipping heart. We must carry this waiting into all our worship; we will have to make a study of it; we will have to speak about it; we will have to help each other, for the truth has been too much lost in the Church of Christ; we must wait upon God about it. Then we shall be able to carry it out into our daily life. There are so many Christians who wonder that they fail; but think of the ease with which they talk and join in conversation, spending hours in it, never thinking that all this may be dissipating the soul's power, and leading them to spend hours not in the immediate presence of God. I am afraid this is the great difficulty: that we are not willing to make the needed sacrifice for a life of continual waiting upon God. Are there not some of us who would feel it an impossibility to spend every moment under the covering of the Most High, "in the secret of His pavilion"? Beloved, do not think it too high, or too difficult. It is too difficult for you and me to attain, but our God will give it to us. Let us begin even now to wait more earnestly and intensely upon God. Let us in our homes sometimes bow a little in silence; let us in our closets wait in silence, and make a covenant, it may be, without words, that with our whole hearts we will seek God's presence to come in upon us.



What is religion? Just as much as you have of God working in you, that alone is religion. And if you want more religion, more grace, more strength, and more fruitfulness, you must have more of God. Let that be the cry of our hearts,—More of God! More of God! More of God! And let us say to our souls, “My soul, wait thou upon God; for my expectation is from Him.”

## III

## Entrance into Rest

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”—HEBREWS iv. 1.

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”—HEBREWS iv. 11.

I WANT, in the simplest way possible, to answer the question, “How does a man enter into that rest?” and to point out the simple steps that he takes, all included in the one act of surrender and faith.

And the first step, I think, is this: that a man learns to say, “I believe, heartily, there is rest in a life of faith.” Israel passed through two stages. This is beautifully expressed in the fifth of Deuteronomy: “He brought us out, that He might bring us in”—two parts of God’s work of redemption—“He brought us out from Egypt, that He might bring us into Canaan.” And that is applicable to every believer. At your conversion, God brought you out of Egypt, and the same Almighty God is longing to bring you into the Canaan life. You know how God brought the Israelites out, but they would not let Him bring them in; and they had to wander for forty years

in the wilderness—the type, alas! of so many Christians. God brings them out in conversion, but they will not let Him bring them in into all that He has prepared for them. To a man who asks me, “How can I enter into the rest?” I say, first of all, speak this word, “*I do believe that there is such a rest* into which Jesus, our Joshua, can bring a trusting soul.” And if you would know what the difference is between the two lives—the life you have been leading, and the life you now want to lead—just look at the wilderness and Canaan. What are the points of difference? In the wilderness, wandering for forty years backward and forward; in Canaan, perfect rest in the land that God gave them. That is the difference between the life of a Christian who has, and one who has not, entered into Canaan. In wandering backward and forward; going after the world, and coming back and repenting; led astray by temptation, and returning only to go off again;—a life of ups and downs. In Canaan, on the other hand, a life of rest, because the soul has learned to trust: “God keeps me every hour in His mighty power.” There is a second difference: The life in the wilderness was a life of want; in Canaan, a life of plenty. In the wilderness there was nothing to eat; there was often no water. God graciously supplied their wants by the manna, and the water from the rock. But, alas! they were not content with this, and their life was one of want and murmurings. But in Canaan God

gave them vineyards that they had not planted, and the old corn of the land was there waiting for them; a land flowing with milk and honey; a land that lived by the rain of heaven and had the very care of God Himself. O Christian, come and say to-day, "I believe that there is a possibility of such a change out of that life of spiritual deadness, and darkness, and sadness, and complaining, that I have often lived, into the land of the supply of every want; where the grace of Jesus is proved sufficient every day, every hour." Say to-day, "I believe in the possibility that there is such a land of rest for me."

And then, the third difference: In the wilderness there was no victory. When they tried, after they had sinned at Kadesh, to go up against their enemies, they were defeated. In the land they conquered every enemy; from Jericho onward, they went from victory to victory. And so God waits, and Christ waits, and the Holy Spirit waits, to give victory every day; not freedom from temptation; no, not that; but in union with Christ, power that can say, "I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me." "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." May God help every heart to say that!

Then comes the second step. I want you to say not only, "I believe there is such a life," but, second, "*I have not had it yet.*" Say that. "I have never yet got that." Some may say, "I have sought it"; some may say, "At times I thought I

had found it, but I lost it again." Let every one be honest with God.

And now, will all who have never yet found it honestly begin to say, "Lord, up to this time I have never had it"? And why is it of such consequence to speak thus? Because, dear friends, some people want to glide into this life of rest gradually; just quietly to steal in; and God won't have it. Your life in the wilderness has not only been a life of sadness to yourself, but of sin and dishonour to God. Every deeper entrance into salvation must always be by the way of conviction and confession; therefore, let every Christian be willing to say, "Alas! I have not lived that life, and I am guilty; I have dishonoured God; I have been like Israel; I have provoked Him to wrath by my unbelief and disobedience. God have mercy upon me!" Oh, let it go up before God—the secret confession: "I haven't it; alas! I have not glorified God by a life in the land of rest."

Then comes the third word I want you to speak, and that is, "*Thank God, that life is for me.*" Some say, "I believe there is such a life, but not for me." There are people who continually say, "Oh, my character is so unstable; my will is naturally very weak; my temperament is nervous and excitable, it is impossible for me always to live without worry, resting in God." Beloved brother, do not say that. You say so only for one reason: You do not know what your God will do for you. Do begin to look

away from self, and to look up to God. Take that precious word: "He brought them out that *He might bring them in.*" The God who took them through the Red Sea was the God who took them through Jordan into Canaan. The God who converted you is the God who is able to give you every day this blessed life. Oh, begin to say, with the beginnings of a feeble faith, even before you claim it, begin even intellectually to say, "It is for me; I do believe that. God does not disinherit any of His children. What he gives is for every one. I believe that blessed life is waiting for me. It is meant for me. God is waiting to bestow it, and to work it in me. Glory be to His blessed name! My soul says, it is for me too." Oh, take that little word "me," and, looking up into the very face of God, dare to say, "This inestimable treasure—it is for me, the weakest and the unworthiest; it is for me." Have you said that? Say it now, "This life is possible to me too."

The following step is thus: "*I can never, by any effort of mine, grasp it; it is God must bestow it on me.*" I want you to be very bold in saying, "It is for me." But then, I want you to fall down very low and say, "I cannot seize it; I cannot take it to myself." And how can you then get it? Praise God, if once He has brought you down in the consciousness of utter helplessness and self-despair, then comes the time that He can draw nigh and ask you, "Will you trust your God to work this in you?" Dearly beloved Christians,

say in your hearts, "I never, by any effort, can take hold of God, or seize this for myself; it is God must give it." Cherish this blessed impotence. It is He who brought us out, who Himself must bring us in. It is your greatest happiness to be impotent. Pray God by the Holy Spirit to reveal to you this true impotence, and that will open the way for your faith to say, "Lord, Thou must do it, or it will never be done." God will do it. People wonder, when they hear so many sermons about faith, and such earnest pleading to believe, and ask why it is they cannot believe. There is just one answer: It is self. Self is working; is trying; is struggling, and self must fail. But when you come to the end of self, and can only cry, "Lord, help me! Lord, help me!"—then the deliverance is nigh; believe that. It was God brought the people in. It is God who will bring you in.

A fifth step is taken when we see that *we must be willing, for the sake of the rest, to give up everything*. The grace of God is very free. It is given without money and without price. And yet, on the other hand, Jesus said that every man who wants the pearl of great price must sacrifice his all, must sell all that he has to buy that pearl. It is not enough to see the beauty, the attractiveness, and the glory, and almost to taste the gladness and the joy of this wonderful life as it has been set before you. You must become the possessor, the owner of the pearl. The man who found the field with a treasure, and the man who found the great pearl, were both

glad ; but they had not yet got it. They had found it, seen it, desired it, rejoiced in it ; but they had not yet got it. Not until they went and sold all, gave up everything, and bought the ground, and bought the pearl. Ah, friends, there is a great deal that has to be given up : the world, its pleasures, its favour, its good opinion. You are to stand to the world in the same relation as Jesus did. The world rejected Him, and cast Him out, and you are to take up the position of your Lord, to whom you belong, and to follow with the rejected Christ. You have to give up everything. You have to give up all that is good in yourself, and to be humbled in the dust of death. And that is not all. Your past religious life and experience and successes—you have to give all up and become nothing, that God alone may have the glory. God has brought you out in conversion ; it was God's own life given you : but you have defiled it with disobedience and with unbelief. Give it all up. Give up all your own wisdom, and your own thoughts about God's work. "How hard it is for the minister of the gospel to give up all his wisdom, and to lay it at the feet of Jesus, to become a fool, and to say, "Lord, I know nothing as I should know it. I have been preaching the gospel, and how little I have seen of the glory of the blessed land, and the blessed life!" Why is it that the blessed Spirit cannot teach us more effectually? No reason but this: the wisdom of man prevents it; the wisdom of man prevents the light of God from shining in. And so we could



say of other things ; give up all. Some may have an individual sin to give up. There may be a Christian man who is angry with his brother. There may be a Christian woman who has quarrelled with her neighbour. There may be friends who are not living as they should. There may be Christians holding fast some little doubtful thing, not willing to surrender and leave behind the whole of the wilderness life and lust. Oh, do take this step, and say, "I am ready to give up everything to have this pearl of great price ; my time, my attention, my business, I count all subordinate to this rest of God as the first thing in my life ; I yield all to walk in perfect fellowship with God." You cannot get that and live every day in perfect fellowship with God, without giving up time to it. You take time for everything. How many hours a day has a young lady spent for years and years that she may become proficient on the piano ? How many years does a young man study to fit himself for the profession of the law or medicine ? Hours, and days, and weeks, and months, and years, gladly given up to perfect himself for his profession. And do you expect that religion is so cheap that without giving time you can find close fellowship with God ? You cannot. Brothers and sisters, the pearl of great price is worth everything. God is worth everything. Christ is worth everything. Oh, come to-day, and say, "Lord, at any cost help me ; I do want to live this life." And if you find it difficult to say this, and if there is a struggle

within the heart, never mind; say to God, "Lord, I thought I was willing, but I see how much unwillingness there is; come and discover what the evil is still in the heart." By His grace, if you will lie at His feet and trust Him, you may depend upon it deliverance will come.

Then comes the next step, and that is to say: "*I do now give up myself to the holy and everlasting God for Him to lead me into this perfect rest.*" Ah, friends, we must learn to meet God face to face. My sin has been against God. David felt that when he said, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." It is God on the judgment seat whose face you will have to meet personally. It is God Himself, personally, who met you to pardon your sins. Come to-day and put yourself into the hands of the living God. God is love. God is near. God is waiting to give you His blessing. The heart of God is yearning over you. "My child," God says, "you think you are longing for rest; it is I that am longing for you, because I desire to rest in your heart as My home, as My temple." You need your God. Yes, but your God needs you, to find the full satisfaction of His Father heart in Christ in you. Come to-day and say, "I do now give up myself to Christ. I have made the choice. I deliberately say, 'Lord God, I am the purchaser of the pearl of great price. I give up everything for it. In the name of Jesus I accept that life of perfect rest.'"

And then comes my last thought. When you

have said that, then add: "And now, *I trust God to make it all real to me in my experience.* Whether I am to live one year, or thirty years, I have heard it to-day again: 'God is Jehovah, the great I AM of the everlasting future, the eternal One; and thirty years hence is to Him just the same as now'; and that God gives Himself to me, not according to my power to hold Him, but according to His almighty power of love to hold me." Will you trust God to-day for the future? Oh, will you look up to God in Christ Jesus once again? A thousand times you have heard, and thought, and thanked—"God has given us His Son"; but will you not to-day say, "How shall He not with Him give me all things, every moment and every day of my life?" Say that in faith. "How shall God not be willing to keep me in the light of His countenance, in the full experience of Christ's saving power? Did God make the sun to shine so brightly, and is the light so willing to pour itself into every nook and corner where it can find entrance? And will not my God, who is love, be willing all the day to shine into this heart of mine, from morning to night, from year's end to year's end?" God is love, and longs to give Himself to us.

Oh, come, Christians, you have hitherto lived a life in your own strength. Will you not begin to-day? Will you not choose a life in which God shall be all, and in which you rest in Him for all? Will you not choose a life in which you shall say,

“O God, I ask, I expect, I trust Thee for it. I enter this day into the rest of God to let God keep me; to let God keep me every hour. I enter into the rest of God.” Are you ready to say that? Be of good courage; fear not, you can trust God. He brings into rest. Listen to God’s word in the Prophets once again: “Take heed, and be quiet. Fear not, neither be faint-hearted.” Joshua brought Israel into the land. God did it through Joshua; and Joshua is Jesus, your Jesus, who washed you in His blood; your Jesus, whom you have learned to know as a precious Saviour. Trust Him to-day afresh: “O my Joshua, take me, bring me in and I will trust Thee, and in Thee the Father.” You may count upon it. He will take you, and the work will be done.

## IV

**The Kingdom First**

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.”—MATTHEW vi. 33.

**Y**OU have heard what need there is of unity in Christian life and Christian work. And where is the bond of unity between the life of the Church or the life of the individual believer, and the work to be done among the heathen? One of the expressions for that unity is, “Seek first the Kingdom of God.” That does not mean, as many people take it, “Seek salvation; seek to get into the Kingdom, and then thank God, and rest there.” Ah, no; the meaning of that word is entirely different and infinitely larger. It means, let the Kingdom of God, in all its breadth and length, in all its heavenly glory and power, let the Kingdom of God be the one thing you live for, and all other things will be added unto you. “Seek first the Kingdom of God.” Let me just try to answer two very simple questions; the one, Why should the Kingdom of God be first? and the other, How can it be? The one, Why should it be so? God has created us as reasonable beings, so that the more clearly we see, that, according to the law of nature, according to the fitness of things,

something that is set before us is proper and an absolute necessity, we so much the more willingly accept it, and aim after it. And now, why does Christ say this, "Seek first the Kingdom of God"? If you want to understand the reason, look at God, and look at man.

Look at God. Who is God? The great Being through whom alone the universe exists; in whom alone it can have its happiness. It cannot find any rest or joy but in Him. Oh that Christians understood and believed that God is a fountain of happiness, perfect, everlasting blessedness! What would the result be? Every Christian would say, The more I can have of God, the happier. The more of God's will, and the more of God's love, and the more of God's fellowship, the happier. How Christians, if they believed that with their whole heart, would, with the utmost ease, give up everything that would separate them from God! Why is it that we find it so hard to hold fellowship with God? A young minister once said to me, "Why is it that I have so much more interest in study than in prayer, and how can you teach me the art of fellowship with God?" My answer was, "Oh, my brother, if we have any true conception of what God is, the art of fellowship with Him will come naturally, and will be a delight." Yes, if we believed God to be only joy to every one who comes to Him, just a fountain of unlimited blessing, how we should give up all for Him! Has not joy a far stronger attraction

than anything in the world? Is it not in every beauty, or in every virtue, in every pursuit, the joy that is set before us that draws? And if we believed that God is a fountain of joy, and sweetness, and power to bless, how our hearts would turn aside from everything, and say, "Oh, the beauty of my God! I rejoice in Him alone." But, alas! the Kingdom of God looks to many as a burden, and as something unnatural. It looks like a strain, and we seek some relaxation in the world, and God is not our chief joy. I come to you with a message. It is right, on account of what God is as Infinite Love, as Infinite Blessing, it is right, yea more, it is our highest privilege, to listen to Christ's words, and to seek God and His Kingdom first and above everything.

Then look at man again; man's nature. What was man created for? To live in the likeness of God, and as His image. Now, if we have been created in the image and likeness of God, we can find our happiness in nothing except that in which God finds His happiness. The more like Him we are, the happier. And in what does God find His happiness? In two things: Everlasting righteousness and everlasting beneficence. God is righteousness everlasting. "He is light, and in Him is no darkness." The Kingdom, the domination, the rule of God, will bring us nothing but righteousness. "Seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." If men but knew what sin is, and if men really longed to be free from everything

like sin, what a grand message this would be! Jesus comes to lead me to God and His righteousness. We were created to be like God, in His perfect righteousness and holiness. What a prospect! And in His love too. The Kingdom of God means this, that there is in God a rule of universal love. He loves, and loves, and never ceases to love; and He longs to bless all who will yield to His pleadings. God is Light, and God is Love. And now the message comes to man: Can you think of a higher nobility; can you think of anything grander than to take the position that God takes, and to be one with God in His Kingdom? *i.e.* to have His Kingdom fill your heart, to have God Himself as your King and portion, to have His Spirit and disposition animate you, to have your whole being possessed by His rule. Yes, my friends, let us remember that we must not just try to get here and there one and another of the blessings of the Kingdom. But the glory of the Kingdom is this, that it is the Kingdom of God where God is all in all. The French Empire, when Napoleon lived, had military glory as the ideal. Every Frenchman's heart thrilled at the name of Napoleon as the man who had given the empire its glory. If we realised what it means,—our God takes us up into His Kingdom and puts His Kingdom into us, and with the Kingdom we have God Himself, that blessed One, possessing us—surely there would be nothing that could move our hearts to enthusiasm like this?



The Kingdom of God first! Blessed be His name! Look at man. I don't speak about man's sins, and about man's wretchedness, and about man's seeking everywhere for pleasure, and for rest, and for deliverance from sin, but I just say, Think what man is by creation, and think what man is now by redemption; and let every heart say, "It is right. There is no blessedness or glory like that of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God ought to be first in my whole life and being."

But now comes the important question: "How can I attain this?" Here we come to the great question that is troubling the lives of tens of thousands of Christians throughout the world. And it is strange that it is so very difficult for them to find the answer; that tens of thousands are not able to give an answer; and others, when the answer is given, cannot understand it. The day the centurion found his joy in being devoted to the Roman Empire, it took charge of him with all its power and glory. Dear friends, how are we to attain to this blessed position in which the Kingdom of God shall fill our hearts with such enthusiasm that it will spontaneously be first every day? The answer is, first of all, *give up everything for it*. You have heard of the Roman soldier who gave up his soul, his affection, his life, who gave up everything to be a soldier; and you have often seen, in history ancient and modern, how men who were not soldiers gave up their lives in sacrifice for a

king or a country. You have heard how, in the South African Republic, not many years ago, the war of liberty was fought. After three years of annexation by the English, the people said they would endure it no longer, and so they gathered together to fight for their liberty. They knew how weak they were, as compared with the English power, but they said, "We must have our liberty." They bound themselves together to fight for it, and when that vow had been made, they went to their homes to prepare for the struggle. Such a thrill of enthusiasm passed through that country, that in many cases women, when their husbands might have been allowed to stay at home, said to them: No, go, even though you have not been commanded. And there were mothers who, when one son was called out to the front, said: No, take two, three. Every man and woman was ready to die. It was in very deed "Our country first, before everything." And even so, friends, must it be with you if you want this wonderful Kingdom of God to take possession of you. I pray you, by the mercies of God, give up everything for it. You do not know at once what that may mean, but take the words and speak them out at the footstool of God: "Anything, everything, for the Kingdom of God." Persevere in that, and by the Holy Spirit your God will begin to open to you the double blessing: on the one hand, the blessedness of the Kingdom which comes to possess your heart; and, on the other hand, the blessed-

ness of being surrendered to Him, and sacrificing and giving up all for Him.

“The Kingdom of God first!” How am I to reach that blessed life? The first answer is: Give up everything for it. And then a second answer would be this: *Live every day and hour of your life in the humble desire to maintain that position.* There are people who hear this, and who say that it is all true, and that they want to obey it. But if you were to ask them how much time they spend with God day by day, you would be surprised and grieved to hear how little time they give up to Him. And yet they wonder that the blessedness of the divine life disappears. We prove the value we attach to things by the time we devote to them. The Kingdom should be first every day, and all the day. Let the Kingdom be first every morning. *Begin the day with God, and God Himself will maintain His Kingdom in your heart.* Do believe that. Rome did its utmost to maintain the authority of the man who gave himself to live for it. And God, the living God, will He not maintain His authority in your soul if you submit to Him? He will, indeed. Come to Him; only come, and give yourself up to Him in fellowship through Christ Jesus. Seek to maintain that fellowship with God all the day. Ah, friends, a man cannot have the Kingdom of God first, and at times, by way of relaxation, throw it off and seek his enjoyment in the things of this world. People have a secret idea life will become too solemn, too

great a strain; it will be too difficult every moment of the day, from morning to evening, to have the Kingdom of God first. One sees at once how wrong it is to think thus. The presence of the love of God must every moment be our highest joy. Let us say, "By the help of God, it shall ever be the Kingdom of God first."

And then, my last remark, in answer to that question, "How can it be?" is this: *It can be only by the power of the Holy Ghost.* Let us remember that God's Word comes to us with the language, "Be filled with the Spirit"; and if you are content with less of the Spirit than God offers, not utterly and entirely yielding to be filled with the Spirit, you do not obey the command, and you cannot possibly keep the Kingdom first. But listen: God has made a wonderful provision. Jesus Christ came preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and proclaimed, "The Kingdom is at hand." "Some," He said, "are standing here who will not see death until they see the Kingdom come in power." He said to the disciples, "The Kingdom is within you." And when did the Kingdom come—that Kingdom of God upon earth? When the Holy Ghost descended. On Ascension Day the King went and sat down upon the throne at the right hand of God, and the Kingdom of God, in Christ, the Kingdom of heaven upon earth, was inaugurated. When the Holy Ghost came down He brought God into the heart, and Christ, and established the rule of God in power. I am afraid sometimes,

that in speaking of the Holy Spirit we forget one thing. The Holy Spirit is very much spoken of in connection with power; and it is right that we should seek power. It is not so much spoken of in connection with the graces. And yet these are always more important than the gifts of power—the holiness, the humility, the meekness, the gentleness, and the lovingness; these are the true marks of the Kingdom. We speak rightly of the Holy Spirit as the only one who can breathe all this into us. But I think there is a third thing almost more important, that we forget, and that is, in the Spirit, the Father and the Son themselves come. When Christ first promised the Holy Spirit, and spoke about His approaching coming, He said, “In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, *and I in you*. He that loveth me keepeth my commandments; and My Father will love him, and *we will come and make our abode with him*.” Brother, would you have the Kingdom of God first in your life, you must have the King Himself in your heart. If my heart be set upon a thing, I may be bound with chains, but the moment the chains are loosed I fly towards the object of my affection and desire. And just so the King must be within us, and then it is easy to say, “The Kingdom first.” To have the Kingdom within us in truth, we must have God the Father, and Christ the Son, by the Holy Ghost within us. No Kingdom without the King.

You are called to likeness with Christ. Oh,

how many Christians strive after this part and that part of the likeness of Christ, and forget the root of the whole! What is the root of all? That Christ gave Himself up utterly to God, and His Kingdom and glory. He gave His life that God's Kingdom might be established. Do you the same to-day, and give your life to God to be every moment a living sacrifice, and the Kingdom will come with power into your heart. Give yourself up to Christ. Let Christ the King reign in your heart, and the heavenly Kingdom will come there, and the Presence and the Rule of God be known in power. Oh, think of that wonderful thing that is going to happen in the great eternity. We read of it in 1st Corinthians: God has entrusted Christ with the Kingdom, but there is coming a day when Christ shall come Himself again to be subjected unto the Father, and He shall give up the Kingdom to the Father, that God may be all, and in that day Christ shall say before the universe, "This is My glory, I give back the Kingdom to the Father!" Christians, if your Christ finds His glory here on earth in dying and sacrificing Himself for the Kingdom, and then in eternity again in giving the Kingdom to God, shall not you and I come to God to do the same and count anything we have as loss, that the Kingdom of God may be made manifest, and that God may be glorified?

## V

**The Christ Life**

“Christ who is our life.”—COLOSSIANS iii. 4.

ONE question that rises in every mind is this: “How can I live that life of perfect trust in God?” Many do not know the right answer, or the full answer. It is this: “Christ must live it in me.” That is what Christ became man for; *as a man to live a life of trust in God, and so to show to us how we ought to live.* When He had done that upon earth, He went to heaven, that He might do more than show us, might give us, and live in us that life of trust. It is as we understand what the life of Christ is, and how it becomes ours, that we shall be prepared to desire and to ask of Him that He would live it Himself in us. When first we have seen what the life is, then we shall understand how it is that He can actually take possession, and make us like Himself. I want especially to direct attention to that first question. I wish to set before you the life of Christ as He lived it, that we may understand what it is that He has for us and what we can expect from Him. Christ Jesus lived a life upon earth that He expects us literally to imitate. We often say that we long to

be like Christ. We study the traits of His character, mark His footsteps, and pray for grace to be like Him, and yet, somehow, we succeed but very little. And why? Because we are seeking to pluck the fruit while the root is absent. If we want really to understand what the imitation of Christ means, we must go to that which constituted the very root of His life before God. It was a life of absolute dependence, absolute trust, absolute surrender, and until we are one with Him in what is the principle of His life, it is in vain to seek here or there to copy the graces of that life.

In the gospel story we find five great points of special importance: the birth, the life on earth, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension. In these we have what an old writer has called "the process of Jesus Christ"; the process by which He became what He is to-day—our glorified King, and our life. In all this life process we must be made like unto Him. Look at the first. What have we to say about His birth? This: He received His life *from God*. What about His life upon earth? He lived that life in dependence *upon God*. About His death? He gave up His life *to God*. About His resurrection? He was raised from the dead *by God*. And about His ascension? He lives His life in glory *with God*.

First, He received His life *from God*. And why is it of consequence that we should look to that? Because Christ Jesus had in that the starting-point of His whole life. He said, "The



Father sent Me"; "The Father hath given the Son all things"; "The Father hath given the Son to have life in Himself." Christ received the life of God as His own life, just as God has His life in Himself. And yet, all the time it was a life given and received. "Because the Father almighty has given this life unto me, the Son of Man on earth, I can count upon God to maintain it and to carry me through all." That is the first lesson we need. We need often to meditate on it, and to pray, and to think, and to wait before God, until our hearts open to the wonderful consciousness that the everlasting God has a divine life within us which cannot exist but through Him. If I believe God has given me His life, and that it roots in Him, I shall feel it must be maintained by Him. We often think that God has given us a life which is now our own, a spiritual life of which we are to take charge; and then we complain that we cannot keep it right. No wonder. We must learn to live on earth even as Jesus did. I have a God-given treasure in this earthen vessel. I have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. I have the life of God's Son within me, given me by God Himself, and it can only be maintained by God Himself as I live in fellowship with Him.

What does the Apostle Paul teach us in Romans vi., where he tells us that we must reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus? He goes on at once to say, "Therefore

yield, present yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." How often a Christian hears solemn words about his being alive to God, and his having to reckon himself dead indeed to sin, and alive to God in Christ! He does not know what to do; he immediately casts about, "How can I keep it, this death and this life?" Listen to what Paul says. The moment that you reckon yourself dead to sin and alive to God, *go with that life to God Himself*, and present yourself to Him as alive from the dead, and say to God, "Lord, Thou hast given me this life. Thou alone canst keep it. I bring it to Thee. I cannot understand all. I hardly know what I have got, but I come to Thee to perfect what Thou hast begun." To live like Christ, I must be conscious every moment that my life has come from God, and He alone can maintain it.

Then, secondly, how did Christ live out His life during the thirty-three years in which He walked here upon earth? He lived it in dependence *upon God*. You know how continually He says, "The Son can do nothing of Himself. The words that I speak, I speak not of Myself." He waited unceasingly for the teaching, and the commands, and the guidance of the Father. He prayed for power from the Father. Whatever He did, He did in the name of the Father. He, the Son of God, felt the need of much prayer, of persevering prayer, of bringing down from heaven and maintaining the life of fellowship with God in prayer. We hear a

great deal about trusting God. Most blessed ! And we may say, "Ah, that is what I want," and yet forget what is the very secret of all,—that God, in Christ, must work all in us. I not only need God as an object of trust, but I must have Christ within as the power to trust; He must live His own life of trust in me. Look at it in that wonderful story of Paul the apostle, the beloved servant of God. He is in danger of self-confidence, and God in heaven sends that terrible trial in Asia to bring him down, lest he trust in himself and not in the living God. God watched over His servant that he should be kept trusting. Remember that other story about the thorn in the flesh, in 2 Corinthians xii., and think what that means. He was in danger of exalting himself, and the blessed Master came to humble him, and to teach him: "I keep thee weak, that thou mayest learn to trust not in thyself, but in Me." If we are to enter into the rest of faith, and to abide there; if we are to live the life of victory in the land of Canaan, it must begin here. We must be broken down from all self-confidence, and learn, like Christ, to depend absolutely and unceasingly upon God. There is a greater work to be done in this than we perhaps know. We must be broken down, and the habit of our souls must be unceasingly: "I am nothing; God is all. I cannot walk before God as I should for one hour, unless God keep the life He has given me." What a blessed solution God gives then to all our questions and our diffi-

culties, when He says, "My child, Christ has gone through it all for thee. Christ hath wrought out a new nature that can trust God; and Christ the Living One in heaven will live in thee, and enable thee to live that life of trust." That is why Paul said, "Such confidence have we toward God, through Christ." What does that mean? Does it only mean through Christ as the mediator, or intercessor? Verily, no. It means much more; through Christ living in and enabling us to trust God as He trusted Him.

Then comes, thirdly, the death of Christ. What does that teach us of Christ's relation to the Father? It opens up to us one of the deepest and most solemn lessons of Christ life, one which the Church of Christ understands all too little. We know what the death of Christ means as an atonement, and we never can emphasise too much that blessed substitution and blood-shedding by which redemption was won for us. But let us remember, that is only half the meaning of His death. The other half is this: just as much as Christ was my substitute, who died for me, just so much He is my head, in whom, and with whom, I die; and just as He lives for me, to intercede, He lives in me, to carry out and to perfect His life. And if I want to know what that life is which He will live in me, I must look at His death. In that I see how He gives up His life to God. By His death He proved that He possessed life only to hold it, and to spend it, for God. To the very

uttermost, without the shadow of a moment's exception, He lived for God,—every moment, everywhere, He held life only for His God. And so, if one wants to live a life of perfect trust, there must be the perfect surrender of his life, and his will, even unto the very death. He must be willing to go all lengths with Jesus, even to Calvary. When a boy twelve years of age, Jesus said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" and again, when He came to Jordan to be baptized, "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." So on through all His life, He ever said, "It is my meat and drink to do the will of my Father. I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." "Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God." And in the agony of Gethsemane His words were, "Not My will, but Thine be done."

Some one says, "I do indeed desire to live the life of perfect trust; I desire to let Christ live it in me; I am longing to come to such an apprehension of Christ as shall give me the certainty that Christ will for ever abide in me; I want to come to the full assurance that Christ, my Joshua, will keep me in the land of victory." What is needful for that? My answer is: "Take care that you do not take a false Christ, an imaginary Christ, a half Christ." And what is the full Christ? The full Christ is the man who said, "I give up everything to the death that God may be glorified. I have not a thought; I have not a wish; I would

not live a moment, except for the glory of God. I give my life up to God, even unto death." You say at once, "What Christian can ever attain that?" Do not ask that question, but ask, "Has Christ attained it, and does Christ promise to live in me?" Accept Him in His fulness, and leave Him to teach you how far He can bring you and what He can work in you. Make no conditions or stipulations about failure, but cast yourself upon, abandon yourself to this Christ who lived that life of utter surrender to God, that He might prepare a new nature which He could impart to you and in which He might make you like Himself. Then you will be in the path by which He can lead you on to blessed experience and possession of what He can do for you. Christ Jesus came into the world with a commandment from the Father that He should lay down His life, and He lived with that one thought in His bosom His whole life long. And the one thought that ought to be in the heart of every believer is this: "I am in the death with Christ; absolutely, unchangeably given up to wait upon God, that God may work out His purpose and glory in me from moment to moment." Few attain the victory and the enjoyment and the full experience at once. But this you can do: take the right attitude, and as you look to Jesus and what He was, say, "Father, Thou hast made me a partaker of the divine nature, a partaker of Christ. It is in the life of Christ given up to Thee to the death, in His power and indwelling, in

His likeness, that I desire to live out my life before Thee."

Death is a solemn thing, an awful thing. In the Garden it cost Christ great agony to die that death; and no wonder it is not easy to us. But we willingly consent when we have learned the secret: in death alone the life of God will come; in death there is blessedness unspeakable. It was this made Paul so willing to bear the sentence of death in himself; he knew the God who quickeneth the dead. The sentence of death is on everything that is of nature. But are we willing to accept it, do we cherish it? or are we not rather trying to escape the sentence or to forget it? We do not believe fully that the sentence of death is on us. Whatever is of nature must die. Ask God to make you willing to believe with your heart that to die with Christ is the only way to live in Him.

You ask, "But must it then be dying every day?" Yes, beloved; Jesus lived every day in the prospect of the cross; and we, in the power of His victorious life, being made conformable to His death, must rejoice every day in going down with Him into death. Take an illustration. Take an oak of some hundred years' growth. How was that oak born? In a grave. The acorn was planted in the ground, a grave was made for it that the acorn might die. It died and disappeared; it cast roots downward, and it cast shoots upward, and now that tree has been standing a hundred years. Where is it standing?

In its grave; all the time in the very grave where the acorn died; it has stood there stretching its roots deeper and deeper into that earth in which its grave was made, and yet, all the time, though it stood in the very grave where it had died, it has been growing higher, and stronger, and broader, and more beautiful. And all the fruit it ever bore, and all the foliage that adorned it year by year, it owed to that grave in which its roots are cast and kept. Even so Christ owes everything to His death and His grave. And we, too, owe everything to that grave of Jesus. Oh, let us live every day rooted in the death of Jesus! Be not afraid, but say, "To my own will I will die; to human wisdom, and human strength, and to the world I will die; for it is in the grave of my Lord that His life has its beginning and its strength and its glory."

This brings us to our next thought. First, Christ received life from the Father; second, Christ lived it in dependence on the Father; third, Christ gave it up in death to the Father; and now, fourth, Christ received it again raised *by the Father*, by the power of the glory of the Father. Oh, the deep meaning of the resurrection of Christ! What did Christ do when He died? He went down into the darkness and absolute helplessness of death. He gave up a life that was without sin; a life that was God-given; a life that was beautiful and precious; He just said, "I will give it into the hands of My Father if He asks it"; He did it; and He lay there



in the grave waiting on God to do His will; and because He honoured God to the uttermost in His helplessness, God lifted Him up to the very uttermost of glory and power. Christ lost nothing by giving up His life in death to the Father. And so, if you want the glory and the life of God to come upon you, it is in the grave of utter helplessness that that life of glory will be born. Jesus was raised from the dead, and that resurrection power, by the grace of God, can and will work in us. Let no one expect to live a right life until he lives a full resurrection life in the power of Jesus.

Let me try and make clear, from another point of view, what this resurrection means. Christ had a perfect life, given by God. The Father said, "Will you give up that life to Me? Will you part with it at My command?" And He parted with it, but God gave it back to Him in a second life ten thousand times more glorious than that earthly life. So God will do to every one of us who willingly consents to part with his life. Have you ever understood it? Jesus was born twice. The first time He was born in Bethlehem. That was a birth into a life of weakness. But the second time, He was born from the grave; He is the "first-born from the dead." Because He gave up the life that He had by His first birth, God gave Him the life of the second birth, in the glory of heaven and the throne of God. Christians, that is exactly what we need to do. A man may be an earnest Christian; a man may be a successful worker; he

may be a Christian that has had a measure of growth and advance ; but if he has not yet entered this fulness of blessing, then he needs to come to a second and deeper experience of God's saving power ; he needs, just as God brought him out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, to come to a point where God brings him through Jordan into Canaan. Beloved, we have been baptized into the death of Christ, but have not yet known its power. Let us confess : " I have had a very blessed life, and I have had many blessed experiences, and God has done many things for me ; but I am conscious there is something wrong still ; I am conscious that this life of rest and victory is not really mine." Before Christ got His life of rest and victory on the throne, He had to die and give up all. Do you it, too, and you shall with Him share His victory and glory. It is as we follow Jesus in His death that His resurrection power and joy will be ours.

And then comes our last point. The fifth step in His wondrous path was : He was lifted up to be for ever *with the Father*. Because He humbled Himself, therefore God highly exalted Him. Wherein consists the beauty and the blessedness of that exaltation of Jesus ? For Himself perfect fellowship with the Father ; for others participation in the power of God's omnipotence. Yes, that was the fruit of His death. Scripture promises not only that God will, in the resurrection life, give us joy, and peace that passeth all understanding,

victory over sin, and rest in God, but He will baptize us with the Holy Ghost; in other words, will fill us with the Holy Ghost. Jesus was lifted to the throne of heaven that He might there receive from the Father the Spirit in His new, divine manifestation, to be poured out in His fullness. And as we come to the resurrection life, the life in the faith of Him who is one with us, and sits upon the throne—as we come to that, we too may be partakers of the fellowship with Christ Jesus as He ever dwells in God's presence, and the Holy Spirit will fill us, to work in us, and out of us, in a way that we have never yet known.

Jesus got this divine life by in glory depending absolutely upon the Father all His life long, depending upon Him even down into death. Jesus got that life in the full glory of the Spirit to be poured out, by giving Himself up in obedience and surrender to God alone, and leaving God even in the grave to work out His mighty power; and this very same Christ will live out His life in you and me. Oh, the mystery! oh, the glory! and oh, the divine certainty! Jesus Christ means to live out that life in you and me. What think you, ought we not to humble ourselves before God? Have we been Christians so many years, and realised so little what we are? Am I a vessel set apart, cleansed, emptied, consecrated; just standing, waiting every moment for God, in Christ, by the Holy Spirit, to work out in me as much of the holiness and the life of His Son as pleases Him?

Until the Church of Christ comes to go down into the grave of humiliation, and confession, and shame; until the Church of Christ comes to lay itself in the very dust before God, and to wait upon God to do something new, and something wonderful, something supernatural, in lifting it up, it will remain feeble in all its efforts to overcome the world. Within the Church what lukewarmness, what worldliness, what disobedience, what sin! How can we ever fight this battle, or meet these difficulties? The answer is: Christ, the Risen One, the Crowned One, the Almighty One, must come and live in the individual members. But we cannot expect this except as we die with Him. I referred to the tree grown so high and beautiful, with its roots every day for a hundred years in the grave in which the acorn died. Children of God, we must go down deeper into the grave of Jesus. We must cultivate the sense of impotence, and dependence, and nothingness, until our souls walk before God every day in a deep and holy trembling. God keep us from being anything. God teach us to wait on Him, that He may work in us all He wrought in His Son, till Christ Jesus live out His life in us perfectly! To this may God help us!

## VI

## Christ's Humility our Salvation

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”—PHILIPPIANS ii. 5, 8.

ALL are familiar with this wonderful passage. Paul is speaking about one of the most simple, practical things in daily life,—humility; and in connection with that he gives us a wonderful exhibition of divine truth. In connection with his teaching on humility, we have the eternal Godhead of Jesus—He was in the form of God, and one with God. We have His incarnation—He came down, and was found in the likeness of man. We have His death with the atonement—He became obedient unto death. We have His exaltation—God hath highly exalted Him. We have the glory of His kingdom—that every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess Him. And with what object in view does he speak of these high mysteries? Is it a theological study? No. Is it a description of what Christ is? No; it is in connection with a simple, downright call to a life of humility in our intercourse with each other. Our life on earth is

linked to all the eternal glory of the Godhead as revealed in the exaltation of Jesus. The very looking to Jesus, the very bowing of the knee to Jesus, ought to be inseparably connected with a spirit of the very deepest humility. Let us consider the humility of Jesus. That humility is our salvation; that humility is just the salvation we need; that humility is the salvation which the Holy Spirit will give us.

*Humility is the salvation that Christ brings.* That is our first thought. We often have very vague—I might also say visionary—ideas of what Christ is: we love the person of Christ, but that which makes up Christ, which actually constitutes Him the Christ, that we do not know or love. If we love Christ above everything, we must love humility above everything, for humility is the very essence of His life and glory, and the salvation He brings. Just think of it. Where did it begin? Is there humility in heaven? You know there is, for they cast their crowns before the throne of God and the Lamb. But is there humility on the throne of God? Yes; what was it but heavenly humility that made Jesus on the throne willing to say, "I will go down to be a servant, and to die for man; I will go and live as the meek and lowly Lamb of God"? Jesus brought humility from heaven to us. It was humility that brought Him to earth, or He never would have come. In full accordance with this, just as Christ became a man in this divine

humility, so His whole life was marked by it. He might have chosen another form in which to appear; He might have come in the form of a king, but He chose the form of a servant. He made Himself of no reputation; He emptied Himself; He spoke, and His life confirmed what He said, "I am among you as one that serveth." He said, "The Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." And you know, in the last night, He took the place of a slave, and girded Himself with a towel, and went to wash the feet of Peter and the other disciples. Beloved, the life of Jesus upon earth was a life of the deepest humility. It was this gave His life its worth and beauty in God's sight. And then His death,—possibly you have not thought of it much in this connection,—His death was an exhibition of unparalleled humility. "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." My Lord Christ took a low place all the time of His walk upon earth; He took a very low place when He began to wash the disciples' feet; but when He went to Calvary, He took the lowest place there was to be found in the universe as God, the very lowest, and He let sin, and the curse of sin, and the wrath of God, cover Him. He took the place of a guilty sinner, that He might bear our load, that He might serve us in saving us from our wretchedness, that He might by His precious

blood win deliverance for us, that He might by that blood wash us from our stain and our guilt.

We are in danger of thinking about Christ, as God, as man, as the Atonement, as the Saviour, and as exalted upon the throne, and we form an image of Christ, while the real Christ, that which is the very heart of His character, remains unknown. What is the real Christ? Divine humility, bowed down into the very depths for our salvation. The humility of Christ is our salvation. We read, "He humbled Himself, therefore God hath highly exalted Him." The secret of His exaltation to the throne is this: He humbled Himself before God and man. Humility is the Christ of God; and now in heaven, to-day, that Christ, the Man of humility, is on the throne of God. What do I see? A Lamb standing, as it had been slain, on the throne; in the glory He is still the meek and gentle Lamb of God. His humility is the badge He wears there. You often use that name,—the Lamb of God,—and you use it in connection with the blood of the sacrifice. You sing the praise of the Lamb, and you put your trust in the blood of the Lamb. Praise God for the blood. You never can trust that too much. But I am afraid you forget that the word "Lamb" must mean to us two things: it must mean not only a sacrifice, the shedding of blood, but it must mean to us the meekness of God incarnate upon earth, the meekness of God represented in the meekness and gentleness of a little lamb.



But the salvation that Christ brought is not only a salvation that flows out of humility; it also leads to humility. We must understand that this is not only the salvation which Christ brought, but that *it is exactly the salvation which you and I need.* What is the cause of all the wretchedness of man? Primarily pride; man seeking his own will and his own glory. Yes, pride is the root of every sin, and so the Lamb of God comes to us in our pride, and brings us salvation from it. We need above everything to be saved from our pride and our self-will. It is good to be saved from the sins of stealing, murdering, and every other evil; but a man needs above all to be saved from what is the root of all sin, his self-will and his pride. It is not until man begins to feel that this is exactly the salvation he needs, that he really can understand what Christ is, and that he can accept Him as his salvation. This is the salvation that we as Christians and believers specially need. We know the sad story of Peter and John; what their self-will and pride brought upon them. They needed to be saved from nothing except themselves; and that is the lesson which we must learn, if we are to enter the life of rest. And how can we enter that life, and dwell there in the bosom of the Lamb of God, if pride rules? Have we not often heard complaints of how much there is of pride in the Church of Christ? What is the cause of all the division, and strife, and envying, that is often found even among God's saints? Why is it that often in a family there is

bitterness—it may be only for half an hour, or half a day; but what is the cause of hard judgments and hasty words? What is the cause of estrangement between friends? What is the cause of evil speaking? What is the cause of selfishness and indifference to the feelings of others? Simply this: the pride of man. He lifts himself up, and he claims the right to have his opinions and judgments as he pleases. The salvation we need is indeed humility, because it is only through humility that we can be restored to our right relation to God.

“Waiting upon God,”—that is the only true expression for the real relation of the creature to God; to be nothing before God. What is the essential idea of a creature made by God? It is this: to be a vessel in which He can pour out His fulness, in which He can exhibit His life, His goodness, His power, and His love. A vessel must be empty if it is to be filled; and if we are to be filled with the life of God, we must be utterly empty of self. This is the glory of God, that He is to fill all things, and more especially His redeemed people. And as this is the glory of the creature, so this is the only redemption, and the only glory of every redeemed soul, to be empty and as nothing before God; to wait upon Him, and to let God be all in all.

Humility has a prominent place in almost every epistle of the New Testament. Paul says, “Walk with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to

keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The nearer you get to God, and the fuller of God, the lowlier you will be; and equally before God and man, you will love to bow very low. We know of Peter's early self-confidence; but in his epistles what a different language he speaks! He writes there: "Let the younger be subject to the elder, and all of you be subject one to another; humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in His own time." He understood, and he dared to preach, humility to all. It is indeed the salvation we need. What is it that prevents people from coming to that entire surrender that we speak of? Simply that they dare not abandon themselves, and trust themselves, to God; that they are not willing to be nothing, to give up their wishes, and their will, and their honour to Christ. Shall we not accept the salvation that Jesus offers? He gave up His own will; He gave up His own honour; He gave up any confidence in Himself; He lived dependent upon God as a servant whom the Father had sent. There is the salvation we need, the spirit of humility that was in Christ.

What is it that often disturbs our hearts and our peace? It is pride seeking to be something. And God's decree is irreversible: "God resisteth the proud; He gives grace only to the humble." How often Jesus had to speak to His disciples about it! You will find repeatedly in the Gospel those simple words: "He that humbleth himself shall be

exalted ; he that exalteth himself shall be humbled." He taught His disciples : " He that would be chiefest among you, let him be the servant of all." This should be our one cry before God : " Let the power of the Holy Ghost come upon me, with the humility of Jesus, that I may take the place that He took." Brother, do you want a better place than Jesus had ? Are you seeking a higher place than Jesus ? Or will you say, " Down, down, as deep as ever I can go. By the help of God I will be nothing before God ; I will be where Jesus was."

And now comes the third thought : *This is the salvation which the Holy Ghost will work in us.* You know what a change took place in those disciples. Let us praise God for it ; the Holy Spirit means this : the life, the disposition, the temper, and the inclinations of Jesus brought down from heaven into our hearts. That is the Holy Ghost. He has His mighty workings to bestow as gifts ; but the fulness of the Holy Ghost is something higher and better than gifts : Jesus Christ in His humility coming to dwell in us. When Christ was teaching His disciples, all His instructions may have helped in the way of preparation, breaking them down, and making them conscious of what was wrong, and awakening desire ; but the instruction could not do it, and all their love to Jesus and their desire to please Him could not do it, until the Holy Ghost came. That is the promise Christ gave. He says, in connection with the coming of the Holy Ghost, " I will come

again to you." Christ said to His disciples, "I have been three years with you, and you have been in the closest contact with Me, and I have done the utmost to reach your hearts; I have sought to get into your hearts, yet I have failed; but fear not, I will come again. In that day ye shall see Me, and your hearts shall rejoice, and no man shall take your joy from you. I will come again to dwell in you, and live My life in you." Christ went to heaven that He might get a power which He never had before. And what was that? The power of living in men. God be praised for this! It was because Jesus, the humble One, the Lamb of God, the meek, the lowly and gentle One, came down in the Holy Spirit into the hearts of His disciples, that the pride was expelled, and that the very breath of heaven breathed through them in the love that made them one heart and one soul.

Dear friends, Christ is yours. Christ as He comes in the power of the Holy Spirit is yours. Are you longing to have Him, to have the perfect Christ Jesus? Come then, and see how, amid the glories of His Godhead—His having been in the form of God, and equal to God; amid the glories of His incarnation—His having become a man; amid the glories of His atonement—His having been obedient to death; and amid the glories of His exaltation—this is the chief and brightest glory—He humbled Himself from heaven down to earth and on earth down to the cross. He humbled Himself to bear the name, and show the

meekness, and die the death, of the Lamb of God. And what is it we now need to do? How are we to be saved by this humility of Jesus? It is a solemn question, but, thank God, the answer can be given. First, we must desire it above everything. Let us learn to pray God to deliver us from every vestige of pride, for this is a cursed thing. Let us learn to set aside for a time other things in the Christian life, and begin to plead with the Lamb of God day by day, "O Lamb of God, I know Thy love, but I know so little of Thy meekness." Come day after day, and lay your heart against His heart, and say to Him with strong desire, "Jesus, Lamb of God, give, oh, give me Thyself, with Thy meekness and humility," and He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him. It is not enough to desire it and to pray for it; claim and accept it as yours. This humility is given you in Christ Jesus. Christ is our life. What does that mean? Oh that God might give you and me a vision of what that means! The air is our life, and the air is everywhere, universal. We breathe without difficulty because God surrounds us with the air. And is the air nearer to me than Christ is? The sun gives light to every green leaf and every blade of grass, shining hour by hour and moment by moment. And is the sun nearer to the blade of grass than Christ is to man's soul? Verily, no; Christ is around us on every side; Christ is pressing on us to enter, and there is nothing in heaven, or earth,

or hell, that can keep the light of Christ from shining into the heart that is empty and open. If the windows of your room were closed with shutters, the light could not enter! it would be on the outside of the building, streaming and streaming against the shutters; but it could not enter. But leave the windows without shutters, and the light comes; it rejoices to come in and fill the room. Even so, children of God, Jesus and His light, Jesus and His humility, are around you on every side, longing to enter into your hearts. Come and take Him to-day in His blessed meekness and gentleness. Do not be afraid of Him; He is the Lamb of God. He is so patient with you, He is so kindly towards you, He is so tender and loving. Take courage to-day and trust Jesus to come into your heart and take possession of it. And when He has taken possession, there will be day by day a life of blessed fellowship with Him, and you will feel a necessity ever deeper for your quiet time with Him, and for worshipping and adoring Him, and for just sinking down before Him in helplessness and humility, and saying, "Jesus, I am nothing, and Thou art all." It will be a blessed life, because you will be conscious of being at the feet of Jesus. At this moment you can claim Jesus in His divine humility as the life of your soul. Will you? Will you not open your heart, and say, "Come in; come in"?

Come to-day, and take Him up afresh in this blessed power of His wonderful humility, and say

to Him: "O Thou who didst say, 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls,' my Lord, I know why it is that I have not the perfect life; it is my pride; but to-day, come Thou and dwell in my heart. Thou who didst lead even Peter and John into the blessedness of Thy heavenly humility; Thou wilt not refuse me. Lord, here I am; do Thou, who by Thy wonderful humility alone canst save, come in. O Lamb of God, I believe in Thee; take possession of my heart, and dwell in me." When you have said that, go out in quiet, and retire, walking gently as holding the Lamb of God in your heart, and say, "I have received the Lamb of God; He makes my heart His care; He breathes His humility and dependence on God in me, and so brings me to God. His humility is my life and salvation."



## VII.

**The Complete Surrender.**

“Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him at the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him.”  
—GENESIS xxxix. 1-3.

**WE** have in this passage an object lesson which teaches us what Christ is to us. Joseph was a slave in the house of Potiphar, but God was with him so distinctly that his master could see it. “And his master saw the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him,”—that is to say, he was his slave about his person. “And he made him overseer over his house,”—that was something new; Joseph had been a slave, but now he becomes a master. “And he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all

that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat."

We find Joseph in two characters in the house of Potiphar: first as a servant and a slave, one who is trusted and loved, but still entirely a servant; second, as master. Potiphar made him overseer over his house and his lands, and all that he had, so that we read later on that he left everything in his hand, and he knew of nothing except the bread that came upon his table. I want to call your attention to Joseph as a type of Christ. We sometimes speak in the Christian life, of entire surrender, and rightly; and here we have a beautiful illustration of what it is. First, Joseph was in Potiphar's house to serve him and to help him, and he did that, and Potiphar learned to trust him, so that he said, "All that I have I will give into his hand." Now, that is exactly what is to take place with a great many Christians. They know Christ, they trust Him, they love Him, but He is not Master, He is a sort of helper. When there is trouble they come to Him, when they sin they ask Him for pardon in His precious blood, when they are in darkness they cry to Him; but often and often they live according to their own will, and they seek help from themselves. But how blessed is the man who comes and, like Potiphar, says, "I will give up everything to Jesus"! There are many who have accepted Christ as their Lord, but

have never yet come to the final, absolute surrender of everything. Christians, if you want perfect rest, abiding joy, strength to work for God, oh, come and learn from that poor heathen Egyptian what you ought to do. He saw that God was with Joseph, and he said, "I will give up my house to him." Oh, learn you to do that. There are some who have never yet accepted Christ; some who are seeking after Him, thirsting and hungering, but they do not know how to find Him: let all come and learn what the true secret is of the Christian life.

Let me direct your attention to four thoughts regarding this surrender to Christ: First, its motives; second, its measure; third, its blessedness; lastly, its duration.

First of all, its motives. What moved Potiphar to do this? I think the answer is very easy. Potiphar was a trusted servant of the king, and had the king's work to take care of, and he very likely could not take care of his own house. All his time and attention were required at the court of Pharaoh. He had his duty there; he was in high honour; but his own house got neglected. Very likely he had had other overseers, one slave appointed to rule the others, and perhaps that one had been unfaithful, or dishonest, and somehow his house was not as he would have it. So he buys another slave, just as he had formerly done, but in this case he sees what he had never seen before. There is something unusual about the man.

He walks so humbly, he serves so faithfully and so lovingly, and withal so successfully. Potiphar begins to look into the reason for this, and finally concludes that *God is with him*.

It is a grand thing to have a man with whom God is, to entrust one's business to. The heathen realised this, and between the need of his own house and what he saw in Joseph, he decided to make him overseer. I ask you, do not these two motives plead most urgently that you should say, "I will make Jesus master over my whole being"? Your house, Christian, your spiritual life, the dwelling, the temple of God in your heart,—in what state is that? Is it not often like the temple of old, in Jerusalem, that had been defiled and made a house of merchandise, and afterwards a den of thieves? Your heart, meant to be the home of Jesus, is it not often full of sin and darkness, full of sadness, full of vexation? You have done your very best to get it changed, and you have called in the help of man, and the help of means; you have used every method you could think of for getting it put right; but it will not come right until He whose it is comes in to take charge.

If there is any trouble in your heart, if you are in darkness, or in the power of sin, I bring to you the Son of God, with the promise that He will come in and take charge. As Potiphar took Joseph, will you not take Jesus? Is not this He of whom it can be said as of none else: God is

with Him, and maketh all He doth to prosper? Has He not proven Himself worthy to be trusted? Come and say, "Jesus shall have entire charge; He is worthy." Think not only of His divine power, but think of His wonderful love; think of His coming from heaven to save you; think of His dying on Calvary and shedding His blood out of intense love for you. Oh, think of it; Christ in heaven loves everyone who is given to Him, and whom He has made a child of God. "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

Must I plead in the name of the love of the crucified Jesus; must I plead with you Christians, and say, Look at Jesus, the Son of God, your Redeemer, and ask you to make Him overseer over all? Give Him charge of your temper, your heart's affections, your thoughts, your whole being, and He will prove Himself worthy of it. Joseph had been for a time just a common slave, and with the other slaves had served Pharaoh. Alas! many a Christian has used Christ for his own advancement and comfort, just as he uses everything in the world. He uses father and mother, minister, money, and all else the world will give, to comfort and make him happy; there is danger of his using Christ Jesus in the same way. But oh, brethren, this is not right. You are His house, and He has a right to dwell therein. Will you not come and surrender all, and say, "Lord Jesus, I have made Thee overseer over all"?

But now, secondly, the measure of that surrender. We read in the 4th verse: "*All that he had* he put into his hand." Then in verse 5: "And it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer over *all that he had*"—there you have it the second time—"the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house, and the blessing of the Lord was upon *all that he had*"—there the third time. Then in verse 6: "And he left *all that he had*"—there you have the words the fourth time—"in Joseph's hand, and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat." What do I see here? Potiphar actually gave everything into Joseph's hand. He made him master over his slaves. All the money was put into Joseph's hand, for we read that Potiphar had care of nothing. When dinner was brought upon the table, he ate of it, and that was all he knew of what was going on in his house. Is not this entire surrender?—he gives up everything into the hands of Joseph. Ah, beloved Christians, I want you to ask yourselves, "Have I done that?" You have offered more than one consecration prayer, and you have more than once said, "Jesus, all I have I give to Thee." You have said it, and meant it; but very probably you did not realise fully what it meant.

In the use of the word surrender there always comes a larger and more comprehensive meaning. We do not succeed in carrying out our intentions, and we take back one thing and another until we have lost sight of our original purpose. Beloved

Christians, let Christ Jesus have all. Let Him have your whole heart, with its affections; He Himself loves, with more than the love of Jonathan. Let Him have your whole heart, saying, "Jesus, every fibre of my being, every power of my soul, shall be devoted to Thee." He will accept that surrender. He spoke a solemn word: "You must hate father and mother." Say you to-day, "Lord Jesus, the love to father and mother, to wife and child, to brother and sister, I give up to Thee. Teach Thou me how to love Thee. I have only one desire, which is to love Thee. I want to give my whole heart to be full of Thy love."

But when you have given your heart, there is yet more to give. There is the head—the brain with its thoughts. I believe Christians do not know how much they rob Christ of in reading so much of the literature of the world. They are often so occupied with their newspapers that the Bible gets a very small place. Oh, friends, I beseech you bring this noble power which God has given you, the power of a mind that can think heavenly, eternal, and infinite things, and lay it at the feet of Jesus, saying, "Lord Jesus, every faculty of my being I want to surrender to Thee, that Thou shouldst teach me what to think, and how to think, for Thee and Thy kingdom." Bless God, there are men who have given their intellect to Jesus, and it has been accepted by Him. And in this connection there is my whole outer life. There is my relation to society, my position among

men, my intercourse in my own home, with friends and family; there is my money, my time, my business; all these should be put in the hands of Jesus. One cannot know beforehand the blessedness of this surrender, but blessed it surely is. Come, because He is worthy; come, because you know you cannot keep things right yourself, and make Christ master over all you have. Give father and mother, wife and child, house and land and money, all to Jesus, and you will find that in giving all you receive it back an hundred-fold.

Thirdly, look at the blessing of the entire surrender. You have here the remarkable words: "And it came to pass from the time that Potiphar made Joseph overseer over all that he had, that *the Lord blessed* the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and *the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had* in the house, and in the field." I ask you Christians, If God did this to that heathen man, because he honoured Joseph; if God, for Joseph's sake, blessed that Egyptian in this wonderful way, may a Christian not venture to say, "If I put my life into the hands of Jesus, I am sure God will bless all that I have"? Oh, dare to say it. Potiphar trusted Joseph implicitly and absolutely, and there was prosperity everywhere, because God was with Joseph. Beloved friends, if you but surrender everything, depend upon it, the blessing from that time will be yours. There will be a blessing within your own inner life, and a blessing



in your outer life. He blessed Potiphar in the house, in the field, everywhere.

Think, Christian, what is the blessing you will get? I cannot tell all, but I can tell you this: if you will come to Christ Jesus and surrender all, the blessing of God will be on all that you have. There will be a blessing for your own soul. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." Try that; trust Jesus for everything, and trust everything to Him, and the blessing of God will come upon you—the sweet rest, the rest of faith. If all is in the hands of Jesus, He will guide you; He will teach you; He will work in you; He will keep you; He will be everything to you. What a blessed rest and freedom from responsibility and from care, because it is all in the hands of Jesus! I do not say trouble and trial will never come; but in the midst of trial and trouble you will have the all-sufficiency of the presence of Jesus to be your comfort, your help, and your guide. Joseph was sold by his brethren, but he saw God in it, and he was quite content. Christ was betrayed by Judas, condemned by Caiaphas, and given over to execution by Pilate; but in all that, Christ saw God, and He was content. Give over your life, in all that happens, into the hands of Jesus; remembering that the very hairs of your head are numbered, and not a sparrow falls to earth without the Father's notice. Consent now and say, "I will give up everything into the hands of Jesus. Whatever happens is

His will regarding me. Whether He comes in the light or in the dark, in the storm or on the troubled sea, I will rest in that blessed assurance. I give up my whole life entirely to Him."

In reading the Book of Jonah, we find God's hand in each step of Jonah's experience. It was God Who sent the storm when Jonah went on board the ship; Who appointed a whale to swallow him; Who ordered the whale to cast him out; and then afterwards it was God Who caused the hot wind to blow when the sun was sending down its scorching rays, until the soul of Jonah was grieved; Who made the gourd to grow; Who sent the worm to kill the gourd, and sent an east wind to dry the gourd up quickly. Do we not thus see that every circumstance of our living, every comfort and every trial, comes from God in Christ? There is nothing can touch a hair of my head. Not a sharp word comes against me; not an unexpected flurry surrounds me, but it is all in charge of Christ Jesus. With my life in His hands, I need care for nothing. I can be content with what Jesus gives.

God blessed Potiphar in the field, in the visible life outside of his house; and God will so bless you, that, in your intercourse with men, you may be a blessing; that by your holy, humble, circumspect, quiet walk, you may carry comfort; that by your loving readiness to be a servant and a helper to all, you may prove what the Spirit of God has done within you. Oh, my brother, my sister, you

have no conception of it,—I have not,—how God is willing to bless the soul utterly given up to Jesus. God can delight in nothing but Jesus. God delights infinitely in Jesus. God longs to see nothing in us but Jesus; and if I give up my heart and life to Jesus, and say, “My God, I want that Thou shouldst see in me nothing but Jesus,” then I bring to the Father the sacrifice that is the most acceptable of all, and His blessing will come on all I have. Nothing will be excepted. God’s blessing will come on all. Oh, believers, come to-day; come out of all your troubles, and all your self-efforts and your self-confidence, and let the blessed Son of God take possession.

Let me direct your thoughts, lastly, to the duration of this surrender. I want to emphasise this—because in many cases the surrender does not last. Some go away, and for a time have much gladness and joy, but it soon begins to decrease, and in a few weeks or perhaps months is all gone. Others, who do not lose it entirely, complain sadly at times, that it goes away and comes again. They say, “My life has been very much blessed since that surrender I made to God, but it has not always been on the same level.” What did Potiphar do? We read in the 6th verse: “He made him overseer over his house, and all that he had *he left in Joseph’s hand.*” What a simple word! He left it there.

Children of God, if you will only get to that point, and say, “For all eternity I leave it in the

hands of Jesus," you will find what a blessing it is. Potiphar found now that he could do the king's business with two hands and an undivided heart. I might try to rescue a drowning man by holding fast somewhere with one hand, while I reached out the other hand to the man; but it is a grand thing for a person to be able to stretch out both hands. That person is the man who has left all with Jesus—all his inner life, all his cares and troubles, and has given himself up entirely to do the will of God. Will you leave it there? I must press this, because I know temptations will come. One temptation will be that the feelings you had in your act of surrender will pass away; they will not be so bright. Another, that circumstances will try you. Beloved, temptations will come; God means it for your good. Every temptation brings you a blessing. Do understand that. Learn the lesson of giving up everything to Jesus, and letting Jesus take charge of everything. Leave all with Jesus. Do not think that by a surrender to-day, or on any day, however earnest, however intense, things will keep right themselves. You need every morning afresh, when God wakes you up out of sleep, to put your heart, and your life, and your house, and your business, into the hands of Jesus. Wait on Him, if need be, in silence, or in prayer, until He gives you the assurance: "My child, for to-day all is safe; I take charge." And morning by morning He will renew to you the blessing, and morning by morning you will go out from your quiet time in

the consciousness: "To-day I have had fellowship with my King, and all is right, for I have left all in His hands; Jesus has taken charge." And so, day by day, you can have grace to leave all in the hands of Jesus.

In conclusion, let me speak to two classes. There are some true believers who have perhaps never yet understood that it was their duty to give up everything to Christ. Beloved fellow-Christians, I come with a message from your Father, to come and to-day take that word into your hearts and upon your lips, even though you do not understand it: "Jesus, I make Thee Master of everything, and I will wait at Thy feet, that Thou wilt show me what Thou wouldst have me be and do." Do it now. Then there are believers who have done it before, and who long with an unutterable longing to do it fully and perfectly. Child of God, you can do it, for the Holy Spirit has been sent down from heaven for this one purpose, to glorify Jesus; to glorify Jesus in your heart, by letting you see how perfectly Jesus can take possession of the whole heart; to glorify Jesus by bringing Him into your very life, that your whole life may shine out with the glory of Jesus. Depend upon it, the Father will give it to you by the Holy Spirit, if you are ready. Oh, come, and let your intercourse with God be summed up in a simple prayer and answer: "My God, as much as Thou wilt have of me to fill with Christ, Thou shalt have to-day." This be your prayer, and God's answer will come: "My

child, as much of Christ as thy heart longeth to have, thou shalt have; for it is My delight that My Son be in the hearts of My children. He that makes Him overseer of all he has shall find that all he has is blessed by Me for My Son's sake."

## VIII

**Dead with Christ**

**"I am crucified with Christ."**—GALATIANS ii. 20.

**T**HE Revised Version properly has the above text: "I have been crucified with Christ." In this connection, let us read the story of a man who was literally crucified with Christ. We may use all the narrative of Christ's work upon earth in the flesh as a type of His spiritual work. Let us take in this instance the story of the penitent thief (Luke xxiii. 39-43), for I think we may learn from him how to live as men who are crucified with Christ. Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ." And again, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom I have been crucified to the world, and the world to me." We often ask earnestly: How can I be free from the self life? The answer is: Get another life. Have the old life crucified, and receive a new life, in Christ. We often speak about the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon us, but I doubt if we fully realise that the Holy Spirit is a heavenly life come to expel the selfish, and fleshly, and earthly life. If we want, in very deed, to enjoy fully the rest that there is in Jesus, we

can only have it as He comes in, in the power of His death, to slay what is in us of nature, to take possession, and live His own life in the fulness of the Holy Ghost. God's word takes us to the cross of Christ, and it teaches us about that cross, two things. It tells us that Christ died *for* sin. We understand what that means, that in His atonement He died as I never die, as I never can die, as I never need die; He died for sin and for me. But what gave His death such power to atone? It was this: The spirit in which He died, not the physical suffering, not the external act of death, but the spirit in which He died. And what was that spirit? He died *unto* sin. Sin had tempted Him, and surrounded Him, and had brought Him very nigh to saying, "I cannot die." In Gethsemane He cried, "Father, is it not possible that the cup pass from me?" But, God be praised, He gave up His life rather than yield to sin. He died to sin, and in dying He conquered. And now, I cannot die for sin like Christ, but I can and I must die to sin like Christ. Christ died for me. In that He stands alone. Christ died to sin, and in that I have fellowship with Him. I have been crucified; I am dead to sin.

And here is the great subject to which I want to lead you: What it is to be dead with Christ, and how it is that I can practically enter into this death with Christ. We know that the great characteristic of Christ is His death. Out of the great eternity He came with the commandment of the



Father that He should lay down His life on earth. He gave Himself up to it, and He set His face towards Jerusalem. He chose death, and He lived and walked upon earth to prepare Himself to die. His death is the power of redemption; death gave Him His victory over sin; death gave Him His resurrection, His new life, His exaltation, and His everlasting glory. The great mark of Christ is His death. Even in heaven, upon the throne, He stands as the Lamb that was slain; and through eternity they ever sing, "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain." Beloved brother, your Boaz, your Christ, your all-sufficient Saviour, is a Man of whom the chief mark and the greatest glory is this: He died. And if the Bride is to live with her husband as his wife, then she must enter into his state, and into his spirit, and into his disposition, and ever be as he is. If we are to experience the full power of what Christ can do for us, we must learn to die with Christ. I ought not, perhaps, to use that expression, "We must learn to die with Christ"; I ought rather to say, "We must learn that we *are dead* with Christ." That is the glorious thought of the 6th chapter of Romans; to every believer in the Church of Rome—not to the select ones, or the advanced ones, but to every believer in the Church of Rome, however feeble, Paul writes, "You *are dead* with Christ." On the strength of that he says, "Reckon yourselves dead unto sin." What does that mean: You are dead to sin? We cannot see it more

clearly than by referring to Adam. Christ was the second Adam. What happened in the first Adam? I died, in the first Adam; I died to God; I died in sin. When I was born, I had in me the life of Adam, which had all the characteristics of the life of Adam after he had fallen. Adam died to God, and Adam died in sin, and I inherit the life of Adam, and so I am dead in sin as he was, and dead unto God. But at the very moment I begin to believe in Jesus, I become united to Christ, the second Adam, and as really as I am united by my birth to the first Adam, I am made partaker of the life of Christ. What life? That life which died unto sin on Calvary, and which rose again; therefore God by His apostle tells us, "Reckon yourselves indeed dead unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus." You are to reckon it as true, because God says it, and because it is so: your new nature is indeed, in virtue of your vital union to Christ, actually and utterly dead to sin.

If we want to have the real Christ that God has given us, the real Christ that died for us, in the power of His death and resurrection, we must take our stand here. Many Christians do not understand what the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans teaches us. They do not know that they are dead to sin. They do not know it, and therefore Paul instructs them: "Know ye not, that as many of you as are baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into His death?" How can we who *are dead to sin* in Christ live any longer therein? We

have in very deed the death and the life of Christ working within us. Most Christians do not know this, and therefore do not experience or practise it. They have to be taught that their first need is to be brought to the recognition, to the knowledge, of what has taken place in Christ on Calvary, and what has taken place in their becoming united to Christ. The man must begin to say, even before he understands it, "In Christ I am dead to sin." It is a command: "Reckon ye yourselves to be indeed dead unto sin." Get hold of your union to Christ; believe in the new nature within you, that spiritual life which you have from Christ, a life that has died and been raised again.

A man's acts are always in accordance with his idea of his state. A king acts like a king, otherwise we say, "That man has forgotten his kingship"; but if a man is conscious of being a king, he behaves like a king. And so I cannot live the life of a true believer unless I am filled with a consciousness of this every day: "I thank God that I am dead in Christ. Christ died unto sin, and I am united with Christ, and Christ lives in me, and I am dead to sin." What is the life Christ lives in me? Ask what is the life Adam lives in me. Adam lives in me the death-life, a life that has fallen under the power of sin and death, death to God. That life Adam lives in me by nature as an unconverted man. And Christ, the second Adam, has come to me with a new life, and I now live in His life, the death-life of Christ. As

long as I do not know it, I cannot act according to it, though it be in me. Praise God, when a man begins to see what it is, and begins in obedience to say, "I will do what God's word says; I am dead, I reckon myself dead," he enters upon a new life. On the strength of God's everlasting word, and your union to Christ, and the great fact of Calvary, reckon, know yourself as dead indeed unto sin. A man must see this truth; this is the first step. The second is: He must accept it in faith. And what then? When he accepts it in faith, then there comes in him a struggle, and a painful experience, for that faith is still very feeble, and he begins to ask, "But why, if I am dead to sin, do I commit so much sin?" And the answer God's word gives is simply this: You do not allow the power of that death to be applied by the Holy Spirit. What we need is to understand that the Holy Spirit came from heaven, from the glorified Jesus, to bring His death and His life into us. The two are inseparably connected. That Christ died, He died unto sin, and that He liveth, He liveth unto God. The death and the life in Him are inseparable; and even so in us the life to God in Christ is inseparably connected with the death to sin. And that is what the Holy Ghost will teach us and work in us. If I have accepted Christ in faith by the Holy Ghost, and yield myself to Him, Christ every day keeps possession, and reveals the full power of my fellowship in His death and life in my heart. To some this comes

undoubtedly in one moment of supreme power and blessing; all at once they see and accept it, and enter in, and there is death to sin as a divine experience. It is not that the tendency to evil is rooted out. No; but the power of Christ's death keeps from sin, and destroys the power of sin; the power of Christ's death is then manifested in the Holy Spirit's unceasingly mortifying the deeds of the body.

Some one asks me if there is still growth needed. Undoubtedly. By the Holy Spirit a man can now begin to live and grow, deeper and deeper, into the fellowship of Christ's death. New things are discovered by him in spheres of which he never thought. A man may at times be filled with the Holy Ghost, and yet there may be great imperfections in him. Why? For this reason: because his heart, perhaps, had not been fully prepared by a complete discovery of sin. There may be pride, or self-consciousness, or frowardness, or other qualities of this nature which he has never noticed. The Holy Spirit does not always cast these out at once. No. There are different ways of entering into the blessed life. One man enters into the blessed life with the idea of power for service; another, with the idea of rest from worry and weariness; another, with the idea of deliverance from sin. In all these aspects there is something limited, and therefore every believer is to give himself up after he knows the power of Christ's death, and say continually, "Lord Jesus, let the

power of Thy death work through, let it penetrate my whole being." As the man gives himself unreservedly up, he will begin to bear the marks of a crucified man. The apostle says, "I have been crucified," and he lived like a crucified man.

What are the marks of a crucified man? The first is, deep, absolute humility. Christ humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. When the death to sin begins to work mightily, that is one of its chief and most blessed proofs. It breaks a man down, down, and the great longing of his heart is, "Oh, that I could get deeper down before my God, and be nothing at all, that the life of Christ might be exalted! I deserve nothing but the cursed cross; I give myself over to it." Humility is one of the great marks of a crucified man. He knows he deserves nothing but to be crucified, and he is ashamed of himself.

Another mark is impotence, helplessness. When a man hangs on the cross, he is utterly helpless, he can do nothing. As long as we Christians are strong, and can work, or struggle, we do not get into the blessed life of Christ; but when a man says, "I am a crucified man, I am utterly helpless, every breath of life and strength must come from my Jesus," then we learn what it is to sink into our own impotence, and say, "I am nothing."

Still another mark of crucifixion is restfulness. Yes. Christ was crucified, and went down into the grave, and we are crucified and buried with Him.

There is no place of rest like the grave; a man can do nothing there. "My flesh shall rest in hope," said David, and said the Messiah. Yes, and when a man goes down into the grave of Jesus, it means this: that he just cries out, "I have nothing but God, I trust God; I am waiting upon God; my flesh rests in hope; I have given up everything, that I may rest, waiting upon what God is to do to me." Remember, the crucifixion, and the death, and the burial are inseparably one. And remember, the grave is the place where the mighty resurrection power of God will be manifested. And remember those precious words in the 11th of John: "Said I not unto thee,"—when did Christ speak them? It was at the grave of Lazarus,—“if thou believest thou shalt see the glory of God?” Where shall I see the glory of God most brightly? Beside the grave. Go down into this death believing, and the glory of God will come upon thee, and fill thy heart.

Dear friends, we want to die. If we are to live in the rest, and the peace, and the blessedness of our great Boaz; if we are to live a life of joy and of fruitfulness, of strength and of victory, we must go down into the grave with Christ, and the language of our life must be: "I am a crucified man. God be praised, though I have nothing but sin in myself, I have the everlasting Christ, with His death and His life, to be the life of my soul."

How can I enter into this fellowship of the cross? We find an illustration in the story of the

penitent thief. Thomas said, before Christ's death, "Let us go and die with Him." And Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee to prison, or to death." But the disciples all failed, and our Lord took a man who was the offscouring of the earth, whom He found upon the cross of Calvary beside Himself, and He said to Peter, and to all, "I will let you see what it is to die with Me." And He says that word to-day, to the weakest and the humblest; if you are longing to know what it is to enter into death with Jesus, come and look at the penitent thief. And what do we see there? First of all, we see there the state of a heart prepared to die with Christ. We see in that penitent thief a humble, whole-hearted confession of sin. There he hung upon the cursed tree, and the multitudes were blaspheming that man beside him, but he was not ashamed publicly to make confession: "I am dying a death that I have deserved; I am suffering justly; this cross is what I have deserved." Here is one of the reasons why the Church of Christ enters so little into the death of Christ; men do not want to believe that the curse of God is upon everything in them that has not died with Christ. People talk about the curse of sin, but they do not understand that the whole nature has been infected by sin, and that the curse is on everything. My intellect, has that been defiled by sin? Terribly, and the curse of sin is on it, and therefore my intellect must go down into the death. Ah, I believe that the Church of Christ suffers more



to-day from trusting in intellect, in sagacity, in culture, and in mental refinement, than from almost anything else. The spirit of the world comes in, and men seek by their wisdom, and by their knowledge, to help the gospel, and they rob it of its crucifixion mark. Christ directed Paul to go and preach the gospel of the cross, but to do it not with wisdom of words. The curse of sin is on all that is of nature. If there be a minister who has delighted in preaching, who has done his very best, who has given his very best in the way of talent and of thought, and who asks, "Must that go down into the grave?" I say, "Yes, my brother, the whole man must be crucified." And so with the heart's affection. What is more beautiful than the love of a child to his mother? In that lovely nature there is something un-sanctified, and it must be given up to die. God will raise it from the dead and give it back again, sanctified and made alive unto God. So I might go through the whole of our life. People often say to me, "But is it not God who has made all things so beautiful, and is it not right that we should enjoy them? Are not His gifts all good?" I answer, Yes, but remember what Scripture says; they are good, if sanctified by the word of God and prayer. The curse of sin is on them; the blight of sin is on everything most beautiful, and it takes much of God's word and much of prayer to sanctify them. It is very hard to give up a thing to the death, and it is hardest of all to give

up my life to the death, and I never will until I have learned that everything about that life is stamped by sin, and let it go down into the death as the only way to have it quickened and sanctified.

The penitent thief confessed his sin, and that he deserved death. Then, next, he had faith in the almighty power of Christ. A wonderful faith. It has no parallel in the Bible. There hangs the cursed malefactor with Jesus of Nazareth, and he dares speak, and say, "I am dying here, under the just curse of my sins, but I believe Thou canst take me into Thy heart, and remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Oh, that we might learn to believe in the almighty power of Christ! That man believed that Christ was a King, and had a kingdom, and that He would take him up in His arms, and in His heart, and remember him when He came into His kingdom. He believed that, and believing that, he died. Brother, you and I need to take time to come to a much larger and deeper faith in the power of Christ, that the almighty Christ will indeed take us in His arms and carry us through this death-life, revealing the power of His death in us. *I cannot live it without personal contact with Christ every hour of the day.* Christ must do it; Christ can do it. Come therefore and say, "Is He not the almighty One; did He not come from the throne of God; did He not prove His omnipotence, and did not the Father prove it

when He rose from the dead?" Would you be afraid, now that Christ is on the throne, of doing what the malefactor did when Christ was upon the cross, and entrusting yourself to Him to live as one dead with Him? Christ will carry you through the very process He went through; will make His death work in you every day of your life.

I note one thing more in the penitent thief—his prayer. There was his conviction of sin, and his faith, but there was, further, the utterance of his faith in prayer. He turned to Jesus. Remember that the whole world, with perhaps the exception of Mary and the women, was turned away from Christ that day. Of the whole world of men as far as I know, there was but that one praying to Christ. Do not wait to see what others do; if you wait for that,—alas! I desire to say it in love and tenderness,—you will not find much company in the Church of Christ. Pray incessantly, "Lord Christ, let the power of Thy death come into me." For God's sake, pray the prayer. If you want to live the life of heaven, there must be death to sin in the power of Jesus. There must be personal entrustment of the soul into His death to sin, personal acceptance of Jesus to do the mighty work.

We have seen what the preparation is on the part of this man; let us look, secondly, at how Christ met him. He met him, you know, with that wonderful promise, with its three wonderful parts: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

A promise of fellowship with Christ,—“Thou shalt be with Me”; a promise of rest in eternity, in the Paradise from which sin had cast man out,—“With Me in Paradise”; a promise of immediate blessing,—“To-day shalt thou be with Me.” With that threefold blessing Jesus comes to you and me, and He says, “Believer, are you longing to live the Paradise-life, where I give souls to eat of the Tree of Life, in the Paradise of God, day by day? Are you longing for that uninterrupted communion with God that there was in Paradise before Adam fell? Are you longing for perfect fellowship with Me, longing to live where I am living, in the love of the Father? To-day, even as the Holy Ghost says, ‘To-day, to-day shalt thou be with Me!’ Longest thou for Me? I long more for thee. Longest thou for fellowship? I long unceasingly for thy fellowship, for I need thy love, my child, to satisfy My heart. Nothing can prevent My receiving thee into fellowship. I have taken possession of heaven for thee, as the Great High Priest, that thou mightest live the heavenly life, that thou mightest have access into the holiest of all and an abiding dwelling-place there. To-day, if thou wilt, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.” Thank God, the Jesus of the penitent thief is my Jesus. Thank God, the cross of the penitent thief is my cross. I must confess my sinfulness if I want to come into the closest communion with my blessed Lord. There was not a man upon earth during the thirty-three years of Christ’s life that had such wonderful fellowship with

the Son of God, as the penitent thief, for with the Son of God he entered the glory. What made him so separate from others? He was on the cross with Jesus, and entered Paradise with Him. And if I live upon the cross with Jesus, the Paradise-life shall be mine every day.

And now, if Jesus gives me that promise, what have I to do? Let go. When a ship is moored alongside the dock, with everything ready for the start and all standing on the quay, the last bell is rung and the order is given, "Let go." Then the last rope is loosened, and the steamer moves. There are things that tie us to the earth, to the flesh-life, and to the self-life; but to-day the message comes: "If thou wouldst die with Jesus, let go." Thou needst not understand all. It may not be perfectly clear; the heart may appear dull, but never mind; *Jesus carried that penitent thief through death to life.* The thief did not know where he was going, he did not know what was to happen; but Jesus, the mighty Conqueror, took him in His arms, and landed him, in his ignorance, in Paradise. Oh, I have sometimes said in my soul, bless God for the ignorance of that penitent thief. He knew nothing about what was going to happen, but he trusted Christ; and if I cannot understand all about this crucifixion with Christ, and the death to sin, and the life to God, and the glory that comes into the heart, never mind, I trust my Lord's promise, I cast myself helpless into His arms. I maintain my position on the cross. Given up to

Jesus, to die with Him, I can trust Him to carry me through.

Shall we not each one take the blessed opportunity of doing what Ruth did when she, in obedience to the advice of her mother, just cast herself at the feet of the great Boaz, the Redeemer, to be His? Shall we not come into personal contact with Jesus, and shall not each one of us just speak before the world these simple words: "Lord, here is this life; there is much in it still of self, and sinfulness, and self-will, but I come to Thee; I long to enter fully into Thy death; I long to know fully that I have been crucified with Thee; I long to live Thy life every day." Then say, "Lord Jesus, I have seen Thy glory, what Thou didst for the penitent one at Thy side on the cross; I am trusting Thee, that Thou wilt do it for me. Lord, I cast myself into Thy arms."

## IX

## Joy in the Holy Ghost

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”—  
ROMANS xiv. 17.

**I**N this text we have the earthly revelation of the work of the Trinity. The kingdom of God is righteousness; that represents the work of the Father. The foundations of His throne are justice and judgment. Then comes the work of the Son: He is our peace, our Shiloh, our rest. The kingdom of God is peace; not only the peace of pardon for the past, but the peace of perfect assurance as to the future. Not only the work of atonement is finished, but the work of sanctification is finished in Christ, and I may receive and enjoy what is prepared for me. The new man has been created, and I may in Him live out my life; if a kingdom is established in righteousness, if the rule is perfect, there can be perfect rest. If there be peace, no war from without, and no civil dissension within, a nation can be happy and prosperous. And so there comes here, after righteousness and peace, the joy, the blessed happiness in which a man can live: “The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and

joy in the Holy Ghost." Let us consider this joy of the Holy Ghost, not only as a beautiful thing to admire, not only as a thing to have beautiful thoughts about, but as a blessing that we are going to claim.

We often see a fruiterer's or confectioner's shop, with beautiful fruit or cake temptingly displayed in the window. There is a great pane of plate glass before it, and the hungry little boys stand there and look, and long, but they cannot reach it. If you were to say to one, "Now, little boy, take that fruit," he would look at you in surprise. He has learned that there is something between. If he had never known of glass he might attempt it. The plate glass is sometimes so clear that even a grown man might for a moment be deceived and stretch out his hand. But he soon finds there is something invisible between him and the fruit. This represents exactly the life of many Christians: they see, but they cannot take. And what now is this invisible pane of plate glass, that hinders my taking the beautiful things I see? It is nothing but the self life; I see divine things but cannot reach them, the self life is the invisible plate glass. We are willing, we are working, we are striving, and yet we are holding back something; we are afraid to give up everything to God. We do not know what the consequences may be. We have not yet comprehended that God and Christ Jesus are worth everything. Whatever is told us of the blessed life of peace and joy, we say, "Praise God: God's word



is true; I believe the word;" and yet, day by day, we stand back. When someone says, "Take it," we say, "I can't take it; there is something between." Would we were willing to give up the self life! Would we had the courage to give up to-day, and let the joy of the Holy Ghost be our religion! That is the religion God has prepared for us; that is the religion we can claim; not only righteousness, not only peace, but the joy of the Holy Ghost. That is the kingdom of God.

What is this joy in the Holy Ghost? First of all, it is *the joy of the presence of Jesus*. We are often inclined to speak most of two other things, the power for sanctification, and the power for service. But I find there is a thing more important than either of those two, and that is that the Holy Ghost came from heaven to be the abiding presence of Christ in His disciples, in the Church, and in the heart of every believer. The Lord Jesus was going away, and His disciples were very sad; their hearts were sorrowful; but He said to them, "I will come back again, and I will come to you. Your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you." What took place with them, may take place with us too. The Holy Spirit is given to make the presence of Jesus an abiding reality, a continual experience. And what was that joy that no man could ever touch? It was the joy of Pentecost. And what was Pentecost? The coming of the Lord Jesus in the Holy Ghost to dwell with His disciples. While Jesus was with

His disciples on earth, He could not get into their hearts in the right way. They loved Him, but they could not take in His teaching, they could not partake of His disposition, and they could not receive His very spirit into their being. But when He had ascended to heaven, He came back in the Spirit to dwell in their hearts. It is this alone that will help us to go, the minister to his congregation with its difficulties, the business man to his counter, the mother to her large family with its care, the worker to her Bible class. It is this only that will help us to feel, "I can conquer, I can live in the rest of God." Why? "Because I have the Almighty Jesus with me every day." With God's people, there seems to be one hindrance, *they do not know their Saviour*. They do not realise that this blessed Christ is an ever-present, all-pervading, in-dwelling Christ, who wants to take charge of their entire lives. They do not know, they do not believe, that He is an Almighty Christ, and ready in the midst of any difficulties and any circumstances to be their keeper and their God. This is absolutely true. Many Christians are asked as to how one may have the joy unspeakable, the joy that nothing can take away, the joy of the friendship and nearness and love of Jesus filling his heart. We complain that the rush of competition is so terrible that we cannot get time for private prayer. Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, if He comes to you as a brother and a friend and an abiding guest, can give your heart the joy of the

Holy Ghost, so that business will take its right place under your feet. Your heart is too holy and precious to have it filled with business; let the business be in the head and under the feet, but let Christ have the whole heart, and He will keep the whole life. Our glorious, exalted, almighty, ever-present Christ! why is it that you and I cannot trust Him fully, perfectly to do His work? Shall we not say before God that we do trust Him, that we will trust Christ to be to us every moment all that we can desire? On the cross of Calvary Christ was all alone, and you believe He did a perfect and a blessed work; and Christ in heaven is all alone, as High Priest and Intercessor, and you trust Him for His work there. But, praise God! it is equally true, Christ in the heart is able all alone to keep it all the days. May it please God to reveal to His children the nearness of Christ standing and knocking at the door of every heart, ready to come in and rest for ever there, and to lead the soul into His rest!

We all know what the power of joy is; we know there is nothing so attractive as joy, there is nothing can help a man to bear and endure so much as joy; we know that the Lord Jesus Himself for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross. One is not living aright if he is living a sighing, trembling, doubting life. Come to-day, and believe the joy of the Holy Ghost is meant for you. Does not the scripture say, "Whom not having seen we love; in whom, though now ye see

Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"? Do you not believe that this blessed, adorable, inconceivably beautiful Son of God, the delight of the Father,—do you not believe that this Son of God could fill your heart with delight day and night, if He were always present? And do you not believe that He loves you more than a bridegroom loves his bride? Do you not believe that, having bought you with His blood, Jesus is longing for you? He needs you to satisfy His heart of love. Begin to believe with your whole heart, "The joy of the Holy Ghost is my portion," for the Holy Ghost secures to me without interruption the presence and the love of Jesus.

But, secondly, there is *the joy of deliverance from sin*. The Holy Ghost comes to sanctify us. Christ is our sanctification, and the Holy Ghost comes to communicate Him to us, to work out all that is in Christ and to reproduce it in us. Let us remember that in the sight of God there is something higher than work. There is Christlikeness—the likeness and the life of Christ in us. That is what God wants; that will fit us for work. God asks not that Christ should live in us as a person sometimes lives in a house that is not clean, separate from it, and always conscious of the difference between himself and the house. We are not to be temples full of filthy, impure, foul creatures, with Christ hidden away somewhere within;—that is not the intention of God, but He

wants Christ so formed in us that we are one with Christ, and that in our thinking, feeling, and living the image of His blessed Son is manifest before Him. The Holy Spirit is given to sanctify us. My brother, are you willing to be sanctified from every sin, be that sin great or small? I am not asking, do you feel that you have the power to conquer it? I am not even asking, do you feel the power to cast it out? It may be that you feel no power; that won't hinder if you are willing. I cannot cast out sin, but I can get the Almighty Christ by the Holy Spirit to do it, and it is my work to say to Christ, "There is the sin, there is the evil thing; I lay at Thy feet, I cast it there, I cast it into Thy very bosom. Lord, I am ready to cut off the right hand, anything, only deliver me from it." Then Christ will cast out the evil spirit and give deliverance. The Spirit of God is a holy Spirit, and His work is to make free from the power of sin and death. And if you want to live in the joy of the Holy Ghost, the question comes: "Are you willing to surrender everything that is sinful, even what appears good, but has the stain of sin on it?" You may be involved in relationships that make your life very difficult. A pastor with his people may be brought into very difficult relationships; or a business man with his partner, or those with whom he has to associate, may be in an exceedingly trying position. But is not the blessed Lamb of God worth it all? What is the Christ worth to you? The question

was once asked the disciples, "What think ye of Christ?" I ask, "What is Christ worth to you?" And I beseech you, whatever prospective difficulties there may be, and whatever perplexities surround you, take the whole world to-day and cast it at His feet. To have Him is worth any difficulty; to have Him will be the solution of every difficulty. There are not only such external, manifest difficulties and perplexities, there are a thousand little things that come in our life and that often disturb us, temptations to unloving feelings, and sharp words, and hasty judgments. Oh, come, and believe that the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, can come in and rule, and give grace to pass through all without sinning, and you shall know what the joy of the Holy Ghost is. Our body, we read in 1st Corinthians, is the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is to be holy in things like eating and drinking. How often a Christian comes to the consciousness that he takes or seeks too much enjoyment in eating, eating for pleasure, with no self-denial or self-sacrifice in his feeding the body! How often we tempt one another to eat, and how often the believer forgets that this body is the very secret temple of the Holy Ghost, and that every mouthful we eat and drink may be for the glory of God in such a way as to be a sacrifice, perfectly well pleasing to Him! Beloved, I bring you a message: There is access for you into the rest of God, and the Holy Spirit is given to bring you in, and the Holy Spirit will fill your heart with the

unutterable joy of Christ's presence ; and with the joy of deliverance from sin, of victory over sin ; the unutterable joy of knowing that you are doing God's will and are pleasing in His sight ; the unutterable joy of knowing that He is sanctifying and keeping the temple for Christ to dwell in. Believers, the joy of the Holy Ghost, the joy of the holiness of God, is His blessedness, His purity, His perfection, that nothing can mar or stain or disturb. The Holy Ghost waits to bring and to manifest it in our lives. He wants to come so into our hearts that we shall live, as Holy Ghost men, the sanctified life, with the sanctifying power of Jesus running through our whole beings.

My third thought is : the joy of the Holy Ghost is *the joy of the love of the saints*. The Holy Ghost was not given to any man on the day of Pentecost separate from the others ; He came and filled the whole company. We know how much division and separation and pride there had been among them, but on that day the Holy Ghost so filled their hearts that we find it was afterward said, "Behold how these men love one another." There was a love in the primitive Church that the very heathen noticed, and could not understand. Why was that ? The Holy Spirit is the bond of union between the Father and Son ; and that bond is love. The Holy Spirit is just the love of God come to dwell in the heart. When He dwells with me and my brother, we learn to love each other. Though I be naturally unloving, and though I

have very little grace, if the heart of my brother is full of the Holy Spirit he loves me through it all.

You know love is a wonderful thing. As long as a man tries to love it is not real love, but when real love comes, the more opposition it meets the more it triumphs, for the more it can exercise itself and perfect itself, the more it rejoices. Take a mother with a son dishonouring her. How her love follows him! When she sees that he has fallen deeper than ever before, how the dear mother heart only loves him the more intensely through all the wretchedness! Does not the scripture say, "If He gave His life for us, we are bound to give our life for the brethren"? The Holy Spirit comes as a Spirit of love, and if you want to know the joy of the Holy Ghost, and want Him to lead you into the rest of God and keep you there, beware above everything on earth or in hell of being unloving. One sharp word to your brother or sister brings a cloud upon you without your knowing it. People are so accustomed to talk just as they like about each other that they say sharp and unkind and unloving things, and when a cloud comes in consequence they cannot understand it. If there is one thing that grieves God, if there is one thing that hinders the Spirit,—the fruit of the Spirit is love,—it is the want of lovingness. If you want to live in the joy of the Holy Ghost, make your covenant with God. "But," you say, "there is a Christian man who makes me so impatient; he



does trouble me and vex me so with his stupidity. And there are those worldly men, how they have tempted me in times past and done me harm! And there is that business man who is trying to ruin me." Take them all, and your own wife and children, and every one around you, and say, "I understand it; love is rest, and rest is love. God resteth in His love. Love is rest, and rest is love, and where there is no love the rest must be disturbed." And let us say to-day, "I see what the joy is; it is the joy of always loving, it is the joy of losing my own life in love to others." In connection with humility, someone asks, "How about that text, 'In honour preferring one another'?" When a soul comes into perfect humility before God, it becomes nothing, and God becomes all in all. I am nothing. There is no self to be affronted; I have said before God, "I am nothing; it is only Thy life and light that shines. The honour is Thine, and nothing may touch me but what is against the glory of my God."

Beloved, are you living in the joy of the Holy Ghost? Come and accept a blessing and give yourself up to live a life of humility in which you are nothing, and a life of love like Christ's in which you only live for your fellow-men, for the kingdom of God is the joy of the Holy Ghost.

My last thought is that the joy of the Holy Ghost is *the joy of working for God*. The joy of the presence of Jesus, the joy of deliverance from sin, the joy of love for the brethren, and then—the

joy of working for God. Some of us have at times felt what an incomprehensible thing it is that the everlasting God should work through us; and we have said, "Lord, what is this, that Thou the Almighty One dost work in me and through me, a vile worm by nature?" It is a mystery that passeth knowledge, and yet it is so true. The joy of the Holy Ghost comes when a man gives himself up to the Christlike work of carrying the love of God to men. Let us seek the perishing, let us live and die for souls, let us live and die that our fellow-men may be reclaimed and brought back to their God. There is no joy like hearing the joy-song of a new-born soul. But yes, there is another joy that may be as deep. Even if God does not give me the blessing of hearing the new-born soul sing its song, I may have the joy, the sympathy with Jesus in His rejected life, knowing that I have given myself for others, and that the Father looks with good pleasure on me. When I think of the thousands of believers in the Christian world and then think of the heathen world, the cry comes up in my heart: "What are we doing?" Ah, we need to be crying to God day and night, "Lord God, wake us up. Lord God, let the Holy Spirit burn within us." Are we the true successors of Jesus Christ? Are we indeed the followers and successors of Christ who went all the way to Calvary to give His blood for men? Do let us remember the joy of the Holy Ghost is the joy of working for God in Christ. I believe that God has

new ways and new leadings and new power for His people, if they will only wait on Him. But what most of us do is this: we thank God for all He has given, we look at all the ways of working we have, and we say that we will try to do our work better. But oh, if we had a sense of the need, if we had any sense, by the vision of the Holy Ghost, of the state of the millions around us, I am sure we would fall on our faces before God and say, "God help us to something new. Oh, that every fibre of our being may be taken possession of for this great work with God!" The great need is that all Christians should consecrate themselves wholly to God for His work. May God help us to know what is the joy of the Holy Ghost!

Concluding, I ask again, "Do you believe that it is possible for the Lord Jesus, our Shiloh, of whom Jacob prophesied, our Joshua, our glorious King and High Priest,—do you believe it is possible for Christ Jesus to bring you to-day into the rest of God?" Remember that word in Hebrews, "Even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day." To-day, summon up courage and take up your ministry, and take up your business, and take up your surroundings, and take up your natural temperament, and take up your home, and take up your life for the days to come upon earth, and say, "I do not understand it, I know not what will come, but one thing I know, I do absolutely give everything into the hands of the crucified Lamb of God; He shall have me in my entirety." And oh, remember,

beloved, that Christ will be to you more than you can think or understand, more than you can ask or desire.

Come, let us cast ourselves into those blessed, loving arms, and let us believe even now that our Joshua leads us into the rest of God, the rest in which we are saved from self-care and self-seeking, from self-trusting and self-loving; the rest in which we do not think of ourselves, but where He who is almighty and omnipresent is always going to be with us and is always going to work within us. And let us, when we have done that, claim the promise, that as we have sought first the kingdom and God's righteousness, all things shall be added unto us. Beloved, the kingdom of God is within you, and it is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Come, let us claim it even now in simple, childlike, humble faith.

## X

## Triumph of Faith

“And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him.”—JOHN iv. 50.

LET me read from the Gospel according to St. John, the 4th chapter, beginning at the 46th verse: “So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where He made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come up out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not *believe*.” Here you have the word “believe” the first time. “The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man *believed* the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.” Here you have that word the second time. “And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever

left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; and himself *believed*, and his whole house." There you have the word "believe" the third time.

This story has often been used to illustrate the different steps of faith in the spiritual life. It was this use made of it in an address that brought the sainted Canon Battersby into the full enjoyment of rest. He had been a most godly man, but had lived the life of failure. He saw in the story what it was to rest on the word and trust the saving power of Jesus, and from that night he was a changed man. He went home to testify of it, and under God he was allowed to originate the Keswick Convention.

Let me point out to you the three aspects of faith which we have here: first, faith seeking; then, faith finding; and then, faith enjoying. Or, still better: faith struggling; faith resting; faith triumphing. First of all, faith struggling. Here is a man, a heathen, a nobleman, who has heard about Christ. He has a dying son at Capernaum, and in his extremity leaves his home, and walks some six or seven hours away to Cana of Galilee. He has heard of the Prophet, possibly, as one who has made water wine; he has heard of His other miracles round Capernaum, and he has a certain measured trust that Jesus will be able to help him. He goes to Him, and his prayer is that the Lord will come down to Capernaum and heal his son.

Christ said to him, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." He saw that the nobleman wanted Him to come and stand beside the child. This man had not the faith of the centurion—"Only speak a word." He had faith. It was faith that came from hearsay, and it was faith that did, to a certain extent, hope in Christ; but it was not the faith in Christ's power such as Christ desired. Still Christ accepted and met this faith. After the Lord had told him what He wished,—a faith that could fully trust Him,—the nobleman cried the second time, "Sir, come down ere my child die." Seeing his earnestness and his trust, Christ said, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." And then we read that the nobleman believed, and went his way. He believed the word that Jesus had spoken. In that he rested and was content. He went away without having any other pledge than the word of Jesus. As he was walking homeward, the servants met him, to tell him his son lived. He asked at what hour he began to amend. And when they told him, he knew it was at the very hour that Jesus had been speaking to him. He had at first a faith that was seeking, and struggling, and searching for blessing; then he had a faith that accepted the blessing simply as it was contained in the word of Jesus. When Christ said, "Thy son liveth," he was content, and went home, and found the blessing—the son restored.

Then came the third step in his faith—"He

believed with his whole house." That is to say, he did not only believe that Christ could do just this one thing, the healing of his son; but he believed in Christ as his Lord. He gave himself up entirely to be a disciple of Jesus. And that not only alone, but with his whole house. Many Christians are like the nobleman. They have heard about a better life. They have met certain individuals by whose Christian lives they have been impressed, and consequently have felt that Christ can do wonderful things for a man. Many Christians say in their heart, "I am sure there is a better life for me to live; how I wish I could be brought to that blessed state!" But they have not much hope about it. They have read, and prayed, but they have found everything so difficult. If you ask them, "Do you believe Jesus can help you to live this higher life?" they say, "Yes; He is omnipotent." If you ask, "Do you believe Jesus wishes to do it?" they say, "Yes, I know He is loving." And if you say, "Do you believe that He will do it for you?" they at once say, "I know He is willing, but whether He will actually do it for me I do not know. I am not sure that I am prepared. I do not know if I am advanced enough. I do not know if I have enough grace for that." And so they are hungering, struggling, wrestling, and often remain unblessed. This state of things sometimes goes on for years—they are expecting to see signs and wonders, and hoping that God, by a miracle, will put them all right. They are just like the Israelites; they limit



the Holy One of Israel. Have you ever noticed that it is the very people whom God has blessed so wonderfully who do that? What did the Israelites say? "God hath provided water in the wilderness. But can He provide the table in the wilderness? We do not think He can." And so we find believers who say, "Yes, God has done wonders. The whole of redemption is a wonder, and God has done wonders for some whom I know. But will God take one so feeble as I, and put me entirely right?" The struggling and wrestling and seeking are the beginnings of faith in you—a faith that desires and hopes. But it must go on further. And how can that faith advance? Look at the second step. There is the nobleman, and Christ speaks to him this wonderful word: "Go thy way; thy son liveth"; and the nobleman simply rests upon that word of the living Jesus. He rests on it, and that without any proof of what he is to get, and without one man in the world to encourage him. He goes away home with the thought: "I have received the blessing I sought; I have got life from the dead for my son. The living Christ promised it me, and on that I rest." The struggling, seeking faith has become a resting faith. The man has entered into rest about his son.

And now, dear believers, this is the one thing God asks you to do: God has said that in Christ you have eternal life, the more abundant life; Christ has said to you, "I live, and ye shall live also." The word says to us that Christ is our

Peace, our Victory over every enemy, who leads us into the rest of God. These are the words of God, and His message has come to us that Christ can do for us what Moses could not have done. Moses had no Christ to live in him. It has been told you that you can have what Moses had not; you can have a living Christ within you. Are you going to believe that, apart from any experience, and apart from any consciousness of strength? If the peace of God is to rule in your heart, it is the God of peace Himself must be there to do it. The peace is inseparable from the God. The light of the sun—can I separate that from the sun? Utterly impossible. As long as I have the sun I have the light. If I lose the sun I lose the light. Take care! Do not seek the peace of God or the peace of Christ apart from God and Christ. But how does Christ come to me? He comes to me in this precious word; and just as He said to the nobleman, "Go thy way home; thy son liveth," so Christ comes to me to-day, and He says, "Go thy way; thy soul liveth; with the life which I live thy soul liveth." "Lo, I am with you alway." "I live, and ye shall live also." "I wait to take charge of your whole life. Will you have Me do this? Trust to Me all that is evil and feeble; your whole sinful and perverse nature—give it up to Me; that dying, sin-sick soul—give it up to Me, and I will take care of it." Will you not listen and hear Him speak to your soul? "Child, go forward into all the circumstances of life that have

tempted you; into all the difficulties that threaten you. Thy soul liveth with the life of God; thy soul liveth in the power of God; thy soul liveth in Christ Jesus." Will you not, like the nobleman, take the simple step of faith, and believe the word Jesus hath spoken? Will you not say, "Lord Jesus, Thou hast spoken: I can rest on Thy word. I have seen that Christ is willing to be more to me than I ever knew; I have seen that Christ is willing to be my life in the most actual and intense meaning of the words." All that we know about the Holy Ghost sums itself up in this one thing: the Holy Ghost comes to make Christ an actual, indwelling, always-abiding Saviour. Do let be true of you what is said of the nobleman: "The man believed the word which Jesus had spoken, and went his way."

Lastly comes the triumphant faith. The man went home holding fast the promise. He had only one promise, but he held it fast. When God gives me a promise, He is just as near me as when He fulfils it. That is a great comfort. When I have the promise, I have also the pledge of the fulfilment. The whole heart of God is in His promise, just as much as in the fulfilment of it, and sometimes God, the Promiser, is more precious because I am compelled to cling more to Him, and to come closer, and to live by simple faith, and to adore His love. Do not think this is a hard life, to be living upon a promise. It means living upon the everlasting God. Who is going to say that is

hard? It means living upon the crucified, the loving Christ. Be ashamed to say that is a difficult thing. It is a blessed thing.

The nobleman went home and found the child living. And what happened then? Two things. First: he gave up his whole life to be a believer in Jesus. If there had been a division among the people of Capernaum, and thousands of them had hated Christ, this man would still have stood on His side. He believed in the Lord. This is what must take place with us. Let us go forward with our trust in the living Christ, knowing that He will keep us. Then we will get grace to carry the life of Christ into our whole conduct, into all our walk and conversation. The faith that rests in Jesus, is the faith that trusts all to Him, with all we have. Do we not read that when God had finished His work, and rested, it was only to begin new work? Yes; the great work was to be carried on—watching over and ruling His world and His Church. And is it not so with the Lord Jesus? When He had finished His work, He sat upon the throne to do His work of perfecting the body, through the Holy Spirit. And now, the Holy Spirit is carrying on that blessed work, teaching us to rest in Christ, and in the strength of that rest to go on, and trust Him to cover our whole life with the power, and the obedience, and the will, and the likeness of the Lord Jesus. The nobleman gave up his whole life to be a believer in Christ; from that day it was a believer in Jesus

who walked about the streets of Capernaum; not only a man who could say, "Once He helped me," but, "I believe in Him with my whole life." Let that be so with us everywhere; let Christ be the one object of our trust.

One thought more—He believed with his whole house. That was triumphant faith. He took up his position as a believer in Christ; and his wife, his children, his servants—he gathered them all together, and laid them at the feet of Christ. And if you want power in your own house, if you want power in your Bible class, if you want power in your social circle, if you want power to influence the nation, and if you want power to influence the Church of Christ, see where it begins. Come into contact with Jesus in this rest of faith that accepts His life fully, that trusts Him fully, and the power will come by faith to overcome the world; by faith to bless others; by faith to live a life to the glory of God. Go thy way, thy soul liveth; for it is Jesus Christ who liveth within you. Go thy way; though trembling and fearful, still *rest in the word and the power of the Son of God*: "Lo, I am with you alway." Go thy way, with the heart open to welcome Him, and the heart believing He has come in. Surely we have not prayed in vain. Christ has listened to the yearnings of our hearts and has entered in. Let us go our way quietly, restfully, full of praise, and joy, and trust; ever hearing the words of our Master, "Go thy way, thy soul liveth"; and ever saying, "I have trusted

Christ to reveal His abundant life in my soul; by His grace I will wait upon Him to fulfil His promise." Let the seeker's faith now be a resting faith, and the resting faith will grow into an active, working faith, bringing blessing to all around. Amen.

## XI

## That God may be All in All

“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him, that God may be all in all.”—1 CORINTHIANS xv. 24–28.

**T**HIS will be the grand conclusion of the great drama of the world's history, and of Christ's redemption. There will come a day—the glory is such we can form no conception of it, the mystery is so deep we cannot realise it, but there is a day coming, when the Son shall deliver up the kingdom that the Father gave Him, and that He won with His blood, and that He hath established and perfected from the throne of His glory. “He shall deliver up the kingdom unto the Father.” The Son Himself shall be subject also unto the Father, “that God may be all in all.” I cannot understand it—the ever blessed Son equal with God, from eternity, and through eternity; the ever blessed Son on the throne shall be subject unto the

Father; and in some way utterly beyond our comprehension, it shall then be made manifest, as never before, that God is all in all. It is this that Christ has been working for; it is this that He is working for to-day in us; it is this that He thought it worth while to give His blood for; it is this that His heart is longing for in each of us; this is the very essence and glory of Christianity, "that God may be all in all." And now, if this is what fills the heart of Christ; if this expresses the one end of the work of Christ, then, if I want to have the spirit of Christ in me, the motto of my life must be: Everything made subject, and swallowed up in Him, "that God may be all in all." What a triumph it would be if the Church were fighting really with that banner floating over her! What a life ours could be if that were really our banner! To serve God fully, wholly, only, to have Him all in all! How it would ennoble, and enlarge, and stimulate our whole being, to know I am working, I am fighting, "that God may be all in all"; that the day of glory may be hastened. I am praying, and the Holy Spirit makes His wrestling in me with unutterable longing, "that God may be all in all." Would that we Christians realised in connection with what a grand cause we are working and praying; that we had some conception of what a kingdom we are partakers of, and what a manifestation of God we are preparing for. To illustrate what a grand thing it is to belong to the kingdom of God, and to the glorious Church



of Christ on earth, John M'Neill tells how, when he was a boy twelve years of age, working on a railway line and earning the grand wages of six shillings a week, he used to go home to his mother and sisters, who thought no end of their little Johnnie, and delight them by telling of the position he had. He would say with great pride, "Oh, our company—it has so many thousands of pounds passing through its hands every year; it carries so many hundreds of thousands of passengers every year; and it has so many miles of railway, and so many engines and carriages; and so many thousands in its employ!" How the mother and the sisters prided themselves in him, because he was a partner in such an important business. Christians, if we would only rouse ourselves to believe that we belong to the kingdom that Christ is preparing to deliver up to the Father, that God may be all in all, how the glory would fill our hearts, and expel everything mean, and low, and earthly! How we should be borne along in this blessed faith! I am living for this: that Christ may have the kingdom to deliver to the Father. I am living for this, and I will one day see Him made subject to the Father, and then God all in all. I am living for Him, and I shall be there not only as a witness, but I will have a part in it all. The kingdom delivered up, the Son made subject, and God all in all! I shall have a part in it, and in adoring worship share the glory and the blessedness.

Let us take this home to our hearts, that it may

rule in our lives—this one thought, this one faith, this one aim, this one joy: Christ lived, and died, and reigns; I live and die and in His power I reign; only for this one thing, “that God may be all in all.” Let it possess our whole heart and life. How can we do this? It is a serious question, to which I wish to give you a few simple answers. And I say, first of all: *Allow God to take His place* in your heart and life. Luther often said to people, when they came troubling him about difficulties, “Do let God be God.” Oh, give God His place. And what is that place? “That God may be all in all.” Let God be all in all every day, from morning to evening. God to rule, and I to obey. Ah, the blessedness of saying, “God and I!” What a privilege that I have such a partner! God first, and then I! And yet there might be secret self-exaltation in associating God with myself. And I find in the Bible a more precious word still. It is, “God and not I.” It is not, “God first, and I second”; God is all, and I am nothing. Paul said, “I laboured more abundantly than they all; though I be nothing.” Let us try to give God His place—begin in our closet, in our worship, in our prayer. The power of prayer depends almost entirely upon our apprehension of who it is with whom I speak. It is of the greatest consequence, if we have but half an hour in which to pray, that we take time to get a sight of this great God, in His power, in His love, in His nearness, just waiting to bless us.

This is of far more consequence than spending the whole half-hour in pouring out numberless petitions, and pleading numberless promises. The great thing is to feel that we are putting our supplications into the bosom of omnipotent Love. Before and above everything, let us take time ere we pray to realise the glory and presence of God. Give God His place in every prayer. I say, allow God to have His place. I cannot give God His place upon the throne; and yet, in a certain sense I can, and I ought to try. The great thing, however, is for me to feel that I cannot realise what that place is, but God will increasingly reveal Himself and the place He holds. How do I know anything about the sun? Because the sun shines, and in its light I see what the sun is. The sun is its own evidence. No philosopher could have told me about the sun if the sun did not shine. No power of meditation and thought can grasp the presence of God. Be quiet, and trust, and rest, and the everlasting God will shine into your heart, and will reveal Himself. And then, just as naturally as I enjoy the light of the sun, and as naturally as I look upon the pages of a book knowing that I can see the letters because the light shines; just as naturally will God reveal Himself to the waiting soul, and make His presence a reality. God will take His place as God in the presence of His child, so that absolutely and actually the chief thing in the child's heart shall be: "God is here, God makes Himself known." Beloved, is not this what you

long for—that God shall take a place that He has never had; and that God shall come to you in a nearness that you have never felt yet; and, above all, that God shall come to you in an abiding and unbroken fellowship? God is able to take His place before you all the day. I repeat what I have referred to before, because God has taught me a lesson by it: As God made the light of the sun so soft, and sweet, and bright, and universal, and unceasing, that it never costs me a minute's trouble to enjoy it; even so, and far more real than the light shining upon me, the nearness of my God can be revealed to me as my abiding portion. Let us all pray "that God may be all in all," in our everyday life.

"That God may be all in all," I must not only allow Him to take His place, but, secondly, I must *accept His will in everything*. I must accept His will in every providence. Whether it be a Judas that betrays, or whether it be a Pilate in his indifference, who gives me up to the enemy; whatever the trouble, or temptation, or vexation, or worry, that comes, I must see God in it, and accept it as God's will to me. Trouble of any sort that comes to me is God's will for me. It is not God's will that men should do the wrong, but it is God's will that allows them to bring us into circumstances of trial. There is never a trial that comes to us but it is God's will for us, and if we learn to see God in it, then we bid it welcome.

Suppose away in South Africa there is a woman whose husband has gone on a long journey into

the interior. He is to be away for months from all posts. The wife is anxious to receive news. In weeks she has had no letter or tidings from him. One day, as she stands in her door, there comes a great savage Kaffir. He is frightful in appearance, and carries his spears and shield. The woman is alarmed, and rushes into the house and closes the door. He comes and knocks at the door, and she is in terror. She sends her servant, who comes back and says, "The man says he must see you." She goes, all affrighted. He takes out an old newspaper. He has come a month's journey on foot from her husband, and inside the dirty newspaper is a letter from her husband, telling her of his welfare. How that wife delights in that letter! She forgets the face that has terrified her. And now, as weeks are passing away again, how she begins to long for that ugly Kaffir messenger! After long waiting, he comes again, and this time she rushes out to meet him, because he is the messenger that comes from her beloved husband, and she knows that with all his repelling exterior he is the bearer of a message of love. Beloved, have you learned to look at tribulation, and vexation, and disappointment, as the dark, savage-looking messenger with a spear in his hand, that comes straight from Jesus? Have you learned to say, "There is never a trouble, and never a hurt by which my heart is touched or even pierced, but it comes from Jesus, and brings a message of love"? Will you not learn to say from to-day, "Welcome every trial, for it

comes from God"? If you want God to be all in all, you must see and meet God in every providence. Oh, learn to accept God's will in everything! Come, learn to say of every trial, without exception, "It is my Father who sent it. I accept it as His messenger," and nothing in earth or hell can separate you from God.

If God is to be all in all in your heart and life, I say not only, Allow Him to take His place, and accept all His will, but, thirdly, *Trust in His power*. Dear friends, it is "God who *worketh to will and to do* according to His good pleasure." It is "the God of peace," according to another passage, "who perfects you in every good thing to do His will, *working in you* what is well-pleasing in His sight." You complain of weakness, of feebleness, of emptiness. Never mind; this is what you are made for—to be an emptied vessel, in which God can put His fulness and His strength. Do learn the lesson. I know it is not easy. Long after Paul had been an apostle, the Lord Jesus had to come in a very special way to teach him to say, "I do gladly glory in my infirmities." Paul was in danger of being exalted, owing to the revelations from heaven, and Jesus sent him a thorn in the flesh—yes, Jesus sent it—a messenger of Satan—to buffet him. Paul prayed, and struggled, and wanted to get rid of it. And Jesus came to him, and said, "It is My doing that you may not be free from that. You need it. I will bless you wonderfully in it." Paul's life was changed from

that moment in this one respect, and he said, "I never knew it so before; from henceforth I glory in my infirmities; for when I am weak, then am I strong." Do you indeed desire God to be all in all? Learn to glory in your weakness. Take time to say every day as you bow before God, "The almighty power of God that works in the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the flowers, is working in me. It is as sure as that I live: the almighty power of God is working in me. I only need to get down, and be quiet; I need to be more submissive, and surrendered to His will; I need to be more trustful, and to allow God to do with me what He will." Give God His way with you, and let God work, and He will work mightily. The deepest quietness has often been proved to be the inspiration for the highest action. It has been seen in the experience of many of God's saints, and it is just the experience we need,—that in the quietness of surrender and faith, God's working has been made manifest.

Fourthly, if God is to be all in all, *sacrifice everything for His kingdom and glory*. "That God may be all in all." This is such a noble, glorious, holy aim, that Christ said, "For this I will give My life. For this I will give My all, even to the death of the cross. For this I will give Myself." If it was worth that to Christ, is it worth less to you? If one had asked Jesus of Nazareth, "What is it Thou hast a body for; what is to Thee the highest use of the body?" He would have said,

“The use and the glory of My body is that I can give it a sacrifice to God. That is everything.” What is the use of having a mind ; and what is the use of having money ; and what is the use of having children ? That I can give them to God ; for God must be all in all in everything. I pray God that He may give us such a sight of His kingdom, and His glory, that everything else may disappear. Then, if you had ten thousand lives, you would say, “This is the beauty and the worth of life, ‘that God may be all in all’ to me, and that I may prove to men that God is more than everything, that life is only worth living as it is given to God to fill.” Do let us sacrifice everything for His kingdom and glory. Begin to live day by day with the prayer, “My God, I am given up to Thee. Be Thou my all in all.” You say, “But am I able to realise that ? can I ever carry it out ?” Yes, in this way : Let the Holy Spirit dwell in you ; let the Holy Spirit burn in you as a fire, and burn in you with unutterable groanings, crying unto God Himself to reveal His presence and His will in you. In the eighth of Romans, Paul spoke about the groanings of the whole creation. And what is the whole creation groaning for ? For the redemption, the glorious liberty of the children of God. And I am persuaded that was what Paul meant when he spoke of the groanings of the Holy Spirit—the unutterable groanings for the coming time of glory when God shall be all in all. Christians, sacrifice your time ; sacrifice your interests ; sacrifice your heart’s



best powers in praying, and desiring, and crying that "God may be all in all."

And lastly, if God is to be all in all, *wait continually on Him all the day*. My first point had reference to giving God His place; but I want to bring this out more pointedly in conclusion. Wait continually on God all the day. If you are to do that, you must live always in His presence. That is what we have been redeemed for. Do we not read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Let us draw near within the veil, through the blood, where the high priest is"? The holy place in which we are to live in the heavens is the immediate presence of God. The abiding presence of God is as certainly the heritage of every child of God, as that the sun shines. The Father never hides His face from His child. Sin hides it, and unbelief hides it, but the Father lets His love shine all the day on the face of His children. The sun of God's Love is shining day and night. "Your sun shall never go down." Begin to seek for this. Come and live in the presence of God. There is indeed an abiding place in His presence, in the secret of His pavilion, of which someone has sung very beautifully—

With me, wheresoe'er I wander,  
That great Presence goes;  
That unutterable gladness,  
Undisturbed repose.

Everywhere, the blessed stillness  
Of that Holy Place;  
Stillness of the love that worships,  
Dumb before His face.

This is the portion of those to whom the prayer is granted—"One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after; that I may dwell all my days in the house of the Lord; to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple." "In the secret of His pavilion He hideth me." God Himself will take you up, and will keep you there, so that all your work shall be done in God. Beloved, wait continually upon God. You cannot do this unless you are in His presence. You must live in His presence. Then the blessed habit of waiting upon God will be learned. The real difficulty of getting to the point of real waiting upon God, is because most Christians have not sought to realise the nearness of God, and to give God the first place. But let us strive after this, let us trust God to give it to us by His grace, let us wait on God all the day. "My eyes," says one, "are ever towards Thee." Wait upon God for guidance, and God, if you wait much upon Him, will lead you up into new power for His service, into new gladness in His fellowship. He will lead you out into a larger trust in Him; He will prepare you to expect new things from Him. Beloved, there is no knowing what God will do for a man who is utterly given up to Him. Praise His name! Let each one of us say, "May my life be to live and die, to labour and to pray continually, for this one thing: that in me, and around me, and in the Church; that throughout the world '*God may be all in all.*'" A little seed is

the beginning of a great tree. A mustard seed becomes a tree in which the birds of the air can nestle. That great day of which the text speaks, when Christ Himself shall be subject to the Father, and deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all—that is the great tree of the kingdom of God reaching its perfect consummation and glory. Oh, let us take the seed of that glory into our hearts, and let us bow in lowly surrender and submission, and say, “Amen, Lord ; this be my one thought. This be my life—to speak and to work, to pray and to exist only that others may be brought to know Him too. This be my life—to yield myself to the unutterable yearnings of the Holy Spirit, that I may not rest, but ever keep my eye on that day—the day of glory, when in very deed GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL.”

God help every one of us. God help us all to yield ourselves to Him, and to Christ, and to make it our everyday life ; for His name’s sake. Amen.

## XII

## Privilege and Experience

“And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.”—LUKE xv. 31.

THE words of the text are familiar to us all. The elder son had complained, and said that, though his father had made a feast, and had killed the fatted calf for the prodigal son, he had never given him even a kid that he might make merry with his friends. The answer of the father was: “Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.” One cannot have a more wonderful revelation of the heart of our Father in heaven than this points out to us. We often speak of the wonderful revelation of the father’s heart in his welcome to the prodigal son, and in what he did for him. But here we have a revelation of the father’s love far more wonderful, in what he says to the elder son.

If we are to experience a deepening of spiritual life, we want to discover clearly what is the spiritual life that God would have us live, on the one hand; and, on the other, to ask whether we are living that life; or, if not, what hinders us living it out fully.

This subject naturally divides itself into these heads: 1. The high privilege of every child of

God. 2. The low experience of too many believers.  
3. The cause of the discrepancy; and, lastly, The way to the restoration of the privilege.

#### 1. THE HIGH PRIVILEGE OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

We have here two things describing the privilege: First, "Son, thou art ever with me"—unbroken fellowship with thy Father is thy portion; second, "All that I have is thine"—all that God can bestow upon His children is theirs. "Thou art ever with me"; I am always near thee; thou canst dwell every hour of thy life in My presence, and all I have is for thee. I am a father, with a loving father's heart. I will withhold no good thing from thee. In these promises, we have the rich privileges of God's heritage.

We have, in the first place, unbroken fellowship with Him. A father never sends his child away with the thought that he does not care about his child knowing that he loves him. The father longs to have his child believe that he has the light of his father's countenance upon him all the day—that, if he sends him away to school, or anywhere that necessity compels, it is with a sense of sacrifice to his parental feelings. If it be so with an earthly father, what think you of God? Does He not want every child of His to know that he is constantly living in the light of His countenance? This is the meaning of that word, "Son, thou art ever with me."

That was the privilege of God's people in Old

Testament times. We are told that "Enoch walked with God." God's promise to Jacob was: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." And God's promise to Israel through Moses was: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." In Moses' response to the promise, he says, "For wherein shall it be known that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not that Thou goest with us; so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." The presence of God with Israel was the mark of their separation from other people. This is the truth taught in all the Old Testament; and if so, how much more may we look for it in the New Testament? Thus we find our Saviour promising to those who love Him and who keep His word, that the Father also will love them, and Father and Son will come and make their abode with them.

Let that thought into your hearts—that the child of God is called to this blessed privilege, *to live every moment of his life in fellowship with God.* He is called to enjoy the full light of His countenance. There are many Christians—I suppose the majority of Christians—who seem to regard the whole of the Spirit's work as confined to conviction and conversion;—they hardly know that He came to dwell in our hearts, and there reveal God to us. He came not to dwell near us,

but in us, that we might be *filled* with His indwelling. We are commanded to be "*filled with the Spirit*"; then the Holy Spirit would make God's presence manifest to us. That is the whole teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews: the veil is rent in twain; we have access into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus; we come into the very presence of God, so that we can live all the day with that presence resting upon us. That presence is with us wheresoever we go; and in all kinds of trouble, we have undisturbed repose and peace. "Son, thou art ever with me."

There are some people who seem to think that God, by some unintelligible sovereignty, withdraws His face. But God loves His people too much to withhold His fellowship from them without reason. The true reason of the absence of God from us is rather to be found in our sin and unbelief, than in any supposed sovereignty of His. If the child of God is walking in faith and obedience, the divine presence will be enjoyed in unbroken continuity.

Then there is the next blessed privilege: "All that I have is thine." Thank God, He has given us His own Son; and in giving Him, He has given us all things that are in Him, He has given us Christ's life, His love, His Spirit, His glory. "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." All the riches of His Son, the everlasting King, God bestows upon every one of His children. "Son, thou art ever with me; *and all that I have is thine.*" Is not that the meaning of

all those wonderful promises given in connection with prayer: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, ye shall receive"? Yes, there it is. That is the life of the children of God, as He Himself has pictured it to us.

2. In contrast with this high privilege of believers, look at

#### THE LOW EXPERIENCE OF TOO MANY OF US.

The elder son was living with his father and serving him "these many years," and he complains that the father never gave him a kid, while he gave his prodigal brother the fatted calf. Why was this? Simply because he did not ask it. He did not believe that he would get it, and therefore never asked it, and never enjoyed it. He continued thus to live in constant murmuring and dissatisfaction; and the keynote of all this wretched life is furnished in what he said. His father gave him everything, yet he never enjoyed it; and he throws the whole blame on his loving and kind father. O beloved, is not that the life of many a believer? Do not many speak and act in this way? Every believer has the promise of unbroken fellowship with God, but he says, "I have not enjoyed it; I have tried hard and done my best, and I have prayed for the blessing, but I suppose God does not see fit to grant it." But why not? One says, it is the sovereignty of God withholding the blessing. The father withheld not



his gifts from the elder brother in sovereignty; neither does our Heavenly Father withhold any good thing from them that love Him. He does not make any such differences between His children. "He is able to make all grace abound towards you," was a promise equally made to all in the Corinthian Church.

Some think these rich blessings are not for them, but for those who have more time to devote to religion and prayer; or their circumstances are so difficult, so peculiar, that we can have no conception of their various hindrances. But do such think that God, if He places them in these circumstances, cannot make His grace abound accordingly? They admit He could, if He would, work a miracle for them, which they can hardly expect. In some way, they, like the elder son, throw the blame on God. Thus many are saying, when asked if they are enjoying unbroken fellowship with God, "Alas, no! I have not been able to attain to such a height; it is too high for me. I know of some who have it, and I read of it; but God has not given it to me, for some reason." But why not? You think, perhaps, that you have not the same capacity for spiritual blessing that others have. The Bible speaks of a joy that is "unspeakable and full of glory" as the fruit of believing; of a "love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us." Do we enjoy these blessings? If not, why? We desire it, do we? Why not get it? Have we asked for it? We

think we are not worthy of the blessing—we are not good enough; and therefore God has not given it. There are more among us than we know of, or are willing to admit, who throw the blame of our darkness and of our wanderings on God! Take care! Take care!

And again, what about that other promise? The Father says, "All I have is thine." Are you rejoicing in the treasures of Christ? Are you conscious of having an abundant supply for all your spiritual needs every day? God has all these for you in abundance. "Thou never gavest me a kid!" The answer is, "All that I have is thine. I gave it thee in Christ."

Dear reader, we have such wrong thoughts of God. What is God like? I know no image more beautiful and instructive than that of the sun. The sun is never weary of shining,—of pouring out his beneficent rays upon both the good and the evil. You might close up the windows with blinds or bricks, the sun would shine upon them all the same; though we might sit in darkness, in utter darkness, the shining would be just the same. God's sun shines on every leaf; on every flower; on every blade of grass; on everything that springs out of the ground. All receive this wealth of sunshine until they grow to perfection and bear fruit. Would He who made that sun be less willing to pour out His love and life into me? The sun—what beauty it creates! And my God,—would He not

delight more in creating a beauty and a fruitfulness in me?—such, too, as He has *promised* to give? And yet some say, when asked why they do not live in unbroken communion with God, “God does not give it to me, I do not know why; but that is the only reason I can give you—He has not given it to me.” You remember the parable of the one who said, “I know thou art an hard master, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed,” asking and demanding what thou hast not given. Oh, let us come and ask why it is that the believer lives such a low experience!

### 3. THE CAUSE OF THIS DISCREPANCY BETWEEN GOD'S GIFTS, AND OUR LOW EXPERIENCE.

The believer is complaining that God has never given him a kid. Or, God has given him some blessing, but has never given the full blessing. He has never filled him with His Spirit. “I never,” he says, “had my heart, as a fountain, giving forth the rivers of living waters promised in John vii. 38.” What is the cause? The elder son thought he was serving his father faithfully “these many years” in his father’s house, but it was in the spirit of bondage and not in the spirit of a child, so that his unbelief blinded him to the conception of a father’s love and kindness, and he was unable all the time to see that his father was ready, not only to give him a kid, but a hundred, or a

thousand kids, if he would have them. He was simply living in unbelief, in ignorance, in blindness, robbing himself of the privileges that the father had for him. So, if there be a discrepancy between our life and the fulfilment and enjoyment of all God's promises, the fault is ours. If our experience be not what God wants it to be, it is because of our unbelief in the love of God, in the power of God, and in the reality of God's promises.

God's word teaches us, in the story of the Israelites, that it was unbelief on their part that was the cause of their troubles, and not any limitation or restriction on God's part. As Psalm lxxviii. says, "He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers." Yet they sinned by doubting His power to provide meat for them. "They spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" (vers. 15-19). Later on, we read in verse 41, "They turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." They kept distrusting Him from time to time. When they got to Kadesh-Barnea, and God told them to enter the land flowing with milk and honey, where would be rest, abundance, and victory, only two men said, "Yes; we can take possession, for God can make us conquer." But the ten spies, and the six hundred thousand men answered, "No; we can never take the land; the enemies are too

strong for us." It was simply unbelief that kept them out of the land of promise.

If there is to be any deepening of the spiritual life in us, we must come to the discovery and the acknowledgment of the unbelief there is in our hearts. God grant that we may get this spiritual quickening, and that we may come to see that it is by our unbelief that we have prevented God from doing His work in us. Unbelief is the mother of disobedience, and all other sins and shortcomings—my temper, my pride, my unlovingness, my worldliness, my sins of every kind. Though these differ in nature and form, yet they all come from the one root, namely, that we do not believe in the freedom and fulness of the divine gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and strengthen us, and fill us with the life and grace of God all the day long. Look, I pray you, at that elder son, and ask what was the cause of that terrible difference between the heart of the father and the experience of the son. There can be no answer but that it was this sinful unbelief that utterly blinded the son to a sense of his father's love.

Dear fellow-believer, I want to say to you that, if you are not living in the joy of God's salvation, the entire cause is your unbelief. You do not believe in the mighty power of God, and that He is willing by His Holy Spirit to work a thorough change in your life, and enable you to live in fulness of consecration to Him. God is willing that you should so live; but you do not

believe it. If men really believed in the infinite love of God, what a change it would bring about! What is love? It is a desire to communicate oneself for the good of the object loved—the opposite to selfishness; as we read in 1 Cor. xiii., “Love seeketh not her own.” Thus the mother is willing to sacrifice herself for the good of her child. So God in His love is ever willing to impart blessing; and He is omnipotent in His love. This is true, my friends; God is *omnipotent* in love, and He is doing His utmost to fill every heart in this house. “But if God is really anxious to do that, and if He is Almighty, why does He not do it now?” You must remember, that God has given you a will, and by the exercise of that will, you can hinder God, and remain content, like the elder son, with the low life of unbelief. We have now seen the cause of the difference between God’s high, blessed provision for His children, and the low, sad experience of many of us in the unbelief that distrusts and grieves Him; let us ask how we can be brought to live up to our privileges.

#### 4. THE WAY OF RESTORATION—HOW IS THAT TO BE BROUGHT ABOUT?

We all know the parable of the Prodigal Son; and how many sermons have been preached about repentance, from that parable. We are told that “he came to himself, and said, I will arise and go

to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight." In preaching, we speak of this as the first step in a changed life—as conversion, as repentance, confession, returning to God. But as this is the first step for the prodigal, we must remember that this is also the step to be taken by His erring children—by all the ninety-nine "who need no repentance," or think they do not. Those Christians who do not understand how wrong their low religious life is, must be taught that this is sin—unbelief; and that it is as necessary that they should be brought to repentance as the prodigal. You have heard a great deal of preaching repentance to the unconverted; but I want to try to preach it to God's children. We have a picture of so many of God's children in that elder brother. What the father told him, to bring him to a sense of the love that he bore him, just as he loved the prodigal brother, was meant to discover to him the evil disposition there was in him. Thus does God tell to us in our contentedness with such a low life, "You must repent and believe that I love you, and that all that I have is yours. By your unbelief, you have dishonoured Me, living for ten, twenty, or thirty years, and never believing what it was to live in the blessedness of My love. You must confess the wrong you have done Me in this, and be broken down in contrition of heart just as truly as the prodigal."

There are many children of God who need to confess, that though they are His children, they have never believed that God's promises are true, and that He is willing to fill their hearts all the day long with His blessed presence. Have *you* believed this? If you have not, all our teaching will be of no profit to you. Will you not say, "By the help of God, I will begin now a life of faith, and will not rest until I know what such a life means. I will believe that I am every moment in the Father's presence, and all that He has is mine"?

May the Lord God work this conviction in the hearts of all feeble believers! Have you ever heard the expression, "a conviction for sanctification"? You know, the unconverted man needs conviction before conversion. So does the carnal-minded Christian need conviction before, and in order to sanctification, before he comes to a real insight to spiritual blessedness. He must be convicted a second time because of his sinful life of doubt, and temper, and unlovingness. He must be broken down under that conviction; then there is hope for him. May the Father of mercy grant all such that deep contrition, so that they may be led into the blessedness of His presence, and enjoy the fulness of His power and love!



## XIII

## The Blessing Secured

“Be filled with the Spirit.”—EPHESIANS v. 18.

I MAY have some air, a little air, in my lungs, but not enough to keep up a healthy, vigorous life. But everyone seeks to have his lungs well filled with air, and the benefit of it will be felt in his blood and through his whole being. And just so the word of God comes to us, and says, “Christians, do not be content with *thinking* that you have the Spirit, or having *a little* of the Spirit; but, if you want to have a healthy life, be ‘*filled with the Spirit.*’” Is that your life? Or are you ready to cry out, “Alas! I do not know what it is to be filled with the Spirit, but it is what I long for.” I want to point out to such the path to come to this great, precious blessing which is meant for everyone of us.

Before I speak further of it, let me just note one misunderstanding which prevails. People often look upon being “filled with the Spirit” as something that comes with a mighty stirring of the emotions, a sort of heavenly glory that comes over them, something that they can feel strongly and mightily; but that is not always the case. I was

recently at Niagara Falls. I noticed, and I was told, that the water was unusually low. Suppose the river were doubly full, how would you see that fulness in the Falls? In the increased volume of water pouring over the cataract, and its tremendous noise. But go to another part of the river, or to the lake, where the very same fulness is found, and there is perfect quiet and placidity, the rise of the water is gentle and gradual, and you can hardly notice that there is any disturbance as the lake gets full. And just so it may be with a child of God. To one it comes with mighty emotion and with a blessed consciousness, "God has touched me!" To others it comes in a gentle filling of the whole being with the presence and the power of God by His Spirit. I do not want to lay down the way in which it is to come to you, but I want you simply to take your place before God, and say, "My Father, whatever it may mean, that is what I want." If you come and give yourself up as an empty vessel and trust God to fill you, God will do His own work.

And now, the simple question as to the steps by which we can come to be "filled with the Spirit." I shall note four steps in the way by which a man can attain this wonderful blessing. He must say, (1) "I *must* have it," then (2) "I *may* have it," then (3) "I *will* have it," and then, last, Thank God, "I *shall* have it."

1. The first word a man must begin to say, is, "I *must* have it." He must feel, "It is a command

of God, and I cannot live unfilled with the Spirit without disobeying God." It is a command here in this text: "Be not drunk with wine, but *be filled with the Spirit.*" Just as much as a man dare not get drunk, if he is a Christian, just as much must a man be filled with the Spirit. God wants it, and oh, that everyone might be brought to say, "I must, if I am to please God, I must be filled with the Spirit!"

I fear there is a terrible, terrible self-satisfaction among many Christians,—they are content with their low level of life. They think they have the Spirit because they are converted, but they know very little of the joy of the Holy Ghost, and of the sanctifying power of the Spirit. They know very little of the fellowship of the Spirit linking them to God and to Jesus. They know very little of the power of the Spirit to testify for God, and yet they are content; and often say, "Oh, it is only for eminent Christians." A very dear young friend once said to me as I was talking to her—(it was a niece of my own)—"Oh, Uncle Andrew, I cannot try to make myself better than the Christians around me. Wouldn't that be presumptuous?" And I said, "My child, you must not ask what the Christians around you are, but you must be guided by what God says." She has since confessed to me how bitterly ashamed she has become of that expression, and how she went to God to seek His blessing. Oh, friends, do not be content with that half-Christian life that many of you are living, but

say, "God wants it, God commands it; I *must* be filled with the Spirit."

And look not only at God's command, but look at the need of your own soul. You are a parent, and you want your children blessed and converted, and you complain that you have not power to bless them. You say, "My home must be filled with God's Spirit." You complain of your own soul, of times of darkness and of leanness; you complain of your watchfulness and wandering. A young minister once said to me, "Oh, why is it I have such a delight in study and so little delight in prayer?"—and my answer was, "My brother, your heart must get filled with a love for God and Jesus, and then you will delight in prayer." You complain sometimes that you cannot pray. There is so little joy in prayer, you do not know what to pray, something drags you back from the closet. It is because you are living a holy life, trying to live a life well-pleasing to God, without being *filled* with the Spirit. Oh, think of the needs of the Church around you. You are a Sunday-school teacher; you are trying to teach a class of ten or twelve children, not one of them, perhaps, converted, and they go out from under you unconverted; you are trying to do a heavenly work in the power of the flesh and earth. Sunday-school teachers, do begin to say, "I *must* be filled with the Spirit of God, or I must give up the charge of those young souls; I cannot teach them."

Or, think of the need of the world. If you

were to send out missionaries full of the Holy Ghost, what a blessing that would be! Why is it that many a missionary complains in the foreign field, "There I learned how weak and how unfit I am"? It is because the Churches from which they go are not filled with the Holy Ghost. Someone said to me in England a few weeks ago, "They talk so much about the volunteer movement and more missionaries; but we want something else, we want missionaries filled with the Holy Ghost." If the Church is to come right, and the mission field is to come right, we must each begin with himself. It must begin with *you*. Begin with yourself and say, "O God, for Thy sake; O God, for Thy Church's sake; O God, for the sake of the world, help me! I *must* be filled with the Holy Ghost."

What folly it would be for a man who had lost a lung and a half, and had hardly a quarter of a lung to do the work of two, to expect to be a strong man and to do hard work, and to live in any climate! And what folly for a man to expect to live—God has told him he cannot live—a full Christian life, unless he is full of the Holy Ghost! And what folly for a man who has only got a little drop of the river of the water of life to expect to live and to have power with God and man! Jesus wants us to come and to receive the fulfilment of the promise, "He that believeth in Me, streams of water shall flow out from him." Oh, begin to say, "If I am to live a right life, if I am in every part of my daily life and conduct to glorify my God, I

must have the Holy Spirit—I must be filled with the Spirit.” Are you going to say that? Talking for months and months won’t help. Do submit to God, and as an act of submission say, “Lord, I confess it, I ought to be filled, I *must* be filled; help me!” And God will help you.

Then comes the second step: I *may* be filled. The first had reference to duty; the second has reference to privilege—I *may* be filled. Alas! So many have got accustomed to their low state that they do not believe that they may, they can, actually be filled. And what right have I to say that you ought to take these words into your lips? My right is this—God wants healthy children. I saw to-day a child of six months old, as beautiful and chubby as you could wish a child to be, and with what delight the eyes of the father and the mother looked upon him, and what a joy it was to see such a picture of health. And oh! do you think that God in heaven does not care for His children, and that God wants some of His children to live a sickly life? I tell you, it is not true! God wants every child of His to be a healthy Christian. But you cannot be a healthy Christian unless you are filled with God’s Spirit. Beloved, we have got accustomed to a style of life, and we see good Christians—as we call them—earnest men and women, full of failings; and we think, “Well, that is human: that man loses his temper, and that man is not as kind as he should be, and that man’s word cannot be trusted always as ought to be the

case; but—but"— And in daily life we look upon Christians, and think, "Well, if they are very faithful in going to church and in giving to God's cause, and in attending the prayer-meeting, and in having family prayers, and are fairly consistent, we thank God for them, and say, "We wish there were more such;" but we forget to ask, "What does God want?" Oh that we might see that this blessing is meant for each one of us! My brother, my sister, there is a God in heaven who has been longing for these past years, while you never thought about it, to fill you with the Holy Ghost. God longs to give the fulness of the Spirit to every child of His.

They were poor heathen Ephesians, only lately brought out from heathendom, to whom Paul wrote this letter,—people among whom there still was stealing and lying, for they had only just come out from heathendom; but Paul said to every one of these, "Be filled with the Spirit." God is ready to do it; God wants to do it. Oh, do not listen to the temptation of the devil, "This is only meant for some eminent people,—a Christian who has a great deal of free time to devote to prayer and to seeking after it,—a man of a receptive temperament,—that is the man to be filled with the Spirit." Who is there that dare say, "I cannot be filled with the Spirit"? Who will dare to say that? If any of you speak thus it is because you are unwilling to give up sin. Do not think that you cannot be filled with the Spirit because God is not willing to

give it to you. Did not the Lord Jesus promise the Spirit? Is not the Holy Spirit the best part of His salvation? Do you think He gives half a salvation to any of His redeemed ones? Is not His promise for all, "He that believeth in Me, rivers of water shall flow out of him"? This is more than fulness—this is overflow; and this Jesus has promised to everyone who believes in Him. Cast aside your fears, and your doubts, and your hesitation, and say at once, "I *can* be filled with the Spirit; I *may* be filled with the Spirit. There is nothing in heaven, or earth, or hell, can prevent it, because God has promised, and God is waiting to do it for me." Are you ready to say, "I *may*, I *can*, I *can* be filled with the Spirit, for God has promised it, and God will give it"?

And then we get to the third step, when a man says, "I *will* have it! I *must* have it; I *may* have it; and I *will* have it." You know what this means when a man says in ordinary things, "I *will* have it"; he goes and does everything that is to be done to get possession. Very often a man comes and he wants to buy something, and he wishes for it; but *wishing* is not *willing*. I want to buy that horse, and a man asks me £50 for it, but I do not want to give more than £40. I wish for it, I wish it very much, and I can go and say, "Do give it me for the £40"; and he says, "No; £50." I love the horse, it is just what I want, but I am not willing to give the price. At last he says, "Well you must give me an answer; I can get another



purchaser"; and I answer, "No, I won't have it; I want it very much, I long for it, but I won't give the price. I *will* not have it."

Dear friends, are you going to say, "I *will* have this blessing"? What does that mean? It means, first of all, of course, that you are going to give up every sin, you are going to look around into your life, and if you see anything wrong there, it means that you are going to confess it to Jesus, and say, "Lord, I cast it at Thy feet; it may be rooted in my heart, but I will give it up to Thee; I cannot take it out; but, Jesus, Thou cleanser of sin, I give it to Thee." Let it be temper, or pride; let it be money, or lust, or pleasure; let it be the fear of man; let it be anything;—but oh, say to Christ at once, "I *will* have this blessing at any cost." Oh, give up every sin to Jesus!

And it means not only giving up every sin, but—what is deeper than sin, and more difficult to get at—it means giving up yourself—self, with your will, and your pleasure, and your honour, and all you have, and saying, "Jesus, I am from this moment going to give myself up, that by Thy Holy Spirit Thou mayest take possession of me, and that Thou mayest by Thy Spirit turn out whatever is sinful, and take entire command of me." This looks difficult so long as Satan blinds, and makes us think it would be a hard thing to give up all that; but if God opens our eyes for one minute to see what a heavenly blessedness,

and what heavenly riches and heavenly glory, it is to be filled with the Spirit out of the heart of Jesus, then we will say, "It may cost me anything, *anything*, ANYTHING; but I *will* have the blessing." It means that you are just to cast yourself at His feet and to say, "Lord, I *will* have the blessing."

Ah, Satan often tempts us, and says, "Suppose God were to ask that of you, would you be willing to give it?"—and he makes us afraid. But how many have found, and have been able to tell about it, that when once they have said, "Lord, anything and everything!" the light and the joy of heaven filled their hearts.

Last year at Johannesburg, the gold-fields of South Africa, one afternoon we had a testimony meeting, and a woman rose up and told us how her pastor two months before had held a consecration service in a tent, and had spoken strongly about consecration, and had said, "Now, if God were to send your husband away to China, or if God were to ask you to go away to America, would you be willing for it? You must give yourself up entirely." And the woman said,—and her face beamed with brightness when she spoke,—when, at the close of the meeting he asked those to rise who were willing to give up all to be filled with the Spirit, she said, "The struggle was terrible; God may take away my husband or my children from me, and am I ready for it? Oh, Jesus is very precious, but I

cannot say I will give up all. But I will tell Him I do want to do it,"—and at last she stood up. She said she went home that night in a terrible struggle, and she could not sleep, for the thought was, "I said to Jesus *everything*, and could I give up husband or child?" The struggle continued till midnight; "but," she said, "I could not let go. At last I said to Jesus, 'Everything, but fill me with Thyself.'" And the joy of the Holy Spirit came down upon her, and her minister who sat there told me afterwards that the testimony was a true one, and for the two months her life had been one of exceeding brightness and of heavenly joy.

Is any reader tempted to say, "I cannot give up all"? I take you by the hand, my brother, my sister, and I bring you to the crucified Jesus, and I say, "Just look at Him, how He loved you on Calvary; just look at Him." Just look at Jesus! He offers actually to fill your heart with His Holy Spirit, with the Spirit of His love and of His fulness, and of His power, actually to make your heart full of the Holy Spirit; and do you dare to say, "I am afraid,"—do you dare to say, "I cannot do that for Jesus"? or will your heart not, at His feet, cry out, "Lord Jesus, anything, but I *must* be filled with Thy Spirit!" Haven't you often prayed for the presence and the abiding nearness and the love of Jesus to fill you? But that cannot be until you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Oh, come and say, in view

of any sacrifice, "I *will* have it, by God's help! Not in *my* strength, but by the help of God, I will have it!"

And then comes my last point. Say, "I *shall* have it." Praise God that a man dare say that, "I shall have it." Yes, when a man has made up his mind; when a man has been brought to a conviction and a sorrow for his sinful life; when a man, like Peter, has wept bitterly or has sighed deeply before God, "Oh, my Lord, what a life I have been living!"—when a man has felt wretched in the thought, "I am not living the better life, the Jesus life, the Spirit life";—when a man begins to feel that, and when he comes and makes surrender, and casts himself upon God and claims the promise, "Lord, I may have it; it is for me,"—what think you? Hasn't he a right to say, "I *shall* have it"? Yes, beloved, and I give to every one of you that message from God, that if you are willing, and if you are ready, God is willing and ready to close the bargain at once. Yes, you can have it now, *now*, NOW! without any outburst of feeling, without any flooding of the heart with light, you may have it. To some it comes in that way, but to many not. As a quiet transaction of the surrendered will, you can lift up your heart in faith, and say, "O God, here I do give myself as an empty vessel to be filled with the Holy Ghost. I give myself up once for all and for ever. 'Tis done, the great transaction's done.'" You can say it now if you will take your place before God.

Ministers of the gospel, have you never felt the need of being filled with the Holy Ghost? Your heart perhaps tells you that you know nothing of that blessing. Workers for Christ, have you never felt a need, "I must be filled with the Holy Ghost"? Children of God, have you never felt a hope rise within you, "I may have this blessing of which I hear from others"? Will you not take the step and say, "I shall have it"? Say it, not in your own strength, but in self-despair. Never mind though it appears as if the heart is all cold and closed up, never mind; but as an act of obedience and of surrender, as an act of the will, cast yourself before Jesus and trust Him. "I *shall* have it, for I now give up myself into the arms of my Lord Jesus. I *shall* have it, for it is the delight of Jesus to give the Holy Spirit from the Father into the heart of everyone. I *shall* have it, for I do believe in Jesus, and He promised me that out of him that believeth shall flow rivers of living water. I *shall* have it! I **SHALL** have it! I will cling to the feet of Jesus, I will stay at the throne of God; I *shall* have it, for God is faithful, and God has promised."

## XIV

## The Presence of Christ

“But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.”—MATTHEW xiv. 27.

ALL we have had about the work of the blessed Spirit is dependent upon what we think of Christ, for it is *from* Christ Jesus that the Spirit comes to us; it is *to* Christ Jesus that the Spirit ever brings us; and the one need of the Christian life day by day and hour by hour is this,—the presence of the Son of God. God is our salvation. If I have Christ with me, and Christ in me, I have full salvation. We have spoken about the life of failure and of the flesh, about the life of unbelief and disobedience, about the life of ups and downs, the wilderness life of sadness and of sorrow; but we have heard, and we have believed, there is deliverance. Bless God, He brought us out of Egypt, that He might bring us into Canaan, into the very rest of God and Jesus Christ. He is our peace, He is our rest. Oh, if I may only have the presence of Jesus as the victory over every sin, the presence of Jesus as the strength for every duty, then my life shall be in the full sunshine of God's unbroken fellowship, and the word be fulfilled

to me in most blessed experience, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all I have is thine." And my heart shall answer, "Father, I never knew it, but it is true,—I am ever with Thee, and all Thou hast is mine." God has given all He has to Christ, and God longs that Christ should have you and me entirely. I come to every hungry heart and say, "If you want to live to the glory of God, seek one thing, to claim, to believe that the presence of Jesus can be with you every moment of your life."

I want to speak about the presence of Jesus as it is set before us in that blessed story of Christ's walking on the sea. Come and look with me at some points that are suggested to us.

1. Think, first, of the presence of Christ *lost*. You know the disciples loved Christ, clung to Him, and with all their failings they delighted in Him. But what happened? The Master went up into the mountain to pray, and sent them across the sea all alone without Him; there came a storm, and they toiled, and rowed, and laboured, but the wind was against them, they made no progress, they were in danger of perishing. How their hearts said, "If the Master only were here!" But His presence was gone. They missed Him. Once before, they had been in a storm, and Christ had said, "Peace, be still," and all was well; but here they are in darkness, danger, and terrible trouble, and no Christ to help them. Isn't that the life of many a believer at times? I get into darkness, I have committed sin, the cloud is on me, I miss the

face of Jesus ; and for days and days I work, worry, and labour ; but it is all in vain, for I miss the presence of Christ. Oh, beloved, let us write that down,—the presence of Jesus lost is the cause of all our wretchedness and failure.

2. Look at the second step,—the presence of Jesus *dreaded*. They were longing for the presence of Christ, and Christ came after midnight: He came walking on the water amid the waves ; but they did not recognise Him, and they cried out, for fear, “It is a spirit !” Their beloved Lord was coming nigh, and they knew Him not. They dreaded His approach. And ah, how often have I seen a believer dreading the approach of Christ, —crying out for Him, longing for Him, and yet dreading His coming ! And why ? Because Christ came in a fashion that they expected not.

Perhaps some have been saying, “Alas ! alas ! I fear I never can have the abiding presence of Christ.” You have heard what we have said about a life in the Spirit ; you have heard what we have said about abiding ever in the presence of God and in His fellowship, and you have been afraid of it, afraid of it ; and you have said, “It is too high and too difficult.” You have dreaded the very teaching that was going to help you. Jesus came to you in the teaching, and you did not recognise His love.

Or perhaps He came in a way that made you dread His presence. Perhaps God has been speaking to you about some sin. There is that sin of temper, or that sin of unlovingness, or that sin of unfor-



givingness, or that sin of worldliness, compromise, and fellowship with the world, that love of man and man's honour, that fear of man and man's opinion, or that pride and self-confidence. God has been speaking to you about it, and you have been frightened. That was Jesus wanting to draw nigh, but you were afraid. You do not see how you can give up all that; you are not ready to say, "At any sacrifice I am going to have that taken out of me, and I *will* give it up"; and while God and Christ were coming nigh to bless you, you were afraid of Him.

Oh, believers, at other times Christ has come to you with affliction, and perhaps you have said, "If I want to be entirely holy, I know I shall have to be afflicted, and I am afraid of affliction," and you have dreaded the thought, "Christ may come to me in affliction." The presence of Christ dreaded!—beloved, I want to tell you it is all misconception. The disciples had no reason to dread that "spirit" coming there, for it was Christ Himself; and when God's word comes close to you and touches your heart, remember that is Christ out of whose mouth goes the two-edged sword. It is Christ in His love coming to cut away the sin, that He may fill your heart with the blessing of God's love. Beware of dreading the presence of Christ.

3. Then comes the third thought,—the presence of Christ *revealed*. Bless God! When Christ heard how they cried, He spoke the words of the text, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Ah,

what gladness those words brought to those hearts! There is Jesus! There is that dark object, that dreaded form, and lo! it is our blessed Lord Himself. And, dear friends, the Master's object, whether it be by affliction or otherwise, is to prepare for receiving the presence of Christ, and through it all He speaks, "It is I; be not afraid." The presence of Christ revealed! I want to tell you that the Son of God, believer, is longing to reveal Himself to you. Listen! *Listen!* LISTEN! Is there any longing heart? Jesus says, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

Oh, beloved, God has given us Christ. And does God want me to have Christ every moment? Without doubt. God wants the presence of Christ to be the joy of every hour of my life; and if there is one thing sure, Christ can reveal Himself to me every moment. Are you willing to come and claim this privilege? He can reveal Himself. I cannot reveal Him to you; you cannot grasp Him; but He can shine into your heart. How can I see the sunlight to-morrow morning, if I am spared? The sunlight will reveal itself. How can I know Christ? Christ can reveal Himself. And, ere I go further, I pray you to set your heart upon this, and to offer the humble prayer, "Lord, now reveal Thyself to me, so that I may never lose the sight of Thee. Give me to understand that through the thick darkness Thou comest to make Thyself known." Let not one heart doubt, however dark it may be,—whatever midnight there be in

the soul,—at midnight, in the dark, Christ can reveal Himself. Ah, thank God, often after a life of ten and twenty years of dawn, after a life of ten and twenty years of struggling, now in the light, and now in the dark, there comes a time when Jesus is willing just to give Himself to us, nevermore to part. God grant us that presence of Jesus!

4. And now comes the fourth thought. The presence of Jesus *lost*, was the first; the presence of Jesus *dreaded*, was the second; the presence of Jesus *revealed*, was the third; the presence of Jesus *desired*, is the fourth. What happened? Peter heard the Lord, and he was content. He was in the boat, and yonder was Jesus, some thirty, forty, fifty yards distant, and He made as though He would have passed them; and Peter,—in a preceding chapter I spoke about Peter, showing what terrible failure and carnality there was in him,—but, bless the Lord! Peter's heart was right with Christ, and he wanted to claim His presence, and He said, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come upon the water to Thee." Yes, Peter could not rest; he wanted to be as near to Christ as possible. He saw Christ walking on the water; he remembered Christ had said, "Follow Me"; he remembered how Christ, with the miraculous draught of fishes, had proved that He was Master of the sea, and of the waters, and he remembered how Christ had stilled the storm; and, without argument or reflection, all at once he said, "There is my Lord manifesting Himself in a new way; there is my Lord exercising a new and supernatural

power, and I can go to my Lord, He is able to make me walk where He walks." He wanted to walk like Christ, he wanted to walk near Christ. He did not say, "Lord, let me walk around the sea here," but he said, "Lord, let me come to Thee."

Friends, would you not like to have the presence of Christ in this way? Not that Christ should come down,—that is what many Christians want; they want to continue in their sinful walk, they want to continue in their worldly walk, they want to continue in their old life, and they want Christ to come down to them with His comfort, His presence, and His love; but that cannot be. If I am to have the presence of Christ, I must walk as He walked. His walk was a supernatural one. He walked in the love and in the power of God. Most people walk according to the circumstances in which they are, and most people say, "I am depending upon circumstances for my religion." A hundred times over you hear people say, "My circumstances prevent my enjoying unbroken fellowship with Jesus." What were the circumstances that were round about Christ? The wind and the waves,—and Christ walked triumphant over circumstances; and Peter said, "Like my Lord, I can triumph over all circumstances: anything around me is nothing, if I have Jesus." He longed for the presence of Christ. Would God that, as we look at the life of Christ upon earth, as we look how Christ walked and conquered the waves, every one of us could say, "I want to walk

like Jesus." If that is your heart's desire, you can expect the presence of Jesus; but as long as you want to walk on a lower level than Christ, as long as you want to have a little of the world, and a little of self-will, do not expect to have the presence of Christ. Near Christ, and like Christ,—the two things go together. Have you taken that in? Peter wanted to walk like Christ that he might get near Christ; and it is this I want to offer every one of you. I want to say to the weakest believer, "With God's presence you can have the presence and fellowship of Christ all the day long, your whole life through." I want to bring you that promise, but I must give God's condition,—walk like Christ, and you shall always abide near Christ. The presence of Christ invites you to come and have unbroken fellowship with Him.

5. Then comes the next thought. We have just had the presence of Christ desired, and my next thought is,—the presence of Christ *trusted*. The Lord Jesus said, "Come," and what did Peter do? He stepped out of the boat. How did he dare to do it, against all the laws of nature?—how did he dare to do it? He sought Christ, he heard Christ's voice, he trusted Christ's presence and power, and in the faith of Christ he said, "I can walk on the water," and he stepped out of the boat. Here is the turning-point; here is the crisis. Peter saw Christ in the manifestation of a supernatural power, and Peter believed that super-

natural power could work in him, and he could live a supernatural life. He believed this applied to walking on the sea; and herein lies the whole secret of the life of faith. Christ has supernatural power,—the power of heaven, the power of holiness, the power of fellowship with God, and Christ can give me grace to live as He lived. If I will but, like Peter, look at Christ and say to Christ, “Lord, speak the word, and I will come,” and if I will listen to Christ saying, “Come,” I too shall have power to walk upon the waves.

Have you ever seen a more beautiful and more instructive symbol of the Christian life? I once preached on it many years ago, and the thought that filled my heart then was this: The Christian life compared to Peter walking on the waves; nothing so difficult and impossible without Christ; nothing so blessed and safe with Christ. That is the Christian life,—impossible without Christ’s nearness,—most safe and blessed, however difficult, if I only have the presence of Christ. Believers, we have tried in these words to call you to a better life, to a spiritual life, to a holy life, a life in the Spirit, to a life in the fellowship with God. There is only one thing can enable you to live it,—you must have the Lord Jesus hold your hand every minute of the day. “But can that be?” you ask. Yes, it can. “I have so much to think of. Sometimes for four or five hours of the day I have to go into the very thick of business, and have some ten men standing around me, each claiming my atten-

tion. How can I, how can I always have the presence of Jesus?" Beloved, because Jesus is your God and loves you wonderfully, and is able to make His presence more clear to you than that of ten men who are standing around you. If you will in the morning take time and enter into your covenant every morning with Him, "My Lord Jesus, nothing can satisfy me but Thine abiding presence," He will give it to you, He will surely give it to you. Oh, Peter trusted the presence of Christ, and he said, "If Christ calls me I can walk on the waves to Him." Shall we trust the presence of Christ? To walk through all the circumstances and temptations of life is exactly like walking on the water,—you have no solid ground under your feet, but you have the word of God to rest on. You do not know how strong the temptations of Satan may come; but do believe God wants you to walk in a supernatural life above human power. God wants you to live a life in Christ Jesus. Are you wanting to live that life? Come then, and say, "Jesus, I have heard Thy promise that Thy presence will go with me. Thou hast said, 'My presence shall go with thee,'—and, Lord, I claim it; I trust Thee."

6. Now, the sixth step in this wonderful history. The presence of Christ *forgotten*. Peter got out of the boat and began to walk toward the Lord Jesus with his eye fixed upon Him. The presence of Christ was trusted by him, and he walked boldly over the waves; but all at once he took his eye off

Jesus, and he began at once to sink. There was Peter, his walk of faith at an end, all drenched and drowning and crying out, "Lord, help me!" There are some of you saying in your hearts, I know, "Ah, that's what will come of you higher-life Christians." There are people who say, "You can never live that life; do not talk of it; you must always be failing." Peter always failed before Pentecost. It was because the Holy Spirit had not yet come, and therefore his experience goes to teach us that while Peter was still in the life of the flesh he must fail somehow or other. But, thank God, there was One to lift him out of the failure; and our last point will be to prove that out of that failure he came into closer union with Jesus than ever before, and deeper dependence. But listen, first, while I speak to you about this failure.

Someone may say, "I have been trying to say, 'Lord, I will live it'; but, tell me, suppose failure come, what then?" Learn from Peter what you ought to do. What did Peter do? The very opposite of what most do. What did he do when he began to sink? That very moment, without one word of self-reproach or self-condemnation, he cried, "Lord, help me!" I wish I could teach every Christian that. I remember the time in my spiritual life when that became clear to me; for up to that time, when I failed, my only thought was to reproach and condemn myself, and I thought that would do me good. I found it did not do me



good ; and I learn from Peter that my work is, the very moment I fail, to say, "Jesus, Master, help me!" and the very moment I say that, Jesus does help me. Remember, failure is not an impossibility. I can conceive more than one Christian who said, "Lord, I claim the fulness of the Holy Ghost. I want to live every hour of every day filled with the Holy Spirit"; and I can conceive that an honest soul who said that with a trembling faith, yet may have fallen; I want to say to that soul, Don't be discouraged. If failure comes, at once, without any waiting, appeal to Jesus. He is always ready to hear; and the very moment you find there is the temper, the hasty word, or some other wrong, at once the living Jesus is near, so gracious, and so mighty. Appeal to Him, and there will be help at once. If you will learn to do this, Jesus will lift you up and lead you on to a walk where His strength shall secure you from failure.

7. And then comes my last thought. The presence of Jesus had been forgotten while Peter looked at the waves; but now, lastly, we have the presence of Jesus *restored*. Yes, Christ stretched out His hand to save him. Possibly—for Peter was a very proud, self-confident man—possibly he had to sink there to teach him that it was not his faith that could save him; it was the power of Christ. God wants us to learn the lesson that when we fall then we can cry to Jesus, and at once He reaches out His hand. Remember, Peter walked back to the boat without sinking again. Why?

Because Christ was very near him. Remember, it is quite possible, if you use your failure rightly, to be far nearer Christ after it than before. Use it rightly, I say. That is, come and acknowledge, "In me there is nothing, but I am going to trust my Lord unboundedly." Let every failure teach you to cling afresh to Christ, and He will prove Himself a mighty and a loving Helper. The presence of Jesus restored! Yes, Christ took him by the hand and helped him, and I do not know whether they walked hand in hand those forty or fifty yards back to the boat, or whether Christ allowed Peter to walk beside Him; but this I know, they were very near to each other, and it was the nearness to his Lord that strengthened him.

Remember what has taken place since that happened with Peter. The cross has been erected, the blood has been shed, the grave has been opened, the resurrection has been accomplished, heaven has been opened, and the Spirit of the Exalted One has come down. Do believe that it is possible for the presence of Jesus to be with us every day and all the way. Your God has given you Christ, and He wants to give you Christ into your heart in such a way that His presence shall be with you every moment of your life.

Who is willing to lift up his eyes and his heart and to exclaim, "I want to live according to God's standard"? Who is willing? Who is willing to cast himself into the arms of Jesus and to live a life of faith victorious over the winds and the

waves, over the circumstances and difficulties? Who is willing to say this: "Lord, bid me come to Thee upon the water"? Are you willing? Listen! Jesus says, "Come." Will you step out at this moment? Yonder is the boat, the old life that Peter had been leading; he had been familiar with the sea from his boyhood, and that boat was a very sacred place; Christ had sat beside him there; Christ had preached from that boat; from that boat of Peter's, Christ had given the wonderful draught of fishes; it was a very sacred boat; but Peter left it to come to a place more sacred still,—walking with Jesus on the water,—a new and a divine experience. Your Christian life may be a very sacred thing; you may say, "Christ saved me by His blood, He has given me many an experience of grace; God has proved His grace in my heart": but you confess, "I haven't got the real life of abiding fellowship; the winds and the waves often terrify me, and I sink." Oh, come out of the boat of past experiences at once; come out of the boat of external circumstances; come out of the boat, and step out on the word of Christ, and believe, "With Jesus I can walk upon the water." When Peter was in the boat, what had he between him and the bottom of the sea? A couple of planks. But when he stepped out upon the water, what had he between him and the sea? Not a plank, but the word of the Almighty Jesus. Will you come, and, without any experience, will you rest upon the word of Jesus: "Lo, I am with you alway"? Will you rest upon His

word: "Be of good cheer; fear not; it is I"? Every moment Jesus lives in heaven; every moment by His Spirit Jesus whispers that word; and every moment He lives to make it true. Accept it now, accept it now! My Lord Jesus is equal to every emergency. My Lord Jesus can meet the wants of every soul. My whole heart says, "He *can*, He *can* do it; He *will*, He *will* do it!" Oh come, believers, and let us most deliberately, most quietly, most restfully,—let us claim it, *claim it*, CLAIM IT, as our portion.

## XV

## A Word to Workers

SOME time ago I read this expression in an old author: "*The first duty of a clergyman is humbly to ask of God that all that he wants done in his hearers should first be truly and fully done in himself.*" These words have stuck to me ever since. What a solemn application this is to the subject that occupied our attention in previous chapters,—the living and working under the fulness of the Holy Spirit! And yet, if we understand our calling aright, every one of us will have to say, That is the one thing on which everything depends. What profit is it to tell men that they may be filled with the Spirit of God, if, when they ask us, "Has God done it for you?" we have to answer, "No, He has not done it"? What profit is it for me to tell men that Jesus Christ can dwell within us every moment, and keep us from sin and actual transgression, and that the abiding presence of God can be our portion all the day, if I wait not upon God first to do it truly and fully in myself day by day?

Look at the Lord Jesus Christ; it was of the Christ Himself, when *He had received* the Holy Ghost from heaven, that John the Baptist said that "He will baptize with the Holy Ghost." I can

only communicate to others what God has imparted to me. If my life as a minister be a life in which the flesh still greatly prevails,—if my life be a life in which I grieve the Spirit of God,—I cannot expect but that my people will receive through me a very mingled kind of life. But if the life of God dwell in me, and I am filled with His power, then I can hope that the life that goes out from me may be infused into my hearers too.

We have referred to the need of every believer being filled with the Spirit; and what is there of deeper interest to us now, or that can better occupy our attention, than prayerfully to consider how we can bring our congregations to believe that this is possible; and how we can lead on every believer to seek it for himself, to expect it, and to accept of it, so as to live it out? But, brethren, the message must come from us as a witness of our personal experience, by the grace of God. The same writer to whom I alluded, says elsewhere: "*The first business of a clergyman, when he sees men awakened and brought to Christ, is to lead them on to know the Holy Spirit.*" How true! Do not we find this throughout the word of God? John the Baptist preached Christ as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"; we read in Matthew that he also said that Christ would "baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire." In the Gospel by John, we read that the Baptist was told that upon whom he would see the Spirit descending and abiding, He it was who

would baptize with the Spirit. Thus John the Baptist led the people on from Christ to the expectation of the Holy Ghost for themselves. And what did Jesus do? For three years He was with His disciples, teaching and instructing them; but when He was about to go away, in His farewell discourse on the last night, what was His great promise to the disciples? "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth." He had previously promised to those who believed on Him, that "rivers of living water" should flow from them; which the evangelist explains as meaning the Holy Ghost: "Thus spake He of the Spirit." But this promise was only to be fulfilled after Christ "was glorified." Christ points to the Holy Spirit as the one fruit of being glorified. The glorified Christ *leads to the Holy Ghost*. So in the farewell discourse, Christ leads the disciples to expect the Spirit as the Father's great blessing. Then again, when Christ came and stood at the footstool of His heavenly throne, on the Mount of Olives, ready to ascend, what were His words? "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me." Christ's constant work was to teach His disciples to expect the Holy Spirit. Look through the Book of Acts, you see the same thing. Peter on the day of Pentecost preached that Christ was exalted, and had received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost; and so he told the people: "Repent and be baptized

in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." When I believe in Jesus risen, ascended, and glorified, I shall receive the Holy Ghost.

Look again, after Philip had preached the gospel in Samaria, men and women had been converted, and there was great joy in the city. The Holy Spirit had been working, but something was still wanting; Peter and John came down from Jerusalem, prayed for the converted ones, laid their hands upon them, "and they received the Holy Ghost." Then they had the conscious possession and enjoyment of the Spirit; but till that came they were incomplete. Paul was converted by the mighty power of Jesus, who appeared to him on the way to Damascus; and yet he had to go to Ananias to receive the Holy Ghost.

So, again, we read that when Peter went to preach to Cornelius, as he preached Christ, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word"; which Peter took as the sign that these Gentiles were one with the Jews in the favour of God, having the same baptism.

And so we might go through many of the Epistles, where we find the same truth taught. Look at that wonderful Epistle to the Romans. The doctrine of justification by faith is established in the first five chapters. Then in the sixth and seventh, though the believer is represented as dead to sin and the law, and married to Christ, yet a dreadful struggle goes on in the heart of the



regenerate man as long as he has not got the full power of the Holy Spirit. But in the eighth chapter, it is the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that maketh us free from "the law of sin and death." Then we are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," with the Spirit of God dwelling in us. *All the teaching leads up to the Holy Spirit.*

Look again at the Epistle to the Galatians. We always speak of the doctrine of justification by faith as the central truth of this Epistle; but have you ever noticed how the doctrine of the Holy Spirit holds a most prominent place there? Paul asks the Galatian Church: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" It was the hearing of faith that led them to the full enjoyment of the Spirit's power. "*We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*" And then at the end of the fifth chapter, we are told: "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit."

Again, if we go to the Epistles to the Corinthians, we find Paul asking the Christians in Corinth: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" If we look into the Epistle to the Ephesians, we find the doctrine of the Holy Spirit mentioned twelve times. It is the Spirit that seals God's people: "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." He illumines them: "That God may give the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." Through Christ, both Jew and Gentile "have access by one

Spirit unto the Father." They "are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." They are "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." With "all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love," they "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." By not "grieving the Holy Spirit of God," we preserve our sealing to the "day of redemption." Being "filled with the Spirit," we "sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord," and thus glorify Him. Just study these Epistles carefully, and you will find that what I say is true—that the Apostle Paul takes great pains to lead Christians to the Holy Ghost as the consummation of the Christian life.

It was the Holy Ghost who was given to the Church at Pentecost; and it is the Holy Ghost who gives pentecostal blessings now. It is this power, given to bless men, that wrought such wonderful life, and love, and self-sacrifice in the early Church; and it is this that makes us look back to those days as the most beautiful part of the Church's history. And it is the same Spirit of power that must dwell in the hearts of all believers in our day to give the Church its true position. Let us ask God, then, that every minister and Christian worker may be endued with the power of the Holy Ghost; that He may search us and try us, and enable us sincerely to answer the question, "Have I known the indwelling and the filling of the Holy Spirit that God wants me to have?" Let each one of us ask

himself, "Is it my great study to know the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, so that I may help others to yield to the same indwelling of the Holy Spirit, so that He may reveal Christ fully in them in His divine saving and keeping power?" Will not everyone have to confess, "Lord, I have all too little understood this; I have all too little manifested this in my work and preaching"? Beloved brethren, "The first duty of every clergyman is to humbly ask God *that all that he wants done in his hearers may be first fully and truly done in himself.*" And his first duty towards those who are awakened and brought to Christ is, *to lead them on to the full knowledge of the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.*

If we are indeed to come into full harmony with these two great principles, there come to us some further questions of the very deepest importance. And the first question is: "Why is it that there is in the Church of Christ so little practical acknowledgment of the power of the Holy Ghost?" I am not speaking to you, brethren, as if I thought you were not sound in doctrine on this point. I speak to you as believing in the Holy Ghost as the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity. But I speak to you confidently as to those who will readily admit that the truth of the presence and of the power of the Holy Ghost is not acknowledged in the Church as it ought to be. Then the question is: Why is it not so acknowledged? I answer, because of its spirituality. It is one of the most difficult truths in the Bible for the human mind

to comprehend. God has revealed Himself in creation throughout the whole universe. He has revealed Himself in Christ incarnate; and what a subject of study the person, and word, and works of Christ form! But the mysterious indwelling of the Holy Spirit, hidden in the depths of the life of the believer, how much less easy to comprehend!

In the early pentecostal days of the Church, this knowledge was intuitive; they *possessed* the Spirit in power. But soon after the spirit of the world began to creep into the Church and mastered it. This was followed by the deeper darkness of formality and superstition in the Roman Catholic Church, when the spirit of the world completely triumphed in what was improperly styled the Church of Christ. The Reformation in the days of Luther restored the truth of justification by faith in Christ; but the doctrine of the Holy Ghost did not then obtain its proper place, for God does not reveal all truth at one time. A great deal of the spirit of the world was still left in the Reformed Churches; but now God is awakening the Church to strive after a fuller and more scriptural apprehension of the Holy Spirit's place and power. Through the medium of books, and discussions, and conventions, many hearts are being stirred.

Brethren, it is our privilege to take part in this great movement, and let us engage in the work more earnestly than ever. Let each of us say my great work is, in preaching Christ, to lead men to the acknowledging of the Holy Spirit, who alone

can glorify Christ. I may try to glorify Christ in my preaching, but it will avail nothing without the Spirit of God. I may urge men to the practice of holiness and every Christian virtue, but all my persuasion will avail very little unless I help them to believe that they have the Holy Ghost dwelling in them every moment, enabling to live the life of Christ. The great reason why the Holy Spirit was given from heaven was to make Christ Jesus' presence manifest to us. While Jesus was incarnate, His disciples were too much under the power of the flesh to allow Christ to get a lodgment in their hearts. It was needful, He said, that He should go away, in order that the Spirit might come; and He promised to those who loved Him and kept His commandments, that with the Spirit He would come, and the Father would also come, and make Their abode with them. It is thus the Holy Spirit's great work to reveal the Father and the Son in the hearts of God's people. If we believe and teach men that the Holy Spirit can make Christ a reality to them every moment, men will learn to believe and accept Christ's presence and power, of which they now know far too little.

Then another question presents itself, namely, What are we to expect when the Holy Spirit is duly acknowledged and received? I ask this question, because there is something I have frequently noticed with considerable interest—and, I may say, with some anxiety. I sometimes hear men praying earnestly for a baptism of the Holy Spirit that He

may give them power for their work. Beloved brethren, we need this power, not only for work, but for our daily life. Remember, we must have it all the time. In Old Testament times, the Spirit came with power upon the prophets and other inspired men; but He did not dwell permanently in them. In the same way, in the Church of the Corinthians, the Holy Spirit came with power to work miraculous gifts, and yet they had but a small measure of His sanctifying grace. You will remember the carnal strife, envying, and divisions there were. They had gifts of utterance; gifts of knowledge and wisdom, etc.; but, alas! pride, unlovingness, and other sins sadly marred the character of many of them. And what does this teach us? That a man may have a great gift of power for work, but very little of the indwelling Spirit. In 1 Cor. xiii., we are reminded that though we may have faith that would remove mountains, if we have not love, we are nothing. We must have the love that brings the humility and self-sacrifice of Jesus. Do not let us put in the first place the gifts we may possess; if we do, we shall have very little blessing. But we should seek, in the first place, that the Spirit of God should come as a light and power of holiness through the presence of the indwelling Jesus. Let the first work of the Holy Spirit be to humble you deep down in the very dust, so that your whole life shall be a tender, broken-hearted waiting on God, in the consciousness of mercy coming from above.

Do not seek large gifts; there is something deeper you need. It is not enough that a tree shoot its branches to the sky, and be covered thickly with leaves; but we want its roots to strike deeply into the soil. Let the thought of the Holy Spirit's being in us, and our hope of being filled with the Spirit, be always accompanied in us with a broken and contrite heart. Let us bow very low before God, in waiting for His grace to fill and to sanctify us. We do not want a power which God might allow us to use, while our inner part is unsanctified. We want God to give us full possession of Himself. In due time, the special gift may come; but we want first and now, the power of the Holy Ghost working something far mightier and more effectual in us than any such gift. We should seek, therefore, not only a baptism of power, but a baptism of holiness; we should seek that the inner nature be sanctified by the indwelling of Jesus, and then other power will come as needed.

There is a third question: Suppose someone says to me, "I have given myself up to be filled with the Spirit, and I do not feel that there is any difference in my condition; there is no change of experience that I can speak of. What must I then think? Must not I think that my surrender was not honest?" No, do not think that. "But how then? Does God give no response?" Beloved, God gives a response, but that is not always within certain months or years. "What, then, would you

have me do?" Retain the position you have taken before God, and maintain it every day. Say, "O God, I have given myself to be filled, here I am an empty vessel, trusting and expecting to be filled by Thee." Take that position every day and every hour. Ask God to write it across your heart. Give up to God an empty, consecrated vessel that He may fill it with the Holy Spirit. Take that position constantly. It may be that you are not fully prepared. Ask God, to cleanse you; to give you grace to separate from everything sinful—from unbelief or whatever hindrance there may be. Then take your position before God, and say, "My God, Thou art faithful; I have entered into covenant with Thee for Thy Holy Spirit to fill me, and I believe Thou wilt fulfil it." Brethren, I say for myself, and for every minister of the gospel, and for every fellow-worker, man or woman, that if we thus come before God with a full surrender, in a bold, believing attitude, God's promise must be fulfilled.

If you were to ask me of my own experience, I would say this: That there have been times when I hardly knew myself what to think of God's answer to my prayer in this matter; but I have found it my joy and my strength to take and maintain my position, and say, "My God, I have given myself up to Thee. It was Thine own grace that led me to Christ; and I stand before Thee in confidence that Thou wilt keep Thy covenant with me to the end. I am the empty vessel; Thou art the God that fillest all." God is faithful, and He gives



the promised blessing in His own time and method. Beloved, for God's sake, be content with nothing less than full health and full spiritual life. "Be filled with the Spirit."

Let me return now to the two expressions with which I began: "The first duty of every clergyman is humbly to ask of God that all that he wants done in those who hear his preaching may be first truly and fully done in himself." Brethren, I ask you, is it not the longing of your hearts to have a congregation of believers filled with the Holy Ghost? Is it not your unceasing prayer for the Church of Christ in which you minister, that the spirit of holiness, the very spirit of God's Son, the spirit of unworldliness and of heavenly-mindedness, may possess it; and that the spirit of victory and of power over sin may fill its children? If you are willing for that to come, your first duty is to have it yourself.

And then the second sentence: "The first duty of every clergyman is to lead those who have been brought to Christ to be entirely filled with the Holy Ghost." How can I do my work with success? I can conceive what a privilege it is to be led by the Spirit of God in all that I am doing. In studying my Bible, praying, visiting, organising, or whatever I am doing, God is willing to guide me by His Holy Spirit. It sometimes becomes a humiliating experience to me that I am unwatchful, and do not wait for the blessing; when that is the case, God can bring me back again.

But there is also the blessed experience of God's guiding hand, often through deep darkness, by His Holy Spirit. Let us walk about among the people as men of God, that we may not only preach about a book, and what we believe with our hearts to be true, but may preach what we are and what we have in our own experience. Jesus calls us *witnesses* for Him; what does that mean? The Holy Ghost brought down from heaven to men a participation in the glory and the joy of the exalted Christ. Peter and the others who spoke with Him were filled with this heavenly Spirit; and thus Christ spoke in them, and accomplished the work for them. Oh, brethren, if you and I be Christ's, we should take our places and claim our privilege. We are witnesses to the truth which we believe—witnesses to the reality of what Jesus does and what He is, by His presence in our own souls. If we are willing to be such witnesses for Christ, let us go to our God; let us make confession and surrender, and by faith claim what God has for us as ministers of the gospel and workers in His service. God will prove faithful. Even at this very moment, He will touch our hearts with a deep consciousness of His faithfulness and of His presence; and He will give to every hungry, trustful one that which we continually need.

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