

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross
of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. vi. 14).

THE SEVEN SAYINGS

OF

CHRIST ON THE CROSS

BY

D. ANDERSON-BERRY, M.D., F.R.S. (Edin.)

*Author of "The Unfinished Work of Jesus,"
"After Death," &c.*

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

JOHN R. CALDWELL

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“ SEVEN times He spoke, seven words of love,
And all three hours His silence cried
For mercy on the souls of men.

Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.”—FABER.

PREFACE.

—

THE solemn scenes of Calvary are vividly brought before us in the following pages. They remind one of the expression used by Paul in his writing to the Galatians, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified." And surely that which helps us to realise the glory of the Person and the perfectness of the character of the Lord of Life, who there endured the Cross, must be for edification and must tend to sanctify.

In these days of rush and strenuous conflict there is little disposition generally to sit down and calmly meditate upon the wonders of the Cross. The recurring remembrance of it as the Table of the Lord is surrounded and the Supper observed on the first day of the week is always searching, humbling, sanctifying, and comforting. It is an oasis in the desert, all the richer because of the barrenness around, the most blessed meeting on earth! But the precious opportunity soon passes, and it would be well for us if our meditations oftener flowed in a similar course away from the vortex of 20th century life. The articles which are here reprinted have been greatly appreciated by the

many who read them as they appeared in *The Witness*, and now that they are presented in a permanent form, they will doubtless be helpful to many, leading the soul in some quiet moments throughout the week into green pastures, giving sweet glimpses of the love stronger than death that steadfastly endured until the Mighty Sufferer could cry, "It is finished." By faith we have beheld His humiliation and His sufferings, the Holy Spirit has revealed them in measure to our hearts. The prayer of the Lord was "that they may behold My glory." This we wait for—the fulfilment of every spiritual desire, the fruition of every hope.

I heartily commend the book to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and pray that it may be much used for His glory and for their blessing.

THE SEVEN SAYINGS

OF

CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

I.

THE PRAYER OF THE CRUCIFIED SAVIOUR.

“Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke xxiii. 34).

“**T**HEN”—mark well, believer, that little word. Hast thou ever valued that little adverb of Time in the current coin of the sanctuary of thy soul?

“Then”—the tree, the seed of which some bird had dropped long before to nestle in the breast of some great mountain, there to be cradled as it grew by the wild winds of winter, to be wept on by stormy skies and smiled on by summer suns, until one came by and laid the axe at its root, for the hour of its destiny had come, and the tree was ready to bear the fruit of Calvary. “Then”—the iron formed amidst the cataclysms of the age before man appeared, had been mined, and melted, and fashioned into rough, jagged

nails to pierce the tender flesh of the Son of man, the iron was ready. "Then"—the men with cruel hearts and wild, tempestuous speech, energised by the great spiritual force which wrought in them and by them and through them, the base usurper of his Benefactor's throne, were ready to nail on that tree the kindest, the best, the most tender-hearted Man the world has ever known, or ever shall know—the Saviour who was dying that even they might be saved; nay, more than all that, the Son of God, God the Son. "Then"—with brawny muscles they flung up on high this tree bearing on its rugged breast the nail-torn Sufferer, like some great standard raising its blood-sprinkled crest above this multitude of upturned, scowling faces, brandished fists, and clamouring tongues. "Then"—the pain-wrung pallid lips were seen to move. In cries for pity? No. In bitter malediction? No. For amid the thousand cries of scorn and hatred the Voice that had calmed tempests, raised the dead, brought back life to dead limbs, hope to dead hearts, was heard, heard on earth, heard in heaven, where its waves of sound broke in mighty

surges on the throne of the Eternal and filled the Father's heart with joy and gladness in that prelude to the dark hour by which Time has separated Eternity in twain: "THEN said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

In the Bible we have the pen of God tracing for over four thousand years the prowess, the prayers, the praises, as well as the sufferings, sins, and sorrows of His saints. Out of the hundred or so who have been so distinguished, it has pleased Him only to allude to the dying words of some half-dozen, and to record them in the case of only three in addition to His Son. These three are: Jacob, the immediate founder of Israel; Moses, the law-giver, prophet, and king; and Stephen, the messenger, whom the people, in spite of Pentecost, sent after their Prince to say that they would not have him as king. God means us some lesson to learn from this manner in which he has recorded the histories of His saints.

Like some ill-scored piece of music, we place the emphasis on the wrong places in our lives. We treasure up the dying sayings

of our friends, but forget their living sayings. God underlines living; we underscore dying. We listen to the words of the living with heedless hearts and dry eyes, and forget them scarce they are uttered; but let them be dying words, and all this is reversed.

Son, art thou acting thus towards thy much-loved mother? She has often besought thee to eschew the company of gamblers—this 34th verse says that when Jesus was praying the soldiers were gambling—and her words have seemed as thistledown. But she is dying, every word is sacred; but for her thy listening comes too late, for there is left thee no time to show her that her words at last are heard. Out yonder where the grass grows green on her grave a prostrate form may cry, “Mother, I am doing what thou saidst,” or perhaps it is, “Mother, thy Saviour is my Saviour too.” Too late! the emphasis was laid on the wrong place. And how often we are apt to treat God’s words similarly. How often people restrict the sacred and solemn verities of God’s salvation to dying-beds. “Time enough to think about it when we are dying!” they cry.

And do not believers help in thus laying the emphasis on the wrong place? To talk of God and the soul in the market-place, in the workshop, in the railway train, in the holiday resort, seems to many of the children of God to be introducing sacred interests into secular places. In the church, the chapel, the hall, the enquiry room, the hospital ward, the sick-chamber, or by the dying, such conversation seems to be fitting; but elsewhere? No. I shall never forget, when visiting a business man who professed to be a Christian, his look of utter astonishment when, at the close of an earnest talk in his private room, I knelt down and asked the Lord's blessing and guidance in the important matters about which we had been conversing. He was so surprised that he did not even kneel. And yet if the Lord had not guided and blessed, our plans would have been utterly frustrated.

This saying of our Lord Jesus on the cross is the first of seven. Seven is a very important number in Scripture. It symbolises completeness, perfection, and consequently rest. Students of the Bible will at once recall many places where this number is

used. I only here refer to one other place—the seven parables in Matthew xiii., for there the number is divided into 4 and 3. It will be noticed that our Lord spake four of these seven parables in public to the multitude and three to the disciples in private. And just as the former number (4) in Scripture signifies weakness (it is the first number capable of division, as 2 is the first divisor), therefore it is the world-number, whilst the latter number (3), signifying solidity, is the divine number, so we find that in the first group of parables the Lord presents the Kingdom under its world aspect, and thus we behold its weakness, whilst in the second group we are shown what the Kingdom is to Himself, and therefore behold its abidingness, its solid strength. In a similar manner we have these sayings divided into two groups of three and four—those spoken before the darkness and those spoken after.

Bearing in mind what has been said above, we are able to see the Divine beauty and majesty of the inspired record of our Lord's dying words :

(1) "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34).

The Son in relationship with the whole world—Jew and Gentile.

(2) "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43).

The Son in relationship with the repenting sinner—able to save.

(3) Woman, behold thy son . . . Behold thy mother!" (John xix. 26, 27).

The Son in relationship with His loved ones—able to supply all need.

(4) "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46).

The Saviour uttering the sacrificial cry as substitute for sinners.

(5) "I thirst" (John xix. 28).

The Saviour uttering the suffering cry as surety for man.

(6) "It is finished" (John xix. 30).

The Saviour uttering the satisfied cry as "servant of Jehovah."

(7) "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46).

The Saviour uttering the filial cry as Son of God—God the Son.

The apostle writes (2 Cor. xiii. 4): "For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God." And where else do we see such a vivid illustration of these two things, "weakness . . . power of God," as in these sayings of His? And nowhere is the power so displayed as in the weakness. They cried, "If Thou be the

Son of God, come down!" The highest conception the natural heart can form of God is—a Magic Man. A man-god would have come down; it required all the power of the God-Man to remain up. They thought that He was not able to come down; they knew not the marvel was that He was able NOT to come down. But for the power of God he could not have been thus without strength (*astheneia*). He said, "Father, forgive." He could still say Father! for He was not yet "made sin for us." There is nothing more unscriptural than to say that Christ was a sinbearer all His life. Although on the cross, he was not yet bearing sin. But that question we intend to deal with later. Here I only make the remark as I see Him amidst his agony holding sweet communion with His Father. Presently the dark clouds will gather, the gloom will thicken, the storm must burst, and the waves and billows roll over His head, and amidst a silence that filled Eternity, the transaction took place of which it is safer to use the language of Scripture: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness

of God in Him." And the joy of the latter words brings to me the word "Forgive!"

There are three words in the New Testament for "to forgive."

(1) *Apoluo*, which primarily means to loose, to part one thing from another, then : to discharge a prisoner on payment of a ransom; to release from prison. For instance, Luke xiii. 12, "Thou art *loosed* from thine infirmity; Matthew xix. 8, "Whosoever shall *put away* his wife;" Luke xxiii. 18, "*Release* unto us Barabbas;" Hebrews xiii. 23, "Timothy is *set at liberty*."

In this word, forgiveness takes the aspect of a separation betwixt the sinner and his sins, and his consequent freedom and deliverance from their penalty.

(2) *Charizomai*—the root of this verb lies in *Charis*, grace, and presents to us the gracious attitude of Him who forgives, and the value of the forgiveness. It is also translated (Rom. viii. 32), "How shall He not with Him also *freely give* us all things?" Philippians ii. 9, "And *given* Him a Name which is above every name."

(3) *Aphiemi*, the word used in our passage,

means to send away, to discharge (used of missiles), and to let go. For instance (Matt. xiii. 36), "Jesus *sent* the multitude *away*." There are several secondary meanings, but the Saxon word "forgive" is really a literal rendering of the word in its primary meaning, for it was originally "forth-give." Not only are my sins and I divorced, but they are sent away. It is beautiful to notice that in the Septuagint this word "*aphiemi*" is used of the live goat which was *sent away* from the wilderness on the day of atonement, bearing the sins of the people; the goat and its burden was "forth-given" to the "land cut off" by the hand of a sure man. And as if to emphasise the parting which takes place between us and our sins when we are thus forgiven, the word is used specially in the sense of leaving: John xiv. 27, "Peace I *leave*." When we are forgiven we are enabled to leave our sins, just as in forgiving our sins God sends them away into the land of everlasting oblivion.

And here He prays with this meaning: "Father, forgive them." He is looking at the Roman soldiers who in their covetous

haste are already tossing for His garments. The vesture beneath which had beat that great heart of love, upon which had nestled in perfect confidence the little curly heads of those whom He took up in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them. The robe that covered Him when on wild and lonely mountain sides He prayed; with that hem which a woman's tender fingers had touched, when at the touch health—glorious, tingling health—had surged in one joyous wave through her long-tortured and emaciated frame. These garments which had shone with a whiteness no fuller of earth could give, are now being tossed hither and thither by the brutal, blood-stained hands of those hardened Roman mercenaries heedless of the awful burden above their heads or of the scene just enacted, when through that soft flesh they had urged with quickening blows the reluctant nails.

A knight of old who had retired to end his days in well-earned repose, having won in many a fight the highest honours chivalry could give, was one day listening in his castle's chapel to the reader reciting in tones

monotonous and sad this history of our Saviour's passion. His battle-cry rang out on the astonished congregation, and turning their eyes towards his seat they saw that he was standing with his eyes flashing, his brows bent, his bright sword drawn, and ere they had fully grasped the situation he cried, "Where wast thou with thy keen blade that day?" And if in after days one of these men came to the knowledge of the truth, would he not thank his Saviour that that day's deed of his could be not only forgiven, but forth-given, never to be remembered again any more.

He is looking at these scribes, and priests, and frequenters of the temple and synagogue where they heard read the Scriptures that testified of Him. Could He plead for such when He prayed, "for they know not what they do?" "Brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers," is the Holy Ghost's reply through the Apostle Peter. And when He rose from the dead and gave His great commission to preach the Gospel to every creature, He added, "beginning at Jerusalem." John Bunyan,

the tinker of Bedford, and the author of "The Pilgrim's Progress," had a favourite sermon which he entitled "The Jerusalem Sinner Saved : or, Good News for the Vilest of Men, being an Help for Despairing Souls, Showing that Jesus Christ would have Mercy in the First Place Offered to the Biggest Sinners." Surely the Father's answer to His Son's prayer is to be seen in the three thousand saved on the day of Pentecost. And if there be any who say, "We would not have done this cruel action," then be assured that for your ignorance Christ prayed. Listen to Robert Robinson: "Draw near, sinners, who flatter yourselves that it is not in your power to do this. Is not ignorance in your power? Are not envy, and pride, and the fear of man in your power? These were the sins that put the Son of God to death. One only loved money more than justice, and he sold Him; others only loved the praise of man more than the praise of God, and they bought Him; the officers only did as their masters bade them, and they took Him, and bound Him, and struck Him; the soldiers only made them-

selves merry with a stranger, and they dressed Him with an officer's coat, and mocked Him, and crowned Him with thorns, and called Him king, and bent the knee, and spat on His face; Pilate only wished to be popular, and he adjudged Him to die; the thieves only did as other people did, and they reviled Him. Always when you feel pride, or envy, or any sin stirring in your heart, you may know what it would grow to if it had time and room; and on this account you hate the seed for the sake of the fruit, and say, 'I know what you would be at; you would poison me, and, if it were possible, kill Jesus'."

Children of God, there are many more lessons to be drawn from this first and wonderful saying of Christ on the cross than I have hinted at; but there is one sin of which I would ask the Holy Spirit to warn me as well as you—it is the sin of ignorance. Not ignorance of the world, and its ways, and its toys, and its gauds, and its science, but ignorance of Christ and His ways and words. "We must account at the day of judgment," says Matthew Henry, "not only

for the knowledge we had, and used not, but for the knowledge we might have had, and would not."

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

II.

THE SAVING OF A GREAT SINNER.

"And He said, Jesus, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom. And He said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 42, 43, R.V.).

CRUCIFIXION was an ancient mode of punishment. Where or when it came into vogue is shrouded from view by the mists of antiquity. Phœnicians, Egyptians, Persians, Indians, and Scythians, as well as Greeks and Romans, were wont to crucify the worst of their criminals. Amongst the Romans it was reserved for slaves, hence their name of *Furcifer* or Crossbearer, whilst from this mode of death the Roman citizen was exempt, at anyrate until later times. It was therefore not only a most fearful and terrible death, but its infliction was the

greatest stigma that could be put on the sufferer. It covered his memory with unutterable contempt. Thus the apostle, describing to the Philippians, themselves Roman citizens, the downward path of the Son of God, writes: "Taking the form of a slave, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, THE DEATH OF THE CROSS."

Hung round His neck as He bowed under the burden of His cross towards the place of execution beyond the city wall, was (in all probability) the blackened board on which was written with gypsum, as the custom was, his alleged crime: "This is the King of the Jews." To the proud Roman, in whose eyes the Jews were but a nation of slaves, the punishment rarely fitted the crime. Nay, more than this, he would underscore with double lines the fact of this Man's supposed failure to establish His title to the kingdom by crucifying with Him two of those zealots who, in the attempt by the latest champion of the national cause to overthrow the Roman supremacy and restore

the kingdom to Israel, had been captured and cast into prison. Deliberately confusing the cause of "Jesus who was called the Messiah" with Barabbas who was called (according to many ancient manuscripts) Jesus, this proud Roman governor pillories the King who seemed to fail along with these his supposed accomplices. The One who could say, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My officers fight" (John xviii. 36, R.v., margin), is to be inextricably mingled in death with the two who had sought to build up an earthly kingdom according to the world's approved method—an appeal to arms. If Pilate cannot destroy Barabbas, who seems to him by far the more dangerous of the two pretenders to the throne of David and rivals of great Cæsar, then he will crucify his two officers with Him whom he considers but a harmless fanatic.

Thus I read the accounts given in the four Gospels, for the word *lēstēs* applied to them means more than simply thief or robber. The words of our Lord in Matthew xxvi. 55, "Are ye come out as against a thief (*lēstēs*),

with swords and staves for to take Me? especially when taken in conjunction with His words spoken in "that same hour" as to the "twelve legions of angels" whom the Father was ready to "place beside" Him, appears to bear this out. It is robbery under arms, but the prize is the crown of David. The use of the word by the historian Josephus confirms this, as with him it is synonymous with "zealot" and "patriot." Apparently a recent insurrection had been quelled, for Matthew calls Barabbas a "notable prisoner," and Luke adds that "for sedition and murder" he had been "cast into prison." And as with the chief, so with the lesser leaders; they, too, were cast into prison, but not like him to have their liberty wrenched from the hands of an unwilling Pilate by the tremendous force of public opinion. Nay, the crisis that liberated him sounded their death-knell. Thus it is that at first they both revile Him, for it needed no keenness on their part to understand that He was the immediate cause why they were sent from the safe obscurity of a dungeon to the shame and agonies of a cross. More than that,

they could see in every eye, they could read in every face, in every clenched fist shot suddenly upwards, in every face distended with the foul intent to spit, in that tempest of taunts, curses, gibes, sneers, they must easily spell hate, intense hate, to that silent, centre sufferer. But so far they were heroes, at that moment greater heroes than Barabbas, for were they not dying for the cause! Still, quick as they must have been to read the minds of men, and especially of men in mobs, they could not help seeing that to continue heroes they must shout with the mob. And what else had they to support them under the long-drawn agony of their doom but the sympathy of the crowd? It would not be the only time that the loud plaudits of a surging throng have made a coward spirit brave, and the dastard die like a hero. Such depths of infamy and reproach did our Lord Jesus sink to when even wretches like these feared for their reputation from dying in His company!

But, blessed be God, not for long, not for long. Amid the horrid din there steals a whisper to the Saviour's ear: "Jesus—for

so the best manuscripts read—remember me when Thou comest in [*en*, not *eis*] Thy kingdom.” One of these robbers had just before rebuked his comrade—and consequently the multitude—for his scoffing, had admitted their guilt, had acknowledged the sinlessness of this silent Sufferer, and he now makes a humble appeal to our blessed Lord. Blackwell says that the words of this man are the purest Greek in all the Gospels; it may be so, for it was becoming that the cup which conveyed this draught “from the well by the gate” to the lips of the Lord should be of the purest metal. Aye, but see the courage of this man! By one stroke he had cut himself off from his comrade and the people. No longer would his comrade shout *Courage!* No longer would the Chief Priests smile in benediction on him. No longer would the rough but effective sympathy of the people be his. He was now an outcast to be branded with the name of coward. We speak of the courage needed to-day to take an open and decided stand for the Lord Jesus: it shrinks into insignificance beside the courage displayed that day on a felon’s cross. And for

what did he surrender his place in the interest of the mob and esteem of his friends? A place in the memory of Jesus; but it is in the memory of his King, for the first printed sermon had done its work. Illumined as by a ray of light bursting through the dark clouds of ignorance and sin, he reads, "This is the King of the Jews," and believes. Mark, he does not say "into," but "in Thy kingdom." It was as if he thought that this King's kingdom could not be separated from its Head. Dimly doubtless, yet he perceived that where Christ was there was His kingdom. True: for the Lord Jesus Christ is both King and Kingdom, the entrance into which is by the new birth which unites us to the King by a living, loving, lasting union.

Not that this poor man understood this all at once, for he contemplated the departure of the King, and the boon he begged was that when the King returned He would remember him. A very simple request, yet one that displays what a magnificent trust had been begotten in the breast of this man. He believed in the power and trusted in the

mercy of a King whom His subjects had rejected with contumely, and whom but a short time previously he himself had reproached with helplessness (Matt. xxvii. 44). Yes: for not long before scribes had reasoned in their hearts, "Why doth this Man thus speak? He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but One, even God?" and this man believed that He had forgiven him his sins. How? Because after looking at himself, and turning over the pages of his black life's history, until in very agony he must needs cry out, "We receive the due rewards of our deeds," he begs to be remembered by One who had "done nothing amiss." If he had no sweet sense of pardon would not his prayer rather have been, "Forget me, oh, forget me?" Would not the best boon to be bestowed have been that his life should be blown out for ever like some ill-trimmed, smoky lamp by a chill blast from the black cavern of eternal night? It was the bloody finger of a Reign of Terror that wrote over the cemeteries where the butchered and the butchers lay side by side: "An eternal sleep." The mercy? Yes: for, startled by the con-

trast between the foul wretchedness of himself and the spotless innocence of the Saviour, he cries, "Remember me!" He fears not that after the manner of men this King at the zenith of His glory will seek to forget, even as the butler forgot Joseph, one who cannot but remind Him of that shameful day when His insignia were a reed sceptre and a crown of thorns.

And whence this wonderful faith? Paul answers the question: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word (*rhēmatos*, spoken Word) of God." This robber had not only read the sermon on the cross, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews," but he had also heard the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It was enough: he believed, and was saved. There could be no clearer example of a (so-called) "sudden conversion," of salvation without works, unless it were wicked works: of a perfect justification through faith alone.

Great as are the courage and faith of the petitioner, greater is the prodigality of the King's grace. If we compare the words of

the one with the reply of the other, this will be at once apparent :

Jesus,
remember me
when Thou comest
in Thy kingdom.

Verily, I say unto thee,
thou shalt be with Me
to-day
in Paradise.

Now, looking at these members of the two sentences as being parallel clauses, it is to be noticed that "to-day" is out of its place: it comes too soon. The answer is not, "Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt be with Me to-day in Paradise," but "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." At first this would seem to slightly countenance certain speculations which will be mentioned further on, but on closely looking into the construction of the sentence as it stands in Greek, it is clearly seen that "to-day" is given its place for a reason of emphasis.

Crucifixion was a lingering death. No vital parts were injured; slowly the poisoned wounds produced fever, accompanied by a raging thirst; gradually the pain, the cramps, the poison, the burning thirst, the hideous, shameful exposure, produced a wild delirium which lasted until death closed the scene on

the third or fourth day. Cases are recorded in which the criminal's friends have waited until the guards have grown careless, and seizing a favourable opportunity have freed the victim as late as the third day with ultimate recovery. Now, the robber knew this. Not only so, but having cast in his lot with the rejected and hated King, his tortures will be aggravated to their utmost limit by the malice of the multitude, without the support of the applause of his friends or the hope that they might ultimately deliver him from his enemies. How it must have cheered this new martyr to learn that ere the sun set he would be where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest! Thus in putting "to-day" in the forefront our Lord shows His intense, loving sympathy—"He knoweth our frame: He remembereth that we are dust." But not only do grace, power, triumph shine forth in His words, there runs through them a ripple of gladness that must have filled the penitent's heart with joy. The joyous haste of the welcome "To-day . . ." recalls our Lord's own picture of the glad father who runs to welcome his

prodigal home, and when remonstrated with by the elder brother for what seemed to him unseemly haste, replies : “ It was meet that we should make merry and be glad : for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.” And what a perfect answer is there in this word to the burning desire of this man’s heart. David was king, but a rejected one, and on his weary march to the wilderness he stays his steps close to this very spot to take a farewell view of his city and his home. Whilst watching his followers pass he sees Ittai of Gath, an officer who had lately left his home and country to take service under his banner. Struck with this thought, the king stops him and asks, “ Wherefore goest thou with us? Return to thy place . . .” But this new-born servant of the exiled king replies : “ As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.” And if that was the expression of Ittai’s allegiance, surely the desire of this new follower of a greater King would not fall short

of it. How perfect, then, is the answer :
“To-day shalt thou be with ME.”

There is something very deep and searching in this for us. I have heard that in the days that have faded into the past—we speak of them now as days in the last century — men and women had kindled within them such an all-consuming flame of love and devotedness to the Lord that when the Spirit through His Word revealed to them the truth of His return at any time they stripped themselves of such useless ornaments as rings, breast-pins, bracelets, locketts, necklets, and their houses of expensive furniture and rich plate, in order to expend the proceeds of their sale in the spread of His Gospel both at home and abroad. I remember how such an attitude of expectancy born of devotion struck me. It made the (to me) new doctrine of our Lord's return so real that it led to my conversion. The thought that at any moment He might appear formed a mighty lever to loosen my soul from its environment of intense worldliness. From my youth I had known the Gospel, and though my mind had

passed through all forms of philosophical thought and religious speculation, I had always clung to the thought that the Gospel of my childhood's days would be the best protection in the hour of death—was not the penitent thief saved in the hour of death? But this new doctrine upset all my calculations, for one considers that as a rule death gives its victims some warning. Here was something that would happen without any warning; something so real that the people who had seen it in the Bible cast away their conventionalities and appeared deadly in earnest. To me it seemed the most terrible of doctrines, for it appeared to give me no chance; to them it appeared most joyous. To me the Lord's "to-day" would have sounded as the knell of all my hopes; to them it would have announced the culmination of all their desires. And in that state of mind—to see that this possibility cheered the sufferer, comforted the mourner, encouraged those faced by great trials or bitter sorrows, sustained those ground down by bitter poverty, and proclaimed the hour of most seraphic delight to those whose love,

born of recent pardon, cleansing, and deliverance, burned brightly—I do not wonder that I yielded under such a pressure, the pressure of my sins behind and the attraction of such glory in front, whilst Christ ceased to be a creed and became a Person. I only wonder that I have, with others, altered; that the love of many has become cold; that the attractions of a poor world have, with the cares of a paltry one, absorbed the attention of not a few, so that the news, “To-day shalt thou be with Me,” would seem like a bolt from the blue. And why? Just because the freshness of our allegiance to our Lord has been dimmed by sitting at meat in the Temple of Mammon and bowing with the multitude in the Temple of Rimmon. Would we return? Then the way is marked out for us by three fingerposts pointing to Calvary. The first bears the word “Confession,” the second the word “Separation,” and the third, “Wholehearted Devotion”—a devotion born of our faith in His forgiveness and our trust in His mercy.

Then, what a contrast we have here between God's way and man's plans for

restoring the kingdom to Israel, the former being represented by our Lord Jesus Christ, and the latter by Barabbas and these followers. We see the difference at once: the method of the one was an other-worldly method, the method of the other was of this world, worldly. But are we not by specious representations and fallacious arguments apt to be drawn aside from the heavenly method to employ the worldly one in the spread of the kingdom of God? We hope by politics and threatening the Government to attain that which we ought to obtain by prayer. We endeavour by a purely worldly philanthropy to alleviate physical miseries by physical measures, forgetting that to offer material relief apart from the Gospel of Christ is to present a stone instead of a loaf. We carry on God's work by alms given to Him by those who withhold the only gift they can give Him—their souls—in spite of what He says to us: "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would

not tell thee: for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof. . . . Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Psalm l. 10-15).

Thus huge collections are made to be partially dissipated on the purchase of striking sites in the metropolis of the world upon which to erect magnificent buildings as weighty proofs that His kingdom has come, forgetting that as far as the world is concerned He might still be on the Cross. We need to listen always to the King's words: "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight" (John xviii. 36). And, "Our citizenship is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

There remain only the other readings of our Lord's answer to be discussed. In the

writings of Hesychius the Presbyter (fifth century) there is a passage where he mentions (without approving of it) a suggestion that "to-day" ought to be read with "Verily I say unto thee," that is, that the comma should be put after "to-day," and not before it, as is done in both the Authorised and Revised Versions. As the punctuation stands the words intimate that before sunset the spirit of the robber would be with the spirit of the Lord in Paradise. The suggestion mentioned (and not approved) by Hesychius in the fifth century would leave it indeterminate when the robber and our Lord would meet in Paradise. Hence those who deny any spiritual state of bliss after death and before resurrection have eagerly seized upon this suggestion, otherwise the passage would give the death-blow to their theory that Paradise is the renewed earth, and that there could be no communion between the Lord and this man until after the resurrection of saints and their entrance on the renewed earth. Not only have they no Scriptural authority for calling the renewed earth Paradise, but they can produce no passage where our Lord

uses the words, "Verily I say unto thee to-day." Many times does he say, "Verily I say unto thee or you," but never with the addition of "to-day."

It is no wonder, therefore, that all great Greek scholars in all ages have concurred with Theophylact when he uses the words Ἐκβιάζονται τὸ ῥῆμα (that is, they that "do violence to the words") concerning such interpreters.

Another interpretation puts "this day" (meaning "the day of which you spoke," *i.e.*, the day of My coming in power) in the place of "to-day" as a rendering of *sēmeron*. Unfortunately for such an interpretation, *sēmeron* cannot be so interpreted (for a conclusive reason, *vide* Liddell and Scott, *sub voce*).

Constable vacillates between this interpretation and what he calls "synchronism." According to this the robber, falling asleep before the last half hour of the day expires, loses consciousness of time, because "to the sleeper in death's arms there is no time," and so "the last half hour the penitent thief will spend with His King in His kingdom, for it is there he takes up the thread of time

once more." To my mind this theory has only to be mentioned to be at once condemned as absurd and unscriptural.

The reading by John Thomas (the founder of Christadelphianism) is perhaps equal to this in strangeness, and may be mentioned to show how writers who depart from the plain and common-sense meaning of the words perplex themselves and their readers. "'To-day' is a Scripture term, and must be explained by the Scripture use of it. In the sacred writings, then, the term is used to express a period of over 2000 years. This use of it occurs in David, as it is written, 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, lest ye enter not into My rest.' The apostle, commenting on this passage about 1000 years after it was written, says: 'Exhort one another whilst it is called to-day.' . . . Thus it was called to-day when David wrote, and to-day when Paul commented on it. . . . This to-day is, however, limited both to Jew and Gentile; and in defining this limitation Paul tells us that to-day means 'after so long a time.' . . . If, then, we substitute the apostle's definition

for the word 'to-day' in Christ's reply to the thief, it will read thus: 'Verily I say unto thee, *after so long a time* thou shalt be with Me in paradise'" (Elpis Israel, pp. 54, 55). In spite of this he is afraid that it will not answer, and so gives other and contradictory interpretations of the passage.

Now, all these peculiar interpretations of the simple words of Christ are forced into existence because the makers of them are committed to the theory that there is no intermediate state of conscious blessedness for the righteous, and are, consciously or unconsciously, Materialists bound to the earth for their blessedness. The majority of these writers interpret paradise as the renewed earth; and that brings us to the last point, What and where is this paradise of which our Lord speaks to the dying penitent?

The word paradise is of Eastern origin (Hebrew "pardes," occurring only three times in the Old Testament—Neh. ii. 8, Eccles. ii. 5, Cant. iv. 12), and in its literal sense signifies *a place fenced off from and more beautiful than common ground*. It is never used in the Bible of the Garden of Eden—that is

always *Gan Eden*. In the Septuagint, however, it is uniformly used in the Greek form, "paradeisos," for the Garden of Eden, except once where the ordinary word for garden, "kēpos," is so used, and from this use doubtless it entered the New Testament. The fact that although the Hebrew word "pardes" does occur in the Scriptures, it is never applied to the Garden of Eden, clearly shows that our Lord in employing "paradeisos" does not refer to that place, but to something of which that place was but a type or shadow. The use John Milton made of the English form of the word in his famous poems "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" has so popularised it as a term descriptive of the Garden of Eden that we are apt to forget that never in the inspired Word is it so used. There "Gan Eden" is the type, and "Paradeisos" is the antitype. Until our knowledge of the ancient Eastern languages was increased by the discovery and study of the monuments, "Eden" was supposed to be derived from a Hebrew root meaning "pleasant" or "pleasantness." But these discoveries have shown us that Eden is the old Sumerian word "edin," meaning *plain* or

steppe. The Sumerian "edin" is always rendered in the Assyrian by "seru," which invariably means *desert*. This goes far to throw light upon the account of the formation of the garden by God in the second of Genesis: "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden . . . and out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant in the sight and good for food . . . and a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads." Clearly the garden was a beautiful oasis formed around the fountain-head of the four great rivers, in the eastern part of the sterile plain of Eden, where everything that was beautiful and good was a direct result of the creative energy of God, of that God who was to be known by revelation (*Jehovah*) as well as by creation (*Elohim*). He formed it for a place of communion between Himself and those whom He had created for that blessed companionship. Thus as the earthly tabernacle was a picture of the heavenly sanctuary, so the earthly garden was a picture of the heavenly paradise. It is instructive to note in this connection that the Apostle Paul in

describing his journey to paradise uses two prepositions, *heōs* and *eis*—" *heōs tritou ouranou* " (as far as the third heaven), and " *eis ton paradeison* " (into paradise)—just as the pilgrim approaching the garden from the direction of the rising sun would come as far as (*heōs*) Eden when he entered into (*eis*) the Garden of Eden. Apparently the Apostle is thinking of the fact that *ha' shamayim* ("the heaven") in the first chapter of Genesis is the dual plural, that is, that the numeral *two* might be inserted before "heavens"—"In the beginning God created the two heavens and the earth"—for he uses the expression "third heaven" to signify that sphere of being which is beyond the material, nay, which is the very antithesis of the sphere where matter reigns: as he writes to the Ephesian believers, "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." But in the sixth chapter (verse 12) of the same epistle he writes of the "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies" (R.V.), so that at present this sphere is not only a sphere of "spiritual blessings," but also the sphere of

“spiritual hosts of wickedness,” hence the necessity of paradise, with its thought of security as well as of communion—it is to the spirits of the departed saints an oasis in the desert, designed and made by God Himself for their delight, where are the fountains of living waters which presently will flow forth to refresh all creation. Of all this the Garden of Eden is a fair and beautiful type: it is the model in clay of that beautiful ideal of God executed in the marble of a spotless spiritual existence. How blessed, then, must the condition of the penitent malefactor have been when in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, his torture on the cross was exchanged for Christ’s welcome to paradise! What an encouragement to those of the Lord’s people who dread the hour of departure! What an encouragement to all the Lord’s people to watch for His appearing, when we all shall exchange our crosses for “the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give . . . unto all them . . . that love His appearing.”

III.

A ROYAL LEGACY.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother . . . When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home " (John xix. 25-27).

ONE day there might be seen a man with a woman in whose arms there was a little Child traversing the long and dusty road that leads from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. Passing in through the gate where the Roman sentinel was keeping his watch, and threading their way amongst the drifting, noisy, parti-coloured crowd that thronged the narrow street, they bent their steps towards the gorgeous structure that raised its shimmering roofs and sparkling walls high above the surrounding buildings. It was the Temple; and they were going thither to present the Child to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice prescribed in the Law of the Lord. They were poor; not only did their dress proclaim

this fact, but their offering was the offering of the poor—"a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons."

To their astonishment, their act did not pass unnoticed. An aged man, well known in Jerusalem for his holy living and communion with God, met them, and taking the little Child up into his arms raised his voice in praise and blessing. The Greek phrase describing their attitude at this sight is somewhat striking: "His father was and his mother marvelling." The finite verb is singular, and agrees with the word father, whilst the plural participle agrees with both. The father is first struck by the peculiarity of the proceeding, but in the end the mother also wonders; as if the mother was not easily astonished at anything that should be said about her wondrous Child. Eight hundred years before Isaiah declared that His name should be "Wonderful"; eight months before the birth of the Child, Elizabeth had said, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb"; and she herself had said, "Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." So that this

wise and holy man should bless God on her Child's account is to her no cause for wonder. But before he finished speaking she did wonder, for, turning to her and blessing her, he used a mysterious phrase, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." A sword? Yes, *rhomphaia*—strictly, a large Thracian broadsword, the word used in the Septuagint for the sword of Goliath with which David cut off his head. Surely this presaged some dreadful mystery. Could it be that what was the greatest earthly blessing that could be bestowed upon her should cause her the greatest sorrow that could be endured on earth? "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother"—*now* the question was solved that was propounded *then*. Even so are all mysteries solved by waiting—if not at the cross of Jesus, then at the throne of the Lamb. And what an agony it must have proved for that gentle mother to see her Son racked with horrid pain, covered with scorn and shame, and to be unable to stretch out a hand to help Him. Yet note her courage—"she stood by the cross." Where were the admiring crowds

that would have made Him King? Gone! Where were the lepers He had cleansed, the blind He had given sight to, the deaf He had made to hear, the lame He had made to leap? Gone! Where were the defiled He had cleansed and the dead He had raised? All gone! Only there stood by His cross His mother, the other Marys, and the beloved disciple. In every real profession of faith in Christ there must needs be this element of courage. All would have been willing to stand beside the King on His throne in yonder fair city of David, but how few were ready to stand by His cross! And is it this that is lacking in my case? Am I willing to sing His praises and tell of His love in the company of the redeemed, but when I step out from the quiet hall that anon echoed my professions of allegiance and attachment, and meet the crowds that are (whether they know it or not) His enemies, am I ashamed to take my stand by His side? Charles Wesley writes :

“ All are not lost or wandered back ;
All have not left the Church and Thee.
There are who suffer for Thy sake,
Enjoy Thy glorious infamy.”

When I was newly converted it was the hardest thing in the world for me to speak to another about his soul or give a tract away. It was to me a thing that cost me hours of mental anguish, yet never has any public ministry of mine been blessed in the way that this hidden ministry was. Another thing which I found difficult was to be seen going to some of our halls and to confess not only that I did so to worldly friends, but also that I profited by the ministry of humble and unlearned brethren. Some of my readers may understand my feelings. I trust that they also may enjoy my experience, for some of my happiest moments have been spent amidst the humblest of surroundings. Mary not only stood by the cross, but there she, with John, received the Lord's legacy. To Mary He gave a Son; to John He gave a mother. I have seen a lady, a descendant of an ancient race, standing in a room where there was a number of happy children; what a yearning look was on her face, what a longing in her eyes, for she was childless, and all her earthly possessions passed from her house at her death. Yet I think that

the desire for two little, soft arms to clasp her round the neck, and two little, pouting lips to whisper "Mother!" in her ear outweighed all other considerations. And what a gift a mother is! How many men trace all their success in life to their mother! And how descriptive the phrase "A motherless girl" is! He who by His wonderful act of atonement was going to bring many sons to God understood the aching void His departure would make in His mother's heart, and to fill it He saith, "Woman, behold thy son!" And may we not suppose that this son of thunder, who with his brother would call down fire on the Samaritan village, needed the influence of this great Sufferer whose soul the sword had pierced before he was prepared to be that tender writer whose words have comforted many hearts? If it were so, then see the matchless wisdom of Him who saith, "Behold thy mother!" If this be so, believe me the best legacy we can have is the one our Lord leaves us at the cross. The poet E. Horton writes some beautiful lines on this:

“ No land, no home, not even a cave,
As Isaac had, to make His grave,
Had He ; no place to lay His head
Among the living or the dead.

No gold, no silver—to the bag
All went that Judas carried ; rag
Of clothing, none was left ; the guard
Had all, and left Him not a shard.

His Spirit, loosed from fleshly bands,
Bequeathed He to His Father's hands
His body Joseph begged, and laid
In the new grave for Joseph made.

His mother I heard Him leave to John ;
Only the cross He died upon,
Some nails and thorns had He to leave
To us ; then, brother, wherefore grieve ? ”

Whatever mortifies self, whatever pierces us that we may be reminded that we must not lean on any earthly prop, whatever manifests to us that this world, with its best and its worst, is under the curse of sin : such is the legacy the Lord has left us. But nothing more ? Much more ; for if He has called us from our father's house and the circle of our loved ones for His sake, we must not forget that “ He setteth the solitary in families,” and He gives His own to each other—“ Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another ” (1 John

iv. 11). There are some Christians who belong nowhere; they find objections to all companies of God's people: these are they who have not accepted their legacy. What did John do when this new tie was created and this new responsibility thrust upon him? "From that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." There was no hesitation; at once he took her to his heart and to his home. Once the Lord asked the question, "Who is My mother, or My brethren?" and He Himself supplied the answer, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, My sister, My mother." Do I ask, Where is my legacy? Perhaps it is the aged sister, poor in this world's goods, but rich in faith, whom I have never noticed before in the assembly. Do you ask where is your legacy? Perhaps it is that lonely and friendless young man who has come up to the great city and knows no one as yet. Be sure that if the Lord's people do not claim their legacy the devil will not be slow in attempting to cheat them out of it.

It is a remarkable thing in the light of the development of Mariolatry that nowhere is

the Lord Jesus reported to have called Mary by the tender name of "mother"! Here when He is bidding her farewell, and knows that her heart craves for that word which is so dear to a true woman's heart, yet he addresses her by the respectful but every-day salutation of "woman"! How seldom, too, is she mentioned in the Scriptures. Only about five times is she mentioned after His birth, and on none of these occasions is she given a place of high honour. Certainly she is not once mentioned after the Holy Spirit descends and the Church is founded. How is it, then, that she is given such a high place of honour amongst the leading sects in Christendom? Because they are the lineal descendants of Paganism and the true successors of Babylon, consequently they must needs worship a woman.

Examine the Scriptures, the monuments, the secular histories, and you will find that the great characteristic of world-religion, under whatever form it is found or named by whatever name it may happen to be, is woman-worship. Let me give you a few examples.

(1) Jeremiah vii. 18; xlv. 17-25. The name here given is "queen of heaven," a name which is popular in the Roman Church. When "Ashta" (woman) came to receive this title the name of "woman" became one of great honour, so that queens were addressed in that way. Our own word "queen" is a product of this, as it is derived from the Gothic "Cwino," which signifies "woman." Now, the "queen of heaven" is the third person in the Assyrian trinity, whose emblem is a dove with an olive branch in her mouth, hence she was called "D'Iune," or the Dove, from whence comes the name of the Roman "queen of heaven"—Juno. It is remarkable that this personage is connected in various places with the supremacy of the air; but this is owing to the fact that the Chaldee word for "air" signifies also "Holy Spirit," so that by alteration of names and materialisation of meanings we can trace the evolution of the present "queen of heaven" back to Babylon.

(2) To give a single illustration of what is said in the Roman Church, I quote from the prayer called "Salve Regina": "Hail! holy

queen! mother of mercy! our life! our sweetness! our hope! To thee we cry, poor, banished sons of Eve. To thee we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate," &c. If she could hear in her present place of bliss, would not a sword again pierce her soul to think that from her God and Saviour should be diverted to her what alone is His! Surely, horror-struck, she would exclaim: "See you do it not, for I am a poor woman requiring His aid, His salvation, even as ye do" (Luke i. 47).

(3) But, like all superstition, this form of idolatry is popular. It will never become effete so long as the present evil age lasts. As a proof of this I would point to the way in which this idolatry is spreading in this enlightened land of ours at the present time. A well-known cleric in the Church of England approves of such expressions as these: "O, Mary, save me! When Jesus will have no mercy, I turn to thee. Give me thy help, guide me, save me, for in thee do I put my trust." What blasphemy!

(4) The most rapidly spreading of all re-

cently started anti-Christian systems has for its founder a woman. I refer to "Christian Science" and Mrs. Eddy. As she says, "No one else can drain the cup which I have drunk to the dregs as the discoverer and teacher of Christian Science, neither can its inspiration be gained without tasting this cup," it appears as if she claimed a supernatural place; in fact, if not in name, "queen of heaven."

And all this is preparing for the production of—a Man. World-worship having risen to its zenith, as symbolised by the "Scarlet Woman," must be overthrown to make way for the Man whom, in His own time, our Lord Jesus shall destroy by the "manifestation of His Presence."

But He never gave her this place; He always addressed her as "woman," a sweet echo of Eden, before, through her folly, sin entered and creation groaned. And what was this folly? The desire to be as gods. Thus where the words of the Lord have been obeyed woman has received her right place, for she was not taken from man's foot to be trampled on, or from his head to rule over

him, but from his side to be his companion and helper. Under no earth-born religion does she get this place. He alone who gave it her can restore to her what she in her restless ambition flung away. Those who aspire to other spheres in the Church than as "woman" the Lord has placed them in, would do well to remember His words, either given directly or through His apostles, for He who has regained for them the place they had lost also restrains them lest they should indulge in a vaulting ambition. But what work for Him a woman, with her quick intuition and sensitive gentleness, can do, especially in the home! Alas! to-day there are great numbers who are ready to serve the Lord anywhere but in the home. For such the Holy Spirit wrote such passages as the fifth chapter of 1st Timothy. It is clear that in the home the greatest trials, and vexations, and opportunities for self-abasement and self-sacrifice are found. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother." It is also clear that many of our homes are not so happy as they might be. There suffering remains unalleviated, tears undried,

depressions uncheered, and little children untrained; whilst in some cases those who can do these things teach other people's children in the Sunday School, visit in a district other mourners, and nurse in a hospital other sick folk. Let such meditate on the fact that it was BY the cross of her despised, and suffering, and forsaken Son that this woman stood, and on the words of the Risen Lord through His servant: "Let them learn first to shew piety at home." David first slew the lion and the bear in private before he slew Goliath in public.

IV.

THE HEART'S HIGHWAY.

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me'?"

THE place was prominent; not because it was 2500 feet above the general sea level of the world, for the surrounding ground was also elevated, and so in Scripture it is always called a "place," leaving it

to hymn writers and others to speak of it as a "mount" or "green hill"; nor because there were skulls scattered around, ghastly trophies of other executions, for this would be against the law of Moses, although there is a peculiar and ancient legend which makes it the burial-place of Adam, and says that the blood which poured from the Saviour's side fell upon his skull; nor because its exact location has been handed down from one generation to another, for no man knows the place either where He was crucified or where He was born. It may have been where a temple of Venus was afterwards built until the devotion of a Christian monarch superseded it by what has now become "The Church of the Holy Sepulchre," for modern research has determined that this place was outside the city wall then standing. It may be the site was not thus on the west of the city, but on the north at the spot called "Jeremiah's Grotto." General Gordon believed that on the knoll, rounded and scarred in the shape of a skull, there to be found, was the cross reared on which our Lord accomplished our redemption.

The place was prominent because, as we read, "the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city," beside one of the great highways which dragged its dusty length along by pleasant fields, through straggling villages, and over green hills, until the holy city was reached and it was swallowed up by the gate that gaped dark and gloomy like some great blot on the sunlit surface of the lofty wall. Many feet had trod that highway coming and going—the feet of age, the feet of youth, children's feet, maidens' feet, women's feet—and if we could have listened with a microphone that makes the steps of a fly sound like the tread of an elephant, we would have heard the joyous step, the hopeful step, the laggard step, the steps of the burdened, the mourner, the desperate, the murderer, all hurrying, halting, hastening along the highway that runs by the place called Golgotha. But amidst the sound of many footsteps one day there echoes the footfall of One. Listen! It is the step of One heavy laden, for He carries a cross: it is the step of a Sufferer, for it is slow and halting, for He has been tortured, buffeted, scourged, and the way is

marked with blood. And as the highway mounts the crest beyond the wall they die away in silence. Some one "coming up from the country" stays to mark with startled, pitying gaze the sight, and in a trice (how graphic is the Greek) the guard have transferred the heavy beams to the broad shoulders of Simon of Cyrene, father to Alexander and Rufus.

Many a man would like to be Alexander, or Augustus, or Napoleon, or Wellington, or some other of the world's heroes, but methinks more glorious would it be to be Simon of Cyrene, and if not worthy to be so great, then let me be Alexander or Rufus to call him "father!" who willingly (so the words imply) bore the Saviour's cross along the great highway that ran by Calvary.

All of which in its way is an allegory, for all who would enter into the Holiest must pass along "a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." The new way is through a life to life. And I think of it as the "Heart's Highway," for the road home to God ran through the broken heart of

Jesus. And the cry of the breaking heart, "My God, My God, why forsookest Thou Me?" had its echo, rest assured, in the heart of God, who said once of man that His having made him had "grieved Him at His heart."

Can we say what this forsaking means? We may answer that it was neither physical nor metaphysical but political and governmental—the sinner's Representative and Substitute was left ALONE with the sinner's sin: the world's Propitiation was left to bear ALONE the world's sin. But do we understand any better? I trow not. Can we even settle the mere earthly, physical question? What was the darkness that brooded o'er the land for three hours? It was not night, for the sun was at his zenith. It was high noon. Nor was it an eclipse, for the moon was at her farthest from the sun. It was the season of full moon. And all we are told is that "the sun was darkened." The falling leaf, the fading flower, the stark, cold form of a feathered songster, the glazing eye of a canine friend, the whole groaning creation, mark the world's participation in

man's sin, so that which would, if continued, convert this earth into a vast charnel house, sweeping through space (for light is necessary to life), marks with its awe-inspiring presence the payment of the penalty of that sin. There was silence: we hear of no cry from the crowd, no scoff from the malefactor, no speech from the Saviour during this gloomy period. Only when the darkness is about to roll away the Sufferer casts one long, backward, shuddering glance into the abyss into which He had sunk, and before stepping up out of the horrible pit into the light of heaven, he cries, and consider how that cry must have rung through the limitless space of Eternity and pierced as with a sword the hearts of the countless myriads that stand ranked round the Throne of the Majesty on High, and sounded in the ear of Him who sits thereon, " My God, my God, why didst Thou forsake Me ? "

The more one weighs it, the more one paces round it, the more one counts the syllables in heart-throbs, the more one is compelled to bow down and worship. Whilst out of the light ineffable (which to our eyes is

thick darkness) comes a Voice, "Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." There are several points which emerge from what has been roughly outlined, and call for consideration.

(1) The narrative is unique in its stern brevity and loftiness of speech. No man could invent such a cry. Docetics, Apollinarians, Sabellians, *et hoc genus omne*, circle round the cross, each in their turn laying emphasis on one part of Christ's being. It is the Bible narrative alone that maintains a perfect unity of being. This is even more striking when we contrast the confusion of thought in this vaunted Twentieth century. To ask me to believe that these two men, Matthew and Mark, accomplished with their very mediocre natural gifts a presentation of the God-Man which the greatest intellects cannot re-present without spoiling, is to ask me to believe the absolutely impossible. Read the Gospels, not by verses or chapters, but by reading a Gospel at a sitting; carefully weigh the perfect manner in which the human and divine are blended and

balanced ; the result is an absolutely perfect picture of One who was Son of God and Son of man at one and the same time. And now contrast that wonderful impression, which may be your salvation from sin and doubt, with such words as the following by one who has been called the most popular and gifted preacher among Nonconformists to-day:

“ God the Father is the vast, infinite, awful totality of Deity. Father is the best word we can find wherewith to name Him, but to name Him at all is to limit Him. He is Father of all because the source and sustenance of all. But there is one side of His nature in which from all eternity the universe, including humanity, has been potentially present. This side has a consciousness and an identity of its own. The word ‘ Son ’ is a symbol wherewith to describe this vast area of consciousness, just as the word ‘ Father ’ is a symbol wherewith to describe the Infinite All. We may then, without confusion of thought [?], regard creation, including humanity, as the life of God the Son Jesus was the eternal Son self-limited. His personality was greater than His consciousness of it during His sojourn on earth. The earthly consciousness of Jesus did not include the whole life of humanity, but His personality did, and does. . . . But this is equally true of God the Father : He is all that the Son is, and more—the Father is greater than He. We ought not to think of Fatherhood and Sonship as mutually exclusive. The Father is present in all that belongs to the Son.”

I am not ashamed to confess that to me this is obscure. Superficially, it is religiosity inflated with verbosity until it has become a monstrosity, which when carefully viewed is seen to be birth-marked with the stain of various heresies. In a former paper we saw the danger arising from the worship of the Woman; here we see the dawning of the worship of the Man.

In leaving the temple of Ashtoreth we enter the temple of Rimmon. And if we resist the Education Act because "we say that the hope for Christianity in this country lies more and more in the Free Churches," we deceive ourselves, and seek to escape from one form of error to fall into another.

Brethren, I look round the horizon of Christendom and see naught but darkness creeping on everywhere. Such a quotation as that given balances such quotations as I gave previously. By the grace of God I would sound an alarm! Many have been the watchwords, but I would give this one, "BACK TO THE BIBLE!" as a rallying cry. Sir John Lubbock (now Lord Avebury), in his list of the hundred best books, puts the

Bible first. But if the Bible is first it is not as *primus inter pares* (first amongst equals), but because compared with it the rest are nowhere. Such writers as those referred to are fond of talking about the inspiration of Shakespeare, and Milton, and others, and explaining thereby in "an easy, unencumbered" fashion the inspiration of the Bible. But the inspiration of Genius is not the inspiration of God:

"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (literally, *understanding ones*, or *geniuses*)—I Cor. i. 19.

The Bible stands aloof from the literature of the world. It is not a book, it is a revelation—a revelation of God's mind, because it is an unveiling of God's Son. And as the world crucified Him, so the critics crucify It; and as those divided His garments by casting lots, so by an equally haphazard process these divide Its garments! "Back to the Bible!" then, let me go, with no miserable preconceptions as to what it should say, with no mistaken notions as to what it does say, but with this wondrous fact dominating my

whole being: This is the Voice of God speaking to me! As one of our own poets has well said:

"Hast thou ever heard
Of such a Book? The author, God Himself;
The subject, God and man, salvation, life,
And death—eternal life, eternal death—
Dread words, whose meaning has no end, no bounds.
Most wondrous Book! bright candle of the Lord!
Star of Eternity! the only star
By which the bark of man could navigate
The sea of Life, and gain the coast of Bliss
Securely; only star which rose on Time,
And on its dark and troubled billows stole,
As generation, drifting swiftly by,
Succeeded generation, threw a ray
Of Heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,
The eternal hills, pointed the sinner's eye."

But perhaps I am speaking to one, a young believer, troubled with the claims of the Higher Criticism. Do I say to you: You must turn a deaf ear to these siren voices, and beating down the scientific faculty within you take ALL on trust in the spirit of the old woman who declared that if it had been written that "Jonah swallowed the whale," yet she would have believed? No—a thousand times no!

"This Book, the Holy Book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high divinity

On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stamped
From first to last—this ray of sacred light,
This lamp from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow,
And evermore beseeching men with tears
And earnest sighs to hear, believe, and live."

It is necessary to take the pronouncements of the Higher Critics on trust, for no ordinary man can see any scientific principle on which men who cannot take, say, a book by Besant and Rice, that is to say a book in a living tongue, their own tongue, and divide it up correctly between the two authors, take an ancient book in a dead language of which the greatest scholar in that language knows less than a slum child in a Board school does of English, declare that several authors and compilers have been at work, and claim to ascribe to each correctly his part in the completed work. They have dared to do it because they knew the workmen were dead long syne. But God has not forsaken His Word, and from the dust are rising witnesses that confront these critics and, clad in the panoply of impregnable truth, convict them

of lying. These two years have I spent in careful study of Higher Criticism and correspondence with Higher Critics, and knowing what I know, I dare to say that the man who turns from the Word of God to give ear to such "old-wives' fables" is turning his faith into a blind trust and forsaking the Son of God—treading the highway of sorrow that ends in total darkness.

But I do not rest here. The study of ancient monuments, of antique ornaments, and of bricks and cylinders, though interesting, may be beyond the capacity of my readers through lack of time and opportunity, so I gladly turn them to the Bible itself. Now, there are certain epistles of Paul (such as Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans) which are allowed by the most destructive of the critics to be his. Practically they have given up all the rest of the Bible. When we study these fragments more carefully (seeing they are all that is left us), we find in them a distinct presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we say to ourselves: This is exactly the presentation we have of Him in the four Gospels. It is a skeleton presentation we

have, but it is a framework which the wonderful flesh of the Gospels, with their miracles, parables, and precious sayings, can alone clothe. This is doing what in another scientific sphere Professor Owen did when he reconstructed from fragments the lost monsters of a primitive age. Further discoveries after his death have verified the Professor's reconstructions, and so later on we shall find in Him who sits upon the Throne the One we found in the Epistles and the Gospels and enshrined within our hearts. Now, the One of whom the Gospels give such a vivid picture, but a picture which is in perfect accord with the Epistles left to us by the sceptics who are called in our tongue Critics, clearly takes up a certain attitude towards the Old Testament Scriptures, an attitude that is so much a part of the picture that to ignore it or attempt to destroy it is to destroy the picture. He spake of Jonah, and Moses, and Abraham, and David, affirming of them what the most moderate and mild of Higher Critics deny !

Lastly, when we, accepting our Lord's words, turn to the Old Testament we find

in it the most wonderful truths wrapped up in such a Divine manner that only when He who is the truth comes do men see that the truths and the Truth are one. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in ALL the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

To suppose that the evangelists put in these pieces about Jonah and the burning bush is as futile as to suppose they conceived the theme. Well might the old poet ask :

" Whence, but from heaven, could men unskilled
in arts,

In several ages born, in several parts,

Weave such agreeing truths ; or how, or why

Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie ?

Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,

Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price."

(2) Is it not remarkable that the evangelists have left no clue to the place other than we have seen? As Jews they were well acquainted with the idea of holy places, as men they would be ready to mark the last pilgrimage their Master took from the council chamber to the grave. It is not Mahometans only that have a Mecca and Medina. All men have their holy places. To other eyes

it may appear to be but a green lane, or bleak mountainside, or a round hillock far away; to one heart it is a holy place for ever sacred. Surely it required the Holy Spirit to overcome their natural, as well as their religious, instincts. Even the one positive statement in the Bible as to the true nature of heaven exhibits the same principle: *the Person is everything, the place is nothing apart from Him*. In fact, the indications given as to its locality serve only to display this wondrous Person as the fulfiller of what all the Scriptures contain. Is it outside the city? Then we read: "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. xiii. 11, 12). Is it close to a great highway? Then we read:

"All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn:
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,
He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver him:
Let Him deliver him, seeing He delighted in him."

The Psalm containing these mournful words

commences, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? "

If, then, we cannot discern the exact locality where the cross stood and the Saviour died, yet we know that it must have been on either the west or the north side of the city. The traditional site is to the west, and a poet has written these touching lines on the tradition that the chief priests commanded that He should be crucified with His back to the temple, that is to say with His face to the west, lest His dying glances should contaminate the holy house, or (more likely) lest the sight of His Father's house should comfort the Father's only Son, although they destroyed the one and denied the other:

" His face was westward. Knew the soldiers why
Thus in its stony cleft they turned the beam ?
Perchance they learn that Jewish elders deem
Unholy glances from the filming eye
Of man condemned upon the cross to die ;
Might shed pollution Zion's courts around
Which God of old so beautiful had found ;
So, leaning westward, hangs He death anigh.
Murmurs the heedless city. O'er Him
breaking,
Beyond the far hills and the boundless main

Rise lands and peoples, deep in night's domain,
Where deathless love shall conquer; nations
waking

Down the long ages, prisoned souls set free,
His face was westward—it was turned to me."

It may be so, for it is written, "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame." But if the site was, as General Gordon affirms, to the north of the city, then we are reminded of the words: "He shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the Lord." Now, just as the Gospels present our Lord from four aspects—Matthew, the King; Mark, the Servant; Luke, the Man; and John, the God—so they correspond to the four forms of offering. The meal-offering presents to us His perfect humanity, and therefore the subject of all the Gospels; the burnt-offering, John; the peace-offering, Luke; the sin-offering, Mark; and the trespass-offering, Matthew. In the offerings the way is out from God to man, whilst in the Gospels the way is in from man to God. The burnt or ascending offering well represents the fourth Gospel, for it sets before us the deep, ineffable satisfaction God has in His Son. The peace-

offering well represents the Gospel of Luke with its keynotes of "grace" and "joy," and its story of the Prodigal Son. The sin and trespass offerings represent Mark and Matthew, because in them alone we have the awful cry, "My God, My God, to what end didst Thou forsake Me?" And Matthew corresponds to the trespass or governmental offering, because it is especially the Gospel of the King and the Kingdom; whilst Mark, the Gospel of the Servant of Jehovah,* corresponds to the sin-offering, for it is upon the Servant's shoulders that "the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah lii. 13; liii. 6). Now, it is in connection with the burnt-offering that we have the words, "He shall kill it on the side of the altar NORTHWARD before the Lord." And of only one grade of that offering, of the sheep or goat, the symbols of silent suffering and of substitution, are the words used. From all of which we learn this deep and difficult

* A servant requires a character, not a genealogical table; hence the lack of the latter and the presence in superabundant measure of the Greek word translated "immediately" or "straightway." It occurs as often in Mark as in all the other Scriptures put together.

lesson, that the moment sin intrudes amidst the loving complaisance with which God viewed His Son even on the cross, judgment falls. There has been no thought of sin-bearing all through that spotless, holy life; no thought of it in Gethsemane; it does not embitter the injustice of Pilate or the rejection by the people, nor does it wring the heart with pangs unbearable whilst the nails are forced through the tender hands and blessed feet; even on the cross there is quietness in that holy spirit, and alone, amidst the surging crowd and cursing malefactors, there is calm within that breast, and words of strength and comfort from these lips. He looks up and says, "Father!" like a little, trusting child. He looks around and says, "Thou shalt be with Me!" for He is a King whose writs run through earth and sky and sea, and in that dread world beyond the grave. He looks down and says, "Woman!" in these tender tones that proclaim Him the true companion of all humanity and the perfect comforter of all afflicted. Suddenly, amidst it all, there comes as it were a storm out of the north, the smiling

landscape becomes grey and drear, the birds cease to sing, and the cicadas are silent; the sun hides his face, and over the earth there falls a pall of thickest darkness. As in the judgment on Egypt, so here there is stirless silence. We hear no longer the cries of the mob, the loud scoffs of the chief priests, or the dicing calls of the careless soldiery. Nay, even the occupants of the crosses are silent. In Egypt it lasted three days when "they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place;" here it lasts three hours, and the end is heralded by that strange, weird cry that pierces the gloom and petrifies the listeners in the attitude of profound attention: "Let alone; let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down!"

To obtain the blood by which the children of earth may be delivered, the bosom of the Firstborn of heaven must be pierced by the sword of eternal justice. Between the Lord of Righteousness and the children of men there yawned a bottomless gulf into whose gloomy depths the light of heaven never shone. No man had ever bridged that chasm; no man had ever sounded that pro-

found abyss. The Architect of our salvation undertook to span it, and the foundations of the bridge He built were securely laid down in its dark depths, whilst its keystone was a broken heart; but across it runs in safety the new highway that stretches up from the city of destruction to the city of the New Jerusalem, the citadel of which is the heart of God, and the streets of which are lighted by that Sun which shall never sink in darkness, for it is the Sun of Righteousness who is the Lamb.

“And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called ‘The Way of Holiness;’ the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

“No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there; and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah xxxv. 8-10).

And the Builder of the bridge, as He with painful effort scales the frowning precipices on the farther side ere emerging once more into the light of heaven, looks back, looks

down, and cries, " My God, My God, why forsookest Thou Me ? " That there might be a highway to the heart of God by which the vilest sinner could return. Hallelujah ; praise ye the Lord !

(3) In these three hours of darkness the price of our redemption was paid by our Substitute, the work of atonement accomplished by our Representative. There are two aspects of the Propitiation—individual and world-wide. " He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world " (1 John ii. 2). Or, as Hebrews ii. 9 may be read, " He by the grace of God should taste death for EVERY THING."

I love to dwell on the aspect of the work of Christ set before us in the burnt-offering. I suppose like all believers, after my conversion I loved to think of Him as my Sin-offering ; similarly, as I continued in the Christian course, I loved to think of Him as my Trespass-offering, and rejoiced in my portion in Him as my Peace-offering. As I proceeded and experienced how illusive were the joys of Christian fellowship, my soul found

its hunger for true companionship satisfied by Him as the Meal-offering, whilst its sorrows were assuaged by the contemplation of His sufferings at the hands of others set forth by its threefold mode of preparation. But what a magnificent vision flashed before my eyes when I stood by and saw Him as the Ascending-offering, when I realised in some faint measure what He was to God, even on the cross. I am a poor, stupid learner, for I still stand like a little child on the verge of a mighty ocean dazzled with the glorious light that tips with gold each foaming crest as they come rolling on a countless multitude. On and on they come a mighty host in an endless procession, delighting my eye with their golden glory, charming my ear with the music of their breaking, awing my soul with their resistless, onward sweep. A poor, faint picture of this vision of the transcendent, peerless value of Christ in the eyes of God. Somewhere in his writings Dr. Chalmers in a powerful passage rebukes the hyper-Calvinist for his "poor arithmetical computation of the worth of Christ, as if God said, So much

sin, so much suffering." Satan in his attempt to make himself on an equality with his Sovereign, and to seize His sceptre and deny His suzerainty, fell. His fall reverberated through the universe, and carried with it angels and demons, powers and principalities, into hopeless ruin. And, if that were not enough, he tempted man set at the head of a reconstructed earth to make the same hopeless attempt. And man in his fall dragged after him his hapless race and the creatures dependent on his headship. Sin apparently was like some foul stain ever spreading. Heaven and earth have been contaminated by its presence. In the Great Plague each man viewed his fellow with suspicion, whilst door after door bore the horrid mark that signified that all within had perished. Was it to be thus in the universe of God?

The solution of this problem is to be found in the unspoken answer of God to the Saviour's question, "My God, My God, to what end didst Thou forsake Me?" Surely to this end, that on this deed done amidst the darkness was to be built a far fairer

edifice than ever the old creation had been, wherein sin should never enter, and where sorrow should never come. Hallelujah!

“ And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.’ And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, ‘ Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever ’.”

Are your feet treading the great highway that leadeth thither ?

v.

THE FOUNTAIN SEALED.

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst” (John xix. 28).

THE fourth Gospel is famous for the briefest bits in the Book of God—“Jesus wept,” “I thirst,” “It is finished,” the two last consisting each of but one word in the original. “I thirst” (*dipso*). Here one word fell fainting over the threshold of the Saviour’s pallid lips, *dipso*.

If ever you stand by the moss-grown, lichen-painted verge of the village well, whither, when the rooks go cawing homeward, the housewives come to draw water, pluck a pebble from the pathway and dropping it into the dark, cool depths, listening, you will hear ascend a tinkling sound like—*dipso!* There is something onomatopoeitic in the word—a reminiscence of tinkling brooks and murmuring rills, of green and shady depths where the cool, clear water splashes softly over stones, making them beautiful the whilst.

How different the meaning! Picture, O

reader, to yourself a caravan slowly wending its way across the pathless desert. For days the travellers have seen nothing but sand stretching out melancholy to the limitless horizon. They have lost their bearings, their supplies of water have run done, their dry tongues can no longer moisten their parched, cracked lips, their deep-sunken eyes rove restlessly over the arid waste where they yearn to see the feathery heads of the palms planted round the well in the desert. What phrase would express their feelings at that moment? "I thirst!" Suddenly the cry is heard of "Water!" Yonder lies before them sparkling in the sunshine a stretch of water reflecting on its bosom the overhanging trees. But scarcely do they reach it with all the haste they can but it vanishes from their sight. It was but a mirage, and they thirst in vain. The bleaching skeletons in after days mark to the passer-by the stricken field where thirst remained a conqueror. Or picture to yourself again a ship sailing southward slowly over the heaving bosom of the mighty ocean. Suddenly one morning a cry is heard of "Boat,

ahoy!" There on that mighty expanse of deep, blue water a dark spot is seen. The ship's course is altered to bring it alongside, and presently you look down into a boat where there seem to be but two heaps of ragged clothes. But the ready sailors bear them on deck, where it is seen that they are men, but what men! . . . And the first words that drop so feebly from these lips, if they be not left for the sunken eyes to express, are "I thirst!" or "Water!" Such tragedies occur so frequently as to become mere commonplaces to those who travel.

Seeing that our bodies consist of water to the extent of about three-fourths—*i.e.*, if we divide our bodies into four parts, three would be water and the remaining part only solid material—it is not wonderful that thirst is more terrible and destroys more quickly than hunger.

Thus not once only in the desert did the children of Israel "Chide with Moses, and said, Give us water, that we may drink." How wonderful must have been the moment when Moses struck the great rock in Horeb, and forthwith came there forth water, of which the people drank, and their thirst was

quenched. Of which the Apostle writes: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ"—*Christ!* More wonderful the moment when Christ said, "I—I thirst!" The One who quenched the thirst of thousands asked in vain for a drop of cold water to quench His burning thirst. "I thirst!"

Nay, more: the rills that leap down the mountain sides, the brooks that make glad the valleys with their murmurs, the rivers that stretch out shining arms to turn great wheels that grind the people's food and bear on their bosoms the nation's merchandise, the wells and fountains and reservoirs that give drink to the thirsty, and the great clouds that float in fleets across the azure expanse of the sky, swift argosies of moisture, the discharge of which is life to millions, all these are His who said once before, "Give Me to drink," and now, "I thirst!"

Thus was written in symbol across the dread scene, the solemn truth cast at Him in coarse taunt, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save!" And so the Scriptures

were all fulfilled in this unique act of self-renunciation and self-sacrifice. The next time, therefore, O reader, thou thirstest think of Him who said, "I thirst!" The next time thou seest the dry and parched land drink up the grateful shower, and the drooping flowers lift up their heads to heaven and cast forth on the circumambient air their sweet odours, think of Him who said, "I thirst!" And the next time thou drawest aside from the white and dusty road to cast thy weary limbs down on the soft sward in the pleasant shade where glide along the pellucid waters that make green the pastures and give drink to man and beast and bird, think of Him through whose veins there flew the fierce torrents of a rising fever whilst His limbs were racked with cramps, who in a moment of final agony cried, "I thirst!" Ah! may it be that, touched by such a sight of love as His, thou dost by faith stretch out thy soul filled to the brim with tenderest love and truest trust, and cry, "Drink, dear Lord, drink!" For is it not written, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied?"

I. In this saying we have expressed the humanity and its perfect unity with the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Angels do not thirst. Unfallen hosts of glorious beings do not thirst. They that pass away from earth to gaze upon the face of their risen Redeemer do not thirst. For it is written: "They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more." Thirst is a characteristic of our fallen state, and His thirst was another sign that this was the Son God sent "in the LIKENESS of sinful flesh."

It is very necessary, as we shall see, in these days to be well-grounded in the Scripture doctrine of the Person of Christ. We call doctrine connected with the Person of Christ, "Christology," and it is a convenient label, therefore we shall use it. There are in these days, then, many Christologies; but that was promised, for Christ Himself said: "Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in My Name, saying, 'I am Christ'; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them." This, mark you, is recorded in the Gospel of Luke, and therefore is of especial importance to us

Gentiles. Now that there may be opportunities for many saying with any possibility of success, I am Christ, it is clear that His description must have been tampered with. That is to say, false christs imply the previous existence of false christologies. Now, before sketching briefly various erroneous christologies which have troubled the Church from its earliest days to the present time, let me vindicate the necessity for my doing so.

Mr. Campbell, of the City Temple, London, replied publicly to a correspondent in these words :

“ H. L. (Chelsea) asks for some literature on the subject of the Virgin Birth. He is somewhat puzzled to know just where evangelical Christians stand on this matter, especially as some of their better-known exponents have frankly given up this doctrine. Like the late Mr. Haweis, my own view is that my faith in the Godhead of Christ is not in the least affected by the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Still, I do not at present feel any difficulty in accepting it. Some of the better-known, spiritually-minded evangelical teachers of the day have, as you say, frankly given it up.”

Lest this should be taken as only a sample of the evil there is south of the Tweed, take

a few sentences from a review, by Dr. Marcus Dods, of a book in which a German seeks to explain "The Beginnings of Christianity" when Christ never wrought a miracle or even rose from the dead—that is, How can we explain Christianity, even as we know it, if we have had only a "German-made Christ" to start it? This is a portion of that which Dr. Dods says of this German-made solution of a German-made puzzle :

"We cannot recall any work by a foreign theologian which is like to have a more powerful influence on the thought of this country than this book. . . . It is earnest, clear, and persuasive; and above all it is well adapted to catch the large class of thinking men who are at present seeking some non-miraculous explanation of Christianity . . . His method of dealing with his subject is ADMIRABLE. . . . The titles by which He was designated—Son of Man, Son of God, and so forth—have no relevant significance. Not one of these words expresses even remotely what He was amongst men, or what He was called to be 'by God for all time'."

A sentence in which Dr. Dods sums up some of the teaching of a book which he calls "extraordinarily plausible" I am sure many of my readers trust is true, when we give the

words in it their technical—not their biblical—sense. He says,

“He redeemed men from disease, from theologians, and from the Church.”

Once more I would simply quote one or two statements from an article by the late A. B. Bruce, Professor of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Glasgow. The first quotation will be from the beginning of his article entitled “Jesus,” and the second from the conclusion:

“Those books in the New Testament which bear the name of Gospels, and are our main source of information for the history of Jesus. These documents are of varying value from a historical point of view . . . nor do the contents of any one of them possess a uniform degree of historic probability.”

“The words of Jesus concerning the future show limitation of vision. In other directions we may discover indications that He was the CHILD OF HIS TIME AND PEOPLE.”

These are or have been teachers of those who themselves are now teachers of the people. I think of far-off villages where men are born, grow up, labour and die; where women love and sorrow and weep; where children sing merrily and laugh and

play under the shadow of the solemn elms that line the way to the churchyard where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." It may be such a hamlet as Andrew Bonar loved, and where he spent the springtide of his new life in preaching the gospel, warning the impenitent, seeking the lost, comforting the mourner, and teaching the young. But now things are different. The young, as they grow up, seek the distant city, and either write back or return to tell of the wonders of the modern life that is surging through the land. The place may have escaped the railway, but it does not escape the motor car. Thus it is that the way is prepared for the new minister who tells from the pulpit of new things. Formerly such places were excited to the highest pitch by the question of paraphrases or no paraphrases, and where organs were denounced in the strongest terms. It is no longer a question of hymns or organs, it has become a question of Bible or no Bible. And the remarkable thing is that this new question does not excite the mind as the others had done. It is in keeping with the

“spirit of the times!” The grey, old, steepled building, standing amidst the dust of the Past, now resounds with the gospel of the Present. The preacher no longer presses home the fact of the Ruin of man, the pressing need of Repentance, and the glorious possibility of Regeneration by the Holy Spirit. No, he waxes eloquent on the many-sided question of the Higher Morality, and takes his auditors into his confidence as to how far he follows the Leaders of the Church in the various burning questions of the Higher Criticism, as to whether the first half of a certain verse in Genesis is by “J.” or by “E.,” and the latter half by “P.” How can he preach the Atonement when he doubts whether Jesus were more than a young Rabbi obsessed (to use a modern word) with the idea of his Messiahship, or whether he really rose again in more than a spiritual and visionary fashion? Perhaps his hearers sleep. Yet who can think of these villagers without sadness? Shall we let them become indoctrinated with this hateful teaching? Or shall we find in this a call to greater

exertions and greater sacrifices? The matter is more urgent in Scotland than in England, for priestism is opposed (at present) to the destruction of the Bible—other than by fire; and the Nonconformist village preachers are not educated enough to promulgate these doctrines—as yet. But in Scotland the danger is great, the position of affairs is pressing. In any village pulpit may appear one fresh from his college, proud of the learning he has imbibed without examination from his professors, and satisfied that he has something to convey to the ends of the earth—the news of the Higher Criticism. And what is the latest news? Read again the extracts I have given, and ponder, and pray, and then up and work. If the Church of Christ will not, the Rationalists are preparing to do so. Far and wide they are spreading, in cheap sixpenny form, the logical conclusions of such statements as these extracts contain. As the religion of Christendom is now appealing to the head and no longer to the emotions, it is making straight the path and opening wide the entrance for Rationalism in its most abhor-

rent form. O reader, surely our Lord cannot delay His blessed appearing long now!

“Come, Lord, and tarry not,
Bring the long-looked-for day;
O why these years of waiting here,
These ages of delay?”

The solemn moment had come. The high priest had borne the bowl of steaming blood through the gazing multitudes of Israel; he had passed out of their sight within the sacred precincts of the tent of meeting; he had crossed the holy place dimly lit by the flame of the lamp and perfumed by the smoke from off the altar; and now he stretched forth his hand to part the veil that hid the ark, the mercy-seat, and the shekinah from the eyes of mortal man. He was about to see the Light that dwelt with thick darkness. One movement, and what hid the most sacred sight to be seen on earth would be for the moment removed. Hence the appropriateness of the Hebrew word for the veil. According to Gesenius, it comes from an unused root signifying to *break*, and therefore in a secondary sense to *separate*. It signified that intercourse between God

and man was broken off—that the twain were separated. So it was but once a year that the veil was parted, and for the moment, and to the bearer of blood, it was as if it were not. Not only so, what separates has two sides; it partakes of two spheres, so one side of the veil was within the holiest always, whilst the other formed a part of the holy place where the priests daily ministered.

In addition, it was formed of fine-twined linen, with blue, and purple, and scarlet, and cherubim. In fact, it was, as was fitting and proper for such a high place and purpose, a matchless fabric wrought from a heavenly pattern.

Now, this veil, made of fine linen adorned with splendid tints and a heavenly design, clearly sets before our eyes our Lord Jesus Christ from the standpoint of that wondrous truth, “God was manifest in the flesh.” “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The fine-twined linen reminds us that His name is “Jehovah our Righteousness” (Jer.

xxiii. 6); the blue reminds us of His heavenly origin, "the Son of man which *is* in heaven" (John iii. 13); the scarlet reminds us of earth and sin, for these amongst other reasons: (1) Just as blue is the heavenly colour, so scarlet is the colour much found on earth in flowers, in ecclesiastical, political, and military adornments, and in the courts of justice where the most awful crimes are dealt with; (2) In all passages in Exodus where this word scarlet occurs, two Hebrew words are used; the first of these (*tohlahgh*) is rendered elsewhere *worm*: "I am a *worm*, and no man (Psa. xxii. 6). The other word (*shahnee*) is of questionable meaning; but both occur together in the well-known passage in Isaiah (i. 18): "Though your sins be as *scarlet* (*shahnee*, probably marking the fixity of the dye), they shall be white as snow; though they be red like *crimson* (*tohlahgh*, emphasising the glaring nature of the colour—the eye cannot escape it), they shall be as wool." Then as to the third colour, purple, it is worth noting that although the list of colours is given many times, their order is never varied—blue, purple, scarlet.

Now, if you try in an unpractised manner with water-colours to shade off blue into scarlet, you will find that where they meet it is purple; and when the king of day lies a-dying on his scarlet couch in the west it is purple curtains that the blue-robed twilight draws round him. So here in the veil the same Hand, from whence all the beauties of the natural world come in rich profusion, is seen—the red does not end abruptly in blue, but both are shaded off into each other through purple, so that the most artistic eye cannot say where the one ends or the other begins. What a beautiful curtain it must have been!

As in the type, so in the Antitype, as we shall see, our Lord Jesus Christ is Son of God and Son of man, but where He ceases to be God we cannot tell, or begins to be man we cannot tell, and so we call Him with all humility the *theanthropos*, or God-man. Not that we mean that His Deity and humanity are so mixed that a strangely-compounded Being is formed whom we call by a compound name, like our penny, formed not of copper or tin, but a mixture of both we call

bronze, but as in the glorious veil where we find such opposites as heavenly blue and earthly scarlet brought together by the mediatorship of imperial purple, so in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ we find that the two natures (and by *natures* is meant *substances*, human and divine) are brought together and so knit together that no one can part them. And when we forget this great lesson of the veil we take our first step towards a false Christology that declares of the Incarnation :

“Suffer me to call your attention to this very familiar but little understood word. You think you know what it means; and you do, partly. You would say at once, ‘It is God becoming man.’ You are right; but we might invert the phrase, and say much more truly, It is man becoming God.”

That is false. It is the offer Satan made long ago to our first parents in the garden, and call that a myth? as the writer of the above does. Its dire results are no myth, for they are mirrored in the myriads of tears that fall every moment, and prove that the Fall is no hexateuchal dream.

Now, the Scriptures clearly declare the Saviour is God (John i. 1-14; Rom. i. 2-5;

Rom. ix. 5; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Phil. ii. 6-11; Heb. i. 3-8).

The Scriptures also declare that the Saviour is Man (Gal. iv. 4). As Man, He had a true body (Luke ii. 7; ii. 52; John iv. 6; Romans viii. 3; and a rational soul (Luke ii. 46-52; Matt. xxi. 23-27; xxii. 15-46; John xi. 35).

But the Scriptures teach that although He was perfect God and perfect Man, yet He was ONE PERSON. They reveal the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three distinct persons. For instance, the Father says to the Son, "I will give Thee"; and the Son says to the Father, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." But never does the Son of God address the Son of man as a different person from Himself. In the Scriptures He is always spoken of as a single, distinct person, just as when on earth He was spoken to: "Thou art not yet fifty years old," and "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands." The fact is, our Lord Jesus Christ as Son of

God existed from Eternity, for "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," and when He deigned to enter this world which He had made He did not take a human *person* into union with Himself, but a human *nature*. The Son of God became Son of man. Nowhere is it said that a son of man became God. Thus as the seat of personality in a human being is in his spiritual nature, so in the God-man the seat of personality is in His divine nature. The first and most obvious of the consequences of this union is what may be called the "*communion of attributes*." That is to say, the one nature does not participate in the attributes of the other, hence the human nature does not become omnipresent, nor does the divine nature share in the weakness and limitation of knowledge proper to the human nature, but the person is the partaker of the attributes of both natures. Therefore what is true of either nature, or of the two combined as the God-man, is true of the Person of Christ. Many passages of Scripture are to be explained on this important principle. Take the following as examples:

(1) The passages where the person is the subject, but the predicate (what is said of the subject) is true only of the divine nature. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58). "The glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5).

(2) The passages where the person is the subject, but the predicate is true only of the human nature. "I thirst" (John xix. 28). "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (Matt. xxvi. 38). "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man . . . neither the Son" (Mark xiii. 32).

(3) The passages where the person is the subject, but the predicate is true only of the God-man. "My Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28). "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John v. 26). "Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him" (1 Cor. xv. 28).

It will help us to understand the necessity of holding fast to the faith once delivered to the saints if we briefly at this point consider

the history of the various heresies concerning the Person of Christ.

I. The Ebionites.—These arose very early in the history of the Church, holding that Christ was but a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary.

II. The Gnostics.—As the Ebionites denied His Deity, so these in different ways denied His humanity.

III. The Apollinarians.—Next in order of time arose this sect, founded by Apollinaris, a bishop of Laodicea, who was troubled by the difficulty of uniting two natures in one person. Admitting the Scriptural doctrine that man is constituted having a body (*soma*), soul (*psuche*), and spirit (*pneuma*), he taught that in Christ the intelligence or *pneuma* was replaced by the Eternal Son or Logos (“In the beginning was the *Word*”).

This doctrine was condemned by the General Council held in Constantinople A.D. 381, and rightly so, for it mutilated the perfect humanity of our Lord.

IV. The Nestorians.—Thus by rejecting the Apollinarian view it was clearly affirmed that the Lord Jesus Christ was possessed of

a perfect and unimpaired humanity; then arose Nestorius, first a presbyter in Antioch, and afterwards Patriarch of Constantinople, who taught what either affirms or implies a twofold personality in our Lord. The Eternal Word was represented as indwelling the man Christ Jesus as the Spirit indwells each believer. Thus the truth of the Deity of our Lord Jesus was endangered. Ultimately Nestorius was banished, and his followers, moving eastward to Persia, organised themselves into a church which remains to this day—the Nestorian Church.

V. The Eutychians. — As Nestorius divided the two natures so as to necessitate two persons, Eutyches taught that all about Christ was divine, even His body. The human nature was exalted and lost in the divine as a drop of vinegar (to use one of the illustrations) in the ocean.

VI. The Monophysites.—Eutyches taught the absorption of the human by the divine nature; following on, others taught the merging of the divine into the human, so that a composite nature is produced. Hence

the name from *monē phusis*, "one nature." It was, however, applied to others who differed in their method of explaining how they attained the same result—one nature.

VII. The Monothelites. — With these the same method is applied to the "wills" of Christ, so that the Divine will and human will are merged into one will, probably composite in its nature. Thus arose their designation from *monē* and *thelēma*, "will."

Coming down the stream of time, and passing the Reformation, we meet with

VIII. Socinianism.—Socinus, an Italian, who died in 1604, taught:

- (1) That Christ was a mere man, but distinguished from others by His miraculous conception.
- (2) That although He could sin, and was liable to temptation, yet He was entirely without sin.
- (3) That He received a special baptism of the Holy Spirit, and some time before His ministry He was caught up into heaven that He might see God, and be taught of Him.

(4) That in virtue of His work He is now exalted above all creatures, and so is properly worshipped as God.

It will thus be seen that Socinus had more exalted notions of our Lord Jesus Christ than many present-day Unitarians, which include such diverse parties as Arians, semi-Arians, Humanitarians, and Christadelphians.

IX. Pantheistical Christologists.—Under this name may be included many modern teachers, such as Mr. Campbell and others. What is worthy of notice is, that gradually doctrines as to the Person of Christ have arisen whose makers boldly declare themselves independent of the Bible, doctrines founded on two principles—first, that there is but one nature in Christ; and second, that human nature is capable of becoming divine, or that the divine is capable of becoming human. Thus the Higher Critics have made destructive Christology possible within the borders of so-called Christian Churches. And this Higher Criticism began with Jean Astruc, a French physician, who lived between 1684 and 1766. His father was a Protestant pastor, but the son purchased

ease and plenty on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by conforming to Roman Catholicism. He it was who originated the famous theory accepted by Eichhorn and other Germans with delight, which, elaborated by them and introduced into this land by Robertson Smith and others, has destroyed the faith of many in the Bible as the Word of God and in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Hence the need for the rallying cry of "Back to the Bible!" One thing may be noticed in the short sketch we have given, and it is this, the Christian Church in the early days would not allow the slightest deviation from the Scriptural doctrine of the Person of Christ. The question of Monothelite or Dyothelite may seem a little thing in these liberal days. But in the days when Christianity was in death-grips with Paganism, believers did not think so. Apocryphal gospels, cleverly concocted extracts from the Scriptures, mutilated scriptures, were plentiful in those early days, but Christians would have none of them. Reading and writing in those days were rare accomplishments, especially amongst be-

lievers, but they knew what they believed, and it is remarkable how little all these varied doctrines touched the life and thought of the great body of believing men and women. Thus they presented a firm and unbroken front to the diverse and broken forces of heathenism. Why? Because they held fast to the Scriptures as divinely inspired, and no patchwork-quilt of man's manufacture to cover man's ignorance of God and the things of God. How different are things to-day! Even such stalwart defenders of evangelical doctrine as Henry Wace, Dean of Canterbury, give way before that which passes as the trademark of brains. This is an illustration of the grim reality of Revelation xiii. 16: "And he CAUSETH all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their *foreheads.*"

There is a tremendous moral force in these doctrines so fashionable to-day, because they are looked upon as a mark of education, and the only safeguard is by the grace of God to refuse utterly to yield one jot or tittle of the inviolability of the Word

of God as God-breathed from the first word of Genesis to the last word in Revelation.

The German theologians rejoiced in the new method of Astruc because they felt the moral power of the great wave of Rationalism which swept over Germany, and thought by thus dissolving away the difficult parts of the Bible they might (so they put it to themselves) reconcile those whom Rationalism had estranged. Just as many Christians become highly fashionable in order that they may (so they put it to themselves) lead their highly fashionable acquaintances to become Christians. The same principle is to be seen in the lesson-books of the "Reading-made-Easy" style. Alas! as there is no royal road to learning, so there is no easy path to repentance.

"And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, He said, How hardly shall they that HAVE enter into the kingdom of God. . . . Then He took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold the Son of man . . . shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they

shall scourge Him, and put Him to death *and they understood none of these things*" (Luke xviii. 22-34).

What HAVE you? Learning? A reputation as a man of science? A name as a keen-witted man of business? Success in instructing the young in the manifold branches of present-day knowledge? Some acquaintance with the literature of the day? These are your "riches." And because of these you feel the stress of your position as one amongst the illiterate; the old-fashioned, the traditionally orthodox! Perhaps a pile of mere material pelf has come to you, and you feel the awkwardness of being amongst those to whom money does not appeal—in fact, where there is no "society"! In any of such positions, or under any of such conditions, you thirst—you t-h-i-r-s-t for teaching that bears the impress of Thought, for the company of those who bear the impress of Culture; in fact, for a wider outlook and larger light and leading. Aye! and so it stands written that Jesus said, "I thirst."

Where? On the Cross! When? On the Cross dying for you and me! Why?

Because He emptied Himself that we might be filled up into all the fulness of God! He put behind Him the possibilities of the Godhead and all the claims of a spotless, sinless Manhood, and brought Himself down to the place of begging for the simplest necessity of life whilst remaining God over all, blessed for ever. When I sit down and think over it all I feel—and perhaps I may be pardoned if under the stress of the argument I say it—I feel that if anything I have acquired by years of study and severe mental toil stood in the way of my simply taking the Word of God as it stands, and believing what it says about itself, and consequently about Him, I should take whatever it was and lay it down in the dust and put the Cross of Christ on the top of it. At anyrate, that is my poor way of saying what Paul the learned said: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” And yet again: “For Christ sent me . . . to preach the Gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made void. For the Word of the

Cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. i. 17, 18, R.V.).

For when one considers carefully the history, brief as it is, given before of the various changes in Christological doctrine, one sees that the cause of them all is the pressure of contemporary thought. Ebionitism, the answer to Jewish thought; Gnosticism, the answer to Oriental philosophy; Eutychianism, the answer to Nestorianism; and so on until we come to Higher Criticism as the answer to Rationalism, and Pantheistical Christology the reply to Evolution. Man's modification and alteration of the Truth of God is due to man's speculation as to Who and What God is. Or in other words, man's thought about himself and his position in the great economy of Nature tends more and more every day to destroy the old ideas of the Universe and its Maker, and from the ruins to construct a gigantic temple in which man takes the place of God, and man's discoveries the place of God's revelation; or rather his greatest triumph is to make that revelation subservient to his new-

found glory! According to this new gospel it is no longer man's chief end to glorify God: the words may remain the same, but the positions are reversed. Hence the Bible is no longer rejected with contumely; it is shown by the cleverness of man to be a product of the ingenuity of man. Nay more, it is allowed to contain the Word of God, only man is the arbiter as to what is the Word of God in it. As he, through the discoveries he has made, can sift out from amongst a mass of waste and hitherto worthless material grains of priceless radio-active constituents, so in the pride of an unbalanced intellect he stamps as of some price what the infidels of old pronounced worse than worthless because in the sixty-six books forming the Bible he has discovered some "truth" concerning God and himself—that is, that it contains the history of how man becomes God. And just as science traces back radio-activity to radium—that is to say, that radium imparts its remarkable powers to other substances—so we find that whatever value the Bible has is derived from the mind of man!

How different it is when we consider the

Bible as verbally inspired. Owing to the carelessness of some and the ignorance of others, there may be difficulties as to numbers and dates, but what is that compared with the rest which comes to the mind that trusts in the Written Word as that which emanates from the workshop of God. How becoming that the casket which enshrines the Living Word Who is Divine should be itself Divine! How natural that many adverse speculations should be indulged in by fallen man as to the nature of both, for in both God and man are to be found united! And in this age, when, for instance, from a Metropolitan pulpit a Bishop is denounced as acting in a cruel and un-Christianlike manner because he requested the resignation of one of his clergy who had in speech and in print denied the possibility of miracles and the supernatural reality of the Incarnation, it is according to the nature of things that the heavenly origin of both is denied by those who still call themselves Christians, and in many cases draw handsome sums of money for publicly reciting the truths which they have as publicly

denied! It is the age of expediency, license, and inconsistency. Let us, then, like little children, give up thinking our own thoughts and seek the mind of God, "For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace." Therefore, "Back to the Bible!"

II. In this saying we have not only the perfect humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ asserted and incidentally a light thrown upon the wonderful nature of the Book in which such a saying is recorded, but we have a suggestion of the reality and terrible nature of the human sufferings He underwent. It is well to remember this, for there is a tremendous amount of human suffering and agony endured moment by moment in this smiling, heedless world of ours. I do not at this moment refer so much to mental anguish. It is to bodily torture I seek to turn our thoughts at present

In beautiful bedrooms surrounded by every comfort, out on the bare veldt with not a soul in sight, amidst a crowd of fellow-sufferers in the crowded wards of great hospitals, in dingy attics where the rain drips through

the tiles, in dismal cellars amidst surroundings of the most sordid nature, in dungeons, on sunlit pavements, on heaving ships far out at sea, and in the soul-shaking solitude of Arctic and Antarctic wilds, men, women, and children are tossing, writhing, or fixed steadfastly still, with clenched teeth through pain here, pain there, pain everywhere. And everywhere there is the accompaniment of thirst—I thirst, *I thirst!* And this is going on minute by minute, hour by hour, never ceasing whilst the years roll on and centuries grow old. And the familiar question rings in our ears: “Doth God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?”

Here in this short saying of, originally, one word, **we** have a reassuring answer. Not only does God know that there is suffering, but He knows by experience what suffering is. Perhaps some poor sufferer has been wondering why so much time has been spent in discussing a somewhat obscure point in Christology. If you, my poor friend, will turn back and note what has been said about “subject” and “predicate,” you will see that the “I” stands for the Person

in Whom the two natures of God and man are perfectly united, and Who shares in this attribute of human nature—thirst. How close this brings God to you in the night-watches when you turn wearily on your couch of pain, and moisten your parched lips with a drop of water.

Thus you are having sweet communion with Jesus in His sufferings. An Oriental sage has said: "Wound yourself, and steadily gazing at the wound whence the blood flows, ask yourself, 'What is pain?' Immediately you will find that the pain is gone. It is *maya*, or illusion." The suffering believer has a better recipe than this. He (or it may be she) is not asked to make himself believe that all pain is illusion—that there is no such thing as pain. You are not asked to gaze on the site of the pain and persuade yourself, by your ignorance of its nature, to deny its existence. The Gospel ennobles pain. It calls the sufferer to gaze at the Saviour on the Cross, and to see in Him the God Who, by enduring the punishment of sin, removes what separates, so that the evil being removed pain becomes a means

of grace, an occasion of communion, a sacred thing. Thus the mind is drawn away from the site of pain, and the spirit, like a fluttered dove, finds a shelter in the bosom of Him Who Himself has penetrated the mystery of pain to its core, in token whereof He said, "I thirst." Thus calmed and refreshed you will be able to say :

"Jesus, my GOD, I know His Name—
His Name is all my boast ;
Nor will He put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost."

VI.

THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION.

"It is finished" (John xix. 30).

HARK! faintly falls upon the listening ear, borne by the breath of evening, the long-drawn note blown on the silver trumpet to proclaim the completion of the evening sacrifice and the approach of even, which was by Jewish ritual the commencement of a new day, and that day a high day, for it was not only a Sabbath-day, but the Sabbath of the Feast of the Passover. Little did the priest that sounded it on that lofty

platform yonder think that to all that was to his heart most dear it was the "last trump." Yet so it was, for out yonder on the rounded knoll which marked the city's Tyburn from lips fast growing stiff and pallid in death, and that death "the death of the cross," there had fallen but one word—*Tetelestai*, "It is finished."

Just as little recked they who, rendered kind for a moment by the sight of so much suffering, moistened a sponge in the jar of sour wine that stood anigh, and sticking it on a stalk of hyssop, held it to His mouth. "*Tetelestai!*" why, it seemed to them like one of these cryptic utterances which fall from the lips of the dear, dying ones which only love can interpret. "It is finished"—What? His sufferings? But it was early yet, and such horrid scenes of man's inhumanity to man were not wont to be cut short in this manner. His life? Nay, for presently gathering all His vital forces together, He made that one triumphant shout that, ringing across the ravine, rent the temple vail in twain, for this was no defeat at the hands of Death. Here was a Victor in the well-fought

fight who of His own accord yielded the citadel of Life and marched out to beat of drum with colours proudly flying. "Roughly speaking," the bystanders might have said, "His sufferings and His life were finished, for it was not long before He bowed His head and dismissed His Spirit." But it is not so that the words of the Lord Jesus are to be interpreted.

Seeing that He Himself had just said, "I thirst," because He knew "all things were now accomplished (*tetelestai*)" we might suppose that it was what the Scriptures had said about Him to which He referred when He said, "It is finished." But all the Scriptures concerning Him were not yet fulfilled. John, in verses 36 and 37, refers to two Scriptures which were fulfilled later on after His death, and others will readily present themselves to the reader's mind. Thus we may take it that it was neither to His sufferings, dreadful as these were, nor to His life though presently He laid it down, nor to the Scriptures, that He referred when He said, "It is finished." We shall, then, begin by asking—

I. What is the exact meaning of the word the Saviour here uses? The verb occurs in such passages as these:

Matthew x. 23—"Ye shall not have *gone over* the cities."

Matthew xi. 1—"When Jesus had *made an end of* commanding His twelve disciples."

Matthew xvii. 24—"Doth not your master *pay* tribute?"

Luke ii. 39—"When they had *performed* all things."

Luke xii. 50—"How am I straitened till it be *accomplished!*"

Acts xiii. 29—"When they had *fulfilled* all that was written of Him."

Galatians v. 16—"Ye shall not *fulfil* the lust of the flesh."

Revelation xvii. 17—"Until the words of God shall be *fulfilled.*"

Thus the word means more than "ended." *To finish* is *to bring to an end* what was previously begun: *to fulfil* is to do or be what was promised, hoped, expected, or desired; but *to accomplish* is all this, and more, for the idea of perfection is introduced. Looking back over all His course, He could not only

say that it was now brought to a close; that He had done and had been all that He had promised, and the Father could expect or desire. He could say that what had been given Him to do and to be, He had done and been to perfection. "It is finished!" "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

How different an ending this was to that of a graceful queen of fashion! When she lay dying she said to one who sat by her bedside listening: "O, my God, it is over! I have come to the end of it—the end—the end! To have only one life—and to have done with it—and to lie here! To have lived, and loved, and triumphed, and to know that it is over! One may defy everything else, but not this!" And the listener sat watching, when in a moment that face, whose lightest smile had made a prince's paradise, changed into a mask of stone on the pillow, returning her gaze with an unwinking stare. Such was the end of the earthly life of one whose bright, meteoric course had been the envy of thousands. It

could not be said that she had fulfilled anything, for, vanity of vanities, all was vanity. Least of all could she have been said to have accomplished aught, for all she could say was, "It is over." And is not this an extreme type of many a life? It is a mordant example of the close of all lives which have not been lived in the faith of the Son of God and on the strength of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. He who said, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ that lives in me; and the life which I now live in the body I live through faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up to death on my behalf," could also say, "I have *finished*"—the same word as his Master used—"my course."

II. What is it of which our Saviour could say, "It is finished?"

The answer to this question is included in the answer to the query as to what our Redeemer meant by "the work" when He said to His disciples, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv. 34). And this glorious work

was to undo the work of Satan, and to cause his throne to topple over in endless ruin (Heb. ii. 14, 15); to remove the otherwise ineradicable stain of sin by shedding His most precious blood on the cross (Heb. ix. 22, 23); to deliver men and women not only from the guilt of sin, but from that wherein resides the power of sin—themselves (Rom. vi. 4); and, finally, to secure the universe of God from ever being again invaded and polluted by sin (Col. i. 17-20).

And God, in the overflowing of His great heart of love, did not make a sacred secret of His intention, but began revealing it as soon as man's consciousness, quickened by his need, could grasp something of it.

Thus in Eden in word and deed God began unveiling the coming Redeemer. Right down the centuries, in psalm and prophecy, in symbol and story, in figure and sign, He continued to still further unveil the Joy of His heart, so that at length when the Saviour came, the Saviour promised long, He said: "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me; in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin

Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 5-7).

See, then, how fitting is this word rendered *accomplished* on the lips of the Divine Sufferer at this moment. All that was promised, expected, desired, hoped, or could be by God or man, was in Him seen to perfection to be done. Consider this in the light of the argument in Hebrews ix.: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the Living God" (verses 13, 14).

Only, observe that it is "an eternal spirit"; it is Christ's own spirit, not the Holy Spirit of which it is said here, "by virtue of (*dia pneumatos aioniou*) an eternal Spirit." The virtue of the higher element in Christ's personality is introduced here to give value to the "how much more." Here

is a sacrifice which has been accomplished in a higher sphere than that of Time. In this dying Sufferer we see "the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." This is something so magnificent, so awe-inspiring, so incomparable in its quality and perfection, that no other sacrifice can be mentioned in the same breath with it. Like the vail, presently to be rent in twain, this Man partook of two spheres. Limited by time and space, the concomitants of a real humanity, He died on the cross, but on the other side of His being, where the ideas of time and space have no standing-place, by virtue of an eternal spirit, He offered His Sacrifice at the bar of the Eternal Justice. There the redemption money was counted out piece by piece as it came fresh minted from the place of thick darkness, until the cry went up that shook heaven and earth, Enough, enough! And who so worthy of bringing the glad news to the sinful children of men as Himself? So after moistening His lips He uttered the all-sufficient word, *Tetelestai*—"It is finished." It is not curious that elsewhere it should be used to signify

“pay,” “paying tribute money.” The price of eternal redemption WAS PAID! Are you, dear soul, bowed down with guilt and fear? Have you, maybe through length of days, toiled to accumulate something wherewith to pay the price of your salvation? And now as you look at the scrip, at the bonds, at the coin minted at the house of good works, or at the notes issued by the “bank of the Righteousness of Humanity,” in the light of the great white throne that is drawing nearer every day, lo! you find that they are made like most paper, of “filthy rags,” and that the solid rouleaux of coin have turned to dust and ashes, as they used to think money given by witches turned. Your conscience, long sleeping, has wakened up, and through your breast there sounds the fearful alarm, “Prepare to meet thy God!” What can you do? It is too late now to construct a fresh scheme by which you may escape your liabilities. At length you realise that that law you thought had fallen asleep, or was so slow-footed that its bailiff justice could never overtake you, has surrounded you so that there is no escape. Ruined, enmeshed,

doomed, ready to perish, there is nothing you can do, and, thank God! there is nothing for you to do, for the only One who can save you did it all long ago on Calvary's tree.

“ When the law threatens endless death
Upon the awful hill,
Straightway from her consuming breath
My soul goeth higher still ;
Goeth to Jesus, wounded, slain,
And maketh Him her home,
Whence she will not go out again,
And where death cannot come.”

Praise, God! that is what I love to do, for there is another thing that cannot come there. It is what spells Death to our Christian usefulness, and that is—Doubt. And so in closing this chapter I would say a few things to that most pitiable of sights—the Doubting Christian.

In the first place it is well to be plain with yourself and ask, How came I to be such an one as a Doubting Christian? Well, several answers might be given, but I think the answer given by that incomparable dreamer John Bunyan puts what might be said in a picturesque and therefore memorable fashion. (I am trying to write for the

youngest of believers, for, as Martin Luther said, if I succeed in this the most advanced will not be perplexed.)

John Bunyan, then, in his famous dream describing how the pilgrims Christian and Hopeful came to fall into the hands of Giant Despair of Doubting Castle, says: "Now I beheld in my dream that they had not journeyed far, but the river and the way for a time parted, at which they were not a little sorry, yet they durst not go out of the way. Now, the way of the river was rough, and their feet tender by reason of their travels; so the souls of the pilgrims were 'much discouraged because of the way.' Wherefore, still as they went on, they wished for better way. Now, a little before them, there was on the left hand of the road a meadow, and a stile to go over into it; and that meadow is called By-path Meadow. Then said Christian to his fellow: 'If this meadow lieth along by our path-side, let's go over into it.' Then he went to the stile to see, and behold, a path lay along by the way on the other side of the fence. 'It is according to my wish,' said Christian. 'Here is the easiest

going ; come, good Hopeful, and let us go over.' Hopeful—'But how if this path should lead us out of the way?' 'That's not like,' said the other. 'Look, doth it not go along by the wayside?' So Hopeful, being persuaded by his fellow, went after him over the stile. When they were gone over, and were got into the path, they found it very easy for their feet ; and withal they, looking before them, espied a man walking as they did, and his name was Vain-confidence ; so they called after him, and asked him whither that way led. He said, 'To the Celestial Gate.' 'Look,' said Christian, 'did not I tell you so? By this you may see we are right.' So they followed, and he went before them. But behold, the night came on, and it grew very dark, so that they that were behind lost the sight of him that went before."

It would take up too much space to follow the course of the pilgrims, only let it be noticed that the leader, Vain-confidence, presently falls into a pit and perishes, whilst the two that were behind, after many dangers through storm and flood, are found by Giant

Despair and cast into the dungeons of Doubting Castle. Now, when Giant Despair, after beating them sore, egged on by his wife, who is called Diffidence, at length tells them that he is going to tear them to pieces, the story continues in this true and touching manner: "Well, on Saturday, about midnight, they began to pray, and continued in prayer till about break of day. Now, a little before it was day, good Christian, as one amazed, brake out in this passionate speech: 'What a fool,' quoth he, 'am I thus to lie in a stinking dungeon when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom called Promise that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle'." And so they escaped, and in memory thereof they erected a pillar on which they graved these lines:

"Out of the way we went, and then we found
What 'twas to tread upon forbidden ground;
And let them that come after have a care
Lest heedlessness makes them as we to fare.
Lest they, for trespassing, his prisoners are
Whose castle's Doubting, and whose name's
Despair."

Thus pictorially and vividly we have set

forth this great warning that the road to Doubt and Despair is Disobedience. Just as we have the blessed truth put forward that though disobedience to the precept brings peril, yet trust in the promise brings deliverance.

Now, have we not got into the dangerous place of doubts—doubts as to our own salvation, as to our having any portion in the affections as well as the atonement of Jesus Christ, as to the blessedness of our future, nay, even as to the goodness of God—just through disobedience. The path of obedience led away from the purling brook and green pastures out into the wilderness, whilst a pleasant green vista opened before us with soft verdure so soothing to our tender feet. Yet the Word of God, the Voice of God in our souls, yea, the Finger of God in the daily providences of life, pointed insistently the way that led to the wilderness where appeared no shade for our aching heads, and but sharp flints to pierce our already tender feet. In spite of this we yielded to what the Scripture calls the flesh in us, and lo! we found not only an easy path but a compla-

cent leader. Methinks Vain - confidence graduated in the School of Holiness, and took highest honours in Perfection. The stirrings of the flesh would be to him but the natural infirmities of our poor frame, and thus treading the path of ease he enlivens the way by boasting of how many days it is since he last sinned. Alas! a pit awaits such, and many pilgrims can testify that they have shrunk back affrighted as they heard his last cry in the darkness. Yet without doubt it is the ease with which those who make loud professions of "All for Jesus" tread the paths which are manifestly unscriptural that masks the meaning of the step we took when we followed them where the Word led us not. Bunyan wisely marks it as "heedlessness"; and so it is oftentimes. But see, our disobedience has a deep root. It is rooted in unbelief. David when led of God in the wilderness said at length in his heart, "I shall one day perish at the hand of Saul." And straightway goes down to the pleasant safety of a fenced city where he knew Saul could not come. It is the sin our first parents committed, and we know

where that ended—outside amidst the thorns and briars of a cursed earth. So disobeying God, 'tis easy to doubt Him. And that is the way Despair lies; and once a man despairs!

Perhaps one is reading this who is ready to say, "I am such a case." You have often spent the night in crying to God, but no answer comes. Beloved friend, see here in this very word which you have disobeyed, and which condemns you, are promises many and gracious, all leading you to the Promiser, so kind, so loving, so pitiful. Turn for a moment from your doubts, your self-condemnation, your despair, "back to the Bible" and read of Him until you cannot help realising that He is near to you in the darkness. Consider Him in the light of His great and precious promises. Think of Him as He walked this earth. Only a few of the many kind and loving acts He then performed are recorded, but enough to reveal Him as the kindest, noblest, best that earth has ever known or can know. The outcast, the vile, those from whom you would shrink in horror, if not in terror, and even those who,

according to the revelation of the Divine will, had no right to expect His favour or to receive any kindness at His hand, all, ALL found that at His feet was the charmed place which none left unblessed or unshriven. Such was His grace, that when His heart might have been filled with bitterness, in the worst hour when He saw Himself forsaken, heard Himself denied with oaths and curses, He not only forgave but saved by a look the man who thus added shame to His sorrow.

Think of Him as He died. And what a death He died! A death of cruelty, a death of agony, a death of shame. More than that, a death of wrath, a death of condemnation, the cursed death on the cross. There He bore guilt, suffered the punishment of sin, exhausted the sentence of the violated law. There He vindicated the justice of God, the character of God, and there He began a new kingdom for God by obeying Him at the entire cost of Himself. All that the eternal law of righteousness demanded He satisfied. All the heart of God desired He accomplished. All the utmost need the greatest sinner required He fulfilled. Across it all

He could write the word *tetelestai*—paid, cancelled, accomplished, done, finished! What a wonderful record! What a claim He must have on God!

And 'tis this same Jesus who says to you, doubting, despairing one, "Come!" It is a Royal command: you must obey. And on the command swiftly comes the promise, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," but he shall find "rest." He has not altered since He left Olivet's green mound except that He now is seated crowned with glory and honour, having all authority, all power in heaven and on earth, able to save to the uttermost ALL that come to God by Him. Ah! in the face of all this you cannot dwell with despair. Surely at the sound of that blessed Voice your soul must flee like a bird to the mountain, to the feet of Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth, there to find rest and satisfaction in Him who finished all the work God gave Him to do on your behalf. It is inspiring to dwell on the majestic effect of these words breathed by a Man dying on a cross, the scoff of men and the sport of circumstances. It tran-

scends the utmost limits of time and space, infinite though these may seem to us: it penetrates into another world, the world of spirit and of eternity. Thus what was finished is said by Paul in that magnificent passage in Colossians to be the bringing of everything created into one harmonious whole. But turning away from this vast vision of redemptive power, it is soul-healing and soul-uplifting to say, "What was finished there was the work necessary to make me one with God now and for ever, world without end." Sometimes I think it is harder to persuade Christians to believe that what they need has been done than it is to persuade unconverted sinners. We are so apt to fall back on ourselves for our acceptance with God. Having begun in the spirit, we proceed to seek for perfection in the flesh! In the next chapter I will seek by the aid of the Holy Spirit to show the bearing of the position of this sixth saying on this great question for believers.

"Pining souls, come nearer Jesus,
And O come not doubting thus,
But with faith that trusts more bravely
His huge tenderness for us.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
 Are more felt than up in heaven;
 There is no place where earth's failings
 Have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader
 Than the measures of man's mind,
 And the heart of the Eternal
 Is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple
 We should take Him at His word,
 And our lives would be all sunshine
 In the sweetness of our Lord."

VII.

THE HEART'S TRUE HAVEN.

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost" (Luke xxiii. 46).

"**FATHER!**" Did you hear that? Why, He is crying to His Father again! might have been the remark of one onlooker to another. For as He began His tremendous sufferings by praying to His Father on behalf of others, so He closes them by speaking to His Father on behalf of Himself.

The darkness has rolled away, the terrible agony of soul has subsided, and now again

He says, "Father," expressing the tender relationship which has endured from eternity, and shall endure to eternity.

Have you noticed that just as the Son is fond of speaking of His Father, so the Father is fond of speaking of His Son? "Jehovah hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son" (Psalm ii. 7) "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son" (Matt. iii. 17) "And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son" (Luke ix. 35).

And what has passed between them on the Cross does not alter this mutual, tender attachment and perfect confidence. Looking at the Gospel narrative impartially, reverently would one say that God did not smooth the path of His Son towards the goal. All that the cruelty and cowardice of the worst specimens of the human race could devise to humble Him, to torture Him, to put upon Him what is worse than the fear of death, the fear of man (2 Sam. xxiv. 14), and to crown all, to make Him feel Himself a man forsaken by all men, all was permitted.

Where were the multitudes whom He had cleansed, healed, delivered, raised from the dead? Where were the disciples whom He had taught and shown His innermost heart to? One had betrayed Him, another had denied Him, all had forsaken Him. He stood like a discredited impostor, nay, worse, for never since have the worst impostors died without some faithful souls assuring them of their faith in them, discredited as they might seem to be before a scoffing, sneering, laughing world. And yet when the first blow fell upon Him He could fall back upon His Father. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father . . .?" And when new physical tortures were waking Him up to endure the last bitterness, when they were with smashing blows forcing the blunt iron through His tender tissues, He could still say, "Father, . . ."

But presently an invisible hand puts the brimming cup to His parched lips; an invisible arm rises above the stake to descend in soul-sickening silence until the bruised (Isaiah liii. 10) Sufferer can endure no more, and cries in the darkness, "My God, My God,

why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Has the perfect confidence and tender trust been slackened in their grip? Never! "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." What Jesus was to His God, that He would have all men be, and so He presents Himself freely as the One, trust in Whom, brings sonship. But do we truly realise what becoming sons of God means? "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," and according to the best MSS. John adds here, "And such we are." The words, "Our Father," constitute a prayer in themselves. What thanksgiving! what hope! what filial confidence and trust! what mutual love are all expressed in these two words!

We can never endure what our Lord Jesus Christ endured. But in some small measure the mystery of life's trials, the ingratitude and unkindness of friends, the malice and spite of enemies, the unanswered petitions and questions with which we assail the throne of grace, the slow torture of deferred hopes, and, perhaps, physical anguish which calls for the administration of remedies which

blunt our faculties and bemoan our minds, all, all assail us, and in the skilful hand of Satan are made to misrepresent the silent God, the absent Redeemer, and the present Comforter whose voice we have, alas, listened to so carelessly in the prosperous past that our ears have become dull of hearing! Let them all come, wave upon wave, until the soul can only cling breathlessly to the great living Rock beneath—Christ, and all that He means—Thou art the Son of the Living God —“Father!”

A house was on fire. High up at the nursery windows were seen little white faces amidst the reek of the burning building. There was no time to fetch a fire escape, and so the men of the village had stretched a stout sheet beneath, into which they might safely jump. Many voices called upon them to jump, but still, as the smoke drifted by, the white, terror-stricken faces were seen staring out at the glare of the flames swiftly drawing nearer their prey. Just then, when hope in every heart died, a man stumbled round the corner, and with one glance took in the situation. In an instant he straightened

himself, and with an imperious wave of his hand, cried, "Jump! jump!" In a moment the children were safe, but not a moment too soon. They asked the man how he was able to do in two words what men and women had failed to do with many cries and entreaties. He replied, "I am their father!" Oh, that we knew our Father's voice and obeyed so promptly our Father's word amidst the ruins of a world fast hastening to its final conflagration. We should pass through fiery trials without being burned.

You remember how "He taught His disciples, and said unto them, The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men," and how time after time the words, "Into the hands of men," seem to be in His heart and on His lips. Now He is passing from these hands into the hands of His Father. What a joyous note the inspired record of His earthly sufferings closes upon! Most earthly careers close upon a low note in the gamut of circumstances. Read the "Lives" of great men and you will find that the greatest are looking forward to falling into the hands of disease, of age, of death. It runs as a minor

note through all their pæans of victory, swelling louder and ever louder as the years roll on, until at last it bursts out alone in the funeral music of dead desires, dead hopes, dead aspirations, dead ideals. How different with the Son of God, and, in their measure, with the sons of God. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be unto God, Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 55, 57).

And this death on the part of our adorable Lord and Saviour was perfectly voluntary. He was not compelled to lay down His life. And yet He was compelled. Bound with the bands of perfect love to God and man, He offered Himself a living sacrifice. Talk of love, as the world is so fond of doing! Until we spell it in the prints of the nails in the light of glory, we shall be bound to own we have known but its shadow and grasped but its phantom. And this character of voluntariness is stamped upon the record. In Matthew the words are literally "dismissed His Spirit." In Mark and Luke the word means, "He breathed out His Spirit." In

John the words mean, "He gave up His Spirit." Nowhere in the Septuagint or in the New Testament are these expressions used of anyone else dying. So Augustine rightly says: "He gave up His life *because* He willed it, *when* He willed it, and *as* He willed it." This leads us to one important and final point which, so far as I know, has been touched upon by one writer only, F. W. Grant.

The following weighty words deserve and will repay careful study on the part of readers:

"The peculiar agony passed of the forsaking of God, there remains but death to complete atonement. All that lay upon man is then taken, God's righteousness approved and manifested, sin in its reality as before Him exposed. . . . This is easily understood, if we consider the difference between that which is the necessary part of the penalty upon sin, as resulting from the very nature of God, and therefore unchangeable as that nature, and that which it may please Him to affix to it as the special brand of His displeasure. As has often been said, while 'God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look at sin,' and therefore His separation from it is an unchangeable necessity, death (I am speaking of what we ordinarily call that) is, in man's case, such a governmental brand, and can be removed from him without change on his part, or atonement from him (on his behalf). This is important to realise as bearing upon the resurrection of the wicked. It

has often been argued, and with apparent justification from a certain statement in Scripture, that the resurrection even of the wicked is due only to Christ's atoning work, and so in their case also has a redemptive character. Here is not the place to discuss the fundamental passage; but the Lord's own words assure us that as, on the one hand, there is a 'resurrection of life,' so, on the other, there is a 'resurrection of judgment' (John v. 29, R.V.). As, on the one hand, life claims even the bodies of the heirs of life, so, on the other, does judgment claim the bodies of the unsaved. And thus it is said, 'AFTER death, the judgment' (Heb. ix. 27), which takes place, as we see in the Book of Revelation, only when 'death and hades' have given up the dead. Thus death has place in God's dealings with man this side of eternity only; and indeed, though it be the brand upon sin, yet still as part of a discipline of mercy. . . . Whatever, then, the final issue, death has no part in it; for even the second death is no repetition of the first, but that in which it is swallowed up and lost, while the saint inherits life eternal."—F. W. GRANT, of Plainfield, N.J., U.S.A., in his "Notes on the Gospels," pp. 266-7.

Death in Scripture has two well-defined meanings. In one class of passages it stands for the penal consequences of sin. From the very nature of the case, these are eternal. For what is Sin? It is not simply transgression of law either innate or published with all the sanctions of Sinai. It is that, in so far as law is the expression of God's

Being. But more than that, it is that which enunciates that fatal antagonism to the nature of God expressed in the terms of His character which are summed up in the one pregnant word, **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. An antagonism fatal in its nature, ceaseless in its action, tireless in its energy, keeping God and man apart as long as God is Himself and man is a sinner, and this consequence is called Death. The moment man sinned this gulf yawned—"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

In another class of passages the word represents that which we commonly call by that name—physical dissolution. In a sense that did not enter the world through man, for long before man made his appearance on the stage of Time death had revelled amidst the hills and dales and oceans of earth. It was no new thing which God took to place on fallen man as a brand of His displeasure. Hence physical death is but an echo in the body of the darker doom resulting from sin in the soul.

Once again it is well to remember that just as the *wrath of God* is the scriptural

mode of expressing that antagonism of His nature excited by the disobedience of man, so the term *curse* sets forth the pronouncement of the consequences of disobedience which accompanies the revelation of His will. One is apt to connect with these two words especially, human ideas and attributes which convert *wrath* into ungovernable and cruel rage, and *curse* into violent and bad language.

Every human law has its penal clauses wherein are stated the penalties to be inflicted upon the breaker of the statute. These penal clauses constitute its curse. According to Blackstone, if these penalties were as regularly remitted as they were incurred, the law would be practically abrogated or repealed. Hence the sanction of a law is in its curse. But the sanction of any law lies in its curse just because that curse expresses the innate feeling of the community in regard to its value, and consequently in regard to the ill-desert of those who break it.

Nay more, the existence of the community depends on law, since lawlessness is fatal to

any community. Hence its attitude towards the lawbreaker is twofold. There is the detestation in which all criminals are held by every law-abiding community, arising in part from the sense of self-preservation; and there is the penalty which that community has affixed to each law or expression of its will. Now, the former may be private, but the latter must be public. The former is the expression of the character of the community, the latter belongs to its government. It is the brand it puts upon the offence, and which the offender therefore bears. Hence the latter may be repealed, the former is irrevocable.

If what has been written be followed, we are in a position to understand the twofold nature of Christ's atoning sufferings. In the hours of darkness he endured the *wrath of God*. He endured that which is changeless and imperative, because it was both an expression and also a necessity of God's being. Hence the darkness, the hidden nature of these sufferings, the fearful cry. I cannot tell—language utterly fails me—how my soul is bowed down to the very dust

when I contemplate this act of the Redeemer—the spotless, sinless Lamb of God.

But there was also the public aspect of the Holy Redeemer's satisfaction of the justice of God on our behalf. Why was He crucified? The immediate cause was because this was the Roman method of punishing the lowest criminals. When the Roman Procurator was elsewhere engaged, and the rulers of the Jews were left through political complications with a free hand for an instant they showed what they would do when they could by stoning Stephen. But God so ordered it that the power of death had been rent from their malignant grasp when His Son came to die. Thus to die at all He must be crucified (John xviii. 31, 32). But, to go a step back, why did God order this so? Because long ago as ruler of His earthly people He had taken death by hanging on a tree and affixed that as a brand on offences against His rule. Hence before heaven and earth the blessed Son of God was proclaimed the One who endured not only the governmental brand affixed to Adam's first sin, physical dissolution, but bore it surcharged

with the stamp of God's special mode of punishing actual transgressions.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. iii. 13). Therefore we see clearly how during His hanging upon the cross, except during the three hours of darkness, our Saviour enjoyed perfect communion with His Father, and when He came to die, He could say, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.” He had said, “It is finished.” He no longer occupied that position of outer darkness into which He was driven when He was “made to be sin for us.”

Very distinctly, too, will be seen, if I have been able to express myself with any clearness, why believers are called upon to endure physical death. It is the brand which was affixed to Adam's first sin, and which we share as his descendants. But what our Lord redeemed us from was that which makes it terrible—the curse. This is seen in the case of young children who cannot commit sin, yet die. As an epitaph on an

infant's tomb in Portishead churchyard puts it—

“I died because Adam sinned,
I live because Christ died.”

Now, when our Lord “dismissed His Spirit,” the occasion was marked by the removal of this governmental brand in the case of the bodies of many of the saints sleeping in their graves around Jerusalem. Note here how this occurs alone in Matthew's gospel. Hence Matthew's gospel is the gospel of which the trespass or governmental offering is a symbol.

When He returns the occasion will be made more remarkable, for not only shall the “dead in Christ” arise, but the stamp of death will be taken off the bodies of those of us who are alive and remain until that blessed hour.

Students of prophecy will also remember how during His reign on earth through the millennium this hereditary brand will be removed. But should a righteous man sin he shall die, and this is the true meaning of the oft-quoted words, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” But not to perish; O no!

Therefore amongst the books opened before the Judge on the Great White Throne is the Book of Life.

Thus a careful study of what physical death means in the light of Scripture prevents us being misled by Christadelphians and others who exalt it to a place which it never occupies in the economy of God. The worst of it all is that by so doing the true evil of sin is overlooked. A man may endure the penalty of a broken law, but who can alter the attitude of his innocent fellows towards him? He would require to become a new man; in fact, to lose his old life and be born again. Thus Christ not only endured the curse, but He bore the wrath; and united to Him by a living, loving, lasting union beyond death, on resurrection ground, where there is no antagonism, where there can be no disharmony to shatter that peace made on Calvary and crystallised in the Person of the Son of God, for "He is our peace"—we stand by the side of the Eternal God. Nay more, by becoming children of God we share in that nature which demanded our eternal punishment as sinners and yet craved

in ineffable love for our reconciliation. Do we realise it? Do we understand aright that there can be no truce between the old man and the new, between the flesh and the spirit, between sin and the Saviour to whom we have been united?

Beloved, believe me, it is no question of reformation—it is a matter of regeneration. Between us and the past let us ever put the Cross and what it stands for, whilst we turn our eyes towards the dawn and cry, “Father, into Thy hands I commit myself!” As righteousness is *legal completeness*, so holiness is *spiritual perfection*, and both we have in Him who answered to the full the claims of the Divine nature against sin, and endured the penalty of the Divine law.

Sin results in disharmony. It puts us out of harmony with ourselves, with each other, with God. Hence the word “atonement,” to describe that of which this last act of Christ on the cross was the crown and consummation. “One” formerly used to be pronounced “own,” hence “atonement” is simply “at-one-ment,” with the word so important in its construction pronounced accord-

ing to the old style. That is to say, "atone-ment" is that which makes those previously antagonists at one.

It perhaps is well here to say that the theories which have been constructed to explain the facts of the Atonement are three.

1. The *sacrificial*: which declares Christ's death on the cross to be a sacrifice for man's sins.
2. The *remedial*: which declares that Christ's incarnation was the way in which God entered into the human race so that by His life and death sin might be eliminated and humanity made one with Himself.
3. The *Socinian*, or *moral influence*: that Christ's mission was to lead men by His example to live better lives, and thus be made one with God.

It is well to know this, as there has sprung into prominence lately a rejuvenated school of preachers who rejoice in the name of "Humanists." In flowery and eloquent periods they seek to abolish the offence of the Cross and lay the stress of the Atonement on the Incarnation. The logical out-

come of this theory (No. 2) is *Universalism*, of which doctrine R. J. Campbell has become the best-known advocate in these days.

Beware of this Humanism, then, that comes to you in delicate clothing, and in silky accents assures you that the "Gospel in Blood" is old-fashioned and incompatible with the advance of humanity. I say it is a rejuvenated school, for its doctrine is as old as Paul's day, for he had to write :

"Christ sent me . . . to preach the Gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the Cross is to them that are perishing, foolishness; but unto us who are being saved, it is the power of God. . . . God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." (Read 1 Cor. i.)

They talk of the inhumanity of the Cross, but 'twere better to talk of man's inhumanity to man than of God's injustice to His Son a thousand thousand times over. Christ bore our sins on the tree in His own body, and endured the curse of the law and quenched the wrath of God, or how explain the meaning of the cross, the darkness and the death? Spotless, sinless, perfect, His

very body only a "likeness to flesh of sin" with no inherited taint, no secret germ of mortality, of corruption, yet He died the death of the cross, and His holy spirit was crushed beneath the agony of the forsaking. Explain it, or the mind drifts from its moorings out on the shoreless sea of doubt, over which broods for ever the darkness of despair. Blessed be God, the explanation is so simple that a child who scarce can tell his letters may understand. 2 Cor. v. 21: "He (God) hath made Him (Christ), who knew no sin, sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

There is the affecting tale told of the captain of a small sailing vessel who was taken very ill. They were far from land, and the vessel carried no doctor. The captain, realising that death was approaching, became troubled in soul and very anxious. He sent for his mate, but the difficulty was beyond the mate's power to solve; he could only mutter a vague hope that "'E worn't as bad as 'e thought." The captain then ordered him to send down the bos'n, but he was still more inarticulate when confronted with the

question, How to prepare for dying? He was sent on deck, where he gave it as his opinion that the "ole man" was "goin' off 'is 'ead," and the crew were sent down one by one with the same result, until in despair the captain summoned the poor cabin-boy. Johnny gave it as his opinion that if his old mother were there there wouldn't be any difficulty, so in agony the captain asked him what did he think his mother would do. Johnny replied that the very first thing his mother would do would be to ask for a Bible. When directed by the captain, who began to see a ray of hope, Johnny found a Bible, he said that the next thing she would do would be to turn to the fifty-third of Isaiah, and this the dying man begged him to do without delay. When after some difficulty he had found it, his face brightened and he said, "Cap'n, me mother always taught me to read a bit ov it in dis way: "He was wounded for Johnny's transgressions, He was bruised for Johnny's iniquities, the chastisement of Johnny's peace was upon Him, and with His stripes Johnny is healed." The poor face on the pillow was turned

questioningly towards the reader, and the fast darkening lips framed the question, "Who is He, Johnny?" "Jesus, cap'n," said the boy. Still the same longing look till the boy humbly suggested with an inward tremor, for a captain is a great man in the eyes of his cabin boy, "Suppose, cap'n, you read it with Jesus' name and—and with yours." So they began, the man's deep voice, upon which the hush of death was fast falling, following the lad's clear treble, "Jesus was wounded for Cap'n Smith's transgressions" The ship rose and fell rhythmically to the slow swell, the timbers creaked and the bulkheads groaned, still the deep voice, growing more indistinct now, toiled after the treble until silence fell. Then, whilst an ineffable look of supreme content crept over the storm-battered face and a light into the upturned, fast-glazing eyes, his lips were seen to move, "Jesus . . . with Jesus' stripes I am healed."

It is remarkable how the anguish-tossed soul intuitively, as it were, grasps the simple doctrine of a substitutionary atonement. I remember a man in the West of London, a

great traveller and well known in Society. He lay dying slowly of an incurable and horrible disease. He sent one of his friends to me who seemed somewhat ashamed of his errand. He said that his friend wanted to see me unprofessionally; that he had become afraid to die; that he couldn't understand what the clergymen said, and that he thought perhaps I might put something in a simple way which would, in his own words, "prevent me funking it at the last." I went, and to my utter astonishment found that such words as "sin," "atonement," were to him an unknown tongue. He had heard long ago the "padres" (clergymen) speak of Jesus, but he complained rather querulously that if I could only use words like these I was of no more use to him than the clergymen. "They spoke to me in Latin, but I hoped you would speak to me in English." I read a few verses of Scripture, prayed very simply with him, and left him some little books, begging him to read them, and promised that the next time I came I would not use strange words. Asking the Lord to give me wisdom, I read to him on the next occasion about the death

of our Lord. This interested him, and he wished to know why He died. So gradually he came to understand what all the strange words meant, but there was one word he never tired of uttering. It was "JESUS." He lingered on a long time, and strong opiates had to be given to lessen his agony, so he never became very learned in the Scriptures, but his simple trust in the Lord Jesus was wonderful. He used to get his old friends to come to see him, for he had been rather a popular man. I heard of this, and one day I asked him what he said to them, for he used to ask to be left alone with them, "Oh," said he, with a smile, "I tell them about Jesus." I asked him what he told them. To this, with a delighted little laugh, he replied, "Well, you know, doctor, I can't tell them all you could, but perhaps they mightn't have much patience with you, for you know you're fond of long words, but I do tell," and here his poor, worn face lit up like an angel's. "I do tell them about Jesus, how he died on the cross for me, and took my punishment in my place for love of me; and they understand, oh,

yes, they understand!" And he died as he lived, with the Name of Jesus on his lips.

Our Saviour closed His life on a high note. I would close these poor words of mine on the highest note that can be sounded in heaven and re-echoed by earth—the Name of Jesus. One of our own poets has thus rendered the dying words of Anastasia, an early Christian martyr:

" Oh, my God

I thank Thee for the inestimable gift
Of Thy Son, Jesus Christ; that Miracle
Of counsel and design as well as love.
The only argument that could explain,
Resolve, and vindicate Thy ways to men,
And reconcile the hearts of men to Thee.
Christ is the Causeway which unflung to earth
Had left the gulf impassable betwixt
Creator and created. Thus I die
A meek believer in the Name of Jesus.
Through Him I feel no terror for my sins.
Vast as they are, they harass me no more.
Their price is paid in full, and I may call
God, whom I've outraged, my Saviour, my
Friend."

Thus may we, both writer and readers, find through simple faith in our adorable Lord and mighty Saviour, Jesus Christ, Son of man, Son of God, God the Son, that the haven of our hearts is the bosom of our God!

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