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*By Prof. J. LAIDLAW, D.D., Edinburgh.*

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF MAN;  
OR,  
THE ANTHROPOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY  
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**FOUNDATION TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE**

BY PROFESSOR J. LAIDLAW, D.D.

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FOUNDATION TRUTHS  
OF SCRIPTURE

AS TO

SIN AND SALVATION

IN TWELVE LESSONS

BY

PROF. JOHN LAIDLAW, M.A., D.D.

EDINBURGH

AUTHOR OF

"THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF MAN" "THE MIRACLES OF OUR LORD"

EDINBURGH

T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET

## P R E F A C E



THIS book is an endeavour to show, in brief compass, that the main points of Christian Doctrine, as taught among us, rest directly on Scripture, and are vitally connected with one another. The substance of the book has been repeatedly given orally to audiences of Christian Workers and Students of practical Christianity. It has, in that form, found acceptance among them ; as also with the members of the Y.W.C.A. when monthly portions of it appeared in the pages of their Magazine. It is now for the first time published, in the hope that it may reach a still larger circle of Christian Teachers and Bible Students who desire to see for themselves how Evangelical Doctrine stands upon a strictly Scriptural basis, and is worthy of all believing acceptance and reasonable exposition.

J. L.

*New College, Edinburgh,  
January 1897.*

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# FOUNDATION TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE AS TO SIN AND SALVATION



## LESSON I

### SIN AS FACT—ITS EXTENT AND NATURE

I. Names and definitions of sin given in Scripture. Num. xv. 27-30; Ps. xix. 12, 13, xxxii. 5; 1 John iii. 4. Why to be carefully heeded. 2 Pet. i. 19; Rom. iii. 20.

II. Scripture proof of *universal guilt*. 1 Kings viii. 46; Eccles. vii. 20; Prov. xx. 9; Rom. i. 18 to iii. 20; 1 John v. 19.

III. Its teaching as to *heart-corruption*. Gen. vi. 5, viii. 21; Eccles. ix. 3; Jer. xvii. 9; Matt. xv. 19.

IV. Its teaching as to *inherited sinfulness*. Job xxv. 4; Ps. li. 5; John iii. 6; Rom. viii. 5, 8; Eph. ii. 3.

I. THE Bible has two kinds of teaching about sin. (a) Upon the *fact* of sin—its *extent* and *nature*—as it now exists in human experience, it has much to say, the effect of which is to deepen and rectify what we already know by nature and conscience, though all too slightly and partially. The Bible does not need to reveal the fact that man is a sinner and the world full of sin. But it discloses a depth in the fact unknown without the Bible. God's revelation is a

“Light shining in a dark place,” of which it reveals the darkness. It discovers so much of the “sinfulness of sin” that we may say of the whole Revelation what is said specially of the Law,—that “by it is the knowledge of sin.” What it says of this kind is our theme now. (*β*) Its other teaching about sin,—its origin and issues, *whence* it came and *whither* it tends, will be the theme of next Lesson.

Observe the names and definitions of it, the kinds and classes of sins described in the passages cited. In Num. xv., the distinction is taken between “sins of ignorance” and “sins of presumption,” or of “the high hand.” The Psalmist prays (in Ps. xix.) that he may be “cleansed” from the first kind, and “kept back” from the last. In Ps. xxxii., he looks at it from different sides. As *sin*, it is a failure, a missing of man’s true end; as *transgression*, it is departure from, or offence against God’s law (sin of omission or of commission), as *iniquity*, it is wrong done to God and man. In 1 John iii. 4, it is defined as departure from law—lawlessness. In other places of that Epistle it is declared to be the opposite of light—darkness; the opposite of love—hatred; the opposite of God—for it is of the wicked one.

Thus the Bible takes the strongest views of sin. And it has the right to do so: because it tells us how sin may be put away and overcome. It would be mere cruelty to enlarge to the sick man on his maladies, if you have no cure and know of none. But when you do it to rouse his attention to the infallible remedy, and to the Great Physician, that is the kindest course.

The main lines of Bible teaching about the state of sin, as it is, are the three we are now to follow—*universal guilt*,

*heart-corruption, inherited sinfulness*, or, what is more usually called *original sin*.

II. *Universal guilt*. Apart from the Bible, people know and confess, in a way, that everybody goes wrong. But here it is taught with a thoroughness which the unassisted human conscience does not attain. Follow St. Paul's demonstration in that long passage from the middle of the first chapter of Romans to the middle of the third. Notice the precise truth which he is teaching there, viz. that all men capable of conscious moral action, do on their own account actually transgress God's law. He works this out, step by step,—the Jews, who have the law, do it in one way; the Gentiles, who have not the law, do it another way. So he reaches his conclusion (iii. 19) that "they are all under sin," that all have actually sinned and do in their own life and character "come short of the glory of God." For what purpose does he take such pains to prove this? That "every mouth may be stopped," and that "all the world may be brought under the judgment of God;" that all may be convinced "there is no difference" and "no distinction" (R.V.). That is to say, the aim of this universal and terrible verdict is one of deepest kindness. It is to show that as there is "no difference," *i.e.* no exception to the fact that in the sight of God's holy law every conscious human life is under guilt on account of its own sin; so, also, there is no difference of merit or worth before God in respect of salvation. In every case salvation is grounded in the righteousness of Christ received by faith.

Thus we are taught how to use this truth; how to do it rightly and avoid doing it wrongly. To harp upon this sad string, "all men are sinners, and so you are a sinner," may

be of little use. Nor may we so handle the truth, "there is no difference," as to rouse the common conscience against our message. There is "a difference" in sins and sinners. "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." There is a five hundred pence debtor and a fifty pence debtor. Let us make all allowance for degrees of guilt and hardening. But, then, come back to the point wherein there is "no difference," viz. in that all of us, *without exception*, "have come short of the glory of God," *i.e.* have failed of our "chief end." "There is none that understandeth, that seeketh after God." Thus we reach the conscience about sin. For, after all, "sin" has no meaning to us till we see that it is denying God His due, putting something before or instead of Him. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." The right use of this verdict—the condemning sentence of God's law written over against every human life—is to shut us up to Christ and His grace. It beats down that foolish hope which the unconvinced heart builds upon its own fancied betterness, or not-so-badness, as compared with other people. God's holy standard disallows the plea. In this matter of acceptance with Him there are no exceptions. When the debtor has *nothing* to pay, a debt of fifty pence is as fatal as one of five hundred pence. But, then, God's free and glorious grace has the same motto, "no difference"—a full and free salvation to every one that believeth.

III. *Heart-corruption.* As the former was a statement of the *breadth*, this is of the *depth* to which the evil of sin has affected our nature. It is radical and total; not only *all men*, but the *whole man* is under its blight. Across the whole of Scripture there extends a chain of passages on this topic, of which those quoted above (in Division III.) are some of

the links. These texts give a view of sin which goes down to the roots. Sin is something deeper than "actions," "words," or even "thoughts." These are merely the fruit or outcome of it. Since its seat is in the "heart," it taints the very springs of human nature. It is seated where God ought to dwell. No wonder that to deliver us from it is the work of God alone. Consider what "heart" in Bible language means, that we may state rightly this Bible doctrine of heart-sinfulness.

(i.) It does *not mean* the substance or being of man. Therefore, when we are told the "heart" is corrupt, it is not meant that man has now wholly lost the image of God and is made after the image of the Devil. If that were so, redemption would be impossible. The "heart" is not the being or person of the man, but his principles of action. Being or person cannot be changed, but principles can. In conversion I do not become another person, I get a "new heart."

(ii.) It does *not mean* merely the *feelings* as contrasted with *mind* or *understanding*. In modern language we speak of *head* and *heart* and contrast them. The Bible (especially the Old Testament) never so speaks. It puts "heart" for the whole inward nature—knowledge, feeling, imagination, will. Every product of a man's nature proceeds from his "heart," "out of it are the issues of life"—like streams from a fountain, like fruit from a tree. "Make the tree good," says our Lord; keep the fountain pure, get it made clean.

All through the Bible, "heart" *does mean* the centre-point of man's moral activity—all his principles of action as they concur in his doing right or wrong.

See how this exposes the mistakes men have made about

sin and its cure. They begin by confining sin to some part or faculty of man's nature. Some say it is only his *understanding* that is dark. Enlighten! educate! and people will all do right! Or again, it has been said, it is the *lower*, or *animal part* of man only that is wrong. Starve the body, macerate the flesh, and so we shall get rid of sin! No! but it is at the "heart" man is wrong, and that goes all through his nature and makes all the rest wrong in the sight of God, for "He looketh upon the heart."

Such is the truth of this much-abused Bible doctrine of "total depravity," and of the entire corruption of our nature under sin. It does not mean that every man is as bad as every other man, or as bad as he could be, or any of the absurd consequences which its opponents seek to draw. It means that in the *heart* of man are the seeds and roots of all sorts of sins, and that this disposition affects, therefore, the entire standing of man before God.

*The results of this truth.* It leads (1) to renouncing of human merit. If we consider the sinfulness, not of particular actions, words, etc., but of our prevailing *dispositions* by nature, we see why the Bible says that, in this state, man "cannot please God." That does not exclude man's power (in God's kind Providence) to do good in natural things, in family affection and earthly government, in civil society, etc.; nor even that these good doings are not acceptable to God, in their own way. But for man as he is, gaining of God's favour, deserving God's mercy by his own merit is impossible.

"For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee."—*Tennyson*.

(2) It is meant to lead to acceptance of Divine Grace.

Since the evil is so deep and central in the old and evil heart, the remedy lies only in the gift of a new heart, a clean spirit—the work of God's mighty grace. The change is not one which nature can effect upon itself,—is, in short, “impossible with man.” But it is “possible” with God: more than possible. He has promised it and we must pray for it. “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” “Create in me a clean heart” (Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Ps. li. 10).

IV. *Inherited sinfulness.* This is usually called *original sin*, *i.e.* sin of origin; race- or birth-sin. It precedes, underlies, or occasions all actual transgression. The Bible takes the profound view that sin has its rise in a principle which is inborn with us—an evil bias, a bent which begins where we begin in this world, grows with our growth and strengthens with our strength; unless and until God's grace counterworks it. The Bible word for it is rendered *lust*, in theology *concupiscence*, in common speech *proneness*, or *propensity to evil*. We have to show (1) that this propensity is itself sinful, (2) to explain its connection with what the New Testament calls “the flesh.”

(1) As there have been views which regard it as only a weakness, infirmity, or misfortune of our nature, we must appeal to Scripture to prove that it is in itself sinful, *i.e.* displeasing to God. (See the passages set down under Division IV.) Let us look especially at Ps. li. 5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity.* Having already stated, in ver. 4, as the head and front of his offending that it was sin against God, the Psalmist goes on here (ver. 5) to adduce his birth-sin as an aggravation of the case. Not only have I done such things, but I am the inheritor of a nature which pro-

duces them. A self-ignorant man would have said—"Yes, I have done this one very bad thing, I have made a big mistake, but I must not be judged by that. I am not such a bad person after all, I have a good heart." "On the contrary," says the Psalmist, "it is my nature and disposition that are bad, and out of it has this evil deed come." Again, a man untaught in the evil of sin and its mystery, admitting his evil disposition, might have said—"I have sinned, but my inherited sinfulness is some excuse for me." No! this penitent, taught of God, says—"I have sinned, but what is worse, I am of a sinful nature, it is in me from my birth. If such deeds be the streams, how foul must be the source from which they flow." Thus he clears God, accuses himself, and does truth in the inward part.

So in the New Testament, Eph. ii. 3. The redeemed are like others, "the children of wrath by nature," *i.e.* they were the just objects of Divine displeasure. Now, if our fallen nature is justly obnoxious to God, is righteously under His condemnation, it is not merely innocently weak or faulty, it must be sinful. If the bias in our nature could excuse our actual sins, that would be said. But Scripture never brings it forward as a palliation, always as an aggravation of our evil. Such is the teaching of the Bible on this dark and mysterious theme. Our inborn depravity is not mere misfortune, weakness, defect, but beyond all these it is defilement in God's sight, from which He only can "cleanse" us, as He has said He will. This deep truth explains many things, *e.g.* how awakened children can have a sense of sin; how the most advanced Christians complain most of sinfulness.

(2) "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18). "They that are in the flesh cannot please

God" (Rom. viii. 8). Plainly in such passages "the flesh" means "unregenerate human nature," man, just as he is apart from God's grace. "They that are *in the flesh*," means those that are under the power of the native principle of sin. But why this should be called "the flesh" is not so clear. One thing is quite certain, it cannot mean the bodily nature, or the literal "flesh," as contrasted with the mind or soul. In those places of Scripture where "flesh" stands for fallen human nature, there must be some special reason for that language. It cannot mean (*a*) that all sin is *seated* in the body, for the worst sins are those of the soul. It cannot mean (*b*) that all sin is *owing to* our having a body, for Scripture claims our bodies as the Temples of the Holy Ghost. If sin were owing to the body, salvation would be deliverance from bodily being, whereas the climax of it is the Redemption of our body. But our Lord explains the term—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John iii. 6). The sinfulness is seated neither exclusively in the body, nor in the soul. It is transmitted to us by our ordinary human descent. It is called "the flesh" because it comes to us by our first birth. It can only be counteracted by a second birth—a birth again from above—"that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

#### QUESTIONS.

1. *What are the two modes of teaching about sin found in the Bible?*
2. *Set down the kinds, names, and definition of sin given in the Texts of Division I.*
3. *Why should this Scripture teaching about sin be carefully attended to?*
4. *Mark the several steps in the argument of Rom. i. 18 to iii. 20, and state its conclusion and intention.*

5. *Explain the phrase—"There is no difference" (Rom. iii. 22).*
6. *Show what the doctrine of heart-corruption does not mean.*
7. *Show what it does mean.*
8. *State the two conclusions to which this doctrine is meant to lead.*
9. *What is meant by the expression—"original sin"?*
10. *Prove from Scripture that the propensity to evil is itself sinful and displeasing to God.*
11. *Show that "sinful flesh" does not mean that human sin has either its main seat or its primal source in the body.*
12. *Give our Lord's explanation of the term "flesh," as used for what in human nature is sinful.*

## LESSON II

### SIN—ITS ORIGIN AND ISSUES

#### *Whence it came and Whither it tends*

I. It comes to the race from their first father. Hos. vi. 7 (R.V.); Rom. v. 12, 19.

II. It came to our first parents by the Fall. Gen. iii. 7-24; Job xxxi. 33; Eccles. vii. 29.

III. The first temptation came from an evil power not human. Gen. iii. 1-5; John viii. 44; 2 Cor. xi. 3; 1 John iii. 8.

IV. Its issues: comprised in the one word—Death. Gen. ii. 17; Rom. vi. 23; James i. 15.

I. GROUND-TEXT, Rom. v. 12-21. Original sin consists of (a) loss or want of that goodness or uprightness which the first man had; (b) of the actual corruption, or propensity to evil, which now appears in us all. It was this last which was chiefly treated in Lesson I. under Division IV. But now let us fix our notice on what a close attention to the above-named text will bring out—that something went before both, viz. (c) the guilt of the first sin. From that guilt, as its consequences, followed both the loss and the corruption of our nature, as well as death and all other effects of sin. This passage profoundly explains that the sinful tendency was inherited, and death became universal in all the human race, *because* our first father sinned. Sinfulness became universal,

and death overtakes even those who have done no actual sin, because in Adam "all sinned," and spiritually died.

Now let us notice how this deep truth is used in the Bible, and is to be applied by us.

(i.) Not to heap more guilt on men than that of their own sin ; but to account for sinfulness and death before any actual transgression. This truth of the first man's sin, and its effects upon us, his posterity, is to be used—not for personal conviction. For *that* we have enough in our own actual sins. Never let us try to make people sensible of sin by dwelling on the first act of disobedience, showing its enormity : that only leads away from themselves. They try to find excuses for Adam, and so for self.

(ii.) Use it, as St. Paul here does, to explain and illustrate the glory of salvation by the grace of God, and by the work of Christ. The apostle wants to meet an objection to the surprising good news of pardon and peace through faith,—of reconciliation to God by the doing and dying of Jesus. He supposes someone to say, How can this be? Must I not do my own part to reconcile God? Indeed! says St. Paul, but are you not a sinner, partly at least by the sin of another? Were not you and all men "made sinners" by the *disobedience* of your first father? Since we are so ruined as a race, and involved in our first parents' sin, shall we not praise the God of salvation, who has secured, that by the *obedience* of one—our Lord Jesus—many shall be made righteous? If we fell in the first Adam we can rise in the Second. Though our first Head and representative went wrong, the second, the Lord from heaven, has all righteousness and strength. One sin of the First man brought so much evil into the world ; but as for

the Second, the Lord has laid on Him the iniquities of us all. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20).

II. Ground-text, Gen. iii. This is the Bible explanation of how evil got entrance into the world at all. It was by a *fall* of our first parents from a state of original uprightness, and goodness. "God made man upright" (Eccles. vii. 29). The Genesis-narrative of the Temptation tells us how this state was fallen from. Traditions of a Fall of mankind are found among many heathen nations—traces of an event in the history of the race: but the definite account only in the Bible. This is a profound and serious doctrine, yet very far from being a dark or despairing doctrine. The opposite indeed: for (*a*) it clears God, and (*b*) gives hope for man.

(*a*) All religious teachings which deny or ignore the fact of a Fall, while not denying (as who can?) that man is morally evil now, are shut up to one or other of two mistakes about sin. Either they must make little of it, tone it down, make it a kind of lesser or inferior good, through which it is necessary for us to pass on to the better; or, they charge it upon nature, and upon the Author of nature. Evil is in the make of the world: man is by constitution sinful: he can never help sinning. The Bible says, No! man was not made sinful; he was not so put into the world by the Creator that he could not help sinning. He is now sinful by heredity, but he was not sinful by creation. God, the sole Author of nature and man, made them to fit each other. He saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good: man, its central figure, was made in the image of the supreme God Himself. The doctrine of a Fall clears God, does not make Him the Author of sin.

(*b*) The doctrine of a Fall gives hope for man. If man's being were necessarily sinful by its make, how could he ever be delivered from sin? The Bible says the ills in which man is now involved are not the unavoidable defects of a being, low, earthly, and animal by its constitution: they are effects—serious and terrible enough no doubt—resulting from the fall of a being made in God's image. The Bible holds vices and sins to be not the original essence of human nature, into which, in that case, it must always relapse after any little improvement; but degradation, from a nature originally made upright, to which uprightness therefore it can be restored by redemption. Sin is not nature in the primal sense, but unnatural. The Bible truth of a Fall carries in it a *high* view of man's nature at the first, a *grave* view of the depth to which he has fallen, and a *hopeful* view of the deliverance which his Almighty Redeemer can work out for him.

III. *Evil behind and beyond that of man* (*a*) is hinted at in the Old Testament: (*b*) but only fully brought out by our Lord and His apostles in the New. This part of Bible teaching is a discovery or unmasking of the evil kingdom by Him who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

(*a*) In the Temptation narrative (take pains to note Gen. iii. 1-5) there is an outside suggestion of the first sin. It is not said to have come altogether from the heart of our first parents themselves. A being, who is there called "the serpent," is said to have tempted Eve, and led her into it. Later Scriptures warrant us in saying that this influence was really that of Satan—the head of the evil kingdom; but comparatively little is revealed on this topic in the Old Testament.

(*b*) It is when the Redeemer of men, the Lord of Light, comes to earth, that this dark power starts into bare and

hideous exposure. At the beginning of His ministry it made a fierce assault upon Him, but He broke the chain of its temptations at once for Himself, and by anticipation for His people (Matt. iv. 1-11; Mark i. 13; Luke iv. 1-13). All through His ministry Jesus speaks of him plainly, as an oppressor and murderer of men, as an enemy of God and truth (John viii. 44). Towards the close He beheld his fall (Luke x. 18); declared that "the prince of this world," as He calls him, had no hold upon Him (John xiv. 30); that he would be "cast out" from his rule over the world (John xii. 31); judged and condemned (John xvi. 11); stripped of a great part of his power, and finally cast into the punishment prepared for him and his minions (Matt. xxv. 41). The apostles speak of him as a power that is being vanquished, though still formidable. He still rules the disobedient and unbelieving world (Eph. ii. 3; 1 John v. 19); against him, therefore, Christians are to be constantly on their guard; as Peter himself, warned by our Lord (Luke xxii. 31, 32), earnestly warns us (1 Pet. v. 8). We are called to resist him steadfastly (Jas. iv. 7; 1 Pet. v. 9); to war, not as against flesh and blood only, but with a vast spiritual army (Eph. vi. 12). It is prophesied that at last he shall be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 2, 10).

We now see the two kinds of teaching about *sin* contained in the Bible. What we had in Lesson I. was of the kind which deepens and intensifies what we partly know by conscience and experience. The three topics we have now gone over are of the nature of revelation proper. We could not otherwise know these truths about the Fall and Satan but as Scripture discloses them.

IV. *The issues of sin, summed up in the Bible word Death*

(Rom. vi. 23; Jas. i. 15). Beware of the shallow interpretation of the words "life" and "death," as if they meant only "continuance of being," and "end or cessation of being." "Life" in the Bible means fulness of being, and "death" has many meanings besides the literal. Mainly spoken of as the consequence of sin, it has these meanings,—*Death legal*, or condemnation, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," which meant from that day they were under sentence; *Death spiritual*, "Ye were dead in trespasses and sins," "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth;" *Death physical*, "Death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" *Death final*, or the second death—the last outcome of sin unrepented of and unforgiven.

Death is the last and final effect of sin. But there are some other effects that intervene between the two terms, sin and death. Sin first entails *guilt*. Every actual sinner the Bible declares to be *guilty* (Rom. iii. 19). But guilt incurs the displeasure of God, or what the Bible calls His *wrath*. Then, this wrath, if unaverted, if the mercy which would swallow it up be rejected, must bring *death*. Observe the great practical value of counting these steps, and especially that middle one of the Divine displeasure. Sin displeases God, but God's displeasure is really death to man's nature. Sin and death are the two ends of the chain, but the intermediate link is the anger of God. Or, more shortly, "the *wages* of sin is death." Death is not simply the result and effect of sin, but its *wages*, *i.e.* something justly meted out by One Who pays. Now a great deal of modern thinking drops out this middle link. "Wrong-doing brings death, necessarily, mechanically—it must. There is no help for it. The

law of the universe entails it. Repentance is useless and redemption impossible." This is the modern doctrine of despair, or what is called *pessimism*. The Bible teaches quite another and grander truth—the controlling and commanding truth that there is a Personal God who is displeased at sin, and whose displeasure brings punishment: who, no doubt, has framed His world so that sin usually punishes itself. But the Personal God maintains the whole system freely in His own hand. It is true He is angry at sin, but His anger at sinners can be *turned away*. Instead of saying "once a sinner always a sinner and a sufferer," His book says, "If the wicked will turn from his evil ways, he shall not die, he shall surely live" (Ezek. xviii. 21). We are not in the grasp of dead, cast-iron laws, but in the hand of the living God, who will surely punish sin, but who can also say, "Deliver from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom."

### QUESTIONS

1. *How does Rom. v. 12, etc., connect our sinfulness and death with the first sin of our first parents?*
2. *How this Bible truth should not be handled.*
3. *What is its true use?*
4. *Show how the teaching of the Bible about a Fall clears God.*
5. *How it gives hope for man.*
6. *What does the narrative of Gen. iii. say about evil suggested to our first parents?*
7. *Who in the New Testament speaks most clearly of Satan, and why should this be so?*
8. *Give several meanings of the term "Death" in the Bible.*
9. *What is the defect of some modern teaching about the consequences of sin?*
10. *How does the Bible correct this defect?*

## LESSON III

### THE SAVIOUR

#### *His Person, on its human side, "Perfectly man"*

I. His natural perfection. That He is and needs be "real man." Matt. iv. 4; John viii. 40; Heb. ii. 14; 1 John iv. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 5.

II. His moral perfection or sinlessness. The meaning of it. Luke i. 35; Heb. vii. 26; 1 John iii. 5; John viii. 29.

III. Evidences for it. Matt. xxvii. 4, 19; Luke xxiii. 47; John viii. 46, xiv. 30, xv. 10, xvii. 4.

IV. Purposes which it fulfilled. John viii. 46, 47; Heb. iv. 15, vii. 26, 27.

OBSERVE what our topic for this and next Lesson precisely is. Not everything about Jesus as a Saviour for us; but as *He is in Himself*; the doctrine of the *Person of Christ*; the answer to the question, as Christian faith gathers it from Scripture, "Who and what our Saviour is?" The answer is summed up in these two statements, in their connection and harmony. "He is perfectly man" and "truly God." We begin with the perfect manhood, which comes naturally first in order of study, enabling us to start from the historical Jesus as His life is recorded in the Gospels. Further, notice that even this truth of the manhood falls into two parts—(i.) that His manhood is real and complete, naturally or physically like that of all men; (ii.) is perfect morally, or, is

possessed of the quality of sinlessness, unlike that of any other man.

I. *That Jesus had real, genuine, complete human nature.*

(a) *He says so Himself.* He calls Himself "man" (John viii. 40). He takes to Himself the promises made in the Bible for "man's" use (Matt. iv. 4). He underwent those necessities to which man, as such, is liable. He was "an hungered" (Matt. iv. 2). He was weary and thirsty (John iv. 6, 7). He slept (Mark iv. 38). He was sometimes grieved and angry (Mark iii. 5). He wept (John xi. 35). He suffered and died.

It was usual in His day to speak of our nature as consisting of three parts, spirit, soul, and body; so He expressly claims each, showing that He had all the parts of a complete humanity. "My *soul* is exceeding sorrowful" (Matt. xxvi. 38). "Into Thy hands I commend My *spirit*" (Luke xxiii. 46). Then after the Resurrection He showed to the disciples the reality of His risen "*body*" (Luke xxiv. 39). But above all, His favourite name for Himself was, "The Son of Man." This phrase occurs more than sixty times in the Gospels, and always from His own lips. Only twice in the New Testament is He called so by anyone else. This proves how lovingly eager He was to make Himself out to be our true Brother Man, "Bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh."

(b) *The apostles argue* that He was and must have been true man. Peter in his address to the people at Pentecost (Acts ii. 22), and Paul in Pisidian Antioch (Acts xiii. 23), and again at Athens (xvii. 31), both proceed on the description of a real human character as Jesus the Messiah, and freely apply to Him the term "man." In 1 Tim. ii. 5 Paul

bases the propriety of His mediatorial office on the fact of His being "Himself man" (R.V.). In the Epistle to the Hebrews the elaborate argument for His perfect priesthood rests at every point on His true humanity (see ii. 14, 17, v. 8, 9, etc.). In the language of the Apostle John, to deny "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" is the mark of a deceiver and an Antichrist (1 John iv. 2; 2 John 7). These were allusions to early heresies which came into the Christian Church, to the effect that Jesus was a Divine or Superhuman Being, appearing in the likeness of human nature: but was not really man at all. Very precious to our faith are those full and repeated assurances of the New Testament that He took upon Him our veritable nature that He might live among us and die for us.

II. *His Moral Perfection*, or, what is commonly called the *sinlessness* of Jesus.

Its meaning; the New Testament gives us three elements to make up His perfection. (a) *Of stainless nature*. Luke i. 35, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee." Heb. vii. 26, "Who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." (b) *Of sinless life*. Heb. iv. 15, "In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." 1 John iii. 5, "Manifested to take away sin, and in Him was no sin." To these two which are negative, there is to be added a positive, as we should expect, for in such a world as ours, a perfectly holy person must not merely not sin, he must do all that is good. So we have in Jesus a character (c) *of complete actual and active holiness*. He "fulfilled all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15). He "went about doing good" (Acts x. 38). Now we must strongly maintain that such a Jesus is truly and completely human—is indeed the

*only true man.* We are apt to cheat ourselves out of a real brotherly and sympathising human Saviour, by thinking, "All men are sinful, and since Jesus differs in having no sin, He must be unable to sympathise with us." The Bible says the opposite. It says, He is all the more able to sympathise and succour (Heb. ii. 18). Go back to its teaching about "*sin.*" The sinner is the unnatural man. The Man who did God's will perfectly and kept Himself spotless, is the only true man, as God made Him, which fallen and sinful man is not. We must, therefore, reject as unscriptural a view of our Lord's Person mistakenly held by some Christian people, who do not deny our Lord's actual perfection, but think that He came into the world with a nature sinful like the rest of us, only that He overcame the sinfulness and lived a perfectly holy life. This view cannot be reconciled with Scripture, for (1) a Being with a fallen nature to start from is not sinless; (2) it gives up the miraculous and immaculate conception of our Lord as recorded; (3) it contradicts the New Testament teaching, that His sacrifice was an offering *without spot* unto God.

III. *The evidence of His sinlessness.* It is necessary that so important and exceptional a fact should be fully proved.

(i.) The witness of His *friends* and *disciples*, who all declare Him to have been "without sin." They had the best opportunities of closely observing His life.

(ii.) The testimony of *strangers* and even *enemies*, such as Herod (Luke xxiii. 15); Pilate (John xix. 4; Matt. xxvii. 24); Pilate's wife (Matt. xxvii. 19); the dying robber (Luke xxiii. 41); the centurion (Luke xxiii. 47); Judas (Matt. xxvii. 4).

(iii.) The evidence of His *miracles* (John ix. 16), and of the *Heavenly Voices*, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17; Luke ix. 35; John xii. 28).

(iv.) *Of His own consciousness.* In two forms (a) He is not conscious of sin (John viii. 46, xiv. 30). (b) He is conscious of perfect rectitude (John viii. 29, xv. 10, xvii. 4). This is the highest and strongest kind of evidence; for with such a knowledge of man and of sin as He had, it is impossible either that He could be self-deceived, or that He could say what was not true.

(v.) *The New Testament Writers* use His moral perfection as the ground of various doctrinal and practical arguments (2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. iv. 15, vii. 26; 1 John iii. 5).

(vi.) The whole witness of *Christianity and of the Christian Church.* How was such a life recorded, if it was not lived? Where did such a conception of a perfect Christ come from? Who could imagine or invent it? Whence came the idea of certain virtues and of such a character as our religion demands? They were unknown till Jesus brought them. The world before Christ did not know such virtues as humility, forgiveness, and chastity. It considered them not virtues at all, only weaknesses. Who set up this standard? Jesus did. He is the source of Christian morality. Will the source shame the stream? Never. The stream may be less pure than the fountain, but never the reverse.

IV. *The purposes or uses which His moral perfection serves.*

(i.) *To convince us of the truth of His religion.* In other words, to prove His fitness for His prophetic office, *i.e.* His fitness to make known to us the entire will of God for our

salvation. He who was to bring into the world God's complete message to man needed to be a perfect Messenger. He only could be a perfect Interpreter of the Divine Mind, who perfectly did the Divine Will. This is His own argument (John viii. 46, 47), "Which of you convinceth Me of sin; and if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" Here is one who is free from sin and from error. His words in morals and in religion are of supreme authority. His message from God is to be entirely and cordially accepted. It is impossible to make too much of this central fact in the gospel history—a sinless Christ. The perfect character of Jesus, as it shines in the mirror of this history, is fitted to gladden the sin-conscious soul of man, to arouse its deep instinct for holiness and desire for God, to carry, with conviction, into heart and mind, the whole consequences of the Christian belief.

(ii.) *To sustain His claim to be our High Priest, i.e. Redeemer and Reconciler.* The largest view of our Saviour's work is that it is Mediatory. It is to bring God and man together. But sin is the cause of the difference between fallen man and a holy God. The "Daysman between" must Himself be without sin. So only would He be the sinless ransom—the sympathising and interceding High Priest. [Go over again more minutely the passages cited under III. (v.) on p. 38, and add such as John i. 29, 36; Heb. ix. 14, vii. 27; 1 Pet. i. 19; 1 John ii. 1.]

(iii.) *To lead us from the manhood of Jesus to His Godhead.* His Godhead depends upon its own proper evidence, which we shall fully adduce in next Lesson. But this prepares the way. One so perfectly and exceptionally man must be more than man. The steps of this argument

are such as these—(a) a human being without sin has appeared in a race invariably and hereditarily sinful. Such an one, therefore, though truly human, cannot be ordinarily human. How did he come into this world sinless? Answer: By the miraculous birth and immaculate conception. But this leads (b) to the doctrine of the Incarnation. It was the Divine Son who was thus born of woman, yet sinless (John i. 14). So we come to the whole truth of His *superhuman* (or, more strictly speaking), His DIVINE PERSONALITY.

### QUESTIONS.

1. *State our Lord's own testimony to the reality of His manhood.*
2. *Give instances of the use which the Apostles make of the fact that He was true man.*
3. *Of what three elements does His moral perfection consist?*
4. *What mistakes would arise from leaving out or denying the first of these?*
5. *Enumerate the witnesses to our Lord's sinlessness.*
6. *Show why His own witness to His sinlessness has special weight.*
7. *Quote a text to prove each of these uses of Christ's moral perfection:—*
  - (a) *That Christ's sinlessness gives Him a right to be believed in His message.*
  - (b) *That it is essential to the value of His sacrifice.*
  - (c) *That it fits Him to be our Advocate and Intercessor.*

## LESSON IV

### THE SAVIOUR'S PERSON ON ITS DIVINE SIDE

*That He is "truly God," and is therefore God-man*

I. Two ways of proving His Divinity—(1) From the facts of His life; (2) from the language of the New Testament generally; as John xx. 28; Tit. ii. 13 (R.V.); 2 Pet. i. 1 (R.V.); Rom. ix. 5.

II. His Godhead is that of "the Son"—John i. 18, iii. 16; Gal. iv. 4; Rom. i. 4; "the Word"—John i. 1-5, 14; 1 John i. 1, 2; Rev. xix. 13; "the Image of God"—Col. i. 15; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Heb. i. 3.

III. The Union of the Natures, in the Incarnation or God-manhood. John i. 14; Rom. i. 3, 4; Gal. iv. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

IV. The Value of this fact for our Faith and Life. Rom. i. 5; Gal. iv. 5; 1 John iv. 2, 3, v. 1, 5.

I. WE closed last Lesson with the thought that One so exceptionally and perfectly man must be more than man. That is to say—the perfect manhood of our Lord Jesus prepares us to receive and hold His true Godhead. But, observe, only *prepares*. There is more to follow. His true and proper Godhead rests on its own independent evidence, which is our theme now. There are two ways of conducting the proof. Let us call the first *Evidential*, the second *Biblical*—to be used for two distinct purposes and mainly addressed to two different religious positions.

1. The *first* is used to produce the conviction that Jesus

is divine, and may be addressed to those who are not yet Christians. Here we need nothing to start with but that the Bible is a historical book, and the Gospels an authentic record of facts about Jesus. This argument will then proceed by such steps as these—

(i.) *Jesus fulfilled the expectations and predictions about a Messiah or Christ given in the Old Testament.* Thousands of Jews, during His lifetime and immediately after it, who knew their own Scriptures, believed on Him as the Christ.

(ii.) *His life, words, and works show Him to be divine, e.g.* His moral perfection as man—the only perfect character and life in all history; the divineness of His teaching (John vi. 68, 69); the miracles which He wrought; the miracles of which He was the subject, (*i.e.*) His miraculous birth and His miraculous return from the grave and ascension to heaven.

(iii.) *His own distinct testimony that He was divine, shown, e.g.,* by His full and serene consciousness of Divine Sonship in a sense entirely peculiar to Himself (Matt. xi. 27); by His letting Himself be called God and worshipped as such (John ix. 38, xx. 28); by His claim to be Lord, Leader, and Refuge of the whole human race (Matt. xi. 28). He who says such things of Himself is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John xiv. 6).

(iv.) *His doing things and having things said of Him which belong to God only;* as, for example, forgiving sins in His own name (Luke v. 20, 21); His raising the dead by His own power (John xi. 43); His conducting the Last Judgment (Matt. xxv. 31, etc.). In other words, the matchless picture of Jesus in the gospel history, when it is truly seen and taken up into mind and heart, makes the inquirer feel that he has now seen the Father, and constrains him to agree

with Peter in the confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

2. The *second* method may be called the Biblical, and is addressed mainly to those who believe in Christ already, and accept the divine authority of Scripture. Its object is to ascertain what kind or degree of divineness Christians guided by the Word of God ought to ascribe to Jesus. This is very necessary, for there are hardly any but call Him divine in some sense. But the real question is, In what sense do the Scriptures mean us to call Him so? And the answer clearly is, that they affirm His literal and true Godhead—that He is very God of very God. We prove this by arranging the Bible witness to His true divinity. It is not necessary to show again how the Old Testament Scriptures led their readers to expect a Messiah, divine as well as human, and how Jesus has fulfilled these expectations. For the New Testament, let us study the proof in this order—(a) In some few passages Jesus is called God *simply* or *absolutely*. But (b) His Godhead is fully and expressly defined all through the New Testament as that of *God's only and eternal Son*. (c) This is confirmed by its calling Him also *the Word of God* and *the Image of God*. (d) It is amply supported by the whole current of the language concerning His Person, used both by Himself and by His followers.

The first class of passages—(A) John xx. 28; Acts xx. 28; Rom. ix. 5; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Tit. ii. 13 (R.V.); 2 Pet. i. 1 (R.V.); Heb. i. 8; 1 John v. 20—should not (so scholars tell us) be made the sole proof of our Lord's Godhead, but they are very helpful when joined to those to be adduced in next section.

II. The main pillar and ground of this truth of our

Lord's Deity is (*B*) the New Testament affirmation of *His only and essential Divine Sonship*. Notice (i.) its *frequency*. How this pervades the whole New Testament. In all the Gospels: He is called "God's beloved Son" nine times in the first three Gospels, "God's only-begotten Son" five times in the Fourth Gospel, "THE SON" and "MY FATHER" are used by Jesus countless times in all the four Gospels. He is called "the Son of God" all through Paul's Epistles, especially "His *own* Son" (Rom. viii. 3), His *very* Son (Rom. viii. 32), "His *dear* Son" (Col. i. 13), "THE SON" all through the Epistle to the Hebrews, "*His* son" many times in the First Epistle of John. (ii.) The *meaning* or *force* of all this usage is that God has no other such Son. That Jesus claims to be "the Son of God" in a sense entirely peculiar to Himself, and that all the apostles understood Him so to be. Even His enemies threatened to stone Him, and at last condemned Him to death because He claimed this (John x. 33; Matt. xxvi. 66; Mark xiv. 64).

This does not exclude His claiming also a Messianic and believer-sonship in which His people share. Further, that He reveals a Fatherhood of God for all mankind, and proclaims, as the Good News of His Kingdom, that all men may by Him become sons of God. All this, however, depended on Himself being the very Son of the Father in a sense which no other being in the universe could share. But the connection between His Divine Sonship and our redeemed Sonship is of the closest kind. "He who was, by His eternal and divine nature, the Son of God, of His marvellous grace became man; that we, who were by nature 'sons of men,' might through His grace become the 'children of God.'"

The doctrines about the Deity of Christ which have been

drawn from this great Bible definition, that He is the Son of God, are these three—

(i.) His pre-existent personality and glory, *i.e.* that He did not begin to be “the Son of God” when He was born in Bethlehem, but was eternally so; had this glory with the Father before the world was (John xvii. 5; Gal. iv. 4).

(ii.) His equal Godhead, *i.e.* that since Father and Son are of the same nature or essence, the Divinity or Godhead of our Lord Jesus is the same as that of God the Father.

(iii.) His place in the Trinity, which is that of the *Second Person*; the Father being the First, and the Holy Ghost the Third: for the truth of the Trinity is not that there are three Gods, but One God in three *Persons*.

(C) The New Testament declares that our Lord is the *Word* and *Image* of God. These two affirmations, though not frequent, are of much weight, as both describing the pre-existing Person; who He was before He came into the world; the Divine Person by whom the world itself was made, and by whom it is still upheld and governed. There could hardly be any stronger way of saying that Jesus Christ is really God. [For the passages which call Him the *Word*—a name never shared by any creature, but belonging only to the Divine Son—and those which call Him the *Image* of God—a name given to no other, though the original and sinless man was made in “the Image” and after the likeness of God, read the passages cited in Division II. of heading to this Lesson. When reading them, observe what divine works are ascribed in these passages to Him who is called in them the Word and Image of God.]

(D) The whole current of expressions used in the New Testament both by Jesus Himself and by His followers

abundantly supports the doctrine of His true and proper Godhead.

1. It is not needful to say more about His own way of calling God His Father in a sense entirely unique; nor of His offering Himself in the gospel as the Source of all truth, holiness, and rest for mankind, inasmuch as He came out from God and went to God: though this theme is so attractive that one hardly knows how to break off speaking of it once it is begun.

2. Mark the habitual language in which all the New Testament writers speak of Him. Think of the greetings, benedictions, doxologies of all the Epistles—wherein Jesus is appealed to and adored together with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. Consider the constant use in the body of these letters, of the phrase, “the Lord,”—which commonly means not God in general, but our Lord Jesus Christ, and breathes the spirit of divine ascription,—then, let us ask, Can the Book ever be thought to mean what it says, if we are not to understand that these writers held their beloved Master to be literally and truly God? So patent is this, that those who cannot see their way to confess the true Godhead of Jesus usually reject also the authority of Scripture—and quite consistently—because the witness of the New Testament to that fact is so clear and unmistakable.

III. *The Union of the Natures in the Incarnation or God-manhood.* In last Lesson we proved from Scripture that Jesus is “perfectly man.” Now we have proved, in the same way, that He is “truly God.” Let us go back in our thought to that moment or event when these two began to be one. When He who is truly God became

perfectly man, a most stupendous fact took its place in the annals of the world. On the first Christmas morning a Person appeared in history who is Divine-human or God-man. This fact we call the Incarnation (John i. 14); and the truth or doctrine of it is called in Theology, the *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, in the stricter sense of that phrase, in distinction from the many other truths and doctrines about our Saviour. This doctrine briefly stated is, that when the Eternal Son of God became man, there took place an inseparable union of the divine and human in the one Person, in virtue of which, while the *natures* remain distinct or unconfused, they have such mutual effects that our Lord Jesus is clothed with all the attributes of both, and all His acts are those of His God-manhood.

This doctrine, which is to most of us familiar as "household words," was the result in its present shape of nearly two centuries (the fourth and fifth A.D.) of earnest theological contendings, by the Christian Church, in the rejection of *error* and the construction of *truth*. The results of these, which Christians have constantly to hold fast, are—

(i.) The Oneness of the Person. The *error* which had to be first rejected was one which rose out of a deep and true sense of the tremendous distance between Godhead and Manhood, and, accordingly, kept them so far apart in thought as to make them Two Beings—the Eternal Son and the Man Jesus—between whom there was only a union of harmony or goodwill. This was called from its author *Nestorianism*. The *truth* affirmed here by all orthodox Christendom (Greek, Roman, Protestant) is that which is fixed by the word *indivisibly*. The two—Godhead and Manhood—are indivisibly united in the Person of the One Lord Jesus Christ.

(ii.) The Distinctness of the Natures. The *error* that had to be repelled here is the tendency to mix the natures, arising from a desire to make the mystery of the "Word made flesh" at once thinkable and adorable. This attempt, however, to get only one thing in Christ, really fuses the Manhood in the Godhead, and leaves us no real human Jesus. This is called in Church history *Eutychianism*, from its first preacher, in the fifth century. The *truth* affirmed in opposition to it, is that of the real union, with distinctness, of the natures. That we have in the one Christ both Godhead and Manhood *distinctly*; both without an item of retraction,—the whole true God in Jesus, and also the complete and perfect man,—a fact difficult for the mind to grasp, but adorable to the heart, and absolutely needful to make Him our mighty and tender Redeemer.

(iii.) The Communion of the Natures, *i.e.* that while the natures are neither ever *separated* nor ever *mixed*, there is a constant co-operation of the two. For instance, while our Lord was going through His course of suffering obedience upon earth, His Godhead sympathised and suffered with His Manhood, and His Manhood was sustained and fitted for its work by His constantly supplying it with the grace of His own Holy Spirit; so that our Redeemer overcame the world and sin and death by the grace of the same Spirit, through which He enables His redeemed to overcome, only by an infinitely higher degree of it, for God gave to Him the Spirit "not by measure" (John iii. 34).

IV. *The Value of these truths for faith and life.* The *errors* pointed out under (i.) and (ii.) of last section, and the corresponding truths asserted, deserve our attention for the most practical purposes of faith and worship. The idea of an

entire separation of the divine and human in Christ does not now occur very often as an error; but the confusing of the two so as to present us with a one-sided Christ is still very common. There is (1) the too exclusive dwelling on the Deity of Christ, which never lets us see a real human Jesus at all. The Christ of this extreme is simply a God walking the earth during His life below, in a thinly-veiled mask of seeming humanity. It sinks or loses the Manhood in the Godhead, and the loss to faith and comfort is incalculable. (2) The other extreme, not less common, is when the Godhead is hid behind the Manhood; when we hear ceaseless praises of the man, sometimes in terms of compliment which no creature has a right to use towards his Creator, and almost everything is said about Jesus, except the one thing that He is truly and literally God. To stand by the *Union* of the two natures is essential to our having a real God-man Redeemer. And unless we also hold the *distinctness* of the natures, we can conceive no *communion* of the natures, and thus we get neither the real human Jesus, nor the "strong Son of God."

Now, then, we have seen in our Saviour One who is *perfectly Man* and *truly God*; in whom these two are *indivisibly* united, and in whom they continue for ever *distinctly* to subsist.

But why all this pains about these abstruse and subtle definitions? Because it has been historically proved by long, sore, and sad experience that anything less than this full confession of the Christ, the Son of the living God, is the ruin of all Christian faith and life. Wherever this is not held, some form or shade of Sabellian, Arian, or Unitarian error has taken its place. Why condemn these views?

Because they condemn themselves. We are not to deny that in these partial forms of belief there is some truth. And it would be wrong to question that among those who hold them there may be real Christianity. Yet after all, and on the whole, that word of Jesus is the test, "By their fruits ye shall know them." What doctrine about our Lord's Person has been proved from its effects to be essential to vital and vigorous Christianity? Exactly that which has been briefly summed up in this Lesson. For wherever it has been rejected, Christianity has practically withered. The belief which has sustained Christian life and produced the moral change which centuries have seen is that our Saviour is, in the plain, straightforward sense of the words, very God, as well as perfect man. To this Christ bore all the apostles witness. Him have all generations of Christians adored. For this Christ the martyrs died. It is He who has founded, as on a rock, the Church of God, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. *Give the steps by which our Lord's Divinity is proved from the facts of His life and history.*
2. *What is the object of the Biblical method of treating His Divinity.*
3. *Sum up the various New Testament ways of defining and expressing it.*
4. *Show the consent of the New Testament writers in calling Him "The Son of God."*
5. *What is the real meaning of this epithet as applied to Jesus? How does our sonship differ from His, and how does His become the ground of ours?*
6. *What doctrines about Christ have been drawn from the fact of His eternal and essential Divine Sonship?*

7. *From what other New Testament titles for our Saviour is His true Godhead confirmed?*
8. *What is meant by the Doctrine of the Person of Christ in the stricter sense? State briefly what that Doctrine is.*
9. *What are the three main affirmations contained in it? Briefly describe the errors against which these are intended to guard.*
10. *Show the practical value of these affirmations; also why the whole doctrine of the Lord's Godhead is so essential to the Christian religion.*

## LESSON V

### REDEMPTION—THE SAVIOUR'S WORK

#### *I. How wrought by Him?*

*Mainly on the Cross, but fully in these four stages*

I. By humbling Himself to become Man. 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6-8; Gal iv. 4, 5.

II. By His obedient life. Rom. v. 19, x. 4; Phil. iii. 9.

III. By His sufferings and death. Eph. i. 7, ii. 13; Col. i. 14; 1 Peter ii. 21-24, iii. 18.

IV. By His rising again, ascending, and intercession. Rom. iv. 25, v. 10; Heb. vii. 25.

In last two Lessons we looked upon our Saviour's Person. We are now to look upon His Work. We are to follow Him now through the four stages of lowliness and glory in which He "obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. ix. 12). Before taking these up one by one, let us glance for a moment at those names and titles which set Him forth as our Redeemer. His name "Jesus" (*i.e.* Saviour) was given Him for this reason, "because He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). His constant title "Christ" (Messiah or Anointed—Acts x. 36, 38), because God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost for His three redeeming offices of Prophet, Priest, and King—the God-appointed

functions in redeemed Israel of old. These and many other famous titles given by Himself and dear to His people are all summed up in the great word "Mediator" (1 Tim. ii. 6), or, He who is between God and men. Notice how the idea of between-ness fits into them all. The *Prophet* is sent from God to tell us His mind and will. The *Priest* atones and intercedes for us with God. The *King* brings us into God's Kingdom and rules us there. The *Shepherd* gets us for His flock to save and keep for God His Father. [Work this out through the list of other figurative names He gives Himself; such as, The *Vine* (John xv.), The *Light* (John viii.), The *Door* (John x.), The *Way* (John xiv.), The *Advocate* or *Comforter* (John xiv. 16, cf. 1 John ii. 1).]

The parts, characters, or *offices* which these titles set forth, He fulfils in His *states* of humiliation and exaltation, or lowliness and glory. Let us now attend Him step by step as He goes through these states or stages, working out for us Redemption.

I. *His redemptive self-humbling in becoming man.* This is more exactly expressed as His humbling Himself in the way He became man; or in His conception and birth.

Even this is further divided by St. Paul (Phil. ii. 6-8) into *two* great steps, (a) His *self-emptying* (ver. 7). He that was the Eternal Son of God, in the glory which He had with His Father before the world was, in the fulness of time laid aside that God-form, emptied Himself of it, and took upon Him a man-form. This "mind," that was in Christ before He came into the world at all, is held up to us in that passage of Paul as a marvellous example of love and condescending grace: "The grace [2 Cor. viii. 9] that though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor." St. John seems to set forth the

same thing in a figure when he bids us look at Jesus—(John xiii. 3, 4, 5, “Knowing that He was come from God and went to God”)—rising from supper and laying aside His garments, and girding Himself with a towel, and as a slave with a basin washing the disciples’ feet; which leads us on to (b) His *self-humbling* (Phil. ii. 8), in that He took on Him the “form of a servant.” That is to say, He not only “laid aside” the signs of glory as the Divine Son, but He took our nature in such burdened and lowly conditions as these—“born of a woman,” “born under the law” (Gal. iv. 4). He was not only made man, but took the lot and place of man as fallen, underwent the miseries and toils which are the just effects of God’s displeasure at our sin. Thus, “He who knew no sin was made sin for us” (2 Cor. v. 21).

II. *The redemptive obedience and activity of His life.* This life of His, so rich and full, was lived on our behalf, and becomes an element in our redemption, because in it He “always pleased God,” not for Himself only, but in such a way—(a mystery here let us adore!)—that we also, joined to Him, become, for the sake of it, “well-pleasing in God’s sight.” Glance rapidly at the salient points.

(i.) In His infancy He submitted to the rites of God’s law for ancient Israel (Luke ii. 21–24); in His childhood and boyhood to the obedience of His human home (Luke ii. 51); in His long, silent preparation of thirty years, to the discipline of youth and young manhood, during which He “grew in wisdom and in favour with God and man” (Luke ii. 52).

(ii.) At the commencement of His ministry He “fulfilled the righteousness” preached by His Forerunner, in being by him baptized (Matt. iii. 15). Thereupon He was by God the Father approved as His beloved Son, the Holy Ghost

descending and lighting on Him in the form of a dove (Matt. iii. 16, 17). Then immediately afterwards He was "led of the Spirit" into the wilderness, and exposed to forty days' solitude, fasting, and temptation, the climax of which is described to us in the form of a terrible threefold Satanic trial (Matt. iv. ; Luke iv.). All this that He might be fitted to be a "merciful and faithful High-Priest" for us, and might "be able to succour them also that are tempted." For the same purpose He endured the contradiction of sinners, and when He was reviled answered not again.

(iii.) Through all His public life—the Founder of the Kingdom of God on earth—the Revealer of God's will for our salvation—the Preacher of righteousness was redemptively occupied. In His miracles of healing He was showing Himself as the Redeemer even of our bodies. "Who Himself bare our infirmities and carried our sicknesses." In His raisings from the dead He was the Comforter of man's keenest sorrow and the Conqueror of His last enemy. He was the Friend of sinners, the Seeker of the lost, the Helper of the helpless. Along with and throughout this active life for men He was living out that pure and perfect character in which the Holiness of God was mirrored, so that it could be said that he who had seen Jesus had seen into the heart of the Almighty God and Father of men. In this life of God-glorifying obedience and man-serving helpfulness and self-sacrifice there was more than a pattern to be admired and adored, and diligently imitated by us. There was also through it all, woven out for us, that robe of perfectness in which we "might be found, not having our own righteousness, but that righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 9).

III. *His redemptive sufferings and death.* To impress the truth that the Cross of our Lord is the *central fact* in human redemption let us notice—

(i.) *His own words about it.* He foretold it and spoke of it during his lifetime in such a way as to show that He Himself reckoned His death to be mightier than His words or His miracles, more far-reaching and world-embracing in its results than any other thing which even He could do for mankind,—*the end or purpose, indeed, for which He came into the world.* “He came to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark x. 45). He fixed the memory of it in the central ordinance of the Christian Church. “This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many” (Mark xiv. 24). His death on the Cross, He said, was as needful for the redemption of sinners as the lifting up of the brazen serpent was for the wounded in the desert (John iii. 14, 15). His flesh and blood, He said, is the heavenly food given for the life of the world (John vi. 51). Only because the Shepherd gives up His life for them are the sheep delivered from death (John viii. 11). He sanctifies, or consecrates Himself (as a priest or sacrifice) for His people’s sake, that they also may be sanctified unto God (John xvii. 19). These weighty sayings of our Lord Himself about His own death before it came, we ought to ponder with affectionate reverence if we would understand its depth of meaning.

(ii.) *The testimony of the Gospels.* That the recording evangelists regard the last sufferings and death of Jesus as the climax and crown of His work is plain from the way in which *all the four narratives* become most minute and exactly agree when they reach the point, when “His hour” has come, and

when the "pains of death" begin. From that point on, they cause us to see, as with our own eyes, every moment and every movement from the Paschal Chamber to the Garden, from the High-Priest's Palace to the Procurator's and to the Tetrarch's, by the "sorrowful way" to the Cross and to the grave. On two things especially they lay stress—(a) That the process through which He was done to death was, however false and shameful, one of so-called judgment. "He was reckoned," as He said Himself, "among the transgressors" (Luke xxii. 37). (b) That the manner of His dying "upon the accursed tree" showed that it was for us He died. "He was made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13).

"On Him was our transgression laid,  
He bore the mighty load."

(iii.) *The witness of all the apostles in their speeches and letters.* Wherever they went they preached "Christ crucified," i.e. that the main thing Jesus had done for the world's salvation was to die for it. The Epistle to the *Hebrews* makes Christ above all things a Priest who had such a sacrifice to offer as no other ever had. "Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself, without spot, to God" (Heb. ix. 14). *St. Paul* in his letters determines to know nothing so much as the Cross, which sets forth "Righteousness and propitiation" (Rom. iii. 25); "Reconciliation by the death of God's Son" (Rom. v. 10); "Forgiveness through His blood" (Eph. i. 7; Cor. i. 14); "The far off brought nigh" (Eph. ii. 13); "Peace, and all things made one" (Col. i. 20); "Everything that was against us taken out of the way" (Col. ii. 14). *St. John* began his discipleship by being pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God (John i. 35), and so through all his letters Christ is "the

propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii. 2, iv. 10); and through his other Book of the Revelation, it is the glory of the "Lamb slain for us" he lets us see (Rev. v., vi., vii., xii., xiii., xiv., xv., xix., xxi., xxii.). *St. Peter* in his Epistles is full of Him, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24), and "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. iii. 18). The "Blood of Christ" shines through almost every page of the letters of all the apostles;—blood "which purges the conscience," "brings remission," "gives entrance to the Holiest," "sanctifies the people," "redeems us from our vain conversation," "cleanseth us from all sin." But indeed to exhaust this we should need to quote a large part of the New Testament.

IV. He redeems us also by *His rising again, ascending to Heaven, and interceding for us there*. Let us dwell on His Resurrection and Ascension not so much now—as these were His reward for suffering and obedience, His exaltation after He had first humbled Himself—but as they are a glorious *finishing* of His redemptive work.

(i.) The *Resurrection* of Christ *completes* what His life and death so amply obtained for us. "If we were reconciled to God by the *death* of His Son," says Paul, "how much more shall we be saved by His life" now in Glory? (Rom. v. 10). "He was delivered [*i.e.* unto death] for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). Further, it *attests* and *witnesses* that what Christ did for mankind in His living and dying, God the Father has accepted and sealed (cf. Acts ii. 24, 32; xiii. 30-37; xvii. 31; Rom. i. 4). Best of all it is the "risen Christ" who *applies* salvation to us, by making us share in the spiritual power of

His resurrection (cf. Rom. vi. 5; Col. iii. 1; 1 Pet. i. 3). There is no case in which Christ's resurrection justifies a sinner, but in the same "the power of His resurrection" regenerates and sanctifies those who are thus "risen with Him to newness of life." Last of all, it is Christ's resurrection which *pledges* and *secures* for us our bodily resurrection to Glory (Phil. iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. throughout).

(ii.) His *Ascension* and sitting down at the right hand of God completes redemption in some further and glorious aspects of it. For example, (a) His *High-Priesthood* then and there completed one of its functions and commenced another. Our Lord's entrance into Heaven is a turning-point or crisis in His Priesthood. It corresponded to that supreme act in the Jewish service when the High-Priest consummated the offering for sin by carrying the blood into the Holy of Holies and presenting it on the mercy-seat. Our High-Priest in His ascension "entered for us within the veil," has passed through all visible and inferior heavens, has ascended above them all into the "Heaven of heavens"—the presence of God. By His own blood He has entered once for all into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. That part of His work is *finished*. For this Priest, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God" (cf. Heb. iv. 14; ix. 12, 24; x. 12, etc.). But then another part of His priestly function *begins*. He has "entered within the veil as our forerunner" (Heb. vi. 20) to prepare a place for us. Having surmounted all His trials and accomplished all His work, and learned obedience by the things that He suffered, He has an "unchangeable priesthood, wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by

Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 24, 25). There is now for every struggling Christian on earth a perfected Saviour on high, for every need of ours, even the worst, "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1).

(b) His *Kingship* also takes a new departure when the glorified Saviour enters Heaven—when our Royal Priest is "set on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens" (Heb. viii. 1). In one aspect of His Person and work this is absolutely new. He was in Heaven from everlasting as the Eternal Son of God; but He was there for the first time, at His Ascension, as God-man, as the Incarnate One glorified. It is now the *Son of Man* who is come to His kingdom. It is *man* as well as God that is now ascended up on high, and He Himself foretells that an astonished world shall yet "see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark xiv. 62). And this new dignity He has received not as mere honour to Himself, but for the purposes of His Kingdom of Redemption, that He may give eternal life to men and extend the blessings of salvation. For these ends God has now set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places (cf. John xvii. 1, 2; Eph. i. 20-23).

### QUESTIONS.

1. *Why is our Saviour called Christ?*
2. *A mediator is one who mediates or comes between. Illustrate by this as many of our Lord's New Testament titles as you can.*
3. *Explain distinctly the two steps in our Lord's condescension specified in Phil. ii. 6-9. What are the uses of it stated in that chapter for our imitation, and why?*

4. *Name some situations in life which are specially helped by our Lord's example.*
5. *What part of our redemption was provided by His obedient life, as distinguished from His atoning death?*
6. *Prove from something Jesus did before He died that He Himself counted His death His greatest service to mankind.*
7. *Show how the Resurrection is an important part of His redemptive work.*
8. *Show how His Ascension and place in Heaven illustrate—*
  - (a) *A crisis and turning-point in His Priesthood.*
  - (b) *A new departure in the exercise of His Kingly function.*

## LESSON VI

### REDEMPTION—THE SAVIOUR'S WORK

#### II. *What it is, as wrought for us*

I. The Atonement or Propitiation for our sins. Rom. iii. 25; Heb. ii. 17; 1 John ii. 2, iv. 10.

II. The Reconciling us to God. Rom. v. 10, 11; 2 Cor. v. 18-20; Eph. ii. 13; Col. ii. 14.

III. The Ransoming or Redeeming of our persons and services for God. Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Cor. iii. 20; Rev. v. 9.

IV. The Revealing of the love of God in Christ. John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9, 10; Eph. v. 2.

WE have looked at *Redemption* as that which our loving Redeemer carried through in a series of sublime and glorious steps or stages, viz. in His Incarnation, in His obedient and holy life, in His sufferings and death, and in His Resurrection, Ascension, and Intercession. Now we come to look at the results of what He so carried through, or what He obtained for us in His life, death, and rising again. These we shall consider under four great New Testament terms, viz. Propitiation, Reconciliation, Ransoming (or Redemption), and Revealing. [Please to find these words in the series of passages arranged above, and note that they are Bible words and not terms coined by divines.]

I. *Propitiation*. There is another word very much used

in teaching and preaching which means nearly the same thing, viz. "Atonement." But this word occurs only once in the A.V. of the New Testament (Rom. v. 11), and has been now rightly changed in the R.V., though it remains in the Old Testament. It really covers both the two great Bible ideas of Propitiation and Reconciliation. Thus, when pronounced "Atonement," it is the same as the first term, for atoning and propitiating are the same thing; when pronounced "at-one-ment" it is equivalent to the second, for reconciling is the same as making to be "at-one," or agreed. The two ideas are closely connected. Something had to be done in relation to human sin and divine justice which the Bible calls "making atonement" in the sense of "propitiation"; and upon that, something else follows, is grounded on the propitiation or obtained by it, which the Bible calls "at-one-ment," or "reconciliation." Our care, in teaching this truth, should be to dispel the shallow notion that there is nothing, in the work of our Saviour, done God-wards, that only man and his feelings need to be brought over to God, that it is only man that requires to be made friends with his Maker. If that were so, Propitiation, which is the Bible word, would be wholly unmeaning.

Now let us try to understand what this God-ward side of our Lord's work really means and what not.

(i.) What it does *not* mean. The Bible never represents the Cross of Christ as having for its object to produce a new or different disposition in God toward us sinners. It tells us that God's disposition towards men is of such a sort always, even "while they are yet sinners," that He "gave His Son," "sent Him to be the propitiation for their sins." The Bible assures us that it was not Christ's Atonement that obtained

for us God's love, but that God's love provided the Atonement. Further, even the Old Testament avoids altogether the heathenish expression which would make the sacrifice or offering propitiate God, appease or pacify Him. The New Testament never says that the Cross of Christ has quenched God's wrath, lest we should think of it as something going before God's love and procuring for us God's favour. Always it puts God's love for men first, as the fountain-head, out of which flowed the self-sacrifice of the Cross.

(ii.) What it *does* mean. Christ's dying on the Cross enables God to show His changeless love and always gracious disposition towards sinners in a new or changed way. And this it expresses in *two* forms. (1) Out of regard to our Lord's self-offering, we are now admitted to that nearness and fellowship with God from which our sin had debarred us. That which took place on Calvary makes it now possible that man can be brought near to God, restored to sonship and filial service, re-admitted by a Holy God into His holy presence. This great thought is carried through all the Epistle to the Hebrews, which takes its language from the Temple. In that book it is declared over and over in the strongest terms that this is now accomplished in our High-Priest's sacrifice once for all on the Cross, and we are urged now to "draw near in full assurance of faith" (Heb. iv. 16, x. 22). (2) We are taught, especially in St. Paul's writings, that what was done, for this purpose, on the Cross, was done in a way that is just, honourable, and glorifying to the divine law and attributes—in a way so agreeable to all the principles of God's holy and righteous government, that the pardoned and accepted ones can never fear its reversal any more. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are

in Christ Jesus." This teaching is specially given in the Epistle to the Romans (cf. Rom. v. 1, 8-11, viii. 1).

II. *Reconciliation*. Upon the propitiatory or atoning work of Christ now described, which has to do with the innermost dealing of God with human sin, with its defilement, and with the consequences due to it, there follows the glorious fact, to be proclaimed in all gospel ministry, that there is now complete *Reconciliation* between God and man. This Reconciliation has two sides.

(i.) It has a divine side. In Christ such a propitiation has been made that God can, through His messengers, address the world of mankind as "not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 19), which is a change in God's procedure toward us, and not merely in our feeling towards Him. But it has also—

(ii.) A human side. Through the same glorious means—Christ lifted up on the Cross and God's love displayed there—He does remove the enmity of men's sinful heart, and draws them to Himself. Let us bear in mind, then, that "Reconciliation" is double-sided. The Bible word is large and broad, beyond our English word "reconcile," in which we are apt to see only the bringing of one of the parties out of sulk and ill-feeling. The New Testament always speaks of "God reconciling us to Himself" by the death of His Son on the Cross, but the expression includes both the parties; it means the re-establishment of friendly relations on both sides. Why we say so much, in our teaching this truth, as to the *divine* coming first,—the propitiation, as that on which the *human* return or reconcilment to God depends, is to dispel those false and shallow explanations which make Atonement mean only the overcoming of our ill-feeling

towards God—an explanation based, as Archbishop Trench well says, “on a desire to get rid of the reality of God’s anger against sin.” There are three things about this reconciliation which are much to be thought on. St. Paul states them for us.

1. *It comes wholly from God.* “All things” (in it) “are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. v. 18). There is really no one and nothing outside of God that can affect it. Now this has important bearings, both doctrinal and practical.

*Doctrinal.* People get on a wrong line of thought whenever they imagine a third party bringing man and God together. Who is the Worker or Agent in this mighty transaction? Our Lord Jesus Christ. But who and what is He? “Perfectly man”; therefore He can lay His hand upon us His brethren, can stand with and for us. “Truly God”; therefore acts and transacts, in this, within the Godhead, as for God His Father and the Holy Spirit. It is the God-man in whom we are brought near to God. God gave His Son, and the Son gave Himself. It was “God in Christ” that reconciled sinners to Himself.

*Practical.* No man, no one outside of God, has anything to do with the providing and establishing of our peace with God. No sinner has to reconcile God, to pacify Divine anger, to bring God over to be friends with him. There is no such phrase between the two boards of the Bible as “reconciling God.” Nothing has to be provided on our part to bring Him over to forgive us. That was all settled outside of us, but inside the Almighty, large, and loving heart of our Saviour-God. This, plainly and firmly put, has brought rest, in countless instances, to puzzled and anxious ones.

2. It is a quite *finished* transaction. It was done once for all and for ever in the Cross of our Lord Jesus. "God was in Christ" (on that eventful day), "reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19); *i.e.* then and there God completed the transaction by which He is enabled to "not impute their trespasses unto them." Our message is couched in the *past tense*. "God so LOVED the world, that He GAVE His only-begotten Son." Preachers sometimes quote it, "God *is* in Christ reconciling," etc., and happily there is a sense in which that may be truly said. God is constantly reconciling guilty and hardened souls in their feeling towards Him by the preaching of the gospel. But His "message of reconciliation" is that the great transaction was done upon the tree. "When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. v. 8, 10). The thing was done on Calvary and finished there. Or, you may even date it further back. In God's forgiving disposition and His intending love, it dates from eternity past—"The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." In any case, let us always think and speak of the Reconciliation God-ward as finished, completed, perfect. Man can never touch it, tinker at it, or intermeddle with it. We are simply to be the heralds and messengers of the good news to one another.

3. It covers *both sides*. Not merely was the Divine anger then turned away when Jesus died for us, but human enmity was virtually slain. It got its deathblow on the Cross. We should preach a poor half-gospel if we were to say—Now on the Cross God has reconciled Himself to you. Do you the rest! Piece out and finish the transaction! Change your proud mind! Break your hard heart and reconcile yourself to God! No! Our old nature was "Crucified with Christ"

upon the tree. Our triumphant Saviour is now exalted to "give repentance" as well as "remission of sins." Yield yourselves to Him who has "done it all." "Be ye reconciled unto God."

III. *Redemption.* This word has been used in the title both of Lesson V. and of Lesson VI. in its large and general sense, viz. the entire result which our Lord obtained for us by His doing and dying. Now let us think of it in the more exact sense that in His Self-offering on the Cross, He was *ransoming and redeeming us and our service for God.* There are two words mainly used for this in the New Testament—to redeem or ransom, and to buy or purchase; and their effect is the same: redeemed means ransomed, or bought with a price. Let us try to understand rightly this *Ransom* which the Lord effected when, as He says, He "gave His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). It was not that He paid a price for our sin, or rendered an equivalent for our guilt merely. It is true that towards God and in respect of our sin His offering of Himself was propitiatory or expiatory, for sin and instead of sinners. That has been shown in Section I. under "Propitiation." But it is more. Toward us, it is redemptory. It is a ransoming of us. He made atonement for our sins, but He also obtained redemption for ourselves. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). Observe, then, the full meaning of the Redemption obtained for us by our Lord through that ransom-price of His own life which He paid down. It bought us. It was not a price which merely bought liberation from punishment, or *bought up* the penalty of sin. If ever it is so thought of or taught, such teaching would lower the idea of God's free grace, and be in some danger of

turning grace into an occasion for sin. Further, it did not merely *buy us off*, far less did it *buy us out*, or let us go. It rather bought us in, bought us for Christ and for His Father. No doubt we can truly and scripturally say that there are some bonds and stripes it bought us from under. "He redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13). He was sent forth born of a woman and made under the law, "to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. iv. 5). That is to say, by that glorious ransom of His, sin and death are stripped of their captives. But all this was to the end that we might receive "the adoption of sons," might become members of a redeemed family, might enter into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. More exactly still, it *bought us back*. We were at first the property of the Lord our Maker, children of God by creation in His image. Sin brought us into bondage, sold us into the slavery of Satan (John viii. 34). The Son of God by His Cross makes us free, because He wins us again to God and His Father. So Redemption is the Lord's getting back His own, in a way which makes them twice His own and doubly dear.

Notice the defect of some common ways of putting this. We rightly try to teach by examples and illustrations. But we must see that these are not too shallow. A generous person buys a bird in a cage; then opens the cage and lets it free. A philanthropist buys a slave in the public slave-auction, to give the slave his liberty, who then out of gratitude freely serves his liberator for life. Such illustrations are not altogether without use. They picture the deliverance and the gratitude which may follow the payment of a ransom. But they leave out an important part of Christ's way of delivering us by His ransom. They leave out the *Re-*, the

buying *back*. Our salvation by the Cross is not mere *Emption*, far less *Exemption*; it is *Redemption*. When we take the Bible way of illustrating God's love in our salvation, we get deep and true views of it. Observe, *e.g.*—

(a) The great historical illustration taken from God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt at the first, and his bringing the two tribes out of the Babylonish captivity near the close of the Old Testament history. In both these instances the Redemption was God's getting back His own out of bondage and captivity. Or, take—

(b) The Hebrew system of re-purchase set up by Moses. Lands or persons under that system were never sold but with a right (which even the seller could not part with) to buy back at any time when he or his friends could raise the money. Even, at worst, the sale was only till next jubilee year. Then, what had been sold must return to Jehovah, Whose it was all the while. Notice one thing more—

(c) The right of redeeming land or persons lay not with the debtor merely, but with his next-of-kin; failing him, with the next again, until one was reached who could and would redeem: [*e.g.* the story of Boaz and Ruth; also that of Jeremiah with his cousin's field at Anathoth (Jer. xxxii).] This illustrates not only the meaning of the Ransom and the bearing of Redemption, but the rights of the Redeemer. This helps to clear away those objections to the Doctrine of the Cross which speak as if the doing and dying of Another were accepted instead of us. Our Lord Jesus is not Another, in the sense of being a Stranger. The Lord says, "My lost children of men were sold away from Me by their sin. But there is a way to bring back 'My banished,' to 'save My sheep which were lost.' I give for them My Only-begotten,

who, becoming man, is also their next-of-kin, that with His own life He may buy them back to Me whose they are, and from whose service they have been estranged. Let Him do this, Who has the best right to do it—their Kinsman-Redeemer from everlasting" (Isa. lxiii. 16).

IV. *Revelation* of the love of God in Christ to men. This is the highest end of all Christ's work, to glorify God and to teach men to think rightly about God. "I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it" (John xvii. 26). Looking back over all this teaching of the New Testament about Propitiation, Reconciliation, and Redemption, especially the last, we see—

1. How it reveals the *power* of our God and Father. Even the terrible bondage of sin is not hopeless to Almighty Love. He says, "Deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom" (Job. xxxiii. 24).

2. His *righteousness*. He has proved His right through His dear Son, our Lord and Brother, to redeem us. The ransom-price could not but be taken at His hand, who is our nearest Kinsman.

3. His *grace* and *favour* for men. This ransom-price is paid, not to let them go, or send them away, but to free them for His service, to buy them home to God, to be His now more than ever.

4. His *faithfulness* to carry this Redemption right through to the end. The day of "Redemption of the purchased possession" is fixed (Eph. i. 14, iv. 30), when He shall un-faillingly secure them all and everything about them, for whom He paid the ransom.

The chief value of this truth is the glorious light in which it sets the *Redeeming Love* of the Three-one God. This is

its highest point. We must never stop short of this in our teaching. We should never treat salvation by the Cross as if it served mainly to show what we call Divine Righteousness—or, as if that meant exact justice in requiring satisfaction for sin. It goes far beyond this. Our salvation is of Righteous Grace—"Grace through Righteousness" no doubt, but supremely and finally Grace or Love to the undeserving. This is the preaching of the Cross, "God so LOVED the world." Love is the highest thing in God, and the thing which is most spiritually real for mankind,—the thing which so convinces men that matter, force, time, space are not all, are really as nothing in God's universe against the heart of God Himself. Let us always keep this before ourselves and those we teach—Divine Love revealed in the Son-sacrifice of the Father, in the Self-sacrifice of the Son. This lifting up of Jesus on the Cross draws men to Him. It has moved the world. Christ is God's Love incarnate, and in Him God is loved by men with a devotion not otherwise possible. The Cross is the practical power which attracts men into actual Divine Fellowship and Friendship. "Herein is Love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us and gave His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10).

#### QUESTIONS.

1. *Give the passages which use the words Propitiation and Reconciliation.*
2. *What is the connection between these two things?*
3. *Give another word which may be so used as to contain them both.*
4. *The effect of our Saviour's self-offering Godwards. What this does not mean and what it does mean?*
5. *What is meant by saying that Reconciliation has two sides?*

6. *Show from the passages quoted that Reconciliation is (1) all of God, (2) quite finished, (3) and covers both sides.*
7. *Scripture says that "Christ bought us with a price." What mistaken or lower meanings of that phrase should we avoid, and what is its true or highest meaning?*
8. *Show the defect of some ways of illustrating Redemption.*
9. *What are the biblical ways of illustrating it? Show their larger and better force.*
10. *What are some of the glorious qualities or attributes of God that are shown forth by His redeeming sinners to Himself?*

## LESSON VII

### SALVATION—WROUGHT IN US BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

I. His Person : Who He is. Matt. xxviii. 19 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 14 ; John xv. 26.

II. His Function or Office in Salvation. John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7 ; Tit. iii. 5, 6.

III. His Public exercise of it—on the world and in the Church. John xvi. 7-15 ; Acts i. 8, ii. 1-4, iv. 31.

IV. His Private or Personal application of it. Acts ii. 37, xvi. 14 ; Eph. i. 13, 14, iv. 30 ; Acts vii. 55 ; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22 ; 1 John ii. 20, 27.

WE are passing now from the doctrine of Redemption to that of Salvation. By Redemption is meant the finished work of our Redeemer in His life, death, and rising again—what God in Christ has done *for* us. By Salvation is meant what God works *in* each of us by His saving grace. The doctrine of Salvation teaches how we are actually saved, how we may get a personal share in the Redemption which Christ obtained for man. But before going into the details of this truth of Personal Salvation, it is becoming that we should consider the Divine Worker of it in us. Before we treated the Redemption, we had two studies of the Truth about the Person of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Now, here again we have a like theme for reverent study and adoring thankfulness. It was God through Christ that provided Redemption *for* us. It is Christ through His Holy Spirit

who actually works Salvation *in* us. The proper introduction to this part of Christian doctrine, therefore, is a general view of the *Person and Work of the Holy Ghost*—Who He is, and what part He takes in our Salvation.

I. *His Person: Who He is.* The whole Bible shows that God has revealed Himself to man as Three-in-One. But the unfolding of this sublime revelation comes by great steps or stages. The Old Testament is mostly occupied in teaching the Divine Unity,—that there is One living and true God. The New Testament opens with the four Gospels, in which is revealed the Second Person—the One Divine Son, our Lord. The knowledge of the Third Person—God the Holy Ghost—is fully given in the Acts and Epistles. It was only towards the end of His career that Jesus began to speak plainly to His disciples of another Divine Teacher who was to come to them when He had gone to Heaven (John xiv., xv., xvi.). His Pentecostal coming is described in Acts ii. Then the Epistles are full of references to Him, along with the Father and the Son. That He is to be *equally* worshipped and glorified with the other two is plain from the Baptismal Formula (Matt. xxviii. 19); the Apostolic Benediction (2 Cor. xiii. 14), and countless other places. That by the Holy Spirit is meant not a mere divine influence or attribute, but a PERSON, can be easily proved by the places where He is spoken of under personal *pronouns*. “*He* shall teach you . . . *He* shall testify of *Me*” (John xiv. 26, xv. 26, xvi., and all through these three chapters); as exercising personal *functions*, e.g. 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, xii. 11, only a *Person* could “search,” or “know,” or “will”; as the subject of personal *treatment*, e.g. Eph. iv. 30, only a *Person* could be “grieved.” That He is truly God, and therefore no created Being, is sufficiently shown by

the passages already cited, and may be further illustrated by such passages as Acts v. 3, 5, where lying to the Holy Ghost is said to be falsehood to God; 1 Cor. iii. 16, vi. 19, where our body as the temple of the Holy Ghost is said to be the Temple of God. Thus the whole Scripture clearly teaches us that the Holy Spirit is a DIVINE PERSON—the third in the Holy and Blessed Trinity.

Before going on to speak of His part in Salvation, let us mark that while in *Person*—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are clearly *distinguished* in Scripture, we must never think of them as wholly *separate* in the work of our Redemption and Salvation. It was shown, *e.g.*, already that when we say Christ atones for us, we must always remember that not Christ separate or apart from the Father atones, but that God in Christ provides and accepts the atonement. So when we say that the Holy Spirit regenerates or sanctifies us, this means, according to Scripture, that Christ and His Father are saving and purifying us through the Holy Spirit. The Three-in-One for our Salvation are “all in whole and all in every part.”

II. *The Function or Office of the Holy Ghost in Salvation*, will be best brought out by considering the names or titles He bears in the New Testament.

1. *The Holy Spirit*. He is so called to bring out His distinction as the “Spirit of God”—infinitely separated from all other “spirits,” not only from the unclean and evil, but also from the “angelic,” from the “human,” and, in short, from all created or finite spirits. In one place (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11) He is contrasted even with the “spirit of a man which is in him.” And He is “Holy,” not only as thus separate from and infinitely above all others, but because the chief end of

His work in man is to produce Holiness, wherefore He is sometimes called "the Spirit of Holiness" (see Rom. i. 4).

2. *The Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of God's Son* (Gal. iv. 6). This Title brings Him into close connection with our Salvation, in two ways—

(a) Because He is that Divine Person and Power through whom our Saviour was fitted to redeem us. It is suggestive that this assistance furnished by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Himself comes to view, in the gospel history, before those records in the later New Testament books of the activity of the Holy Ghost in the conversion of sinners and in sanctifying the saints. Observe how, in the Evangelic Narrative, is expressly ascribed to Him the formation of our Lord's holy humanity (Luke i. 35). To His descent upon Jesus at His Baptism is ascribed our Lord's full consecration for His Messianic work (Matt. iii. 16). To His anointing, Jesus traces His own call and power to preach the gospel (Luke iv. 14-18). The most difficult of His miracles—casting out devils—Jesus Himself claims to work by the Spirit of God (Matt. xii. 28). His whole career of good-doing St. Peter describes thus: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts x. 38). The crown of all His redeeming work—His self-offering on the Cross—is put in the same form, "who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God" (Heb. ix. 14); as well as His rising again from the dead (Rom. i. 4, viii. 11). Thus closely associated with our Saviour's whole life and work He may well be called "the Spirit of Christ."

But (b) this title, besides expressing the personal relation of the Spirit to Jesus Himself, also reminds us that in actually saving us He acts for Christ and from Christ. He works and effects in our hearts and lives all that Christ Himself has

undertaken or promised to do for His disciples. For just as the work of the Son was not His own, but rather (as He loves to say) "the work of the Father who sent Him," and in whose name He performed it, so the work of the Holy Spirit is not the Spirit's own, but rather the work of the Son by whom He is sent, and in whose name He fulfils it (John xvi. 13-15). As we go on, also, we shall find that the way in which the Spirit actually saves and sanctifies human beings is by holding forth Christ to men, uniting them spiritually to Christ, and maintaining their union and communion with their glorified Saviour. No wonder, therefore, that the Holy Spirit bears the title "Spirit of Christ."

3. The most special name for the Holy Ghost is that of *Paraclete*—Comforter or Advocate—given to Him by Jesus Himself in the discourse of John xiv., xv., xvi. This may be considered His Title of Office, as describing the two-fold function which He exercises now in representing Christ. The one is to *convince* or *convict* the world (John xvi. 8). The other is to *comfort*, *help*, or *teach*, in a word to *anoint*, Christ's disciples (John xiv. 16). Our Lord expressly says that He Himself must depart or go away, in order that this other Comforter may come (xvi. 7). We hold the Spirit, therefore, to be the Representative of Christ now, carrying on His work both in the Church and towards the world. It may further be shown that the two functions of conviction and anointing are exercised each of them, respectively, in two distinct spheres—the public and the private; a glance at these, in detail, will cover the whole of the Spirit's Agency in bringing Salvation into actual effect among men.

III. *His Public Exercise of it*—on the disciples and on the world. Towards the Church or the disciples of Christ

the Holy Spirit is an unction or anointing—a Baptism with power. Then, through the Church or body of believers so baptized with the Holy Ghost, He effects the convincing or conviction of the world. The first great instance of this two-fold effect was on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts ii., when the Holy Ghost came with power upon the disciples, and through them testified of Christ to the convincing of sinners. Pentecost, therefore, may be said to have begun the ministry of the Holy Ghost, and to be the type for its continued exercise ever since.

(a) The part which the Holy Ghost fills as *Comforter* or *Teacher* of the Church (see the three chapters of John's Gospel already cited) since Christ's departure, is to take the Saviour's place as representing Him and directing them. He was to remind them of what Christ had taught. He was to unfold to them what, in that teaching, they had not fully understood. He was to give fuller and more extensive knowledge of the truth. He was to support and superintend them in spreading the gospel. He was to increase them in wisdom and spiritual power. In short, He was to be with them and in them an abiding unction, maintaining among them the Presence of their Head and Lord.

(b) On the other hand, His part as *Advocate* or *Pleaser* of Christ's cause in the world is described in John xvi. 8-11. It is to convince men of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

(i.) Of Sin, by proving that Jesus, whom men had crucified, was the Son of God, and thus their sin had no more any cloak or excuse from ignorance; but those who reject Christ are now found guilty of the sin of sins because "they believe not in Jesus."

(ii.) Of the personal righteousness of Jesus and of the right-

eousness of God wrought in Him for men's salvation. That righteousness is now sustained and sealed by His rising again and ascending to heaven ; because He is now gone to the Father and men see Him no more.

(iii.) Of Judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged, *i.e.* the open testimony of the Holy Spirit has reversed the condemnation passed by men upon Jesus when they slew Him. That condemnation has now passed over to the Evil One, who is now discovered and cast out from his power over men. Judgment has now gone out against all the superstition, idolatry, and wickedness with which Satan filled the world.

The result of this rebuke or reproof by the Holy Spirit is two-sided. It is confusion to the world as a whole ; but it breaks up the kingdom of Satan among men by separating them into the saved, who, being convinced of sin, yield themselves to the righteousness of Christ, and so pass over to His side ; or, the condemned, who, convicted but not convinced, remain under the doom appointed for the Devil and his angels.

IV. *The Spirit's private and personal exercise of the same.* There is a similar two-fold function of *anointing* and *convincing* carried on by the Spirit towards individuals in saving them. But here it comes in the reverse order. He is first a Spirit of conviction and conversion to them, baptizing them unto Repentance, Remission, and Regeneration. Then, He is a Spirit of Holiness, anointing them to their full standing and service as Christians.

1. In that whole process by which any one passes from the state of sin into a state of grace, the Holy Spirit is the worker. In that process He is fulfilling His part as Paraclete

in the first sense. He is dealing as *Advocate* or *Pleaser* with one whom He finds in the world and of the world, convincing him of sin. This He does at first with a secret efficacy, working in the "hidden man of the heart." The person may be quite unaware at the time Who is the worker. The Spirit does not show Himself, nor speak of Himself, but witnesses of Christ alone, for His aim is to bring the soul to Christ. And we who are Christian workers should respect and imitate that method, speaking to convinced sinners more about Christ, to Whom they should come, than about the Spirit who is striving with them on Christ's behalf.

2. Then the Spirit, having brought the soul to Christ, comes to His second function of confirming or establishing the man in Christ by His *anointing* or *sealing* (see 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; Eph. i. 14, iv. 30; 1 John ii. 20, 27, etc.). This second step, which is called in the New Testament "the gift of the Holy Ghost," "receiving," or "being baptized with" the Holy Ghost, has been too much neglected in our ordinary Christian teaching. It comes distinct from and after the first operation of the Spirit, as the passages quoted above clearly show. There is now a change of *method*. Whereas the former was secret, this is open and patent. It is the manifestation of a child of God. It is the witness of the Spirit with his own spirit, to his sonship. It is his receiving the robe, the ring, the credentials of his standing as a son returned to the Father's house and heart. He is now joyously aware of the Spirit's working in him; therefore it is compared to Fire with which he is baptized, Oil with which he is anointed, a Seal, or Pledge, or Earnest by which he is confirmed in Christ. Further, there is a change of *effect*. Regenerating or converting grace had for its effect union

of the soul to Christ once for all. The effect of confirming or anointing grace is to keep up the communion of the soul with Christ, and to bring it to its fulness. The Unction flows down from the Head to the members; the Seal where-with God the Father sealed Him, also seals them. The Pledge and Earnest is the Spirit of Christ abiding or dwelling in them.

All these effects or steps of the Spirit's work in the hearts of those who are being saved have thus been looked at, as part of the process of actual Salvation—Conviction, Conversion, Repentance; then, Confirmation, establishing in holiness and fulness of grace. In Lessons that follow, we shall consider each of them more at large by itself. The object of this Lesson has been to show how they are all wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit as the agent or minister of Christ. The use of so regarding them is great. In the individual, it is this conscious acknowledgment, that he owes them all to the Spirit, which glorifies and honours the Third in the Blessed Trinity. It is the Spirit-taught believer who can take up that article of the Creed and say as with the thrill of a personal recognition, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." In the collective body of Christians, it is those circles and Churches that have most directly honoured the Holy Spirit that have been honoured by Him in missionary effort and in the practical fruits of Christian life and work.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. *Prove that the Spirit is not a mere attribute or influence, but a Person.*
2. *Show that He is distinctly acknowledged in Scripture as God.*
3. *Show how the Three in Holy Trinity co-operate for our Salvation.*

4. Give the force or meaning of these titles:—
  - (a) "The Holy Spirit."
  - (b) "The Spirit of Christ."
  - (c) "The Paraclete."
5. Name some instances of the Holy Ghost being said to be our Lord's personal helper in the work of Redeeming us.
6. Bring out the Spirit's two-fold function in applying Redemption to men, and show how its two sides are connected.
7. Illustrate this connection on the public scale; how He works on the disciples and on the world respectively.
8. State the order and steps of His working in the salvation of the individual soul.
9. Show the practical value of full Scriptural teaching about the Holy Spirit.

## LESSON VIII

### INITIAL GRACE, IN WHICH THE SPIRIT BRINGS US TO CHRIST

I. Regeneration, or the New Birth. John iii. 3, 5; Tit. iii. 5; 2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 5.

II. Conversion and Vocation. Matt. xviii. 3; Acts iii. 19; Rom. i. 6, viii. 30; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 9.

III. Repentance unto Life. Mark i. 15, vi. 12; Acts xi. 18, xvii. 30, xxvi. 20.

IV. Faith in Jesus Christ. Acts xvi. 30, 31, xx. 21; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. iii. 17.

IN last Lesson we had Bible teaching as to the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit in general. Now we fix our attention on the special and personal aspects of that work, viz. How He effects the salvation of a human being; the method and order in which He brings it to pass. The hinge or centre of the whole "way of salvation," is our being spiritually and effectually joined to the Saviour. *Union to Christ* being the centre, the whole process and results of personal salvation fall into two movements, one on either side of this central fact. (1) An *initial* or *preparatory* work of grace, of which the motto or sum is, *coming to Christ*. Then (2) a completing work, which results from "*Abiding in Christ*." To the former movement belong: The New Birth, Conversion,

Repentance, Faith. To the latter, all the gracious results of being joined to Christ, *e.g.* pardon and peace with God for Christ's sake ; being received into His family, and called "Children of God" ; the life and character which we know as Christian Holiness. To describe these in some detail will occupy all the remaining Lessons of our course.

That this is the usual order of the Spirit's working in the soul, and the actual "way of salvation," may be proved both from Scripture and from experience. The New Testament, read straight forward in the order of the Books, proves it. In the Gospels and Acts, Jesus and His first preachers are seen insisting on the first or initial steps of grace : "Repent, and believe the gospel ;" "Ye must be born again ;" "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Then, the Epistles, which are addressed to Christians, constantly speak of them as "joined to the Lord Jesus" ; as "in Christ" ; as "living and walking in the Lord" ; which proves that union to Christ is the ground of all Christian life and privilege. Then, the blessings which flow from being joined to Christ, are further and fully opened and explained in these Epistles :— "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1) ; "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26) ; "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 1). This order is confirmed by *experience*. To the consciousness of a Christian there comes an awakening, a quickening, a calling to follow Christ ; then, a sense of being in fellowship with Christ ; then, through this, an experience of blessedness, peace with God, and growth in

holiness, by the power of Christ who dwells in him, and in Whom he abides. Let us begin with the earliest of these—the Awakening, or Spiritual Birth.

I. *Regeneration* is the absolutely initial grace, the very first step in personal salvation (Tit. iii. 5). There are three main terms for it in the New Testament, all expressing the same thing, viz. (a) Being born again, or born from above, born of water and of the Spirit (John iii. 3-5); (b) Quickening, or Spiritual Resurrection (Eph. ii. 5, 6); (c) Renewal, or New Creation (2 Cor. v. 17; Rom. xii. 2). These three—New Birth, Rising from the Dead, becoming a New Creature—are the strongest possible ways of describing the change. They may be called figures for it, but the change which they describe is no figurative, but a most real change. They plainly teach such truths about it as these:—(1) That God is the author of it, for raising from the dead, and creating out of nothing, are things which God alone can do; (2) That the person who is thus being changed is, at the time of the change, passive, if not even unconscious of it, as the analogy of Birth and Creation seems to imply; (3) That the change is one not merely of conduct or outward actions, but one inward and radical. When one passes from “death unto life,” a new principle is implanted. The great change is not mere moral reformation, but regeneration, or renewal of the whole nature.

II. *Conversion* and *Vocation* are other names given in the New Testament to the great initial change, and set it forth in further and fresh aspects.

*Conversion* is spoken of much in the same way as the New Birth. It is the necessary and indispensable first step in actual salvation (see Matt. xviii. 3, in texts for Section II.). Peter, addressing the multitudes after Pentecost, tells them to

Repent and be converted, that their sins may be forgiven (Acts iii. 19). Yet *Regeneration* and *Conversion* are not exactly the same. Our Lord speaks of the necessity of Regeneration, "Ye *must* be born again" (John iii. 7). His apostles speak of the duty of Conversion, and regard it as the object of their preaching to produce it (cf. Acts xi. 21, xiv. 15, xxvi. 18). We may mark the difference thus: Regeneration is the power or principle divinely implanted; Conversion is the act of the man, under that divine power, turning to God. There may be further differences, *e.g.* in every case of one entering the kingdom there must be Regeneration, he must be born again. There may not be in every case a manifest or sudden conversion. If grace has been given early, the soul has been, there and then, born of the Holy Spirit. In that case, what is called Conversion may be like the gentle unfolding of a flower, which grows from a living root. Again, though the New Birth and the showing of it in Conversion may usually occur together, and have always a necessary connection with each other, the first occurs at once, and once for all; the second may follow, and have several distinct stages. Even the return or recovery of a Christian from sin or lapse is called his Conversion (see Luke xxii. 32), though his Regeneration in the New Birth had occurred long before.

*Vocation*, or *Calling* to be the Lord's, is the most frequent New Testament form for the beginning or initial grace of the Christian life. Christians are "*the called* of Jesus Christ" (Rom. i. 6); "*called* to be saints" (ver. 7). Their entrance into the new life is "*their high calling* of God" (Phil. iii. 14); the "*holy calling* whereunto God has called them" (2 Tim. i. 9); "*the heavenly calling* of which they are

partakers" (Heb. iii. 1). It is the result of a previous divine resolve, for they are "the *called* according to His purpose" (Rom. viii. 28). To those who are elect or predestinate, there follows the whole golden chain of graces— "*Called, justified, glorified*" (Rom. viii. 30). Christians are expected to "walk worthy of the *vocation* wherewith they are *called*" (Eph. iv. 1).

Now this way of representing one's Conversion or New Birth as his being "*called* into eternal life" (1 Tim. vi. 12), has for us several suggestions. (1) It agrees with the former terms—Birth, Quickening, Creation—in showing that God alone is the prime mover in the change. Its original source is divine. It is "of God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. iv. 17). (2) It is rather larger in its meaning than terms like "Conversion," which indicate one acute crisis, or turning-point. Our being "*called* out of darkness into marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9), "*called unto, or through, glory and virtue*" (2 Pet. i. 3), is plainly a movement or process, having in it such steps as enlightening the mind, convincing of sin, renewing the will, persuading to believe. (3) It is a change produced by a Call or Voice, by something addressed to heart and conscience. That something is none other than the Word of God, which is "His power unto salvation," "the engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls." So that this term, "Calling" or "Vocation," applied to the great saving change, constantly reminds us that it is God's Word applied by the Spirit which is the main if not the sole instrument by which men are brought into the kingdom of God, and not any mere external acts or ceremonies.

III. *Repentance unto Life.* (a) *Its ground in Scripture.*

This is a grace which was made prominent from the beginning. Our Lord's preaching from the first was that men should "repent and believe the gospel" (Mark i. 15). It was one of the ends, He says, for which He came into the world, "to call sinners to repentance" (Matt. ix. 13). He is now exalted with God's right hand, "to give repentance and forgiveness of sins" (Acts v. 31). His last charge to the apostles was, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke xxiv. 47); and this charge they carried out, "Testifying to Jews and Greeks [*i.e.* to all mankind] repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21). Genuine sorrow for sin is called "Repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18), or "Repentance to salvation" (2 Cor. vii. 10), to distinguish it from mere natural remorse or worldly sorrow, which "worketh death" (*ibid*). The grace of true repentance is always the gift of Christ, and the work of His Holy Spirit. It is plainly an *initial* grace, and one connected with faith. The first steps of personal salvation are that men "should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for Repentance" (Acts xxvi. 20).

(b) *Its meaning*, or wherein it differs from other aspects of the great change. In general, we may say that it is a "change of mind," as the Greek word for it literally means; and especially a changed way of regarding one's own *sin*. It is a turning from sin with hatred and loathing of it; a turning to God with trust in His mercy, through Jesus Christ, for full forgiveness or remission. This is clearly its meaning, as shown throughout the New Testament in numberless instances. But it has been often much obscured and mistaken. For a

long time—in what are called the “Middle Ages”—it was not thought of as a turning from sin to God once for all by a great change of mind—rather as a life-long work. Christians were put under a system which made repentance a long course of confession and satisfaction to the Church—a system which put them upon self-inflicted punishments or penances, as a way of working off and clearing up their account with God for sin. Since this bondage or captivity has been removed by the Reformers and their teaching, there has been sometimes an opposite kind of mistake. Repentance has been too little preached, or when it is preached has been made the same as Conversion, or decision for God. But real repentance is deeply concerned with our deliverance from sin. It is contrition as well as conversion. And preaching which only urges immediate acceptance of salvation, and assures of immediate forgiveness, without impressing on the conscience the loathsomeness of its sin, the terribleness and the guilt of its natural bondage, is not likely to produce much practical effect.

(c) *The connection between Repentance and Faith.* It has been sometimes questioned whether Repentance follows Faith, or goes before it? It has been already shown that true repentance is the fruit of God's Spirit: it arises not merely from a sense of the awfulness and guilt of sin, but from a belief that, notwithstanding our sin, God will be merciful to us, and pardon us for Christ's sake. Mere terror produces no “repentance unto life.” The great love of God in providing a Saviour for us, and the great love of the Saviour in bearing our sins and bearing them away, is what really moves us to penitence. To believe in this Loving God is Christian faith, and therefore we may say that

genuine Repentance is a fruit of Faith. Yet it must be said that, in the experience of salvation, there are usually two distinct stages in our feeling about our own sin. There is, at one stage, a sense of sin driving us to Christ, and then a further and fuller sorrow for sin and hatred of it, when we more fully realise the mercy of God in Christ forgiving and accepting us. Faith and Repentance are thus very closely connected. "They shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and mourn because of Him" (Zech. xiii. 10, applied in John xix. 37 to our beholding Jesus on the cross). It is not first "mourn," and then "look"; not first "repent," and then "believe"; but looking they shall mourn—a believing penitence and a penitent believing.

IV. *Faith in Jesus Christ.* (1) *Whence it springs*, or its source. What we have been going over as to Regeneration, Conversion, Repentance, is simply to point out the steps in the way by which the Spirit usually leads the soul out of the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of God. Therefore is this whole topic that of initial grace. But the crown of them all, the immediate link to salvation, is the one we have now come to—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). Why it is so, is plain. Faith links the soul to Christ, therefore puts it in possession of the entire fruit of His redemption. The unbelieving soul is out of Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life" (John iii. 36). Yet faith itself is the fruit of a Divine work in the soul going before. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8). Faith is the act not of a dead, but of a living soul, therefore the act of faith has been produced by the quickening grace of God's Holy Spirit, and is usually

accompanied by the other graces already explained. So the chain of initial or preparatory grace is complete when Faith crowns the series, and unites us for ever with the Saviour.

(2) *What it is, or its nature.* The general faith of a Christian is his believing or holding for true what God has revealed to us in His Word. But what is called specific or saving faith is something more. It is not merely believing what is told us in the Bible or in the gospel about Christ; it is believing *in* and *upon* Christ, trusting Him for salvation. It is not merely general credence, but personal trust. "I know *Whom* I have believed (or trusted), and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12). It is right, however, to point out the *two elements* in true faith.

There is (a) the *Believing*, which of course implies *knowing* about the Saviour. No one can be saved by a Redeemer of whom he knows and cares nothing. Christian faith is not blind assent to one knows not what. The Christian "knows *Whom* he believes." Hence the need on the part of the Church to preach and instruct, for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Hence the need, on the part of men, to understand and receive the message. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17).

(b) *Trusting.* There must be more than knowing or hearing a message—there must be personal trust in a personal Saviour; committing ourselves to Him as to a faithful Redeemer (cf. 2 Tim. i. 12). This is the essence of saving faith, this taking Christ for our own, "receiving and resting upon Him alone for salvation." It has sometimes, indeed, been asked whether true faith does not even go farther than this personal trust in the Saviour, and this claiming Him for our own:

whether it does not also mean a belief that "my sins are forgiven, and that I am really saved." It seems wiser to say that this personal *assurance* (as it is called) follows faith: that, though we cannot say there is no faith where it is wanting, we are entitled to say no true faith will want it long. If one can honestly and cordially say, "I give my soul to Jesus, the Saviour is mine," it will not be long till he can add, "and I am His."

(3) *The sole sufficiency of Faith* for pardon and peace with God (Rom. iii. 28, iv. 5). This truth has been and is obscured wherever it is thought that only through the Sacraments and ordinances of the Church is salvation possible. It was against this error St. Paul contended at the beginning, saying that those who held it had departed from the simplicity that is in Christ, and taught another gospel (Gal. i. 6-9). So all Reformers and Evangelicals of every age have had the honour to contend for immediate salvation as the right of every one that believes in Jesus. Anything else than this (a) *hides the Saviour's glory*, for He says, "Come to Me, and I will give you rest"; "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" (Matt. xi. 28; John vi. 37). And (b) *it brings men into bondage* to ordinances. It misrepresents divine grace, as if it were only to be got out of the reservoir of the Church, and through her channels; whereas the "Spirit and the Bride say, Come! and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

#### QUESTIONS.

1. *State the order of Grace, or the steps of personal salvation, and show on what hinge or centre these depend.*
2. *Prove this order from Scripture, and from Christian experience.*

3. *Three leading New Testament terms for the first great change, and the inferences we may draw from their use.*
4. *What is the difference between Conversion and Regeneration?*
5. *What truths are taught by the New Testament term "Calling," as applied to the beginning of the new life?*
6. *What are the two main elements in Repentance, and why is it called "Repentance unto Life"?*
7. *What is the relation of Repentance to Faith?*
8. *The two elements in saving Faith, and why the second has special value?*
9. *In what sense do we speak of "Faith alone" as bringing salvation?*
10. *What are the two evils which result from putting other things in its place?*

## LESSON IX

### CENTRAL GRACE OF SALVATION—UNION TO CHRIST

I. Scripture terms and figures for it, "in Christ" or "in the Lord" (everywhere in the Epistles). Also 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5; John xv. 4; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Eph. v. 23.

II. What it is not and what it is. John vi. 53-56, xv. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 17; Eph. v. 32.

III. How it is begun and maintained. By faith and through the Spirit. Rom. viii. 9, 13, 14; Gal. iii. 14, 26.

IV. Its issues or results—(a) Grace conferred or imputed, John i. 12; (b) Grace conveyed or imparted, John i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 30.

I. *Scripture Terms and Figures.* Union to Christ must be looked at, not so much as a single grace or blessing in our salvation, rather as the centre of the whole. The graces considered in last Lesson—Regeneration, Conversion, Repentance, Faith—lead up to it. In and by these workings of God's Holy Spirit, we are united to Christ; and from this union all the further blessings of salvation flow, such as Pardon, Acceptance, Adoption, and Holiness. It is well entitled therefore to have an entire portion to itself. Let us first consider the way in which it is *defined and described in Scripture.*

1. The New Testament Epistles are particularly rich and frequent in the use of the phrase, "IN Christ" or "IN the Lord" (*i.e.* Jesus), to cover the whole being and activity of a

Christian man. It is used thus in every chapter, and through some chapters in almost every verse of St. Paul's letters. Further, all the stages of a Christian's actual experience of salvation are expressed, in these same Epistles, as a sharing with Christ in the acts and steps by which He obtained Redemption for us. We are "crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20), *i.e.* to the world; "dead with Christ" (Rom. vi. 8), *i.e.* to sin; "buried with Christ by baptism into His death" (Rom. vi. 4); "quickened together with Christ," by regenerating grace (Eph. ii. 5); "raised up together with Christ" in spiritual resurrection; "made to sit together with Christ in the heavenlies" (Eph. ii. 6), *i.e.* in spiritual privilege: all the humiliation of a Christian's lot on account of his faith is a "being partaker of Christ's sufferings" (1 Pet. iv. 13); all the glory and the triumph of it is "reigning with Christ," for if we share His cross, we shall also share His crown (2 Tim. ii. 12). Could anything more completely prove the spiritual oneness of the Redeemer and the redeemed, than this way in which all their experience is made a parallel or a copy of His?

2. Still further, there are those impressive New Testament figures or analogies which throw a strong light on this oneness. It is likened to the oneness of a *Building with its foundation* (1 Cor. iii. 11-16, where the idea is that of a great Temple; 1 Pet. ii. 4-6, where it is that of a House with all the stones livingly joined to the corner-stone); the oneness of a *Tree with its branches* (John xv. 1-5, where the tree is a vine; Rom. xi. 16-24, where it is an olive); the oneness of a *Body with its head and members* (Eph. iv. 15, 16); of a *Husband and wife* in the married relation (Eph. v. 31, 32). There is, last and highest of all, that comparison in John xvii.

21, 23, where the Saviour prays that *He and His people may be one, as He and His Father are one*. "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." This is to be understood as a comparing of the spiritual or mystical union, not to that of the Trinity, or essential unity of the Godhead, which would be scarcely conceivable, but rather to the unity of Jesus as the Saviour and Sent of God, with the Father who sends Him. "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (John xvii. 23).

II. *Its Nature—What it is not, and what it is.*

1. It is not any mixture or confusion of Being. There is no loss or merging of personal identity. There is no sinking of individual moral responsibility on the part of a believer. Though joined to Christ by faith and in spiritual fellowship, the Christian is none the less accountable to God for all his actions, but only all the more, as being advanced to this high privilege, "called of God unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 9). Neither do we find in Scripture any ground for holding a literal or corporeal partaking of Christ's glorified manhood in the Eucharist. Our spiritual union to Christ has in it neither anything unmoral, as if it removed our personal responsibility, nor anything merely magical or external, as if it followed on a bodily partaking in the Sacrament, though, as we shall shortly see, the Communion of the Lord's Supper has a very special relation to the fostering and maintaining of our spiritual fellowship with Christ.

2. Again, it is not, on the other hand, a mere association

of interests between Christians and Christ. It is not mere union in a cause, or movement, as if He were only the Leader and we His followers, joined to Him and to one another simply by sentiment, interest and affection. That would fall far short of the reality which our Lord and His apostles teach us on the subject.

3. It is a union which we call *vital*, *spiritual*, or *mystical*. It is called *vital* and *spiritual*, because by faith we dwell in Christ and He dwells in us, "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John xv. 4). Further, it is a spiritual thing, because it is brought about and kept up by the Spirit of Life uniting His people to Christ, and continuing in them as the cement, sap, or vitalising element. And this not as a mere element, a power outside of them or working upon them, but as the personal indwelling Holy Ghost. "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. iii. 17). "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16). "As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Cor. vi. 16).

It is also called the *mystical union* (see Eph. v. 32; Col. i. 27), not because there is anything about it which contradicts or confounds our understanding, but because it is a divine secret, a spiritual treasure open to some, though as yet unknown to others—a secret kept between the soul and its Redeemer, manifesting itself only by its fruit.

III. *How it is begun and kept up.* In a word, In the Holy Spirit and Through Faith. The essential bond or uniting

power is the Holy Spirit of Christ entering into and keeping possession of the soul. The instrumental link is personal faith.

1. When the soul first believes on Christ the union is formed, the vital connection begins; by continued and constant faith it is carried on and perpetuated. To form this union of the soul to Christ at the first is the work of God's grace. More particularly it is ascribed to the secret efficacy of His Holy Spirit. The act of beginning or initiating it is what we call Regeneration, Conversion, and the like (see details in Lesson VIII.). So that the real cause or author is the Holy Spirit; the instrumental or inward cause is Faith; all which we sum up when we say that the Spirit puts us in possession of personal salvation by working faith in us, and thereby joining us to Christ with all the riches of His grace.

2. No less does the Holy Spirit through faith as His means or instrument keep up or continue the union to Christ so begun, and maintain that fellowship with Christ in grace and glory which is the substance of our entire actual salvation. Thus the expressive figures already quoted are used, in the New Testament, to describe not merely our being joined to Christ once for all, but our continuing and progress in grace. The spiritual *Temple* grows on to its completion, being "buildd for an habitation of God through His Spirit." The branches, grafted in once for all, "abide in *the Vine*" and bear much fruit. Christ, the living Head, dwells in all His members and works through them, so they that are joined to the Lord are one spirit as well as all members of the one *Body* of Christ.

3. While *Faith* is thus the internal or spiritual link which unites to Christ, and may in a sense be called the only means

by which union to Him is maintained, it must not be forgotten that there are external means which minister to faith, and are indispensable to the result. Two of these, the *Word* and *Prayer*, are singled out in our Lord's own teaching on this subject for special prominence. (a) The *Word*. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7). It is through the things He has spoken that His joy is to remain in us and that in Him we may have peace (John xv. 11, xvi. 33). Nothing could more pointedly enforce the constant searching and careful use of the Scripture as that through which Christ abides in us and we in Him. It is not, of course, mere reading of Scripture that is meant in such sayings; that His Word should be the means of union and of fruitfulness, it must be "kept," *i.e.* obeyed, and cherished, it must be laid up in our innermost hearts, and be the treasure of our inward life. (b) So with *Prayer*. It is the Christian's vital breath. It is the bond of that spiritual life which is described as having Christ dwelling in our hearts. It is the means of intercourse, the fellowship of the soul with Him. It is the response of the soul to the communications of Christ in the Word. The two mutually act on one another. Christ keeps the union vital, by so letting us hear His voice in the Word and in the gospel, not silent to us, that we may never be dumb towards Him. (c) It must further be said that besides these two principal outward means, the Word and Prayer, there is another, which is the symbol or seal of union, *viz.* the *Sacrament*. Indeed, both Sacraments are related to it. The Sacrament of Baptism, which takes place once in a lifetime, is intended to seal our being once for all vitally joined to Christ. While the Sacra-

ment of the Supper is intended as a means and a seal of our Communion, or Fellowship with Him "as oft as" we partake of it. No amount of abuse of this ordinance through externalism or superstition should make us forget its real place and power or fail in its gracious use and privilege.

IV. *The Results or Issues of Union to Christ.* The results are in a word the whole of our personal salvation. Out of this Fountain or Well-head of being joined to Christ every grace of salvation flows, every benefit of Redemption becomes actually ours. Upon some of these graces or blessings of salvation we shall dwell in Lessons that follow. But it is of moment to look how they all depend on this grace of being made one with Jesus, and also to note how there are two distinct ways in which they come to us. Union to Christ *confers* some graces or benefits of Redemption at once, by way of *right* or *standing*. Certain other blessings it *conveys* in a way of *influence* or *power*.

(a) What it *confers*, is the *state* or *standing* to which we are entitled, at once, when we are joined to Him. The New Testament clearly teaches, that as soon as we are one with Him, we are pardoned and accepted in the Beloved, we are counted righteous before God for His sake. "We are made [or become] the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). This is commonly called our *Justification*. Again, so soon as we are joined to Christ by faith, we have a new standing, as belonging to the family of which Christ is the first-born. "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God" (John i. 12, R.V.). This is called in the New Testament "The *Adoption* of Sons" (Gal. iv. 5). It is plain that these things are conferred upon believers at once when they are vitally joined to their Redeemer.

(b) What this Union *conveys* is the spiritual or vital influence, the power of the new life. This, it is plain, is more of the nature of a process or growth. It is the Spirit of Christ who has begun to live in us, the moment we were united to Him by faith, making us increasingly like Himself, reproducing every feature and line of His virtue in those that are the members of His body. This is called our *Sanctification*, and it is the prayer and hope of all Christians, as it is their Lord's promise, that this process will go on until they are "wholly sanctified," "spirit, soul, and body," transformed into the likeness of their glorified Redeemer.

Taking these altogether, notice the clearness, truth, and force with which the whole salvation in all its parts and processes is seen from this central point of view—Union to Christ; that pardon, righteousness, sonship, holiness—in short, all the blessings of Redemption—become ours when we become one with Him. These are not so many separable or separate items taken from Him and bestowed upon us, rather they are all ours when we put on Christ. It is not so much that we take any of them from Christ, as that we have them all in and with Christ. More than half of the objections or difficulties that arise about Christ's merit being imputed to us, or we being counted righteous for His sake, disappear when we attend to this great New Testament idea. We are made the righteousness of God *in Him*, and so are justified. In the New Birth we become spiritually of His flesh and of His bones, born into the family of which He is the elder brother and first-born, so are regenerated and sanctified. In our adoption we share His Sonship, and thus have communion or fellowship with Him not only in grace, but also in His glory.

To these more direct and personal results of Union to the Redeemer may be added the indirect effect—that this Union forms a spiritual and mystic oneness of all the *redeemed with one another*; a truth contained in the figures already expounded in their more explicit sense, viz. the oneness of a Building and its parts, of a Tree and its branches, of a Body and its members. The several parts, branches, or members are all in a sense joined to one another, as well as to their Head and Centre.

### QUESTIONS.

1. *Quote some of the New Testament phrases in which oneness with Christ is expressed.*
2. *Briefly explain the New Testament figures or emblems used to illustrate the Union.*
3. *What kinds of Union are not meant in this connection?*
4. *Why is the Union called vital, spiritual, or mystical?*
5. *Its Author and inward instrument? or How it is formed and maintained?*
6. *Name three outward means or helps to its maintenance, and briefly explain how each of them has its special use for this end.*
7. *Show two distinct ways in which the blessings of salvation come to us from our being united to Christ.*
8. *Bring out the value of this whole idea of salvation and its blessings.*
9. *Mention an indirect result of Union to Christ.*

## LESSON X

### GRACES RESULTING FROM UNION TO CHRIST

#### *Change of State—Justification*

I. Why when united to Christ we are at once justified. Rom. viii. 1 ;  
1 Cor. i. 30 ; 2 Cor. v. 21 ; Eph. iv. 24.

II. That this includes full pardon and acceptance with God. Rom.  
iii. 24, 25, iv. 6-8 ; Eph. i. 6.

III. What it is that is counted to us for Righteousness. Rom. i. 17,  
v. 18, 19, x. 3, 4 ; Phil. iii. 9.

IV. How it is received and evidenced. Rom. iii. 22, v. 1 ; Gal. v.  
5, 6 ; Jas. ii. 18.

#### I. *Why when united to Christ we are at once justified.*

1. Justification *means* full pardon and immediate peace with God. That a sinner upon his union to Christ by faith passes at once from a state of sin into a state of salvation in this respect, belongs to the essence of the gospel. That this is the blessing of every one that believes on Jesus, and that it depends on nothing else than his believing, is the way of proclaiming the gospel which makes it truly glad tidings. At two periods of history this has been proved on the grandest scale. The first was when at the beginning of the Christian Church the gospel was threatened with the gravest danger in consequence of some Hebrew Christians teaching that men could only enter into salvation through the gateway of the

Old Testament ritual, *i.e.* that men must first become Jews in religion before they could be Christians. It was given to the Apostle Paul to check this danger, and to preach free and full salvation for all mankind in such words as "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ"; "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. v. 1, iii. 28). The second period was when the corruptions of the Middle Ages had so overlaid the gospel throughout all Christendom, that men were not thought to be fully pardoned and accepted of God until they had satisfied the Church for their life-sins by penance in this world, and in most cases by purgatory in the world beyond. The Reformers of the sixteenth century found it like a new gospel (though it was only a revival of the true gospel of Jesus) when they could say, "The just" (*i.e.* the man whom God counts justified) "shall live by faith," and accordingly proclaimed justification by faith as the "hinge or turning-point of personal salvation," and as the "Article of a standing or falling Church."

2. WHY this full pardon and immediate acceptance with God comes to a believer in Jesus *at once*, and *once for all*, is plain from the New Testament truth expounded in last Lesson. When the soul is united to Christ it has a right and standing in Christ which is complete, and this takes effect at once, especially with regard to sin and righteousness. Christ has died for our sins once for all, and when we believe in Him we are at once pardoned all our sins. The condemning effect of them is dead and done with (Rom. viii. 1). Not only so, but the righteousness which Christ has fulfilled and finished becomes at once ours also, and we "are made the righteousness of God in Him." When we "put

on Christ," we are covered with that spotless robe of His, and are accepted in the Beloved (2 Cor. v. 21; Eph. i. 6, iv. 24).

3. Notice that this is a *change of state*. One who believes in Jesus is at once and wholly saved "*in this respect,*" *i.e.* in respect of his inward state and right of standing before God. This must be said to protect the truth from abuse or confusion. He is not wholly saved in respect of everything. There is salvation from actual sinning—salvation of character yet to be wrought in him by the Spirit of Jesus. But he is at once and entirely in a saved position Godward, pardoned and at peace with God. If still, it be said, he sins in actual life, the Scripture replies, "Yes! and for these sins he will be thoroughly dealt with by his God and Father" (Heb. xii. 6-9). If, further, it be said that his state before God is not as yet proved and known to men, the Scripture says it will be proved or justified by his deeds (Jas. ii. 18, 22), and will be proclaimed to the whole world on the judgment day (Matt. xii. 37, xiii. 43, xxv. 40). But as a state of inward justification it is complete from the first.

II. *Justification includes both Free Pardon and Entire Acceptance with God.* Let us look at the Bible evidence on both these points.

1. *Free and full forgiveness.* "Justified freely by His grace," "the remission of sins" (Rom. iii. 24, 25). "No condemnation" (viii. 1). This had been largely taught even in the Old Testament. It was one of the terms of the New Covenant spoken of beforehand, *e.g.* Jeremiah xxxi. 31, 34, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." It had been set forth by many a vivid emblem. Entire forgiveness and at once is the state of the justified. "Blessed is the man whose sin is forgiven" (Ps. xxxii. 1).

"Forgiven," *i.e.* "removed," "taken away," as the entrails and the ashes were taken away when the sacrifice had been offered, as the scapegoat was "removed" into a land of separation when the sins of the congregation had been confessed over it (Lev. xvi. 21, 22), as the creditor wipes out the account when it has been paid (Isa. xliii. 25), as the cloud vanishes out of an Eastern sky when the sun arises (Isa. xlii. 22). So when the New Testament Gospel came it preached to men first of all, as "Glad Tidings," "the forgiveness of sins" (Acts xiii. 32, 38). "In whom we have Redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. i. 7). "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). The New Testament phrase, "forgiveness of sins," is larger and better than "pardon" (a word which is never used in our version of the New Testament). "Forgiveness" means "removal," "taking away," and is thus closely connected with the "bearing" or "taking away" of sin by the Sin-Bearer (John i. 29). This requires to be fully understood and received at the outset of a Christian career; for nothing less than this is the life of one who believes in Jesus. The way of nature, into which Legalism and Romanism relapse, is that of piecemeal pardon, keeping a debit and credit account with God, or that of fancied composition or compromise. "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." The Lord's way is, "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them" (Luke vii. 42). Forgiveness—full, free, and altogether.

2. *Entire acceptance in God's sight.* The justified man is not only pardoned, he is counted righteous (Rom. iv. 4-6). To be merely pardoned in the sense of let go, or let off,

would only be half the blessing, if even that. The man who believes in Jesus is not only no more counted a sinner, he is "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6), and the first blessing is grounded on the second. The strongest form to express God's way of forgiving sinners is to say that their sin is not counted to them at all. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Ps. xxxii. 2). But how can this be? St. Paul explains it in the passage quoted from Romans. He says the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord will not impute (or "reckon," R.V.) sin is that of the man to whom God reckons righteousness. That is to say, his sin is not counted to him, because something quite the opposite of sin is counted to him. He is no more held a sinner, because he is held righteous by God, "who justifieth the ungodly" (Rom. iv. 5). Now this shows us the real depth and strength of the divine way of forgiveness. God's pardons are no slack and easy things, not like man's careless forgiving and forgetting. The forgiveness of our sins is the simplest and completest thing for us, because it rests on the deepest and costliest thing for God. "He spared not His own Son," that it might be accomplished. His forgiving of us is no mere passing by of a fault, or letting off from a penalty, or overlooking a blunder. It is a reversing of the sternest of moral facts. The scarlet of our guilt is turned into the snow-white of His acceptance. He will not reckon to us our sin, because He has put the righteousness of His dear Son to our account. Instead of something that comes to us by chance or caprice, the forgiveness of our sins is the most solid and deliberate of the divine works. "Mercy shall be built up for ever; Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens" (Ps. lxxxix. 9).

III. *What it is that is reckoned to us for righteousness*, in our justification. Here there are several mistaken or imperfect notions that have to be put aside and the true New Testament idea set forth.

1. The Romish notion that the grace imparted or the gracious character conveyed to the soul by regeneration and the use of the sacraments is the thing which God reckons to us as righteousness. But this is to overthrow the whole doctrine of salvation by grace. It makes God pardon and accept us, because we are become good, instead of His first forgiving and accepting us for Christ's sake alone that we may become good. And it is exactly contrary to the words of Scripture, "Who justifieth the ungodly" (Rom. iv. 5). "When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom v. 10).

2. The notion that the sincere obedience, though imperfect, which in a Christian springs from faith is counted by God as if it were a complete and satisfying righteousness. This notion proceeds upon the very serious mistake of supposing that it was any part of our Lord's redeeming work to break down God's holy law and make easier terms for His receiving men than its honourable and entire fulfilment. This strange medley or composite of divine grace and human merit in salvation is completely set aside in one sentence of St. Paul. "And if by grace, then is [*i.e.* salvation or justification] it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. xi. 6).

3. The notion that *Faith* itself is the thing that is reckoned as righteousness in a Christian is a misunderstanding about words, rather than anything seriously wrong.

Those who put it so really agree, for the most part, with the teaching of the New Testament. Their view is only a too literal interpretation of a single text, viz. that "Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness." It is really the thing which faith receives and rests on that becomes our righteousness with God. That we are "justified by faith," means that we are justified by that which faith takes hold of for acceptance with God. When we say "a room is lighted by windows," we mean by the daylight which the windows admit, or "a man lives by eating," we mean by the food he eats.

4. The truth is made perfectly clear in the New Testament. The thing counted to us, as that on which we are accepted before God, is the thing which faith accepts or rests on, that is, the "righteousness of God" (Rom. i. 17, iii. 22), "the righteousness of the One" who obeyed for us (Rom. v. 18, 19), that "which is through the faith of Christ" (Phil. iii. 8, 9), who is "made of God unto us righteousness" (1 Cor. i. 30). This righteousness of His is the ground or substance of our acceptance with God, and because it is received or laid hold of in believing, it is called the "righteousness of faith."

#### IV. *How it is received and evidenced.*

Notice two quite distinct things, on this head, brought out by the passages cited. (a) That pardon and peace with God are grounded on the righteousness of Christ *received by faith alone* (Rom. iii. 22, v. 1, and many other passages). (b) That the justification so grounded is *evidenced or proved by the good works which faith produces* (Gal. v. 5, 6; Jas. ii. 18).

(a) That *faith alone* justifies, because it alone joins us to

Christ and receives His righteousness, is the hinge of the whole gospel in its fulness and freeness. This doctrine was the point on which turned the deliverance of Christendom from darkness and tyranny nearly four hundred years ago. That is why the clear announcement of it in the Scriptures must be ever dear to us. There are, no doubt, some passages which speak of "repenting and believing" as together forming the first steps to salvation; but we have already shown in Lesson VIII. Division III. Section (c) that this does not displace *faith* from its true position as the only *way* or *mode* of union to Christ. For true repentance is a turning from sin to God, and this turning arises not only out of a hatred of our sin, but out of a sense of the mercy of God in Christ, which last is nothing else than faith in our Divine Redeemer. Further, we must notice that there is one passage in the New Testament which emphasises very strongly the place of works or deeds along with faith (Jas. ii.) as proving the faith to be genuine or living; because a faith which produces no good fruits in the life would be a "dead" faith, or in other words, no faith at all. But the main reason why these texts which speak of pardon and peace by *faith* in our Redeemer are so precious to us, is that they deliver us from the mistaken system which makes the grace of salvation depend on being joined to the Church by sacraments, instead of being joined to Christ by faith; and that they keep the door of salvation open to "every one that believeth."

(b) That the faith, which alone justifies and saves, never *is alone, but works by love*, is a truth equally clear. It has sometimes required to be brought out in its full force to correct abuses and extravagances about the doctrine of grace. But the place of both these truths—(a), (b)—is plain in the

New Testament. That faith is the only way or mode or instrument by which we are joined to Christ, receive His righteousness, and are thereupon accepted with God, is the New Testament doctrine of justification by faith alone. But equally true to the Scriptures is it that this great transaction before God, in the depths of the believing heart, must be sealed and proved by a life of loving and holy deeds. The Scriptures are as full and clear upon this, that "faith worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6), that "by works is faith made perfect" (Jas. ii. 22). We cannot be too earnest in seeking, that our faith may be crowned or evidenced by its fruits, nor can we give too much diligence to "add to our faith" that whole chain or choir of graces so linked together (2 Pet. i. 5-7) with it—"virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity."

### QUESTIONS.

1. *Name two periods at each of which the truth of salvation by faith has been threatened.*
2. *Show why pardon and peace come at once to every one that believes on Jesus.*
3. *In what respect is the change complete, and in what sense not?*
4. *Give some Scripture expressions and figures which teach entire and immediate forgiveness as the blessing of the gospel.*
5. *Show why acceptance as righteous in God's sight goes along with forgiveness, in the gospel way of salvation.*
6. *What is reckoned to us for righteousness in our justification? Describe the true ground in contrast with some mistaken notions.*
7. *What is meant by saying that faith alone justifies?*
8. *What truth is brought out by saying that the faith which justifies is never actually alone in him who has it?*

## LESSON XI

### CHANGE OF STATE AND NATURE TOGETHER

#### *We "receive the Adoption of sons"*

I. Out of what state this brings us. John viii. 34-36; Eph. ii. 3; Gal. iii. 13, iv. 5.

II. Into what Sonship we are received. John i. 12; Gal. iii. 26.

III. This is at once a new standing and a new nature. Gal. iv. 5, 6; 1 John iii. 1, v. 1.

IV. Its signs and accompaniments. John viii. 35, 36; Rev. ii. 17; Rom. viii. 14, 17; Heb. xii. 5-11; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

THERE is a great deal said in the New Testament about the privileges and blessings of Christians as "sons" and "children" of God. This is too seldom clearly explained or fully considered; yet it is full of instruction and comfort. The right point of view is got by going back to our topic in Lesson IX.—"Union to Christ." The results of this union, it was there pointed out, are of two kinds, viz. what union with Christ *confers* by way of right or standing, and what it *conveys* of vital and spiritual force or character. Now the topic we are to treat in the present Lesson—the *Sonship of Christians*—has the happy property of belonging to both of these kinds. As a standing it is a filial state or right—a place in God's family, which we get only through the right of our Lord Jesus, to whom we are joined by faith (Gal. iii. 26). But it is also

pointedly connected, in the New Testament, with the New Birth, and implies, therefore, a change of nature or disposition. Because those who are joined to Christ are made "Sons of God" by right, God has also given them the Spirit of His Son to be in them, by their new nature (Gal. iv. 6). Let us consider—

I. *Out of what State this Brings us.* For it is, first of all, a "bringing out of" something, a transposition or translation from one standing to another. The New Testament figure or word for this is *adoption* (Rom. viii. 15, 23; Gal. iv. 5; Eph. i. 5). It was a custom of Jews and Romans to assume into their families, especially when they had no sons of their own, male representatives who might become their heirs. Very often the person so "adopted" had been a slave, trained and educated for the new place he was to fill, and then set free and made a son of the house. This figure exactly fits into the grace of salvation. Our Saviour redeems us out of the bondage of sin that we might be adopted into the family of God. Thus our Redeemer brings us out of *a state of slavery*. That is our Lord's own word for the sinful state of men, "Whosoever committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin." In that bondage we were held by the strong enemy of mankind, till a stronger than he, "the Son who abideth ever," entered our world to deliver the captives; and He makes them free indeed (John viii. 32-36). He brings us out of *a state of wrath, i.e.* a state where we were under the displeasure of God. The Bible consistently describes the woes and miseries and death that abound in the world as effects of the displeasure of God with human sin. Those who are now Christians were by nature "children of wrath," *i.e.* subjects of that displeasure, as well as others (Eph. ii.

3, 4.) But it is to the praise of God, who is rich in mercy, that we are now children of grace. He brings us also *from under the curse, i.e.* out of the state of condemnation under the sentence of a just and holy God. It is here that the reality is seen to be grander and wider than the figure. It is not merely that the "adopted" have to be redeemed from the slavery of sin and law, it is that our Redeemer has first of all to take upon Him our bondage, to meet and remove our condemnation, to be made "under the law"—to be even "made a curse for us" to deliver us that were under both, that we might "receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iii. 13, iv. 5).

II. *Into what Sonship we are Received.* 1. It is a *new* sonship, *i.e. new* as being different from that which we lost by sin. It is here that the confused teaching of some requires to be cleared up. They speak as if all men were children of God simply because, at the first, man was made in God's image, and as if all the gospel bids us do is to believe in the universal Fatherhood of God. Now it is true that God's Fatherhood is not blotted out by our sin. He regarded sinful mankind as His lost or banished ones, and sent forth His own Son in "the likeness of sinful flesh" to bring them back. But it is on that glorious fact of the "Word made flesh" that our sonship now alone rests. We can no longer stand on our natural rights toward God. We are "no more worthy to be called His sons." When the New Testament says that we become the children of God by "adoption," it fairly tells us that not through any rights of humanity can we now claim God as our Father, but upon an entirely new and better footing. "Adoption" implies that the person adopted neither was previously a member of

the family, nor had any claim in himself to be so considered. For it is clear that if he were a member of the family already he could not be said, in any proper sense, to be adopted into it. What we receive in Christ is an entirely new and nobler sonship.

2. It is a *real* sonship, though for the reason already given it is called an "adoption." This "son-making" or "son-placing," which is the literal meaning of the New Testament word, is nothing merely legal, or technical, far less fictitious. It makes us really "children of God." "NOW ARE we the sons of God" (John iii. 2). "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these ARE sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14, R.V.). However it may differ from the sonship of angels, of which we know nothing; however far it may excel that which we lost by sin, it is a real and true becoming "children" of our Father in Heaven, and the only way in which sinful men ever can become His children. See how this new and true relation of saved sinners to God lights up to us His nature and character! It flows, as all true "adoption" must, out of the *love* of the Adopter. Not, indeed, because God had no other children, or His Heaven was empty without us, but because an infinite affection opens its fountains here. "Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God" (1 John iii. 1). It is in keeping, too, with the adorable wisdom and righteousness of God, for it takes place upon grounds of eternal rectitude. As St. Paul puts it in Gal. iv. 4-6, God had one Son, Only-begotten, Well-beloved, His "very own Son." He sent that son into our world, entered Him into our human race, made Him our Brother. Then, what follows? Our divine-human Brother bought us out from

the servitude of sin and death ; brought us into the family of God. In His sufferings completed, He has the right to bring us near. "Here am I and the children whom Thou hast given me." That is to say, God is now our Father in a new and higher sense by being the Father of Christ, and we are God's children in a new way by being the brethren of Christ through faith.

### III. *This is both a New Standing and a New Nature.*

1. *It is a higher standing.* Let us put this gift of sonship beside other blessings of salvation already considered, and note how it surpasses them. It means more than that we are now, for Christ's sake, pardoned sinners and accepted with God, much even as that means. Though, of course, this blessing of justification must come first. There can be no entrance into the family of God and its heirship till we are redeemed and set free from our state of slavery under sin. But then "adoption" plainly means more than this. A guilty man at the bar of human justice might be pardoned quite, and for sufficient reasons. But the judge would not on that account be expected to acknowledge him and receive him into his society. He might simply loose him and let him go. And even though the accused person were not merely pardoned, but what is better, were declared not guilty, and put upon a right footing with society, so that even his judge might be obliged to count him a free citizen and an equal, it would not follow that he should receive him into his family and seat him at his table. If he did this last, it would be reckoned an enormous act of favour. It is on this analogy that in our teachings about God's grace, there is so strongly asserted a place for believers' sonship over and above that of entire pardon and acceptance. God might, for

Christ's sake, have pardoned us sinners, cleared us, counted us righteous, given us a place among free and blessed spirits, and all that would have been marvellous grace. But here is more grace! To make us "sons," to put us into the family-roll with Jesus, to count us His younger brethren. It is overwhelming grace—grace full of glory; a thing the very angels desire to look into, a new view opened even to those heavenly beings into the divine wisdom and grace and love (Eph. iii. 10).

2. *It is also a new nature.* And this is to say something more about the redeemed sonship than has been already said. For it is more and other than a new standing or right. It is connected with the New Birth, or the change of nature, which union to Christ implies. As a privilege of the redeemed it is double-based. It is not only a new name to be called "children" of God, but there goes along with it a "new heart." It is not only a new standing, but it is a new spirit. It is well to note how this, its twofold aspect, is brought out by the two great New Testament writers respectively. In St. Paul's writings it is mainly treated as depending on the work of Christ *for* us. His favourite word for it is that we are therefore SONS OF GOD, *i.e.* we have the place and right in the family of God which our Redeemer won for us in His great act of Redemption. In the writings of St. John it is mainly connected with the work of God's Holy Spirit *in* us, His regenerating work, by which we are born into the family. His favourite word is that we are "CHILDREN OF GOD," *i.e.* we are *born* or *begotten* of God. But these two writers interchange the terms often enough to show that the full New Testament doctrine makes redeemed sonship both a standing and a nature, connects

it, *i.e.*, with justification on the one side and with regeneration on the other.

But let us look for a moment at the thing itself from this fresh point of view. Christian sonship is not simply declarative, like pardon and acceptance, it is creative; nay, it is more than a creation, it is a birth or begetting. God can create "stones" and other lifeless things, but He "begets" only living children of His own Spirit. So this truth about the renewed nature lifts the sonship of Christians into a region of reality, far above the figure of adoption. Since the adoption of grace implies a change of nature or character, it makes us children of God indeed. Thus it far excels the kind of adoption known among men. That was at best a sort of "legal fiction"; no doubt a powerful fiction as practised by Jews and Romans, carrying large practical effects as to political rights and civil inheritance. But nature sets limits. It could not convey the father's likeness or the family character. But what man and his laws cannot do, divine grace can. A prince may *call* another man's child his son, and may treat him in every way as such, but can never make him *his own child*. But God can do what man cannot. And He does it in every "child of wrath" whom He takes home to His bosom by the adoption of grace. That act is never a mere fiction of law. God's adopted children all get the Father's likeness and the family spirit, as well as the name and standing of sons by right of their Redeemer.

IV. *Its Signs and Accompaniments.* These are such as—

1. *The new name.* The adopted take the name of the family into which they are adopted. Besides that public and general name of "sons" and "children" of God already

explained, there is that promised in Rev. ii. 17, written on the "white stone," which we may further explain by Rev. iii. 12, "My new name," and that of Rev. xxii. 4, "His name in their foreheads."

2. *The free spirit.* John viii. 36; Rom. viii. 14; 2 Cor. iii. 17. "Newness of spirit," "The Spirit of His Son," "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The saints by adoption have a largeness of heart in all holy obedience, a liberty not *from* duty, but *in* it, not a freedom to omit, which is the stolen liberty of slaves, but a liberty to do according to their Lord's will, for His commandments are not grievous, but delightful, to those who have them written on their hearts. This, of which the Bible has much to say, may be illustrated by comparing the manner in which even good and honest workmen do their master's work, with the way intelligent and loving sons of the same master carry on his business.

3. *Fatherly treatment* (Mal. iii. 17; Heb. xii. 5-11). This opens up the instructive topic of the difference between God's judgments and His chastenings. There is no more direct and useful part of this truth of redeemed sonship than the light it throws upon the troubles and sufferings of God's children. These are really privileges and blessings. It may be illustrated by the difference between the treatment of servants in a household when they offend, and that of children. A servant who is grievously at fault is dismissed, not dealt with. A child of the house who offends is not dismissed, but is dealt with, is chastised. Children in a well-ordered house understand that thoroughly. Their own hearts tell them it should be so. It is not otherwise in God's Father-house of grace. We know, if we have the conscience

of His children, that our sins as children of God are as displeasing to Him as any other. Shall we not say more so, because more dishonouring to His name? therefore sure to bring down the rod of Fatherly displeasure, if not confessed and forsaken. God's true children count their chastenings not burdens, but blessings.

4. *An heirship or inheritance.* Rom. viii. 17. "If children, then heirs, joint heirs with Christ." And their inheritance is "everlasting life" (Matt. xix. 19), "The Kingdom prepared" (Matt. xxv. 34). It includes "the promises" (Heb. vi. 12), "the blessing" (1 Pet. iii. 19), in short "all things" (1 Cor. iii. 21-23; Rev. xxi. 7); and finally, it is "incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away" (1 Pet. i. 4).

#### QUESTIONS.

1. *Show how the ancient custom of "adoption" among Jews and Romans throws light upon our sonship in grace.*
2. *Out of what state does our Redeemer bring us, that we may become children of God?*
3. *Show why the sonship we receive in Christ is called a new sonship.*
4. *Prove from Scripture that, though it is called "the adoption of sons," it is a real sonship, and not merely one legal or nominal.*
5. *Show that "sonship" is a further and higher part of our salvation than even pardon and acceptance.*
6. *How is the twofold aspect of Christian "sonship" expressed in the New Testament, and in what books of it respectively?*
7. *That a change of spirit and disposition goes along with the right to be called sons of God: prove this from the Scripture passages, and point out its value.*
8. *Name and briefly explain some of the signs and notes of Christian sonship.*

## LESSON XII

### CHANGE OF HEART AND LIFE

#### *Sanctification or Christian Holiness*

I. On what foregoing graces it depends. On Regeneration—John i. 13; on Justification, *i.e.* Pardon and peace with God—Rom. v. 1, 2.

II. By what agency and means carried on. 2 Thess. ii. 13; Acts xv. 9.

III. Through what growth or process secured. Rom. vii. and viii.

IV. Its goal or end—“perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Cor. vii. 1; Matt. v. 48; 1 Pet. i. 15; Phil. i. 6, 10, 11.

I. (1) HOLINESS is connected with Regeneration. It springs out of that as its root. If *Regeneration* or the New Birth be (as we have seen) the implanting in the soul, by the Holy Spirit, of a principle of spiritual life; if *Conversion* be the first exercise of that principle in the free turning of the new-born soul to God, then *Sanctification* or Christian holiness is that work of the Spirit which brings all the parts and faculties of man's nature more and more perfectly under the regulating influence of the imparted principle,—is, in fact, the unfolding of the regenerate life.

Observe the value and the limits both of this definition. Its *value* lies in the assertion that Gospel-Holiness consists

not merely in acts, words, or even thoughts, but has a renewed principle, a sanctified habit, or a "new nature" for its source and strength. This is our Lord's axiom "Out of the heart" applied all round. It was necessary in our teaching about sin to assert the Bible truth that man's sinfulness springs from, and greatly consists in, a *sinful nature*, not merely in sinful acts. So here, the Bible teaches that there must be a holy principle at the back of all willings and actings that are deserving of the name of holiness. But our definition has a *limit*. Holiness is not mere development or unfolding of a holy principle; for we must remember that spiritual life is supernatural. It is carried on by the indwelling Spirit of Christ. In fact, as Paul says, it is "Christ that liveth" in us.

(2) Holiness is connected with Pardon and Peace, or what we doctrinally call Justification. In such plain ways as these;—for example, it is only when sin is pardoned that it begins to be really conquered and forsaken. One takes a different position of hope and victory towards one's own sinful propensities and acts, when the burden of their guilt is taken away. Thus, there is both truth and beauty in the line of the hymn to Christ, "Break Thou the power of cancelled sin." Again, God and His law are regarded in a new and different way by the man who is pardoned and put right with God for Christ's sake. God's commandment is loved and obeyed as never before, when one is delivered from condemnation and "accepted in the Beloved." The tap-root of all error in this department is that God's favour depends immediately and directly on man's moral character,—that he must first become good that God may love him; whereas the teaching of the Bible and the doctrine of free

grace is that a man must first be reconciled to God, be brought back into God's favour through Christ, before he can become spiritually and really good.

II. *By what Agency and means Sanctification is carried on.* It is the work of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, renewing the whole man after the image of God, through means external and internal, but especially through faith applying to the soul the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection.

Though the Father (Heb. xiii. 21) and Christ Himself (Tit. ii. 14) are said to *sanctify* the redeemed, that function of Sanctifier is especially ascribed to the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vii. 11; 2 Thess. ii. 13). The words "in the image of God" remind us of the type after which man was formed at the first, as well as of the greatness of the loss which that image has suffered through sin, while such New Testament expressions as "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. iii. 10), that the "fore-known" are "predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29), seem to point to a higher type even for the redeemed man than that which was lost or marred in the Fall.

We are further taught that holiness, though directly supernatural in its origin and agency, is carried on through means. (1) *The external* means are such as: (i.) Providence — Life and its afflictions in the hand of the good Spirit of God; for mere suffering produces no holiness (cf. Ps. xciv. 12, cxix. 67, 71; Heb. xii. 5-11). (ii.) The Word, which is *the* means that makes all the others effectual. Its power to sanctify lies in its being divine truth, light, and quickening (John xvii. 17). When *engrafted*, it is able to

save the soul (Jas. i. 21); when it is "hidden," that is, planted deep like seed "in the heart," it is able to keep from sin (Ps. cxix. 11). See this whole Psalm as to the sanctifying power of God's "law," "statutes," "testimony," or "precept," as it is variously called. (2) The *internal* means is especially *Faith* (Acts xv. 9), and Faith applying the virtue of Christ's cross and rising again for our victory over sin, and growth in holiness. This profound truth is especially expounded in St. Paul's Epistles (*e.g.* Rom. vi.); but it is not always much taught even in evangelical circles, and is sometimes misstated altogether. It ought never to be confounded with the false dogma of "imputed holiness." The personal sanctification or actual holiness of a believer is not something which he receives entire and complete from His Redeemer by a single act of faith. It is something wrought in him, not transferred to him. It is not the holiness of Christ put on, which would be impossible; but the likeness of Christ inwrought and produced by the indwelling Spirit of Jesus.

At the same time, there is a sense in which it is "by faith." We believe in Christ for sanctification, just as much as we do for pardon and peace with God. We are to be constantly putting on Christ by spiritual intuition and holy imitation. The way in which this is actually accomplished is expounded in those profound passages of St. Paul's Epistles already alluded to. It has for its real basis the truth already explained in a separate Lesson, viz. that of the *spiritual* or *mystical* Union. That is to say, faith so engrafts the believer into Christ that there is for him spiritual and moral participation with Christ in His cross and rising again. As Christ literally died unto sin once, and

rose again for our justification with God; so those who believe in Him are enabled, through His cross, to die daily unto sin, and, in the "power of His resurrection," to live unto righteousness.

III. *Through what kind of process Holiness is attained.* The teaching of the New Testament here is, that since there abide remnants of evil in every part of a redeemed man, progress in holiness takes the form of a conflict, a "continual and irreconcilable war," in which, though the remaining evil may for a time prevail, the new nature through the Spirit of Christ unflinchingly overcomes, and holiness is at last perfected.

1. That sanctification is a *process*, *i.e.* that it is gradual and not instantaneous, is a position that has hardly ever been disputed. But it ought to be noticed at this point, that in the redeemed life there may come a crisis when the Christian suddenly, if not instantaneously, rises into a higher life by some new illumination, or by some special believing apprehension of the grace of our Redeemer and Sanctifier. This deserves attention, because ordinary evangelical teaching has been so resolute in maintaining its progressiveness that there has been almost denied any place in it for instantaneous decision, for absolute consecration, or even for any step of a suddenly forward or upward character. And this denial or exclusion is plainly unscriptural and wrong. The Bible term "sanctify" itself emphasises the idea of consecration, or setting apart once for all as the essence of the whole. "The blood wherewith we are sanctified" (Heb. xiii. 12), means that for His part the Redeemer sets His mark on His redeemed to make them wholly His own; and the conscious recognition of

this on their part is the starting-point of all real Christian holiness. "Know ye not that the Temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. iii. 17).

2. This being cleared—that Sanctification is a process—we have next to note how that process takes the form of a *conflict*. This is mainly brought out in two passages of St. Paul's Epistles—the briefer in Gal. v. 16–26, the longer and more detailed in Rom. vii. and viii. Both passages bring out that the parties or elements in the conflict are the "Flesh" and the "Spirit," *i.e.*, to put it plainly, the old and evil nature on the one hand, and the new nature born of the Spirit, on the other. But in the unfolding of the passage in Romans especially, there are two things on which our attention should be fixed in order to avoid mistaken inferences. (1) The passage (Rom. vii. 14–25) should never be understood as if it described the ordinary and normal state of a child of God; as if sin and grace were so exactly balanced in Christians, that they "cannot do the things that they would"; as if the sum and substance of Christian Sanctification were this death in life, or this living death, expressed by the perpetual cry, "O wretched man that I am." If this were all that sanctifying grace could do for the Christian, *viz.* to awaken the sense of inward discord without being able to do it away, the description could only destroy the moral power of Christianity, and disgrace its character. (2) This description is that of a process or conflict which is not completed till we pass on to chap. viii. Full justice is only done to the results of Christian Sanctification when the whole account is taken together. There are in the two chapters two things quite distinct, yet connected. The description of the conflict in chap. vii., ending with the

groan (ver. 24), "O wretched man"; and the description of the triumph, beginning with the shout (vii. 25), "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and carried on through the earlier part of chap. viii. What is described in the former, is a strife of opposing moral forces in the Christian, the power of sin in His "flesh" striving with the testimony of God's law or Divine truth in his "mind," the result of which strife is for the time a sort of moral deadlock,— "he cannot do the things that he would." What is described in the latter, is the grace of the Spirit resolving the strife,— the law of the new life in Christ setting the redeemed man free. Moral impotence, divided service, is not the real or permanent result of the new birth, as has sometimes been falsely inferred from a partial view of this great passage of Scripture. The new life is that which is delivered from the strife and the impotence, when "we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

3. The last thing to notice here is, that the process or conflict has always the one ending in God's redeemed people, viz. the victory of grace over sin. This may seem so plainly scriptural as not to need explanation. But there are some confused teachings that represent the "old man" and the "new" as ceaselessly contending together till death, without any change on either. But by "old" and "new man" the Scripture plainly means two powers or principles striving together in one regenerate and responsible person. As plainly it tells us that the "new" is living or progressive, that the "old" is "dying," "being crucified," "put off," cast out. Watch the course of the description in that great passage (Rom. vii., viii.), and it will be clear that there is no doubling of personality, no confusing of responsibility.

The man himself is never in the two contrasted states or in the two hostile camps at the same time—that would be as impossible as that he should serve “two masters.” The real man, in the spirit of him, passes from the one camp to the other,—from that of sin and the flesh, to that of grace and the Spirit,—as the tide of battle rolls on, but the self is not divided. The real man, born of God, is pressing on towards eternal life. He “lives after the Spirit.” He is “crucifying the flesh.” He is mortifying the deeds of the body. He is, in short, wholly at one with the Spirit of Christ, who dwells in him all along, and will reign alone over his perfected nature.

IV. *Its goal or end: perfected Holiness* (2 Cor. vii. 1 ; Matt. v. 48, etc.). All Christian teaching is agreed, with that of Scripture, that *perfection* in holiness is the aim and climax of the Redeemer’s work in the persons of His people. The main difference among Christian teachers is as to when this *perfection* is to be reached. Much harm has been done, especially to the valuable teaching of the higher Christian life, by some rash persons maintaining that they have now, or can here attain to, absolute perfection. It is plain that the holier a Christian becomes, the more sensitive is he to every least stain of sin, and the farther, in a sense, from deeming himself “perfected” (Phil. iii. 12). John Wesley taught a much more cautious doctrine of freedom from known or conscious sin, as attainable by Christians in this life, but he never allowed it to be called “legal” or “absolute” perfection. Yet it must be said that our usual Gospel teaching, on this point, has been so scared by “perfectionism” as to miss the force of many New Testament promises and a great part of New Testament teaching on

holiness. When attention is roused to it, we are astonished to find so much on this topic, especially in the Epistles, which our ordinary pulpit teaching leaves out of sight. Completeness of Christian character is the thing constantly urged upon Bible readers, confidently promised to them, and taken for granted as continually their aim (cf. Rom. xii. 2 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 11 ; Phil. i. 6). It should be noted, indeed, that in several places of the New Testament, the word "perfect" is used to express a certain matured or attained Christian position, e.g. in Col. ii. 6 ; Phil. iii. 15. "As many of us as be perfect, let us be thus minded"—where the *mind* is that of determined pressing on to the goal of Christian character, for the writer has just said a few verses before that he does not reckon himself to be "already perfected." The word "*perfect*" in ver. 15 plainly means, as it is rendered in Heb. v. 14, "of full age." And the force of the exhortation is that to conceive of Christian holiness as we ought, to aim constantly at it ; to trust our Redeemer and Sanctifier to work it in us, is in a sense to be "holy" ; at least, it is to be "come of age," to be no longer "babes," or "underlings" in Christ, but to reach forth to the stature of complete Christian manhood.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. *Show how Sanctification is connected with the New Birth and with Justification respectively.*
2. *Give passages to prove that the Holy Spirit is the direct divine agent in Sanctification.*
3. *Name the external means by which it is usually carried on.*
4. *Name the internal means ; and show what special elements in our Lord's work for us, faith takes hold of, to produce holiness in us.*

5. *In what sense is Sanctification a process? but show also how this statement must be guarded so as to express the whole truth.*
6. *Name the two elements in the conflict for holiness, and express briefly the whole teaching of Rom. vii. and viii. on this question.*
7. *Prove that the conflict always results in a victory for grace and holiness in the end.*
8. *State the New Testament teaching as to Christian perfection.*