

# The Revelation of God's Righteousness

By James Haldane

THE heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Every part of creation proclaims the character of Him who called it into existence; but the introduction of sin into the world has given rise to a far more glorious exhibition of the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and goodness of God. In the Gospel, JEHOVAH is revealed, not only as the Ruler of the universe, maintaining the unsullied purity of his moral government, by a more awful display of his justice, than if the whole human race had been left to perish; but also, as the Saviour of sinners, providing means by which the most guilty of the sons of men, debased, degraded, and condemned as they are, may be restored to the favour and friendship and image of God. It was the contemplation of this wonderful scheme which led the apostle to exclaim, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith,"* Romans 1:16,17.

We have here one of those short, but comprehensive summaries of the doctrine of Christ, which are frequent in the New Testament, and which, by presenting the Gospel under different aspects, while its fundamental character remains the same, are so much calculated to enlarge our views of the truth.

The epistle from which these words are taken, was originally addressed to the disciples at Rome; but, like the other scriptures, it was intended for the instruction of the people of God to the end of the world. The word of the Lord endureth for ever; and in this passage, which it is our object to illustrate, the Gospel is described as the revelation of god's righteousness, and consequently the power of God to the salvation of every believer.

## PART I

Paul's reason for affirming that he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ—Justification wholly of faith—The Gospel the only means of restoring fallen man.

At first sight it may appear extraordinary, that the apostle, when expressing his desire to preach the Gospel at Rome, would think it necessary to add, "for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." How could such an idea occur to a man who had seen the Lord after his ascension into glory; who had witnessed so many instances of the efficacy of the Gospel in turning sinners to God; and who had so long possessed the power of confirming the truth by mighty signs and wonders? But every subject may be viewed in different lights. When the Gospel is considered as the power of God unto salvation, upon the reception or rejection of which depends our everlasting happiness or misery—when we contemplate it as the grandest display of the Divine perfections which the Almighty has made to his intelligent creation—the idea of a believer being ashamed of the Gospel appears absurd and extravagant. But when we recollect, that this Gospel is to them that perish foolishness; that the whole world lieth in the wicked one; and that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution; when we think of the contempt and obloquy which a leader of the "sect everywhere spoken against" could not fail to encounter at Rome, we shall be convinced, that in saying he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, the apostle at once proclaimed the victory which, through grace, he had obtained over a very powerful temptation, and cautioned believers against a sin into which they are in no small danger of falling.

It is perhaps almost unnecessary to remark, that the Gospel of Christ means the good news concerning Christ. But we are all so prone, especially in religion, to use words without attaching to them any very determinate meaning, that this explanation may not be superfluous.

The apostle describes the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, because “therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.” The expression may seem obscure; but it evidently means, that this righteousness is received by faith, and does not consist in our obedience to the holy law of God. “We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,” Romans 3:28, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent,” John 6:29.

That in many things we all offend, is universally admitted; and therefore it is absurd to suppose that we can be justified by our own obedience. We may indeed conceive of God as if he were altogether such an one as ourselves, and consequently that we may be accepted on account of our imperfect services; but we deceive ourselves. JEHOVAH is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity; he demands of his creatures perfect obedience; he declares, that “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all,” James 2:10; he pronounces every one accursed “who continueth not in ALL things written in the book of the law to do them,” Galatians 3:10.

There is no inconsistency in the divine character. The attributes of God do not clash with each other; he does not exercise benevolence at the expense of truth, nor does his mercy interfere with his justice.

In Jesus Christ this glorious character is revealed. The gospel is addressed to the lost and ruined race of Adam, whom it represents to be under condemnation, without strength, alienated from the life of God through the darkness and ignorance that is in them, their hearts deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Such is the state of man as delineated in the Word of God, and such is the condition from which every believer in Christ is delivered. Hence the gospel is described as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It is the means which infinite wisdom has seen fit to employ for saving fallen man from the wrath to come, for raising him from the depth of guilt and misery into which he was plunged, and for restoring him to the enjoyment of the divine favour.

Are we experimentally acquainted with this salvation? Has it come to us, not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance? If so, surely we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; we do not blush to confess Christ before an ungodly world. No, if we are holding fast the truth, if the word of God abideth in us, we esteem the reproach of Christ our highest honour; we feel it our privilege to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, and follow him; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

## **PART II**

The righteousness of God—Adam’s posterity involved in his guilt—Believers pardoned through the sacrifice of Christ.

In the passage before us, the Gospel is characterized as containing the revelation of the righteousness of God. This expression frequently occurs in the New Testament, and denotes the righteousness provided by God for the justification of sinners through the obedience unto death of Jesus Christ.

Men sometimes dream of being justified by their own righteousness, but the Gospel exposes the folly of such presumption. In the plan of salvation, there is no winking at sin, no compromise of the Divine justice. A perfect righteousness is provided, in which the eye of Omniscience can discern no flaw. This is always opposed to our own righteousness. The apostle, in this epistle, speaking of the Jews, says, “They being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,” Romans 10:3,4. It is called the righteousness of God without the law, Romans 3:21; and the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Peter 1:1, who of God is made unto us righteousness, 1 Corinthians 1:30. This righteousness is received by faith, and is sometimes called the righteousness of faith. Hence it is written, “We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith,” Galatians 5:5; and Paul desiring to be found in Christ, says, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, Philippians 3:9.

It will assist us to understand this subject if we look back to the introduction of sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Romans 5:12. Hence it is appointed for men once to die, and death reigns, even over those who have not personally broken the law of God, ver. 14. Thus were the posterity of Adam brought under condemnation; and, consequently, we are all by nature the children of wrath. But God laid help on one that is mighty; he sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He who was in the beginning with God, and was God, by whom all things were made, assumed our nature. He was born of a woman, was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin. At length, he offered himself without spot to God, a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. Although the cup put into his hands was unspeakably bitter, yet he drank it to the dregs. He did not fail nor was discouraged till he had set judgment in the earth. He yielded complete obedience to God's holy law; it was his meat and his drink to do the will of his heavenly Father; by which will believers are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, Hebrews 10:10.

Thus, from his birth at Bethlehem to his death upon Mount Calvary, the Son of God not only submitted to all that affliction to which fallen man is subject, but endured the most poignant anguish, in suffering, the just for the unjust, that he might bring sinners to God. Hence his agony in the garden; hence his exclamation on the cross, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? But then was the judgment of this world, then was the prince of this world cast out. His bitter sufferings and bloody death made full atonement for sin. On the cross he spoiled principalities and powers, making a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. The Lord made to meet on him the iniquities of his people, and he bore them all away. When his lifeless body hung on the tree, when he had endured that death which, in reference to this event, God had pronounced accursed, Galatians 3:13, his enemies congratulated themselves on the victory which they had obtained. But their triumph was short; he had been delivered for our offences, but he was raised for our justification. He had been numbered with the transgressors, but he was "justified by the Spirit," 1 Timothy 3:16; and when the God of peace brought from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, he declared that ample satisfaction had been made for sin.

Here then was the full revelation of God's righteousness. Thus did God make him who knew no sin, sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Corinthians 5:21. If there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe, Galatians 3:21,22. "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God had set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare (I say) at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," Romans 3:21-26.

Adam had trampled on the law of God, and involved all his posterity in his guilt and ruin. The second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, magnified this law, and made it honourable; and as, by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one man, many are made righteous. As by a man came death, by a man came also the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive—Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. As the death of Adam was the knell of all his posterity, so the resurrection of Jesus is the pledge of the resurrection of all who believe, 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

After the Lord had risen from the dead, he commanded his apostles to preach to every creature the glad tidings of salvation, and to beseech men to be reconciled to God. Accordingly their language was, "Be it known unto you brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things." They encouraged sinners to approach God with confidence through the atonement of Christ; to behold him who died for sin now seated on the right hand of God, and

able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. In short, they exhibited grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ.

### **PART III**

Apparent discrepancy and real harmony of the Old and New Testaments—God's gracious purposes to man gradually unfolded—First promise of the Saviour, and the appointment of animal sacrifices—Offerings of Cain and Abel—The sense of shame, and clothing provided for our first parents, an emblem of God's righteousness—Proofs of this—The revelation of God's righteousness foretold in the Psalms and the Prophets—Intimations of salvation being through faith.

Amongst the various proofs by which the truth of revelation is confirmed, none is more satisfactory than the harmony of its two great divisions, the Old and New Testaments. This proof is rendered complete by the rejection of Israel on account of their unbelief, while they continue to vouch for the authenticity of the living oracles delivered to their fathers, of which the New Testament is the fulfilment. To a superficial observer indeed the two parts of Scripture may appear to contain systems radically and essentially different. In the former, Divine worship was connected with numberless rites and ceremonies. JEHOVAH was declared to be the God of the whole earth, but he appeared in many respects as a local deity. Judea is called the Lord's land; Jerusalem the city of the great King, and Israel his inheritance; while the uncircumcised heathen are treated with comparative indifference. The man who despised Moses's law died without mercy on his guilt being established; the nation of Israel were assured of great worldly prosperity while they continued obedient, and were severely punished when they transgressed.

Under the new covenant, no place is more holy than another; wherever two or three assemble in the name of Jesus, he is in the midst of them. The apostles knew no man after the flesh; Jew and Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, are equally invited to become the subjects of Christ's kingdom and the children of God by faith. All temporal punishment for irreligion is strictly prohibited, and the disciples of Jesus are taught to expect tribulation and persecution in consequence of attachment to their Lord.

And yet, amidst all this apparent discrepancy, we find the most perfect harmony between the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments. It would be foreign to our purpose to illustrate this subject; but we may observe, that not only the sacrifices, but the whole of the law of Moses, was "a parable for the time then present," Hebrews 10:9, and that the New Testament contains its explanation. Spiritual and heavenly things were prefigured by things which were carnal and earthly. Moses taught precisely the same things with the apostles, only he preached with a veil upon his face, which is done away in Christ, 2 Corinthians 3:14; and hence the apostle, describing the superiority of the new dispensation, observes, "We use great plainness of speech; and not as Moses, who put a veil over his face that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished," 2 Corinthians 3:12,13; and another apostle says, "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."

The whole of the New Testament presupposes an acquaintance with the Old. The writings of the apostles are the completion of the revelation of God to man, the full display of his gracious purposes to our ruined race, intimated immediately after the fall, and gradually unfolded in the law and the prophets. It cannot therefore be uninteresting to trace the progress of revelation in regard to the righteousness of God by faith.

Man was placed in paradise, and, as a test of his obedience, and a memorial of his dependence, was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil on pain of death. He disobeyed, and incurred the threatened penalty, from which he was utterly incapable of delivering himself; and therefore fallen man is described as dead in trespasses and sins, far from righteousness, lost, and ungodly. God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent; and if he allowed mankind still to survive, it was for the purpose of imparting a new and eternal life to a multitude whom no man should be able to number, and of manifesting, by the church, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God.

This was to be done, not by our obedience to any law, for man was already under condemnation. His trial was past, he had been weighed in the balance and found wanting; he could not therefore be saved by his own righteousness; his only hope was in the mercy of God, Titus 3:5, and this mercy was to be bestowed through faith in the Saviour, whom God promised to raise up, and who was to be head and representative of all believers, as Adam had been the father of all mankind. Accordingly, before the Saviour's appearance, every thing implied the salvation of sinners through faith in his righteousness.

The curse pronounced on the serpent contained the first promise of the Saviour. He was described as the seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head, while his own heel was to be bruised in the contest. The apostle explains this obscure intimation. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same; that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage," Hebrews 2:14,15. Connected with the promise of the Saviour, and the intimation of his sufferings and victory, was the appointment of animal sacrifices. The history is so short, that the precept to offer sacrifices is not recorded; but that this was a Divine appointment, is put beyond a doubt, by the circumstance of God's acceptance and approbation of Abel's offering the firstlings of his flock. We know that, in every age, will-worship has been an abomination in the sight of God. "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Matthew 15:9: and the apostle informs us, that while will-worship may have a show of wisdom, it proceeds from the pride of the carnal mind, Colossians 2:23.

Besides, can we for a moment believe, that under the law there was no remission without shedding of blood, and yet suppose that animal sacrifices were not of Divine appointment? Did God adopt a human invention as the very basis of his law? And did this human invention so remarkably correspond with the sacrifice of Christ? Hebrews 9:13,14. But this is not all. We are informed, that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain *through faith*, Hebrews 11:4. Here there is evident allusion to the promise of the seed of the woman, who, by his sufferings, was to vanquish the great adversary of man. Cain disregarded this promise; he acknowledged his dependence on God, and his obligations to him, by offering the fruits of the ground; but he had no respect to the promised Saviour, and therefore God had no respect to him or to his offering. No man, says Jesus, cometh to the Father but by me; and this has been the case from the beginning: it is only in the Saviour that God has revealed himself to fallen man; and in every age, those who have professed to worship God, unconnected with the revelation of the Saviour, have, like the Samaritans, worshipped they know not what. The language of Cain's offering was, "To thee I present this acknowledgment of my dependence on thy bounty." The language of Abel's sacrifice was, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and he sought mercy in the way of God's appointment by the shedding of blood. Cain's religion, like that of all who know not God, chiefly respected the Divine favour in the enjoyment of temporal blessings: Abel, like all who have "heard and learned of the Father," looked beyond death and the grave.

There is another circumstance which establishes the fact, that animal sacrifices were of Divine appointment. A sense of shame and nakedness was the immediate consequence of the transgression of our first parents. They attempted to make coverings for themselves; but unto Adam, and also to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skin, and clothed them." Where were these skins procured? Evidently from the animals which had just been offered in sacrifice; for no animals had then been slain for food; and the circumstance of our first parents having received garments made by God himself, is recorded, because it was a shadow of that righteousness which God has provided for all "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them." Here it may not be improper to refer to some passages of Scripture, in order to prove that this interpretation is not fanciful, especially as the subject is intimately connected with the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel.

We have already adverted to the sense of shame and nakedness consequent upon the transgression of our first parents. Hence we find nakedness frequently employed in the Word of God to denote a state of guilt, helplessness, and danger. When the children of Israel had departed from God at Horeb, and made the golden calf, it is said Moses saw that the people were naked, for Aaron had made them naked to their shame before their enemies, Exodus 32:25. Doubtless there is here a reference to the people's having stripped themselves

of their golden ornaments for the purpose of making the calf; but what is said of their nakedness chiefly relates to their having forfeited the favour of God, and consequently having exposed themselves to their enemies; and, in token of this, God commanded them to put off the rest of their ornaments, Exodus 33:5,6.

Again, the Lord represents Israel, when he took them under his protection, as resembling a helpless infant, naked and bare; and he says, "I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness," Ezekiel 16:7,8. The prophet Isaiah introduces the Church rejoicing in the Lord; for she exclaims, "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels," Isaiah 61:10. When Zechariah saw Joshua the high priest, he was clothed with filthy garments, and the angel spake to those that stood before him, saying, Take the filthy garments from him; and unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment, Zechariah 3:3. Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, Isaiah 64:6. He that overcometh "shall be clothed with white raiment," Revelations 3:5. Thou "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear," verse 17,18. "Behold I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame," 16:15. When the apostle saw the souls of those that had been slain for their regard to the Word of God, "white robes were given to every one of them," 6:11; and the innumerable multitude of all nations who stood before the Lamb were clothed with white robes, 7:9. To the Lamb's wife it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints, 19:8. These passages clearly prove, that the term nakedness is often employed in Scripture to denote our being exposed and helpless, and that the righteousness which God has provided for his people is frequently spoken of under the emblem of a robe for the covering of their nakedness; and the foundation of this emblem is evidently the remarkable fact, of God's having made coats of skins for our first parents. Adam and Eve, conscious of their nakedness, having lost the robe of innocence in which they were originally clothed, attempted to make coverings for themselves. But their own contrivance was insufficient; and God, by making for them clothing from the skins of animals offered in sacrifice, intimated that—"while 'their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works,' Isaiah 59:6; while such a 'covering is narrower than that a man can wrap himself in it,' Isaiah 28:20,—a perfect righteousness should be provided for fallen man.

In the psalms and the prophets, the revelation of the righteousness of God was clearly foretold. Thus, "David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works: saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," Romans 4:6-8. And speaking of God's salvation, he says, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.—Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven—Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps," Psalm 85:10,11,13.

Isaiah, foretelling the advent of the Saviour, says, "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.—In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," Isaiah 45:24,25. "Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory," Isaiah 46:12,13. "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord," Isaiah 54:17. "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed," Isaiah 56:1. Jeremiah foretells the coming of the Saviour, and adds, "This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness," Jeremiah 23:6. In the well-known prophecy of Daniel, he says, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness," Daniel 9:24.

Thus did Moses and the prophets testify of Christ's righteousness; and, after his resurrection from the dead, the apostles proclaimed him, to be made of God to all who receive the truth, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Not only did the Old Testament Scriptures foretell the revelation of God's righteousness, but, from the beginning, constant intimations were given that fallen man could only be saved by faith. In the destruction of the world by the flood, God gave a striking proof of his abhorrence of sin, and that although hand joined in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished. From this destruction Noah was preserved through grace, Genesis 6:8, "and being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, he prepared an ark to the saving of his house, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith," Hebrews 11:7.

The Saviour was first described as the seed of the woman. God was afterwards pleased to declare, that in the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed. This eminent patriarch was at the same time constituted the father, model or pattern of all believers. In him the way of a sinner's justification is clearly exhibited. "What shall we then say, that Abraham our father according to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God: for what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.—Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," Romans 4:2,23-25.

The same doctrine is inculcated in the history of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, their preservation in the wilderness, and their conquest of Canaan. All was by faith; and those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, could not enter into the land because of unbelief, Hebrews 3:19. The various sacrifices of the law taught the same lesson. It is true, "the law is not of faith, but the man that doeth these things shall live in them," Galatians 3:12; but the law was our schoolmaster (or leader) to Christ, that we might be justified by faith, verse 24. The law required perfect obedience, and denounced a curse on every transgression, verse 10. It appointed sacrifices indeed; but these were plainly weak and inefficacious; for it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin, and this was confirmed by the constant repetition of the legal sacrifices, Hebrews 10:1,2,4. Thus, before the great Object of faith came, men were kept under the law, shut up unto faith which should afterwards be revealed, Galatians 3:23.

The doctrine of justification by faith was also clearly taught by the prophets. "Look unto me," said the Lord by Isaiah, "and by ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and beside me there is none else—a just God and a Saviour, there is none beside me," Isaiah 45:22. And when the Apostle describes the Gospel as the revelation of the righteousness of God from faith to faith, he represents it as the fulfilment of the prediction of Habakkuk, "The just shall live by faith," Habakkuk 2:4.

When John the Baptist appeared, he exhorted the people, on pain of destruction, to receive the promised Saviour, of whom he declared himself the harbinger, Luke 3:15-19; Acts 19:4; and after the Lord Jesus had been manifested to Israel, John testified that He was the Son of God, and that those who believed in Him should have eternal life, while those who rejected Him should perish, John 1:34; 3:36.

The miracles wrought by Jesus at once attested that He was the Messiah, and shadowed forth the blessings of his salvation. He went about doing good, and healing those that were oppressed of the devil, Acts 10:38. Disease and death are the consequences of sin, and therefore miracles of healing the bodies of men were wrought to evince Christ's superiority to Satan, and his ability to heal and restore their souls. Accordingly we find the forgiveness of sins connected with the removal of bodily disease, Matthew 9:6, and men were healed through faith to intimate that in this way alone, the blessings of salvation were to be communicated, Matthew 9:22,28; 13:58; Mark 9:23.

After the resurrection of Christ, He commanded his apostles to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name to all nations; and this was the word of faith which they preached, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be

saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed," Romans 10:9-11.

Here, then, let us pause, and observe, that, amidst all the variety of the Divine dispensations, Christ was in all. The whole of revelation is a display of his glory, and of the means which he has been pleased to employ for the salvation of sinners. From the beginning to the end of the Word of God, everything tends to confirm and illustrate the glorious plan of redemption through faith in Christ's righteousness. The revelation of mercy resembles the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. It dawned on fallen man in Eden; it gradually brightened in the history of the patriarchs, and in the Mosaic dispensation; it was hailed by the prophets in the most triumphant language; and, at the resurrection of Christ, it burst forth in all its splendour. The great promise of the old dispensation was the coming of the King of Zion, meek and lowly, and having salvation; and the fulfilment of this promise was fondly anticipated by many kings, and prophets, and righteous men. The great promise of the new covenant is also the manifestation of our glorified Redeemer; and to those who look for Him, He will appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.

We live in these days of the Son of Man; the gospel is not preached to us in types and figures, and comparatively obscure predictions, which the prophets themselves did not fully understand, 1 Peter 1:11,12. The righteousness of God, through faith in his Son, is now clearly revealed. He no longer treats his people as servants, who are kept ignorant of the purposes of their master, and obey his orders without comprehending their object; but, Jesus says, I have called you friends for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you, John 15:15. Our privileges are very great—let us be careful not to abuse them.

## **PART IV**

Deliverance from sin connected with pardon—mankind condemned and corrupted by their connection with Adam—Believers pardoned and restored through union with Christ—The truth necessarily purifies the heart in which it dwells—Inseparable connection of holiness and happiness—Analogy between the means of man's corruption and restoration—The necessity of the influence of the Spirit—Union between Satan and fallen man—Connection of believers with the elect angels—Conformity to God keeps pace with the strength of our faith—Perfecting by seeing Him as He is—A false profession—All shall be judged by their works.

Having briefly traced the revelation of God's righteousness from its first announcement in Eden to its full manifestation in the resurrection of Jesus, we shall endeavour to show how the gospel of Christ, in which this righteousness is revealed, is the power of God unto salvation.

In speaking of the salvation of Christ, it is sometimes necessary to distinguish between deliverance from condemnation, and from the love and power of sin; but the salvation is one, and the pardon of sin through the blood of Jesus is necessarily and essentially connected with deliverance from its power. Christ's salvation consists in saving sinners from death and condemnation, and raising them to the privilege of becoming the sons of God; and this privilege is uniformly connected with a change of character; in other words, they are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, Colossians 1:12.

Man was created in the Divine image, but the moment he came under the curse, he became corrupted and depraved, and alienated from God. In like manner, the moment his sins are pardoned he is created anew in Christ Jesus. Hence the Apostle, speaking of believers being dead with Christ, or in other words, having the old man crucified with him, adds he that is dead is justified from sin, Romans 6:7.

As through our connection with Adam, we are condemned and depraved, through union with Christ we are pardoned and restored. Our connection with Adam is the consequence of our birth; our union with the second Adam is through faith in his Word. The great moral change which takes place when a sinner becomes a subject of Jesus Christ's kingdom, is called, with reference to our birth, being born again; and this is effected through the power of the Holy Spirit by means of the Gospel. As the children of fallen Adam, we are born of corruptible seed; and as the children of God, and the brethren of Jesus, believers are born of the



incorruptible seed of the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever 1 Peter 1:23. Adam is the model or pattern after which all his children are made; and all believers are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, Romans 8:29. As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, 1 Corinthians 15:49. Indeed, the moment a sinner receives the truth, he is indissolubly united to Jesus Christ. “By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit,” and again, “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit,” 1 Corinthians 12:13; 6:17.

Such is the close and intimate union formed between Christ and the believer. Now, there is no concord between Christ and Belial; and the truth as it is in Jesus, purifies the heart and makes the believer free from the bondage of sin, John 8:32; Romans 6:18. How, indeed, should it be otherwise? What inducement have we at any time to transgress the law of God? It is the hope of enjoyment—of finding pleasure: and this must of necessity arise from want of faith in God—from not believing that in his favour is life, and not feeling that his loving-kindness is better than life. While under the influence of the truth, we must be sensible that wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, while the way of transgressors is hard. The believer knows that the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; and hence it inevitably follows, that sin must always issue in suffering; and that, however enticing it may appear, it must be bitterness in the latter end. Under the influence of the truth, therefore, he looks not at the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; for he knows, that at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth as an adder, Proverbs 23:31,32.

When we indulge in sin, hoping for gratification, we err, not knowing the character and power of God. We practically say that he is not a sufficient portion, and that, in order to obtain enjoyment, we must disobey him; but when we view him as the God of love, the fountain of light and happiness, who withholds no good thing from him that walketh uprightly, sin must appear at once foolish and loathsome. Now, the truth as it is in Jesus is the revelation of the character of God, of his almighty power, his infinite knowledge, extending alike to the most important events and the most minute occurrences. It is the exhibition of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as the cause of all the misery which exists in the universe. It is the revelation of mercy and happiness to sinners, through the sufferings and death of the Son of God. The disciple of Jesus feels that sin is his inveterate enemy, and unless destroyed, must necessarily bring about his destruction; while he beholds the glory Christ, as the forerunner of his people, has entered into, as that of which they are all to partake. Thus is the believer urged by every motive, by hope, and fear, and love, to press after conformity to God, while the Divine power and truth guarantee his success.

Full provision then, is made in the plan of salvation for completely counteracting the effects of the fall. The transgression of Adam produced a double effect on his posterity. It brought them under condemnation, from which they are incapable of delivering themselves, Psalms 49:7, and therefore we are all by nature the children of wrath Ephesians 2:3. But in the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, a sufficient remedy is provided, and God is just while he justifies every one who believes in Jesus. But mankind are not only condemned, not only under the curse, their minds are also corrupted and alienated from God. “Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me,” Psalm 51:5 The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, Romans 8:7. It was therefore necessary, that man should also be restored to the image of God, and this is effected by the revelation of that righteousness by which the ungodly are justified. Were a sinner to receive a free pardon, it is evident that, unless his heart were changed, he would immediately incur renewed condemnation; and besides, as God is the source of blessedness, it is impossible that any being can be blessed while his mind is alienated from God. The whole of revelation teaches us, that holiness and happiness are inseparably connected; and how should it be otherwise, under the government of one who fills all things, with whom evil shall not dwell, and who hateth all workers of iniquity?

There is a striking analogy, not only between the introduction of sin and righteousness, but also between the manner in which the mind of man was corrupted, and by which it was purified. The progress of the first temptation is thus described: “And the serpent said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the

garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also to her husband and he did eat,” Genesis 3:1-6.

Thus it is evident, that the mind of man was corrupted by the reception of falsehood, and in this falsehood was included a completely erroneous view of the Divine character, for it represented God as deceitful and jealous of his creature. The necessary consequence of man’s giving credit to this representation was the corruption of the human heart. It was a part of his dependence on his Maker, that the image of God, in which he was created, could only be preserved by the contemplation of the character of his Creator; and, therefore, no sooner did the falsehood of Satan, which completely misrepresented this character, take possession of his mind, than his own character was completely changed. Thus did man receive the recompense of his error which was meet. He “changed the truth of God into a lie;” he “did not like to retain God in his knowledge;” and God “gave him over to a reprobate mind. He was filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity.” Such was the process of man’s corruption; and all are begotten in Adam’s likeness, after his image—“having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart,” Ephesians 4:18.

In the revelation of the righteousness of God contained in the Gospel, the Divine character is displayed in all its glory and excellence; and when a sinner beholds this display, he is transformed by the renewing of his mind. As man was corrupted by a falsehood, which represented God as altogether different from what he really is; he is restored by a truth, which exhibits the Divine character in all its purity and grandeur. Hence the Gospel is represented as a mould into which the believer is delivered, Romans 6:17; and hence it is written, “All we, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,” 2 Corinthians 3:18; and thus the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, by which believers are not only delivered from the wrath to come, but by whose mighty energy they are brought out of darkness into God’s marvellous light, 1 Peter 2:9; are born again, 1 Peter 1:23; are made free from sin, John 8:32; Romans 6:22; and in short are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, Colossians 1:13. The Gospel is the rod of God’s strength, which he promised to send out of Zion, Psalm 110:2; and which, by revealing a perfect righteousness for the justification of sinners, casts down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought of the believer to the obedience of Christ, 2 Corinthians 10:5.

But while believers are begotten with the word of truth, born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, we must always remember that, so entire is the alienation of fallen man from God, so completely blinded is he by the love of this present evil world, that as the mid-day sun in all its splendour shines in vain to the blind, so the Gospel is a stumbling-block and foolishness to every man by nature. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Corinthians 2:14. Hence faith is uniformly described as the gift of God. In the economy of redemption, it is the office of the Spirit to take of the things of Christ, and to show them to the mind, John 16:13,15. “Our Gospel,” says the Apostle, “came not unto you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,” 1 Thessalonians 1:5; and no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, 1 Corinthians 12:3. Believers have purified their souls in obeying the truth, but it is through the Spirit, 1 Peter 1:22; and it is only by the Holy Ghost, that we can hold fast the truth, 2 Timothy 1:14. The Lord Jesus was quickened by the Spirit, 1 Peter 3:18; and we are taught that the same almighty power by which he was raised from the dead, is exerted in quickening those who are dead in trespasses and sins, Ephesians 1:19,20; 2:1.

When a sinner believes the Gospel, he becomes aware of his true character. He knows that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing; that he has no resources in himself. He feels his entire dependence on God, and views Christ as the medium through whom every spiritual blessing is communicated; and therefore he says with the Apostle, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Galatians 2:20. He is a partaker of the Spirit of Christ, by whom a new life was first imparted to him, by whom it is maintained, and by whom his body shall be raised from the dead, Romans 8:11.

Thus we see, that man was created in the image of God; that this image was preserved so long as he continued to behold his Divine original: but no sooner was this glorious object removed through the subtlety of Satan, than the image of God was defaced, and man was changed into the image of that false, and jealous, and deceitful idol, which Satan had substituted in the place of God, and imposed on our first parents as their Creator. Man had now lost his guide, he was involved in the grossest darkness, and would for ever have remained in this state, had not God regarded him in mercy, and provided a way by which sinners might be partakers of a Divine nature, through union with the Son of God, who took part with them in flesh and blood, and as their head and representative, magnified the law which man had dishonoured. This union is formed by faith in Him, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. He is the light of the world, the Sun of righteousness, who has risen with healing in his wings; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, and hath declared to the sinful race of Adam, that God, whom no man hath seen at any time, and whom no man knoweth except those to whom the Son will reveal him, Matthew 11:27. Hence, says the apostle, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols," 1 John 5:20.

Nothing is revealed for the purpose of gratifying our curiosity. The Word of God is intended to check the pride of our fleshly minds, and warns us against intruding into those things which we have not seen, Colossians 2:18. But it makes known to us the existence of a being, who is always placed at the head of those who have apostatized from God. There are angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, who are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day, Jude 6. Of these, the devil, or Satan, is described as the chief and head. The everlasting fire into which the wicked shall be cast, is "prepared for the devil and his angels." By his subtlety man was at first seduced, and he is still represented as our great adversary, who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The means of his triumph was falsehood, and no sooner did he succeed in conveying it into the mind of our first parents, than they became his subjects, and a real, though mysterious union, was formed between fallen man and the arch enemy of God. Hence he is denominated the God and Prince of this world, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." He is the father of the wicked, John 8:44; Cain "was of that wicked one;" "the whole world lieth in the wicked one," and are led captive by the devil at his will.

But for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil, and establish an everlasting kingdom, which should subvert the kingdom of Satan. The foundation of this kingdom was laid in his atonement on Calvary. By his sufferings and death, he opened a way for the exercise of mercy to mankind; and, as the reward of his humiliation, he is constituted the head of God's obedient and intelligent creation. A name is given him above every name, angels and authorities and powers beings made subject to him; and it would appear that it is in virtue of their connection with him, that the elect angels are irrevocably and finally secured from all danger; for it is written, "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance," Ephesians 1:9-11. Hence we are said to have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, who are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation. And when the mystery of God shall be finished, when the great end of the mediatorial kingdom of Christ shall be accomplished, he will come to judgment, attended by all the holy angels, and then shall the kingdom of

Satan be completely destroyed, and he, and all his adherents, be cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, Revelations 20:10-15.

To the connection formed between believers and the elect angels as the subjects of Jesus Christ, the apostle seems to allude, when he speaks of his being employed to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, Ephesians 3:9. The gospel not only exhibits all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, as united in one glorious fellowship or society under Christ, but as connected with the angels, who are also his subjects, and who take a lively and active interest in the progress of his kingdom on earth, Luke 15:10; 16:22.

The gospel, then, is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Through faith in this gospel the sinner receives a perfect righteousness, by which he is justified before God; by faith he is united to Christ in the closest and most indissoluble union, and by beholding the glory of his exalted King and Head, the image of God is restored in his soul. Through faith he receives the promise of the Spirit, Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 1:13; and the same almighty agent who at first moved on the face of the waters, reducing to order the earth when without form and void, renews the believer in knowledge after the image of his Creator, Colossians 3:10, and imparts light and life and love to his soul.

Our conformity to God must, then, be in exact proportion to the strength of our faith; for it is by beholding the glory of God, that any measure of conformity is produced; and hence the importance of the exhortation, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The greater progress we make in the discernment of the truth, the more strongly is the Divine image stamped upon the soul; and in heaven the believer's complete conformity to God will spring from the same source, "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John 3:2. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness," Psalm 17:15. "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known," 1 Corinthians 13:12. Thus is the restoration of fallen man begun, carried on, and completed by the manifestation of the Divine glory in Christ Jesus. The crucifixion of the old man commences in the day of regeneration, when the Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to the mind; and every remnant of corruption shall be destroyed by the full discovery of the Divine glory in the astonishing plan of redemption when we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Many indeed profess to believe who are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, and daily give occasion to the adversaries to blaspheme the doctrine of the holy Jesus; but the gospel is not said to be the power of God unto salvation to every one that professeth, but to every one that believeth; and faith uniformly purifies the heart, Acts 15:9, works by love, Galatians 5:6 and overcometh the world, 1 John 5:4,5. "He that doeth good is of God, but he that doeth evil hath not seen God," 3 John 11. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"; "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him," 1 John 2:4; 3:6. "He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit that he hath given us," 1 John 3:24. So inseparable are faith and obedience, that the apostles Paul and James quote the same passage of scripture history, the former to prove the doctrine of justification by faith without works, and the latter to establish the position, that a profession of faith, the sincerity of which is not manifested by obedience, is loathsome as a dead carcass, Hebrews 11:17,31; James 2:21,23. It is the uniform doctrine of Scripture, that while believers are saved by grace through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast, they are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that they should walk in them, Ephesians 2:8,10.

The salvation of Christ, then, is a deliverance not only from the wrath to come, but also from sin, Matthew 1:21 Jesus hath undertaken that sin shall not have dominion over believers, Romans 6:14; and, therefore, while to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness, Romans 4:5, we are assured whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, Galatians 6:7; and we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his

body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, 2 Corinthians 5:10. So that instead of the law being made void through faith, it is established, Romans 3:31, not only because believers are justified by a perfect righteousness, corresponding to the law's most extensive requirements, but as the power of Christ is engaged for their immediate deliverance from the dominion of sin, and for their being finally presented before God without spot and blameless.

## PART V

The efficacy of faith is producing obedience taught in the Old Testament—Noah, Abraham, Moses. Purifications under the law—The prophets teach the connection of justification with purity of heart—The salvation of Christ excludes boasting, and secures conformity to God in all who are pardoned.

We have seen that the Old Testament clearly taught the doctrine of justification by faith. With equal clearness it exhibited the inseparable connection between acceptance with God and conformity to his will.

Noah was preserved from perishing in the flood by faith of things not seen as yet, Hebrews 11:7; and his faith secured obedience to the Divine commandments, "Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he," Genesis 6:22.

In the life of Abraham, we have a striking exemplification of the efficacy of this Divine principle, In obedience to the commandment of God, he left his native country, and set out to go he knew not whither. He cheerfully sojourned as a pilgrim and stranger in the land of promise; and so confident was he of receiving from God whatever was necessary and proper, that he declined accepting what the gratitude of the king of Sodom prompted him to offer, lest he should appear indebted to any man for that wealth and prosperity which God had promised to bestow, Genesis 14:22,23. Under the influence of the same faith, he hesitated not to offer his darling son upon the altar as a burnt-offering, convinced that God was able to raise him up from the dead, Hebrews 11:17,19.

Faith led Moses to despise the treasures of Egypt, and to prefer suffering affliction with the people of God to the enjoyment of the pleasures of sin for a season, Hebrews 11:23,26. In short, whatever was pleasing to God in the conduct of those whose history is recorded in the Old Testament, was the fruit of faith, Hebrews 11:2-39, and indeed, from what other source could it proceed? The apostle challenges gainsayers to produce any other principle sufficiently strong to enable men to resist the allurements of this present world."This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God," 1 John 5:4,5; and again it is written, "Without faith it is impossible to please God," Hebrews 11:6.

As the sacrifices enjoined by the law of Moses prefigured the sufferings of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, so the various legal purifications denoted that internal purity which is the characteristic of all the children of the new covenant. The nation of Israel were a peculiar people unto God, and their separation from the rest of mankind was signified by their being sprinkled with the blood of the covenant at Mount Sinai, Hebrew 9:19,20. But they were liable to many defilements, by which they were excluded from the sanctuary, and certain rites of purification were necessary before the unclean were permitted again to approach the holy place, and to enjoy those privileges from which other nations were debarred. The blood and the water employed on such occasions, prefigured the sanctifying and purifying influences of the blood and spirit of Christ, 1 John 5:6.

One very important means of purification was the ashes of an heifer mixed with running water, and sprinkled on the person who had contracted defilement, Numbers 19. To this the apostle alludes, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God," Hebrews 9:13,14.

The priests, who approached still nearer to God than the body of the people, were solemnly consecrated for their office, by being washed with water, clothed with the holy garments, and sprinkled with blood and oil.

Believers are described as a royal priesthood, who are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of their God. They have all an unction from the Holy One, who abideth in them, and teacheth them all things, 1 John 2:27.

The language of the legal purifications is frequently employed in the psalms and the prophets, to denote moral purity. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," Psalm 51:7. "So," says Isaiah, speaking of the Redeemer, "shall he sprinkle many nations," chapter 52:15. "Then," says the Lord, "will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your idols, and from all your filthiness, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you an heart of flesh; and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them," Ezekiel 36:25-27.

It is unnecessary to trace this subject through the writings of the prophets. We only observe, that while they uniformly teach that God imputed to sinners righteousness by faith without works, Romans 4:6, they represent the purification of the heart as essentially connected with this privilege. "Blessed," says the Psalmist, "is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and *in whose spirit there is no guile*," Psalm 32:2 "Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, *and done thy commandments*," Psalm 119:166. And the man who trusted in the Lord is always contrasted with the wicked, Psalm 32:10.

We have already seen, that in the New Testament the inseparable connection between faith and holiness is constantly maintained. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," Romans 8:1,2; and thus, through the whole of the Word of God, we are taught, that while salvation by faith effectually excludes boasting, it also secures conformity to God in all who receive the forgiveness of sins.

## PART VI

1. We cannot appear before God in our own righteousness—Difference of character in society—The two debtors—The Gospel reveals an atonement sufficient for all: addressed to sinners—The brazen serpent—The Gospel humbles the pride of man.
2. Vain talk of justification unless our hearts are purified—Shall be known by our fruits, and should therefore examine ourselves—General expectation of a future state, founded on revelation—Corrupted—The hope of the Gospel purifies the heart.
3. The nature of saving faith—Some believe facts, yet ignorant of the truth.
4. How much we should prize the knowledge of Divine things—Men may appear to possess this knowledge while profligate, but it is the foundation of everything in man which is well-pleasing to God.
5. Our constant need of the supply of the Holy Spirit—The influence of the Spirit equally necessary with the meditation of Christ—The dreadful consequences of the fall.
6. God deals with us as rational creatures—Opposite errors on this subject.

From this subject we may learn many important lessons. 1<sup>st</sup>. We can never appear before our Judge in our own righteousness, but only in that which God hath provided.

It would be absurd to deny that there is a great difference in the conduct of men. Some are most useful and valuable members of society; their natural disposition is amiable, and they feel pleasure in promoting the happiness and comfort of their fellowcreatures. Others are engaged in deeds of blood and rapine, and the wellbeing of society requires that they should be put to death. The former class have their reward. The satisfaction which they enjoy in their own minds, the respect and affection with which they are regarded, and

the comparative security of their situation, form a striking contrast with the feelings of uneasiness and apprehension endured by the outcasts of society.

But the difference shrinks into nothing when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and therefore all are condemned. This is beautifully illustrated in our Lord's parable. "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, the other fifty; and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both," Luke 7:41,42. The difference of the amount of their debt was great, The debt of the one was ten times that of the other; but *they had nothing to pay*. Here they were completely on a footing; and as all have sinned, and the law condemns him who offends in one point as being guilty of all, no man can stand before God, on the ground of his own righteousness. It is only the righteousness of Christ that the sinner can be accepted, and this righteousness is "unto all and upon all them that believe, for *there is no difference*," Romans 3:22. Whether we owe fifty or five hundred pence—whether we have been an ornament and blessing to society, or profligate and abandoned in the extreme—the mercy of God is freely proclaimed to us through Christ. We have cause to be thankful, if, from the circumstances in which we were placed, we have been preserved from gross sin; if our situation has been so favourable, that many worldly motives have conspired to render us amiable and useful. But, in the matter of acceptance with God, all this is out of the question. The Gospel is the good news of pardon to the guilty; and it enters into no calculations, in regard to the different degrees of guilt in those whom it addresses. It reveals an atonement sufficient for all; and every sinner of the human race is commanded to receive it as a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners. The Gospel does not teach us how to lay a foundation for ourselves, but informs us of the sure foundation which God has laid in Zion, upon which all are *equally* invited and commanded to build their hopes, without any apprehensions of being upbraided for their past conduct by their gracious Creator.

The Gospel is very generally misunderstood by those who profess to believe. They view it as a scheme for making up their deficiencies through the merits of Christ; but this is "another gospel." The Gospel of Christ is addressed to those who are far from righteousness; who are poor and blind, and naked; who have no money to purchase salvation, no merit to recommend them to the favour of God. Christ came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. If we are not sinners we have nothing to do with the Gospel; and if we are sinners, let us not reject the counsel of God against ourselves, by vainly supposing that anything about us gives us a peculiar claim to his favour, or by imagining that our sins are too great to be forgiven. The righteousness of God is altogether irrespective of our obedience. The Gospel equally holds out its promises of favour and acceptance to the man who by his crimes has forfeited his life to the laws of his country, and to him who is justly honoured for his benevolence and philanthropy. The thief upon the cross was saved by faith in Jesus, and none shall enter heaven in any other way.

Let us not then suppose, that we either have, or shall hereafter obtain, something which may entitle us to the favour of God. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Let us therefore come to God with the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and let us look for this mercy through the atonement of Christ.

Although the Scriptures are so clear and express on this subject, it is a stumbling-block and foolishness to the great body of those who hear the Gospel. It offends their pride to be put upon a level with the outcasts of society; surely, they think, some difference will be made; but they err, not knowing the Scriptures; not understanding the malignity of sin; not perceiving, that while the blood of the cross is sufficient to wash away guilt of the deepest dye, nothing less than that precious blood can atone for the smallest deviation from the holy law of God. Such persons mistake the Gospel. They view it as a kind of bargain which God proposes to make with his creatures, that on certain conditions he will accept them—while in fact it is the message of reconciliation, equally addressed to all mankind, declaring that a full atonement for sin has been made upon the cross, and inviting every sinner of Adam's race instantly to approach God as his Friend and Father through Christ. When Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, it was a remedy equally adapted for all who had been bitten. Whether the bite had just been received, or whether the poison had infected the blood, by looking to the serpent, the patient was healed; and in reference to this emblem, Christ,

indiscriminately addressing all mankind, says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no else—a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me," Isaiah 45:21,22.

In announcing the publication of the Gospel, the Lord declared by his prophet, "the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day," Isaiah 2:11; and this is illustrated by the words of the apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," Galatians 6:14. Nor was this feeling peculiar to Paul, "We," says he, including all Christians,—“we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have *no confidence in the flesh*,” Philippians 3:3. Believers look forward with joy to the coming of the Lord; but their confidence rests solely on their knowledge of the perfection of Christ's righteousness, and in no degree whatever on any idea of their superior personal merit. Pride was the snare in which man was taken by the subtlety of Satan—"Ye shall be as Gods;" and the Gospel lays every high imagination of man in the dust, showing him that he is without strength and ungodly; that he can only be justified through the righteousness of Christ; and that he can in no other way be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, than by being created anew, by union with the Son of God.

2<sup>nd</sup>. We may also learn from this subject, that it is vain to talk of being justified by Christ's righteousness, unless our hearts are purified by faith.

While the Gospel is a proclamation of pardon addressed to sinners without exception, an unlimited invitation to the guilty to take shelter in the blood of atonement, it is the power of God unto salvation, only to those who believe. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts. We may profess faith in Christ while we are the slaves of sin; we may deceive ourselves, and affirm that we are trusting in his righteousness while we are living after the flesh; but every branch in the vine that beareth not fruit shall be cast into the fire. We cannot impose on God; and if with the Scriptures in our hands, we impose on ourselves, we are inexcusable. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is the test which Christ has given to enable us to detect false teachers, and the same test shall at last discover, whether we were indeed believers in Jesus. Hence all are commanded to examine themselves whether they be in the faith, not only by comparing their creed with the Word of God, but also by comparing the fruits of their faith with the fruits of the Spirit. Wherever the Spirit of Christ dwells, the fruits of the Spirit will be produced; and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

It is said, Are we not conscious whether we believe? Doubtless we are conscious of what passes in our minds; but we may believe many things, and yet remain in the gall of bitterness. If we believe Christ's Gospel, it will effectually work in our hearts, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, and teach us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; and if what we believe does not produce this effect, it is not the true grace of God in which we stand. We have seen how the discovery of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ restores the Divine image in the soul of him who beholds it; and every doctrine, the belief of which does not produce this effect, is a delusion, and the comfort which we derive from it is merely sporting ourselves "with our own deceivings."

We may indeed feel strong desires of future happiness, and we may persuade ourselves that these desires shall be gratified, while we are far from God. In every country the expectation of a future state has prevailed. Men, it is true, engage in worldly pursuits with as much eagerness as if there were no danger of disappointment. The world was made for man, and was so admirably adapted by infinite wisdom to promote his happiness, that it appears as if he had nothing else to do but to enjoy it, and he is led by the instincts of his nature to expect that it will yield him satisfaction. But the spell is soon broken: every earthly object proclaims to fallen man, Happiness is not in me! And the unwelcome truth is constantly forced on his consideration, that in sorrow he shall eat bread all the days of his life till he return to the dust. Hence the exclamation of a monarch whose means of procuring all the happiness which this world can impart were very uncommon, and whose wisdom in improving his advantages was unrivalled, "Vanities of vanities, all is vanity!" And this exclamation has been re-echoed by all classes of men. At the same time, the human mind revolts at the idea of annihilation. We feel that there is within us something distinct from and superior to the



body; and, in every age, men have cherished a hope of enjoying, in a future state, that happiness which universal experience declares to be unattainable in this world. This expectation is not only rational, but is founded on Divine revelation.

We have seen, that no sooner did man apostatize from his Creator, and begin to feel the effects of his folly, than God intimated his purposes of mercy, and opened for him the prospect of happiness beyond the grave. Considering the character and circumstances of man, it was impossible that this revelation should be forgotten, unless where men were debased almost to the level of the brutes. But the blindness of the human mind, and the corruptions of the human heart, have grossly distorted this, as well as every other part of revelation. Men have imagined a state of happiness, consisting in the uninterrupted gratification of all their evil passions, and consequently the stronger their hopes of future enjoyment, the more were their lusts inflamed. Such was the heaven of the Scandinavians, who expected at once to gratify their intemperance and revenge, by drinking out of the skulls of their enemies. Such is the Mahometan paradise, and such has been the heaven looked forward to in every nation which has not been favoured with the oracles of God: and even the Scriptures, without the teaching of the Holy Spirit, are insufficient to lead men of learning and science to look for anything in a future state beyond the enlargement of their intellectual faculties, and an indefinite advancement in the philosophical investigations in which they are at present occupied.

The Scriptures represent heaven as consisting in beholding the Divine glory, in being entirely and for ever delivered from whatever is contrary to the will of God, and which would interrupt our fellowship with him who is glorious in holiness. That this hope must of necessity purify the heart in which it dwells, not only results from the nature of things, but is recorded in the Scriptures of truth. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall see him as he is. And every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.”

3<sup>rd</sup>. Here too, we may learn the nature of saving faith. To ascertain this, it is not necessary to enter into metaphysical speculations or nice distinctions. Saving faith consists in receiving the testimony of God concerning his Son; but it must be admitted, that many believe that Jesus died at Jerusalem as a sacrifice for sin, and rose again from the dead, who are completely ignorant of the character of God. All the rites of the Papal Church, the mass, absolution, and extreme unction, are founded on these acknowledged facts; but still, how many of the deluded votaries of superstition are involved in the grossest darkness! They have not, then, believed the gospel; for by the gospel, God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into the heart of every believer, giving him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Jesus has said, “I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life;” and if we are followers of Christ, we were sometimes darkness, but now we are light in the Lord, Ephesians 5:8.

Many trust in Jesus precisely as the Jews trusted in Moses, John 5:45. They professed themselves his disciples, John 9:28. They upbraided the Lord with the superiority of the miracles wrought by that eminent prophet, John 6:30,31: yet the searcher of hearts declared, that they did not believe Moses, John 5:46,47. And many who in the present day fully admit the facts respecting the miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and in one sense trust in him, will be found at last to have been strangers to the truth, not because there was a defect in their *manner* of believing, but because they believed another gospel, or at least perverted the gospel of Christ, Galatians 1:6,7.

4<sup>th</sup>. We may be able to talk about religion, and appear to possess an accurate knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, while they are immersed in the love of the world. In consequence of this, many have undervalued knowledge, and spoken as if we might possess an acquaintance with God, without our hearts being affected. But the knowledge of God is the foundation of every thing in man which is well pleasing to his Creator. It is by knowing the true God, That believers are made to differ from others. We may indeed *appear* to possess much knowledge, while we are enemies of the cross of Christ; but still in the knowledge of the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, consists eternal life, John 17:3, and wherever this knowledge is communicated, it produces an entire change on the sinners heart, Proverbs 2:10,22.

5<sup>th</sup>. We may learn from this subject, that believers stand in constant need of the supply of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen that it is by the revelation of himself in the gospel that God restores the divine image to fallen man; and as our first parents retained the image of God no longer than they continued to view God as he really is, so it is only by holding fast the truth that his image can be preserved in our mind. By his influence we maintain fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father, Ephesians 2:18. The influence of the Holy Spirit is therefore equally necessary to our salvation as the meditation of Jesus. How careful ought we then to be not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, Ephesians 4:30. Is God the portion of our souls? Is he our “exceeding joy?” Do we feel it our highest privilege to cast all our cares on him for time and eternity? Do we rejoice in being able to cry, Abba, Father, while we know and believe the love that God hath to us? 1 John 4:16. Let us remember that the continuance of all these enjoyments depends on our minds being enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and that this knowledge is maintained in our hearts only by the power of the Holy Spirit. Here, then, we see our entire dependence on God. So lost and ruined were we by the fall, that nothing but the blood of Christ could redeem us from destruction; and so blinded were we by the love of sin, that the preaching of reconciliation by the death of Christ, was a stumbling-block and foolishness, till the Holy Spirit brought home the truth to our minds with divine power and energy; and, without the continuance of his influence, we should immediately relapse into our former ignorance and alienation from God.

6<sup>th</sup>. Let us at the same time remember, that while all is of grace, while it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, and while he alone makes us to differ from the most abandoned of our species, he deals with us as rational creatures. In the plan of redemption all is of God; but this does not supersede the use of our faculties, our care, our watchfulness, our exertions, to enter into the strait gate, and to obtain that crown of glory which fadeth not away.

Let us also remember that, in endeavouring to direct the attention of our fellow-men to the gospel of Christ, while the consideration that Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase, should lead us to depend entirely on the Lord for success, and to be earnest in prayer that the Holy Spirit may guide those whom we address into the truth, it is at the same time our incumbent duty to employ the means best calculated to excite attention. In all their discourses the apostles preached Christ crucified; they never compromised the truth, or handled the Word of God deceitfully: yet they adapted themselves to the circumstances and prejudices of their hearers. They know that it was God alone who caused them to triumph; but they taught “with all wisdom,” and avoided giving unnecessary offence; becoming all things to all men, and endeavouring to make straight paths for the feet of those whom they were endeavouring to lead into the way of peace. While they recollected that they were addressing men who were the enemies of God, and whose minds were opposed to his salvation, they considered their hearers as rational creatures, and set before them those motives which were best calculated to arouse and awaken them to a sense of their guilt and danger. They knew that man labours under no inability to believe the gospel which weakens his responsibility or lessens his guilt; and they knew, that while no man cometh to Christ except the Father draw him, sinners are brought to the foot of the cross in a way perfectly consistent with their character as accountable creatures.

By losing sight of this, men have been led into the most ruinous and pernicious errors. Some have misrepresented the gospel as if it afforded encouragement to sinners to go about to establish their own righteousness; others, in avoiding this extreme, have spoken of men in a natural state, as if they were mere machines, and as if reason were to be put out of the question in reference to the revelation of mercy. But he that is taught of God “shall come forth of them all;” and while he depends on the influence of the Holy Spirit alone for preserving the impression of the truth on his own heart, or carrying it home to the consciences of others, he will carefully guard against temptation, and will shun whatever might cast an unnecessary stumbling-block in the way of those whom he addresses.

## CONCLUSION

In concluding this very imperfect illustration of an important passage of Scripture, it may not be unsuitable more particularly to direct our attention to the caution which it contains against being ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

The hopes of the believer, for time and for eternity, rest on the incarnation, sufferings, and death of the Son of God. So boundless was his love, that he left that glory which he had with the Father before the world was, took on him the form of a servant, gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, hid not his face from shame and spitting, and finally became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, that guilty sinners might be reconciled to God, and might inherit eternal life.

Is it possible that the believer can, for a moment, be insensible of the extent of his obligation? Is he redeemed from sin and misery by the precious blood of Christ: did the Lord descend from the throne of his glory and assume our fallen nature: did he endure the contradiction of sinners against himself, and make his soul an offering for our sins; and can we requite such unparalleled love with coldness and ingratitude? Has Christ risen from the dead and entered into his glory: does he ever live to make intercession for us: are the reins of universal dominion placed in his hands: and does he constantly employ his unbounded authority for our benefit: had he promised to return, and receive us into his immediate presence, to give us a share of that glory in which he is now enthroned; and can it be necessary to caution us against being ashamed of his gospel?

Yes; such is the desperate wickedness of the human heart, such the natural enmity of fallen man against God, that even those, who are renewed in the spirit of their mind, who are no longer, as formerly, the slaves of sin, are ever prone to compromise their allegiance to their Lord, for the sake of avoiding “the world’s dread laugh.” They know that they have not followed cunningly devised fables; they know that Christ died for their sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; they know, that he who did so much for them, is God over all, blessed for evermore: in whom they live, and move, and have their being; and yet, this is not sufficient to lead them on every occasion to glory in the cross of Christ.

They know, that there is no other name under heaven, given among men, by which they can be saved; they know, that if the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; and still they feel backward to go forth without the camp to Jesus, bearing his reproach. They know that the gospel, derided and despised as it is by worms of the dust, forms the theme of unceasing praise by myriads of angels and glorified spirits before the throne of God. They know, that the salvation of Christ, although a stumbling-block and foolishness to them that perish, is the great subject into which the angels desire to look, and in which, with wonder and astonishment, they trace the manifold wisdom of God. There are moments indeed, when the sublimity of these considerations so elevates the mind, as to lead believers to glory when counted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of the Lord; but at other times, the open ridicule, or the half-suppressed derision of those who know not God, fills them with uneasiness, and they are tempted to conceal their attachment to Jesus.

What a proof is this of our weakness, and of the dreadful malignity of that disease with which our nature is so deeply infected! How impressively does it remind us of the declaration of our Lord, “Without me ye can do nothing.”

Sin, we are assured, shall not have dominion over those who are Christ’s; but this does not arise from any inherent strength which they have received. The Christian life is a life of faith, of entire dependence on Christ, of habitual conviction of our own weakness, and of constant application to his fulness. The grace of Christ has often enabled his people to glory in the most aggravated tribulation. The martyrs of Jesus have braved death in its most appalling forms. For no other crime than attachment to him, they have endured the most cruel sufferings, and they have gotten the victory through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of his testimony. No temptation is too strong for the believer when his eyes are directed to Christ. In such cases,

his Lord always makes him to triumph: but the same grace is necessary to enable him to endure the smallest trial.

Without this, we can no more bear the sneer of ignorance, or the affected pity of the deluded votaries of this present world, than we could support the torments of the rack. But this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith; and, under the influence of this Divine principle, we shall always be more than conquerors.

This may teach us how exactly the religion of Jesus is adapted to our circumstances. It reveals a perfect atonement for the lost and guilty, which neither requires nor admits of any addition; it proclaims pardon to sinners without money and without price; and by forming an indissoluble union between the Saviour and the believer, it secures his deliverance from sin. This deliverance is indeed imperfect in our present state. The moral disease of our nature has withered all our energies, and left us an easy prey to the wiles of the Devil. But as the precious ointment on the head of Aaron ran down to the skirts of his garments, so the Holy Spirit, communicated to Christ without measure, is imparted to every believer, and causes him to triumph over all his enemies. But this Spirit we receive through faith, Galatians 3:14. The moment our eyes are withdrawn from the Captain of our salvation, like Peter, we begin to sink. The believer then resembles Samson when shorn of his locks; and weak like another man, is sure to fall before the slightest temptation.

Let the followers of Jesus at once be humbled and encouraged by this consideration. Well may they say, Lord, what is man? Surely, in his best estate, he is altogether vanity. After tasting that the Lord is gracious, after experiencing the sweetness of communion with God, we are often so base and ungrateful as to blush at the sneer of the scorner, and hardly dare to avow our attachment to that gracious Friend who hath redeemed us with his own blood. But notwithstanding all this, let not the believer turn aside from following the Lord; let him daily cultivate habitual dependence on Christ, and all shall be well. We know who has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

The day is approaching when all, who, from fear of man, from attachment to this present world, or from any other cause, have been ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, thus rejecting this only remedy which the love of God has provided for a lost and ruined world, shall be doomed to everlasting contempt; while those, who, through the Saviour's grace, have confessed him before men, shall be received into the heavenly mansions, and for ever share that matchless glory with which their Elder Brother is already crowned.

Let this hope then animate believers. Let them not think it strange although they should have trial of cruel mockings, but remember the exhortation, "Let those who suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator." Amidst all the ridicule which the men of the world affect to pour on the doctrine of Christ, they feel a secret misgiving of heart, an apprehension that at last they may be fond in an error, and that the persons whom they brand as enthusiasts, may receive the approbation of God. How much does it tend to harden such characters, when they see an appearance of faltering in those who have embraced the Gospel; when, instead of being always ready to give an answer to every one that asketh them a reason of their hope with meekness and fear, they are, on certain occasions, ashamed to avow their real sentiments. It is not necessary or proper at all times to intrude upon others the doctrine of Christ. Nothing is more calculated to excite prejudice, and to harden men to their destruction. But never let the silence of a Christian, on that subject which chiefly occupies his mind, appear to arise from the fear of ridicule.

Let him judge when he ought to direct the attention of others to the truth, and when he ought to be silent. There is a season for everything; but there is no time when the follower of Jesus, without the basest cowardice, and the deepest ingratitude, can disown his Master, or shrink from the open avowal of his allegiance. His motives may be misrepresented, his understanding contemned; he may be charged with hypocrisy, or with being the dupe of able and unprincipled men; but he must follow his Lord through good and through bad report. Truth will finally prevail; and the approbation of Jesus from the thrones of his glory will more than compensate for every uneasy sensation which the believer experienced, while an inhabitant of a world in a state of rebellion against God. Nor will the approbation of Jesus be transient. Through the

revolving ages of eternity his people shall be the objects of his unchanging love; and not a cup of cold water, given under the influence of attachment to him, or the smallest sacrifice of our inclinations to his authority, shall fail to obtain an everlasting, an unmeasurable reward.