

Living Truths

Vol. II

MARCH, 1903

No. 3

When one of the world's great benefactors was asked what his conception of heaven was he said "Rest." The answer of another was "Love."

GOD OUR ANSWER The answer of a third, and the best of all, was "To be with Him." A little before his death Dr. Anderson, of Boston, frequently remarked, "I am getting so homesick to see Jesus. It seems to me it will be the greatest moment of my existence when I meet Him." Each heart has its own special need and cry. But, whatever it is, the true answer is God Himself, for whom the human soul was made, and it never will find rest until it rests in Him.

"Blessed are the homesick for they shall get home," is a fine old German proverb. In this age of practical things and rushing tides of intense activity, we want to guard the deeper and the silent life of the heart. **HEART LONGINGS** Spiritual realities can mean no more to us than our own deep sense of need. Just as the best dish on the table is always a good appetite, so the greatest spiritual blessing is a heart that longs for God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness." Let us cherish the sacred breathings of holy desire and thank God for everything that makes us turn away from everything and cry for Him, "My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land."

And yet the healthy heart will always be found full of bright and wholesome appreciation of all the blessings of life. A trustful and contented spirit will see a thousand gleams of sunshine where others can see nothing but clouds. **MAKING THE BEST OF LIFE** Let us take all the gladness God gives and then pour out the full cup as a libation of love and praise upon His altar.

Good Billy Bray once went to an auction room to buy an old cupboard for six shillings which a friend had given him for the purpose. He intended to use it for a pulpit in his little chapel. But the cupboard went for six and sixpence and Billy lost it. But he never lost his peace of mind about anything, and as he walked home he kept praising the Lord, cupboard or no cupboard. He soon found that the neighbor who had bought it was unable to get it in at his narrow door, and was glad to let Billy have it for six shillings, and cart it to the chapel into the bargain. And so Billy thanked the Lord that He had provided in this way by a seeming disappointment for the extra sixpence for cartage which he did not possess. Like Billy let us trust God, "cupboard or no cupboard," and it will often be cupboard too, in the end.

A high authority has said that the greatest character of modern fiction is Mr. Greatheart in Pilgrim's Progress. The reason must be that Greatheart alone of all the pilgrims never had any troubles of his own, but was always looking after other people. This was the life of the Lord Jesus and we could not imagine Him coming to His disciples and telling them how badly He felt, and how burdened He was. This is the royal life of liberty and love. God help us to exchange burdens with the Lord; "casting all our care upon Him, for He careth for us," and then taking "His yoke upon us, which is easy, and His burden, which is light." God give us each

"A heart at leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathize."

It was this that Lowell meant to teach us when he gave us his exquisite poem of Sir Launfal riding far to find the sacred cup in which the Lord had passed the Paschal wine to His first disciples. And then at last after the weary years of his wandering, as he returned to his castle once more, disappointed and weary, he saw the same beggar sitting at the gate whom he had passed with some trifling gift flung to him from the saddle as he had ridden forth long years before. But now, taught by his own weariness to feel for another's woe, he descended from his saddle and taking his own drinking cup, went to the fountain and brought a cup of water to the thirsty beggar, when, lo, the figure before him was transfigured, the Lord Jesus was standing there in glory and blessing; and, handing him back the cup, it had become the sacred vessel.

he had sought so long in vain, and by an act of humility and love he found the Holy Grail. So in self forgetting love we shall find our blessings and the paradox shall be forever true, "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall keep it unto life eternal."

The public press of this country has been filled during the past week or two, with timely and well deserved eulogiums of the martyr President whose birthday has just been celebrated as a national anniversary. We have been struck by the one tone running through so many of these impressive memorials, namely, a universal tribute to the uprightness, honesty and disinterested patriotism of that quaint and homely figure that filled the center of the stage during the darkest years of American history, Abraham Lincoln. It is said that just after his famous debate with Douglas which brought him into national fame, a friend remarked to him, referring to the senatorship of Illinois, which was supposed to be the prize of the winner in that contest, "Well, thank God, the senatorship is won." "No," said Lincoln, "the senatorship is lost, but the cause of freedom is won." He was right. In these days of time serving and selfish politics our young men and our public men need to be reminded that distinction is never won by seeking it, and that it must ever be true of all the truly great that "the office should seek the man and not the man the office."

"Laborious trifling," is what Dr. Guthrie used to call much of the work of many a wasted life. Mediæval *savants* used to spend years discussing the question, "How many angels could stand on the point of a needle?" If they had discovered it it would have been as little worth the pains as King James' famous problem which he propounded to the scientific sages of his day for solution, namely, "Why does a dead fish weigh more than a living one?" After many a battle had been fought over it a shrewd Scotchman remarked, "I doot the fact," and it occurred to the wise men to weigh the fish under the two different conditions. To their amazement and disgust they found that it weighed just the same living or dead. Are we spending our only life for the best and highest things? Or are we wearing it out in "laborious trifling"?

A TIMELY LESSON

ROYAL LIVES

THE HOLY GRAIL

A GREAT OBJECT

Don't run away from them. Don't magnify them. Don't dwell on them, taking them to bed with you, spoiling your digestion by feeding upon them all day, and making everybody unhappy by throwing their shadow on everyone you meet. But with a resolute, courageous, and trustful spirit, take them to God in prayer and then go forth to meet and vanquish them, and you will find that they are much less formidable than you feared. An old farmer ploughed around a rock in one of his fields for many years, and had grown actually morbid over it, for he had broken a cultivator and two ploughs over it, besides losing a lot of valuable land in its vicinity. One day he made up his mind that he would dig it out and have done with it. And lo, when he put his crowbar under it he found it was less than a foot thick and that he could loosen it with a trifling effort and lift it bodily into his farm wagon to cart away. He smiled to think how all these years it had haunted him. So shall we one day look back upon our trials and upon our anxious cares and find how needless many of them were, so unreal, and yet so distressing that we can say like the old lady when she was reviewing her past life, "I've had so many trials, especially those that never came."

"He hath set eternity in their hearts," is the striking and perhaps correct translation of the familiar verse in Ecclesiastes, "He hath set the world in their hearts." We can anticipate our inheritance. We can pass on our treasures and invest our lives in the coming age. This must be what the Apostle means when he charges them that are rich in this world's goods to give liberally of their wealth for God and humanity, "laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold upon eternal life." It is said that a young lady of wealth and fashionable social connections who did not live altogether above the world once dreamed that she had died and gone to heaven. She was being shown round the celestial city and was asking her angel guide about the different mansions. One was shown to her of great beauty and she was told that it was intended for her coachman. She could not understand whatever he could do with such a fine house, as he lived in the porter's lodge on her father's estate, and spent his evenings mostly in some of the Rescue Missions of the town. The angel however could only tell her he believed the Lord of the city would be able somehow to prepare the inhabitants for their houses as well as the houses for their inmates. Then she asked about a smaller and humbler dwelling, and he told her it was being prepared for her. "Why," she

said, "I could never live in that miserable place. I could not even get my piano into the parlor." The angel was very kind and gentle and said he was truly sorry, but added that "the Master," he was sure, did the very best He could with the material they sent up to Him. The young lady woke from two dreams that morning and began to live "under the powers of the age to come."

The Venezuela blockade has just ended with a distinct triumph for German bluff, some humiliation for British diplomacy, and with a decided victory for the principle of arbitration. The Emperor William gets a little more than ten times as much money out of the cash settlement for his German proteges as England gets for the claims of her subjects, the other allies agreeing to the settlement for the sake of peace. The relief comes none too soon, as the situation in Caracas was just becoming most critical and distressing. It is to be hoped that Venezuela and the South American Republics will now learn that the Monroe Doctrine does not mean for them immunity from paying honest debts.

It is the "Near East" this time that is in a ferment of political agitation. The Macedonian revolutionary leaders are trying hard to force a war on the Balkan frontier and to provoke Turkey to some act of military or political rashness which will involve a general war. The vast extent and significance of such a conflict, should it occur, is naturally exercising a sobering influence on European diplomacy, and Russia, Austria and Great Britain are holding a powerful restraining hand upon the Turk with a view at once to secure the needed reforms and at the same time to suppress the violent measures of the malcontents.

English arms are making significant progress in the Western, as, not long since, they did in the Eastern Soudan. The latest intelligence is to the effect that the great city of Kano, not far from Lake Tchad, the center of a vast section of the most civilized portion of the Western Soudan, has just been captured without the loss of a single man, and that the enemy has fled to Sokoto, another large and most important city of the Haussa country. The conquest of this region would open a vast and important region for the entrance of the Gospel.

DIPLOMACY AND ARBITRATION

EASTERN QUESTIONS

THE CONQUEST OF THE SOUDAN

What is Christianity?

BY THE EDITOR

WHAT is Christianity, rather, what is it to be a real Christian? Measured by statistics there are several hundred millions of Christians in the world. Measured by spiritual dynamics these figures would shrink to perhaps one-tenth or less of that vast estimate.

What is God's test of actual Christianity, the test of the Bible, the test of judgment, the test of reality?

NOT CHURCHIANITY

1. Christianity is not an ecclesiastical matter. It is not settled by enrollment, baptism or confirmation. It is not a question of heredity or profession. It is as true of Christianity as it was of ancient Judaism, "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God."

NOT ORTHODOXY

2. Christianity is not a creed. It is not a set of correct doctrines, honestly believed and consistently proclaimed. It is not a matter of intellect, conviction and illumination. It is not the deepest and highest knowledge of divine things and even the ability to present them to others with truth and even persuasive power. We may have all these and yet be utterly destitute of personal religion. The seat of the religion of Jesus Christ is not the intellect, the imagination, the mind. It is not mental science or orthodox faith. It is something deeper, higher and more divine.

NOT MORALITY

3. Christianity is not morality. It is not the reformation of bad lives and the conformity of our conduct to the highest ideals of duty and righteousness. All this may be accomplished by purely human resolution and endeavor. Heathen Greece and Rome had their ethical systems and their good men, but they were as far from the revelation of God as a torch-light is from the sun. Christianity includes right con-

duct and is the strongest force for reformation and righteousness, but its effect may be simulated by other causes. Judaism was founded, to a great extent, on moral law, and consisted largely in practical righteousness. But Judaism was not Christianity.

NOT CHRISTIAN WORK

4. Christianity is not good works, zeal, benevolence, charity. All these may spring from other motives. All these may be but forms of selfishness, done from a desire to attain merit, or even from a natural impulse of kindness, and they may all exist without the grace of God. For the Apostle has said, "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, if I have not love it profiteth me nothing." And the word for "love" here is divine love, not the love of human impulse, but of divine creation. The records of patriotism are full of examples of heroic self-sacrifice. The religions of paganism are not lacking in stories of self-devotion and the oft-repeated picture of the widow sacrificing herself on her husband's funeral pyre, the mother giving her very babe to the destroying arms of her idol god and the devotee of superstition giving up his life to self-inflicted torture and glorying in it as sincerely as the martyr dying at the stake for love of Christ.

NOT WORSHIP AND DEVOTION

5. Christianity is not devotion, prayer and worship. All these belong equally to the false religions of the world. There is no devotion more sincere and persistent than that of the shrines of idolatry and the altars of paganism. Even Cornelius, one of the highest types of heathenism in the best days of Rome, described by the inspired writer in the Acts of the Apostles as a man of generous liberality and habitual prayer, was not a Christian. For while the heavenly message that came to him declared, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come before God for a memorial," it was added in connection with his summons for Peter to come to him, "He shall tell thee words by which thou and thy house shall be saved." Certainly he was not yet saved, and his conversion to Christianity came when the Apostle brought him the message of Jesus and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

NOT DEVOUT FEELING

6. Christianity is not feeling. There may be the deepest devotional feeling and the loftiest æsthetic emotion and devout fervor, and yet all this may be but human. Mere eloquence can stir the heart to tears and

enthusiasm. The strains of music may wake up a thousand chords which seem like worship and devotion. But all this is but the kindling of a human fire, and all this is frequently found in hearts and lives whose guiding principles are selfishness, worldliness and ungodliness.

What then is Christianity, if it be not intellectual, moral or emotional? Where is its seat? What is its source and how shall we find its touchstone?

Christianity is the religion of the spirit. Its seat is not the understanding, the conscience or the feelings, but that deeper province of our being that touches God,—the spiritual nature. Christianity is a new spirit divinely created within us and united to the Father of Spirits, God Himself. It thus brings us into an entirely new world as different from the intellectual and moral world as the difference between the scope of a human mind and that of one of the irrational creatures that surround us in the lower orders of animated nature.

A CASE IN POINT

The writer was once summoned to the deathbed of a lad who had been brought up amid the usual surroundings of culture and domestic affection, with a happy home and loving parents and friends, but without any religious teaching. For months his life had been wasting away while he kept clinging to the fond, fallacious hope of a possible recovery. At last the honest truth had to be told him, that he might not live another day. His family, who had dreaded to acknowledge the crisis, at last were forced to tell him. No spiritual comforter had ministered beside his bedside, and his own immediate friends were helpless to tell him of a Saviour they did not know. The writer was sent for as a friend of the family to break to him the painful message of his approaching death, and to perform some ministerial rites for his spiritual benefit. Never had he faced a more trying and perplexing responsibility. As he sat down by that bright young life that was flickering out like a dying candle in its socket, and looked into the gentle face, it seemed to him almost cruel to torture him with the thought of the dark and gloomy grave. A few questions were asked and it was soon apparent that the lad had no conception of the Bible or the Saviour, but had the usual notion of unawakened souls that it would somehow be all right because he had never done anything very wrong, and God was merciful and kind. How could that untaught mind be led to the knowledge of Jesus in the few hours or perhaps moments before his soul would certainly take its flight? The awful weight of the task drove the

minister to silent prayer to God for the help of the Holy Spirit to work the miracle of a soul's salvation.

Suddenly there flashed into his mind a simple illustration. A beautiful canary was singing in a cage just over the head of the lad, and his attention was called to the little pet which he dearly loved, and then this conversation began:

"What a pretty bird and what a sweet song." "O, yes," said he; "I love to hear it. It is my constant companion."

"But you cannot talk to it or make it understand your thoughts?"

"No, because it is only a bird."

"You could not speak with it as you speak with me; you could not tell it of your pain and your anxiety about your future; you could not confide to it your heart's secrets; you could not call it a member of your family and treat it as you would your sister or your mother, and it cannot enter into the things we are now talking about, and the deepest interests of your heart and life?"

"Oh, no," said he; "because it has only the mind and heart of a bird."

Then came the application of the incident. "If you should die to-morrow," said the minister, "and pass into another world and find yourself in the presence of God and even in heaven, you would be unable to understand their conversation, their songs, their joy. You would be a stranger. You would be lost. You would be out of place. You would want to get away. You could not be happy even in heaven because you are not a member of God's family. You have not been born His child. You have not received the new heart that understands Him, loves Him and enjoys Him."

Suddenly it all flashed upon the mind of the lad and he saw eternity in a new light. Even if he had not done anything wrong, even if God was good and kind, he was incapacitated for the fellowship of God and for the happiness of heaven just as the little bird was for his fellowship, because he was without a spiritual nature. He had his bodily life, which was soon to go out. He had his mental life, which would continue in immortality, but he was without spiritual life, and his face became distressed with a look of anguish and he cried:

"What shall I do? They tell me I cannot live and I see that I am not prepared to die. How shall I receive this new nature that I have never known?"

Oh how easy it was to tell him now of the blessed work of Jesus and of His simple loving word to another soul, one night, hopeless like

himself, "Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; he cannot see the kingdom of God."

And then we told him that Jesus Christ came into this world just for the purpose of giving us this new birth, this new heart, this new spirit that could know Him, love Him, enjoy Him and become His very child. We repeated to him such simple helpful words as these, "As many as received to Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, which were born not of flesh nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God," and, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." We told him that the very gift of Jesus that He was waiting to bestow upon any one that would receive it, was this new heart that could trust and love God, and then we asked him if he would not lift his heart in prayer to God and ask for this great gift through Jesus Christ.

A MIRACLE OF GRACE

Never shall we forget the moments that followed, the simple prayer, the tears that slowly trickled down the wan face, the intense concern that came over it as he closed his eyes and followed us in prayer. The simple prayer asked but one thing and claimed it because Christ had promised it, and then that strange "light that never shone on earth or sky" came over his face and told us that God had met him, that the miracle of grace had been performed, that a revelation had come to that dying boy and that heaven was opened to his soul before he entered it. It was unutterably real and beautiful, and as he opened his eyes and looked with that look of joy and then began to lisp out his first real prayer, we knew that the work was done. It was all so simple and brief, so real and oh, such a relief from a burden that had seemed to crush us, that we had not words to thank God for His precious grace. The conversation lingered a little longer, a few simple promises and counsels were added and then duty called us elsewhere with the promise to return in the morning.

A MIRACLE OF GLORY

As we hastened to keep that promise and approached the steps of the dwelling a waving band of crape on the door told us that we had seen Arthur on earth for the last time. But the father met us in the hall, bathed in tears, and though an ungodly man himself, he was all broken and softened as he told us the sequel of that little visit. He said that

the lad had lingered, very happy and peaceful, until late in the night, and they had left him for a little, he, the father, occupying the next room; and about the middle of the night he heard him talking as if to some one near, and then as he hastened to his bedside the little thin hands were stretched out as if to meet some one, and his voice was faintly speaking to some one that seemed near, and his face was lighted up with unspeakable joy. He seemed to be saying, "They are coming, they are coming, they are coming for me," and then he sank back. The spirit had fled. "But," said the father, "I have never believed much in these things, but it will be different now, for I know it is all true."

What was it came to that dying lad? It was a spiritual experience. It was a new spirit, it was an element that had been hitherto lacking in his life, it was God revealing Himself to his spiritual nature and putting into him a new nature that could understand and answer back to the God that gave it. That is Christianity, in its germ. That is the new heart which theologians call regeneration, that is something as different from human nature as a star is different from a candle's light, that is a new creation just as wonderful as the creation of the world.

ITS GROWTH

And this new spirit grows, develops, unfolds and expands into all the possibilities of a divine and eternal life. It is this that becomes the dwelling place of God Himself. It is this that is united to Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost and becomes the house of God and "the secret place of the Most High." It is this that becomes the predominant faculty and force of Christian life, dominating the mind as the mind dominates the body.

AN INSTRUCTIVE LIFE

Its intercourse with heaven is immediate, instinctive and intimate. It knows God directly and by intuition. It is something like the intuition of the bird which knows things, not by reasoning, but by an innate certainty that is in a sense supernatural and divine, at least a gift of God.

The spiritual nature has its senses like the physical. It hears the word of God, not in audible tone, but in unmistakable ways. It beholds the face of God and walks "in the light of His countenance," and there is an inner, higher and supernatural atmosphere as real to it as the warmth and light of nature's sun. It tastes the sweetness of God's

loving manifestations and gracious gifts. Its language often is, "Thy words were found and I did eat them and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart." It has the sense of touch and is conscious of contact with Divine Presence, of the approach of evil and of the spiritual channels through which life and healing come into the body. It can touch Him in a different sense from the jostling crowd in mere physical contact. It can say of Christ, "That which we have seen and heard, which we have looked upon with our eyes and our hands have handled of the Word of life."

And finer than all the rest, it has the sense of smell, that "quick scent in the fear of the Lord," which was the peculiar feature of the Master Himself, that instinct that scents both good and evil and discerns the "things that differ." To these spiritual senses God and heaven are very real and the world to come is not a dream, but we are living in the constant foretaste of it and have already anticipated in our limited measure all that we shall enjoy in its larger fullness.

THE SOUL MAN

It is the absence of this spiritual life that constitutes the difference between the cultivated minds of earth and the humble and often illiterate but heaven-taught spirits to whom God has revealed Himself. "The soul man" is the literal translation of the Apostle's description of merely intellectual minds. Literally it is the psychical man, and of him Paul says, "He receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolish unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." "The spiritual man judgeth all things [literally "discerneth all things"], yet he himself is discerned of no man." It is just like the simple figure that saved the dying boy. It is the difference between the canary and the child. The intellectual nature cannot grasp the heavenly world. We must have the mind of God, the Spirit of God, the nature of God, to know God and things divine. This is the key to the Apostle's strong language in I. Corinthians ii. 9-12: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God."

How vain for us, therefore, to expect the most brilliant intellects of earth to comprehend spiritual truth. The writer once called upon a distinguished lawyer, a member of his congregation for whom he had long prayed, and asked permission to talk with him about his soul. The lawyer listened politely for a while and then frankly said: "You may think it strange, but I really do not comprehend you. I can understand a proposition in business or the statement of a principle in law, but I do not even grasp your thought about what you call spiritual life and conversion. It is all an enigma to me. I cannot follow you." And he was perfectly frank and sincere.

Let us pray for such men that God will give them a revelation of themselves and of Christ through the Holy Spirit. And let us thank Him, above all things, that it has been given to us "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."

And oh, if any reader of these pages is under the delusion that he can become a Christian at his own convenience, and when he is ready can turn to God and get into heaven just as soon as he is tired of a life of sin, let him awake to realize that he is as helpless as the dead, that he is without God, without life and without power to create his own life. "As well might a man expect to pull himself up from the ground by pulling at his own boot straps" as to rise to God and heaven by his own efforts. No, dear friends, you are dependent upon a higher power, that very power that you are now slighting and despising. Oh, turn to Him in your helplessness and accept from Him that mighty, priceless gift of THE LIFE which He has come to bestow, and without which you must perish miserably and eternally in your helplessness and sin.

It is admitted that there is another side to Christian experience, a judicial aspect, by which the soul accepts the Atonement of Jesus Christ and is justified freely by His grace from the guilt and punishment of sin. But this is always coincident with the deeper spiritual experience just described. "If any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new."

Bishop Nicholson's Lectures on Colossians

EDITED BY JAMES M. GRAY, D.D.

VI. THE CHRISTIAN'S BLESSEDNESS—*What It Is, and How and When It Came.*

"Giving thanks to the Father, who made us meet for the share of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12).

This verse we had before us in the preceding lecture. It belongs to the Apostle's introductory prayer, in which he prays for the Colossian believers to be enabled to walk worthily of Christ, and is, in part, his statement of what constitutes such a walk. Having prayed for their "being filled with the thorough knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding," as the source of a worthy Christian life, he further prays that they may accomplish such a life in four particulars: in the *bringing forth of fruit* in every good work; in the *increasing* by the thorough knowledge of God; in the being *strengthened with all strength*, according to the power of His glory, unto *all patience and longsuffering, with joyfulness*; and in the *giving of thanks* to the Father who *made them meet* for the share of the inheritance of the saints in light. The first three of these particulars we considered in the previous lecture, only glancing at the significance of the fourth. But this last element of a worthy Christian walk deserves to be thoroughly considered. It contains so remarkable a declaration of the believer's already perfected meetness for the inheritance in light, it so enforces upon him the duty of thankfully recognizing the fact, it so encompasses the Christian life with an atmosphere of joy and gladness, it is so rich in practical teachings for our life-long contest with the powers of evil, we shall find it as sweet and refreshing as is "cold water to a thirsty soul."

1. The Christian's blessedness is an *inheritance*. It is something allotted, assigned; something conferred by right of position and relationship. It is not won by his own efforts, else it is not an inheritance. No righteousness of his own, no good works, no labors of his, have anything to do in the procuring of it for him. It follows BIRTH. He is *begotten* to an inheritance "incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away" (I. Peter i. 3, 4). The new birth and heirship are facts correlative and simultaneous. "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17).

2. The Christian's blessedness is the inheritance of *saints*. It belongs to saints as such: to all saints, and to none else. But who are saints? They are those who have been sanctified (made saints) by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (Heb. x. 10). All believers in Christ, then, are saints; for every believer has been sprinkled with His blood, and brought under its shelter and its endearing value. Purged from guilt and condemnation, invested with God's righteousness in Christ (II. Cor. v. 21), and accepted of God, he is also sanctified, set apart, by God's bloody mark upon him, as His own jewel; is made sacred and very dear to Him as His own *peculium*, His own property (I. Cor. vi. 20; I. Peter ii. 9). This is judicial sanctification, and it is perfect. Out of it, and always according to the heart's realization of it, comes *practical* sanctification. But it is the judicial setting apart which makes any one a saint; it is the sprinkling of the blood which accomplishes this result; it is God's own act, once done, which *saints* us, and in His own calendar He hath written it.

3. The Christian's blessedness is the inheritance *in light*. This is its sphere, its seat, its sweetness, its excellence, its glory. This word LIGHT is the authoritative affirmation of what we just now inferred as to the nature of the inheritance. Light is the emblem of *truth, holiness, purity, perfection*. God is Light (I. John i. 5). Christ is Light (Luke ii. 32). The Word of God is light (Ps. cxix. 105). The inheritance in light, then, is such a condition of blessedness as is constituted of the truth as it is in Jesus, as reflects Christ Himself, as shines with the splendors of God. There the true, the holy, the pure, and the perfect, are the constituent elements of things, and also the order of procedure.

Of course, this locates the inheritance in heaven. For where but there does light exist so absolutely? (Rev. xxi. 23. xxii. 5.) As in Bonar's hymn—

"Sunshine is ever pure;
No art of man can rob it of its beauty,
Nor stain its unpolluted heavenliness:
It is the fairest, purest thing in nature;
Fit type of that fair heaven, where all is pure,
And into which no evil thing can enter.
Where darkness comes not, where no shadow falls,
Where night and sin can have no dwelling place."

And yet this does not *confine* the inheritance to heaven; for saints are now in light, and are light. "They have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I. Peter ii. 9), and are now "the chil-

dren of the light, and the children of the day" (I. Thess. v. 5). The inheritance, then, is located here and now, as well as there and then. In the next verse to our text, as explanatory of the being made meet for the inheritance in light, it is said that "God delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." So that, as saints, we are already in light and in the kingdom. We enjoy the inheritance even now; not the whole of it, indeed, but in part. *Born* of God, at once we *believe on Christ*, and are pardoned, and accepted, and sanctified, and made dear to God; and therein we have come to the inheritance, for straightway we have *fellowship with God*, and He has become our *conscious good and satisfaction, and the peace of God and joy in the Holy Ghost* are as the feelings of the heir to an estate, when he has come to his majority, and has been actually installed in possession. We are just what *the truth, as it is in Jesus*, has made us; and we are *holy to God*, under His own estimation of the value of the blood; and we are *perfect* in the perfection of Christ (Col. ii. 10); and we purify ourselves even as He is pure (I. John iii. 3). It is the inheritance enjoyed even here; imperfectly, indeed, and with many disturbances, and with heart-longings for the heavenly circumstances of possession. But it is *the inheritance*. So that not only have we heaven in prospect, but also an *earnest* of heaven, a very part of heaven already.

4. The Christian's blessedness is an inheritance *that is shared*. "Meet," says the text, "for the *share* of the inheritance of the saints in light." All are equally heirs, equally born of God, equally pardoned and justified in Christ our Righteousness, equally sanctified by the blood, equally put in possession here, and shall be equally put in possession there; and to all belong the same inheritance, the same fellowship with God, the same conscious satisfaction in God, the same peace of God, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Yet each his own. "*The share*." Differences and degrees exist both there and here. In the one body are many members, and all the members are but one body; yet the foot is not the hand, the nose is not the eye. To every man "according to his several ability." Fellowship with God here may differ, in certain regards, in different saints, although they be equally faithful. One may be a Paul, another an Epaphras; both holding the same truths, having the same life, feeling the same joy in God; but the one sees farther, thinks deeper, lives wider, than the other; the one is as the eagle, bathing its wings in the sunshine of the open heavens, the other as the canary, in a smaller sphere, which yet it fills with song and joyance.

Besides, there are differences in faithfulness among saints, and these lead to differently developed capacities of appreciation and enjoyment; and the latter differences require different degrees of advancement and employment in God's appointments concerning us. The saint who uses faithfully his opportunities for being filled with the thorough knowledge of God's will, becomes constantly self-enlarged, and so is constantly gaining as regards his present share of the inheritance, and also as regards his future share in heaven; for while each one there shall receive the crown of life (Rev. ii. 10), yet some crowns will have more stars in them than will others (Dan. xii. 3). Our blessedness is strictly an inheritance; and yet our Father, in a way wholly of grace, not at all of debt, may distinguish between His beloved children, the recipients of the same inheritance.

5. The Christian's blessedness is an inheritance for which the Father hath made us meet.

A meanness or fitness for it we do need to have. A sick man cannot partake of a sumptuous feast; neither could we share in this inheritance and enjoy God as our souls' satisfaction, sinners as we are, corrupt, guilty and condemned, except as having received a new man in the being born again, and thus having been brought into sympathy with God, and as having been pardoned and accepted of God and made dear to Him in Christ our Righteousness. These results of the work of the Saviour are what constitutes His salvation, and He wrought them out for us, on purpose to "bring us to God," to make us "*heirs* of God," to secure to us the inheritance. Therefore it is the believing on the Lord Jesus Christ which makes us meet for the inheritance, for it is that which expresses the new birth, and at the same time receives the righteousness wherein we are justified and sanctified to God. Of the same import is the expression in the text, "*The Father made us meet*"; that is, as the next verse shows, the Father of Christ. God made us meet, then, in His character as the Father of Christ; in other words, He did it *because of, and by means of, the work of Christ* in us.

Hence it follows, that the making us meet for the inheritance is an act of God done and finished for us once in the time past. When a soul is new-born it becomes so in a moment of time; and then, believing on Christ, instantly it is completely pardoned, completely justified and completely sanctified in the infinite value of the blood of the Son of God. Wherefore we are made meet for the inheritance, not

