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GOD'S LOVE TO MAN
AND
MAN'S LOVE TO GOD.

HON. S. R. MAXWELL.





ATONEMENT

THE ONLY EFFICIENT EXPONENT OF GOD'S
LOVE TO MAN,

AND

THE SOURCE AND MOTIVE OF MAN'S
LOVE TO GOD.

BY

HON. SOMERSET R. MAXWELL,

AUTHOR OF "THE WELLS OF SALVATION,"
ETC., ETC.

"The love of God which is in Christ Jesus."—Rom. viii. 39.
"We love Him, because He first loved us."—1 JOHN iv. 19.



LONDON:

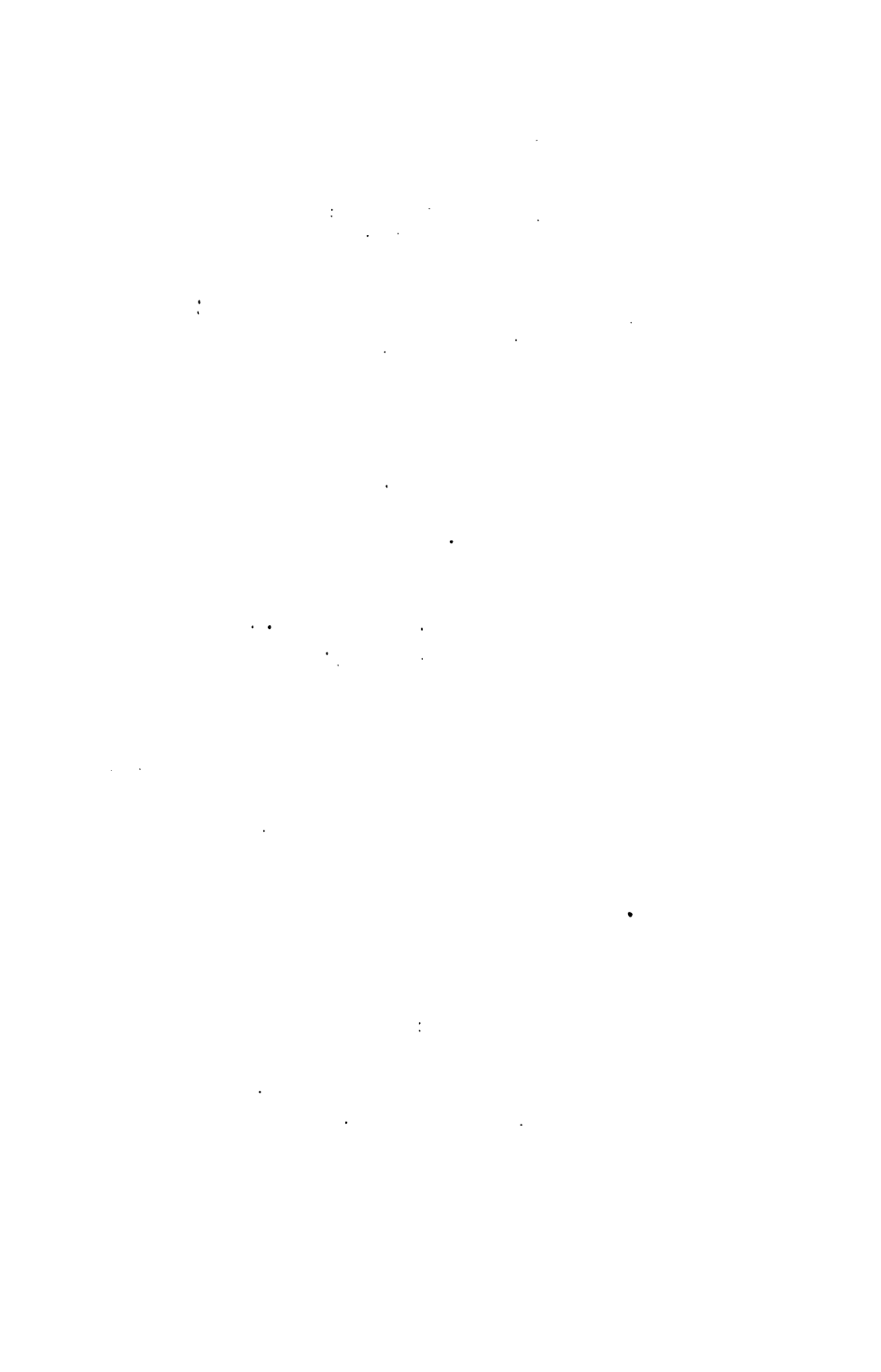
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INTRODUCTION.

It is not too much to say that, in the following pages, a subject is treated of as solemn and important as any that can occupy the mind of man. The types and prophecies of Old Testament Scripture, and the opening out of the one, and the recorded fulfilment of the other in New Testament revelation so represent it, and the sin-convicted and self-condemned sinner, whose "heart" has been "sprinkled from an evil con-Heb. x. 22. science," and who has found "peace through the Col. i. 20. blood of the cross," gives to such representation his glad and grateful endorsement.

This treatise is intended not only to reach the case of those *deistical votaries of intellectuality* who, following in "the way of Cain," avowedly Jude 11. reject, as did their great proto-master in theology before them, all reference to the blood of atonement in their dealings with God: it has a further aim; it would, without ceremony, intrude itself on the

devout adherents of a *ritualistic formalism*, which would call to the aid of faith, or rather would substitute in the stead of the pure actings thereof, the varied appliances which "the god of this world" has ever at hand, to gratify the eye and the ear of those who have yet to learn that "God is a Spirit," and that "they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

This treatise would, with as little ceremony, claim also a hearing from those who would repudiate, equally with the class just alluded to, aught of sympathy with the deist or the infidel, but whose *rationalistic* tendencies and spurious all-comprehending charity would scorn, as narrow-minded bigots, those who would shut up the accepted worshipper to the one "new and living way, consecrated for us, through the veil," that is to say, the flesh of Jesus—Himself "*the way*" for guilty and polluted man to enter into the presence of a holy and righteous God, so as to deal with Him, in communion, as with a FATHER.

To these two now fully developed sections of modern *religionists*—to each of those ranking themselves respectively under the standard, and fully imbued with the principles of *High* and *Broad Churchism*—the following pages (on the warrant of God's truth) would direct that word of appalling

import, "*Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.*" Dan. v. 27.

Yet wider is the range which this publication would take; it would enter on a larger circle still, to challenge from all whom it may find therein a solemn hearing to its unfolding of the blessed and all-important truth with which it deals. Armed with the authority which belongs to a full and faithful presentation of God's own truth, it would fain grapple with that countless multitude, steeped in indifferentism and worldliness, who, however moral in life, and exemplary in deportment, however orthodox their creed, and pious their recognition of a God of Nature and of Providence, *practically* live as if blood of infinite value had never stained our earth; to whom, to all intents and purposes, the need and efficacy of that "precious blood" is as little known, and by whom it is as little estimated, as by the blaspheming Socinian. 1 Pet. i. 19.

The poem which precedes the treatise was the product of the author's first thoughts on the subject set forth in his title-page; the remarks which follow are the result of subsequent close and prayerful contact with Scripture, which, in his hands, he humbly thinks, has been made copiously to minister to the evolving and elucidating of this its favourite and most glorious theme. Of the

poem it may be remarked, that, sensible as the author is of the propriety of presenting to his reader in plain prose a subject so weighty and so truly matter of fact, he nevertheless cannot withhold his analogy between LIGHT in nature and LOVE in grace, though investing it as he has done in poetic garb. The elaboration thereof ministered to him too much of intense interest, and was so the medium of blessing to his own soul, and of confirmation to his own faith in the great doctrine which he now aims to magnify and commend to others, and has been by so many perused with expressed interest and satisfaction, that he scruples not to give to it the prominence which it occupies in the fore-front of this little work. The analogy in question he believes to be more than the mere creature of his brain. To say that the view therein set forth is original (as far as the writer is aware of) would be but a poor commendation of it, if by *originality* was meant the production of a mere picture of the imagination. If legitimately to be stamped with this character, its insertion between the title page and the scriptural exposition of the subject set forth thereon must needs be judged as an unseemly intrusion, unwisely, in the first instance, introducing into the sphere of *fancy* the reader whose *judgment* was, immediately afterwards, to be summoned to a

calm and sober consideration of that which, in the light of Scripture, is proved vitally to concern his peace and usefulness here, and his never dying interests hereafter.

God, in eternity past, as yet not manifested in any act of creation, is a thought within the grasp of the human mind. That God would never have come out of His own essential being in any creative act, except with a view to the display of His glory, in the person of His own divine Son, is a position which the author conceives rests firmly on the basis of revealed truth. Christ is represented as "the beginning of the creation of God;" Rev. iii. 14. "the firstborn of the whole creation;"* all things in heaven and earth created by Him, and for Him; Himself before all things, and all things by Him consisting; and all this subservient to the erection, on this our earth, of a platform, on which He was to appear who was "the image of the invisible God," on which the titles "*the Beginning*" and "*the Firstborn*" were, in the sphere of a new creation, again to attach to Him in a sense which could alone secure for Him, as the God-man, that "pre-eminence" which it was the Father's design should belong to Him, and that "fulness" which it was the Father's pleasure should dwell in Him—"AND [let the force of the

* See Greek in Col. i. 15.

connecting particle be noted] He is the Head of the body, the Church, the beginning, the firstborn Col. i. 15-19. from the dead."

That glorious presentation to us of the eternal Son in Proverbs viii. may be referred to also. Possessed by Jehovah in the beginning of His way, before His works of old; set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was; by Him "brought forth;" with Him "brought up;" His language *Godward* this, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing alway before him:" but a word is recorded, as issuing from eternity past (the utterance of the same glorious being), *manward* in its import and direction, in loving anticipation of His assumption of the nature of that being who was to be made in the image of God, and to be redeemed by Him after he had lost that image—"Rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men," even while as yet God "had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world." Meet anticipatory language this from Him, *in whom* Eph. i. 4. God hath "chosen us BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD;" "*by whom* we were predestinated to the adoption of children to himself;" according to whose purpose and grace *in Him* BEFORE THE 2 Tim. i. 9. WORLD BEGAN, we are said to be "saved and called with an holy calling;" who Himself, equally with

His Church, is said to have been *foreknown* or *foreordained* BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD! (See Greek in 1 Pet. i. 2, 20.)

In the view of such Scriptures as these, it may legitimately be said that Creation was called into being with reference to Redemption, this planet of ours to be selected from all its fellows, to be the platform for its accomplishment; on which He, who in "the beginning," as the eternal Word, "was with God, and was God," was to appear as John i. 1. the Incarnate Word, to give embodied expression to those "thoughts of good and not of evil," Jer. xxix. 11. which from eternity had dwelt in that bosom from whence He tells us Himself He came forth, to "declare" them to sinners, who, in the foreview of John i. 18. His omniscience, were to be the objects of them.

If, as has been shown at the council-board, so to speak, of the divine Three, plans and purposes were, from eternity past, conceived and devised to meet the foreseen need of a future ruined world, if, as has also been shown, the One who was to step forth from that council, to be the great agent to effectuate what infinite love and wisdom had there designed, is represented as giving forth the expression of His "delights" with those who were to be the subjects of His future redemption, can it be considered an undue pressure on the first recorded utterance on the stage of creation, to

recognize therein an *embryo of spiritual truth*, to be evolved and developed, in due time, in a sphere which would carry us far beyond the mere physical effects resulting from the words uttered—“LET THERE BE LIGHT, AND THERE WAS LIGHT?”

It was with deep interest that the author, after elaborating the analogy in question, on referring to Dr. Adam Clarke's commentary on those words in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, “This was the true Light,” &c., was arrested by a remark of an ancient Jewish Rabbi, quoted from a German critic. With those opening words of Isaiah lx. before his mind—“Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee,” the Rabbi thus paraphrases the first recorded *fiat*, “*Let the Messiah be, and the Messiah was!*”—a sentiment indicative of the reach of the Jewish mind into the *embryo* character of their Scriptures, even before those Scriptures had the aid of New Testament revelation to evolve their hidden meaning.

1 John i. 5.
1 John iv. 16.

There are only two things which God is said to be. “GOD IS LIGHT—GOD IS LOVE.” It is attempted in the poem to elucidate how, in *creation*, He was both—the latter the result of the former. In analogy with God's proceedings in nature, Light is introduced into the sphere of *redemption*, and Love, as its issue, is made, on the fall of

man, to assume the hitherto unknown garb of **MERCY.**

May the light of divine truth illumine our minds, as it did those of the Emmaus disciples; then, as with them, shall our *sadness* be turned into *gladness*; and the knowledge of God's love toward us will kindle in us a flame of love toward Him, causing "our hearts" to "burn within us!" Luke xxiv. To aid, in some little measure, with the Lord's help, towards promoting this blessed consummation in the reader's experience is the object in view in the presentation of these pages to the public.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

LOVE God! O tell me how I *can* love God,
 How love Infinity, Immensity!
 As well might I essay to love a cloud,
 And, with my heart's affections, to embrace
 The vast expanse of ether, as love God!
 Man's heart cannot entwine itself around
 An essence shrouded so in mystery,
 And reaching far beyond his utmost ken.
 Soul, this is thy complaint! Most true it is,
 That Love in vain on Fancy's pinions soars,
 Taking o'er abstract Deity its range,
 To find an object suited to itself:

But Faith effects what Fancy cannot do,
Substantial makes what once ethereal seemed ;
Puts, so to speak, God's attributes in type,
And makes them, when adjusted, to spell LOVE !
This type is in a glorious framework set ;
That framework is incarnate Deity ;
And there a world this blessed truth may read—
GOD, IN THE FLESH MADE MANIFEST, IS LOVE.
Not that He was not Love ere Jesus came ;
O no ! in giving Jesús, God was Love ;
And had a Saviour never trod our earth,
Yet God had still been Love, for " GOD IS LOVE."'
E'en just as had the sun ne'er shone on earth,
Yet God had still been Light, for " GOD IS LIGHT."'
Creation's first three days could boast of light,
Yet spread, all vague and indistinct, o'er space,
Imparting nought of influence to earth.
Poured from the hollow of Jehovah's hand,
The gathered waters found their ocean-home ;
E'en so, the all-pervading essence, light,
Must gathered be, to find a fixed abode.
And now the almighty Architect suspends,
In the blue vault of heaven, a glorious lamp,
All-worthy of the hand that placed it there,
Not more the hand of Power than of Love ;
For now might God be said to smile on earth ;
And, in this smile, life, light, and genial warmth
First reach the new-born creature of His hand,
Which henceforth, gratefully responding, owns
The magic virtue of this smile of love, .

Which makes her teem with life and fruitfulness.
 Now Light first meets the varied need of earth ;
 The fourth day's mighty *fiat* is proclaimed,
 That it should find a centre in the sun.
 Elaborated there by skill divine,
 Henceforth there issues from one focal point
 What nature needs of life, and light, and warmth.

From Nature's wide department turn we now
 To the more vast, more glorious sphere of Grace.
 As Light first in the sun a centre found,
 And issued thence in blessing on our world ;
 'Twas even in such wise with Love divine,
 The love which framed and garnished earth for man,
 Which stamped his Maker's image on his brow,
 And made him lord of all things here below.
 That was a love so pure, it could not brook,
 Around Heaven's infinitely holy throne,
 Angels who had not kept their first estate.
 And thus, when sin had brought its curse on man,
 And left our earth, so glorious once, and fair,
 The only blot upon creation's map—
 Since only in God's presence Love subsists,
 And sin had from that presence banished man—
 Love flies from earth to heaven, awaiting there
 A mightier *fiat* than creation heard ;
 And, meanwhile, man related stands to love,
 As was earth's bearing toward primeval light.
 In all that God had done as yet for man,
 Creative Power had fellowship with Love ;

And both in happy harmony had wrought,
In making earth for man, and man for earth.
But these became divorced when Adam fell,
The justice of a sin-avenging God
Forbidding that His heart of love should wield
His arm of power for His creatures' good.
Ere Love could act where sin its curse had brought,
It must an aspect wear, a form assume,
To Adam, while in innocence, unknown—
Unknown as well to angel as to man.
Creative love had not developed God ;
Electing love, which kept heaven's hosts secure,
When from among their number some had fallen,
This love had left God undeveloped too.
Deep in Jehovah's bosom dormant lay
The brightest, fairest of His attributes.
MERCY, through ages past, had slumbered there,
Reserved in foreview of the fall of man,
It slumbered on, unroused when Satan fell ;
Its fitting object guilt, yet not of God
Ordnained to meet the rebel angels' need.
'Twas Eden's fallen pair drew Mercy forth,
O'erwhelmed with guilty fear and dark despair,
The first-fruits of the knowledge they had found,
The sheltering thicket and the apron leaf ;
That to conceal them from God's eye ; and *this*,
Their shame to cover from each other's gaze !
In Eden man had fellowship with God,
And each could speak to each, as friend to friend ;
And holy, happy was their intercourse.

Sin enters, and estranges man from God ;
 But God was not estranged from man ; O no !
 The love which man in innocence had proved,
 That was unchanging, everlasting love,
 Designed, in foreview of the fall, to meet
 Whate'er of ruin sin might bring on man ;
 For soon as Satan's lie had been believed,
 And man his Maker's love had madly spurned,
 Eternal purpose meets rejected love,
 Bends back to Eden its receding steps,
 In earth now cursed, on man now fallen, to find
 A sphere, an object, where, on whom to act.
 But a new platform sin-stained earth must see,
 Where holy love might manifest itself.
 Redemption, not Creation, must declare
 The breadth, length, depth, and height of love divine.
 In nature, God had oped His eye in light ;
 And now, in grace, He opes His heart in love ;
 And o'er a moral chaos such as this,
 The *fiat* of redeeming Love goes forth—
 'Tis Mercy's message heard by fallen man,
 Ere God expels him from his Eden home—
 WHERE SIN ABOUND, LET GRACE MUCH MORE ABOUND !
 'Twas as the fourth day's *fiat* in effect ;
 For Love, which once had come *direct* from God,
 And no more *thus* can reach this scene of sin,
 Is made to centre in the woman's seed ;
 Sole reservoir of life and light with God,
 The fountain also of supply to man
 Of what to life and godliness pertains.

Nature her glorious orb of light displays,
With mighty and mysterious force endued
To keep our planet's orbit in control,
And bind earth by attraction to the sun.
And, lo! exceeding far in glory this,
A light above the brightness of the sun,
Pervading all the firmament of grace,
Dispels the darkness and the death of sin.
The Sun of Righteousness is risen now,
With Gilead's healing balsam in its wings,
To extract the venom of the serpent's sting.
Here, as in nature's typical orb, behold
The "strong man" girded for his daily race,
The "bridegroom" clad in lustrous robes of light.
As Israel's high priest on his shoulders bore,
And o'er his heart the tribal names engraved;
And as the ephod, with the breastplate joined,
Were each to each indissolubly bound,
E'en so two forces keep Christ's Church secure,
The grasp of *power* and the embrace of *love*.

Ocean of love! whose everflowing tide
No ebbing knows; unfathomable till
The finite comprehend the infinite.
Wave after wave, throughout time's course, has brought
Rich freights of mercy and of grace from heaven,
To meet the need of our sin-stricken world.
But not till all that blood-bought throng shall stand
Around the throne of God and of the Lamb,
Has Love its mission to our race fulfilled;

When hunger ceases, and all thirst is quenched,
 And every tear is wiped from every eye,
 And love, enthroned, wears one unclouded smile,
 To bask in which is bliss, eternal bliss!

Am I, through grace, the object of such love?
 Lord, it in rich abundance shed abroad
 Within this heart of mine, that it may be
 The motive to impel, the mainspring which,
 Attached to "body, soul, and spirit," gives
 Due action to their whole machinery.
 With him who proved so wondrously this love,
 Whose soul's deep need could not accept of less
 Than all its "breadth, and length, and depth, and
 height"—

With holy Paul can I of Jesus say,
 "Who lovèd me, and gave Himself for me"?
 If so, it needs must be that I, as he,
 Know somewhat of this love's constraining power.
 Did that deserve the name of love which found
 Expression o'er the grave of Jonathan?
 Then let me take the harp from David's hand,
 To sing the greater love of David's Son—
 "Thy love to me was wonderful," O Lord;
 "Passing the love of women" was Thy love!
 When conflict ceases, and the crown is won,
 Such love as this will be the endless theme
 Of white-robed saints who stand around the throne,
 With harps of gold and palms of victory.
 While yet upon the battle-field of life,

With sword and shield, instead of palm, in hand,
I fain would antedate this song below,
And learn the key-note of this anthem here;
I fain would swell the music of that choir,
Who, taught by him who lay on Jesus' breast,
Among the twelve pre-eminently loved,
Sound forth the praise of Him who lovèd them,
And washed them from their sins in His own blood,
And who, loved with an everlasting love,
And by His loving-kindness drawn, can say—
WE LOVE THEE, LORD, BECAUSE THOU FIRST LOVEDST US!

The following weighty words of that true Christian philosopher, Hugh Miller, happened to arrest the author's attention as he was in the act of sending his manuscript to the publisher. They so forcibly express the all-important truth intended to be conveyed in the above poem, that he cannot abstain from appending them in a note. Alluding to the period of what he considers his real conversion to God, Hugh Miller remarks: "I was led to see at that time that my theological system had previously wanted a *central object to which the heart could attach itself*, and that the true centre of an efficient Christianity is, as the name ought of itself to import, **THE WORD MADE FLESH**. Around this central sun of the Christian system—appreciated, however, not as a *doctrine* which is mere abstraction, but as a *divine person*—so truly man, that the affections of the human heart can lay hold upon

Him, and so truly God, that the mind, through faith, can at all times be brought into contact with Him, all that is truly religious takes its place in a subsidiary and subordinate relation. I say subsidiary and subordinate, because *the divine Man* is the great attractive centre, the sole gravitating point of a system which owes to Him all its coherency, and which would be but a chaos were He away. It seems to be the existence of the human nature in this central and paramount object that imparts to Christianity, in its subjective character, its peculiar power of influencing and controlling the human mind. There may be men who, through a peculiar idiosyncrasy of constitution, are capable of loving, after a sort, a mere *abstract God*, unseen and inconceivable, though, as shown by the air of sickly sentimentality which almost all that has been said and written upon the subject wears, the feeling in its true form must be rare and exceptional indeed. In all my experience of men, I never knew a genuine instance of it. The love of an abstract God seems to be as little natural to the ordinary human constitution as the love of an abstract lunar planet."—*(Extracted from "LIVES MADE SUBLIME." Article, "Hugh Miller, the Christian Geologist," page 82.)*

ATONEMENT,

ETC.

THE love of God to man! the love of man to God!
How little understood in nature or extent the former; consequently, how little realized in the heart's happy experience the latter, this being but the reflex of that! "We love him, because he ^{1 John iv. 19.} first loved us." To "perceive" the one, to be ^{1 Jno. iii. 16.} animated by the other, man must be indwelt by the Spirit of God. "The love of God is shed ^{Rom. v. 5.} abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Let us note the terms of the apostolic salutation. "The love of God" is made ^{2 Co. xiii. 14.} to stand between "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "the communion of the Holy Ghost." The heart and mind must be brought under the enlightening and Christ-glorifying influences of the Spirit, ere God's love is seen to find its true, its full exponent in "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God was, as He ever will be, what He is—

LOVE. The intervention of Christ, in His work of redemption, did not make Him so: this was the effect, not the cause thereof. It was God's
 John iii. 16. love that gave Jesus, and gave Him to open a channel of *holiness* and *righteousness* through which it might reach our sin-stricken world, to meet the deep need of its guilty and polluted inhabitants.

In the light of God's mind, clearly intimated, as here set forth, can be discerned the foundation of sand, on which rests that goodly fabric, which man in his wisdom has reared into a temple, in which to present the tribute of love to a *God of nature* and a *God of providence*, while ignorant of Him as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The worship of this temple is that of the enlightened age in which we live; it is the universal homage to God of *religious* man, outside of that despised circle, which encloses within its sacred precincts only those who own, as the sole
 2 Cor. i. 3.
 Eph. i. 3.
 1 Pet. i. 3.
 Eph. iii. 19. constraining motive to a loving obedience, "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," who recognize no other love in God to man, as capable of begetting legitimate love in man to God, save
 Rom. viii. 39. "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 Col. ii. 3. The worship of this temple is "will worship," and meets its merited check and rebuke from the

lips of God himself—"Who hath required this at Isaiah i. 12. your hand?" It may read its real character in the words of Him who "spake as never man spake." "That which is highly esteemed among Luke xvi. 15. men is abomination in the sight of God." It bears the brand of the rejected offering of Cain, as wanting that whereby his brother "offered a more excellent sacrifice than he;" it lacked *the blood* by which Abel, through believing apprehension of the *bruised heel* of the first promise, pointed, in the victim which he presented before the Lord, to "the Lamb slain from the foundation Rev. xiii. 8. of the world."

Viewed in the light of man's *latitudinarian* ideas of God and his worship, which meet us almost at every point, it is a thought most solemn, that the first recorded manifestation of God's wrath, outside of Eden, had *religious* man for its object; and that the first act of fallen man meeting with rejection by God was a *religious* act—no idolatrous act, but one of homage to, and worship of, Jehovah—"Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." We have no reason to discern insincerity or hypocrisy here: Cain's sin consisted in this, that, as a worshipper, he took his stand in the second chapter of Genesis, abnegating the *status* in which the sad events of the third chapter had placed him,

as a guilty creature in the presence of his Creator, as also the attitude of grace and mercy in which the Creator had presented Himself to him. The offering of Cain had involved more of toilsome labour, in the sweat of his brow, than that of his shepherd brother: it was costly in his sight; and his error was, that he thought it *therefore* must needs be so in God's sight too. Have we not these two brothers, with their bearing respectively towards God, and that of God toward them, reproduced and objected to our view by our Lord, in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican? Cain was absorbed in the thought of what he could bring *out of the earth to God*. Abel, in the sacrifice of innocent life, manifestly was taken up with the adoring contemplation of the substitutional provision which God had bound Himself, by promise, to send *from heaven to man*. If, in the picture held up to us in the temple, we can discern the thank-offering of Cain in the Pharisee, with equal clearness we may discover the offerer of blood in the publican—"God be *propitiated* to me *the sinner*." The quadrupled "*I*" of the one is to be contrasted with the single breathing of the name of "GOD" from the prostrated soul of the other. In the Pharisee's conceit, he was the giver, God the receiver; with the publican, God must be the giver, and he the recipient, and the

Luke xviii.

See Greek in
loco.

gift apprehended to be such as would meet the demands of God's outraged justice, and, at the same time, supply the need and pacify the conscience of a self-condemned sinner.

"God, I thank thee I am not as other men," &c., was language which expressed not more the mind of the sincere, but self-righteous, and therefore rejected Pharisee, than it did that of the equally sincere, self-righteous, and rejected Cain.

How solemn thus the subject with which the Spirit of God would arrest the attention of man on the very threshold of the history of our guilty race! What a weight of oppressive sadness is brought on the Christian's heart, when he reflects on the numbers around him, of whom, as regards their religious *status*, it may be said, in language strong indeed, but expressing no more than the mind of God about them, that they are going *religiously* to hell, "in the way of Cain," their Jude 11. back turned on an atoning Saviour, worshippers, with Cain and the Pharisee, in the same temple, at the same altar, and presenting like incense.

The incense of this temple permeates and perfumes the atmosphere around, but its circling fumes bedim not the eye of faith, which (as clearly as Judah's captive prophet deciphered the doom of Babylon in Belshazzar's hall) can discern, written on its temple's walls, the indignant, burn-

ing words of repudiation—"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me." O that the infatuated offerer could be brought to reflect, that the absence from before the door of his temple of "the *brazen altar*," with all the solemn transactions of its bloody ceremonies, places him at his boasted "*golden altar*" in direct antagonism to Jehovah, whose ordinance it was, that the "burnt offering" should be an indispensable concomitant of that "perpetual incense"

Ex. xxix. 38, which was to go up with acceptance "before
39, 42, xxx.
7, 8. Him." O that he paused to read his guilt and

danger in the conduct and fate of him who presumed to tamper with any of the component spices of the costly perfume, "the sweet incense" of Israel's golden altar, which was declared to be "holy unto Israel," "pure and holy," "most holy,"

Ex. xxx. 32, "holy for the Lord." "As for the perfume which
35-38. thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves

according to the composition thereof; whosoever shall make like unto that to smell thereto, shall

Ex. xxx. 9. even be cut off from his people." "Ye shall offer no strange incense," was a command, the infraction of which brought immediate wrath and

Lev. x. 1-3. ruin on Nadab and Abihu. Even though the "sweet incense," in its composition, should fully meet the requirements of the Lord, containing neither more nor less than the prescribed pro-

portions of "*stacte*, and *onycha*, and *galbanum*, Ex. xxx. 34, with pure frankincense, a confection tempered together after the art of the apothecary;" yet in a most striking manner is our attention challenged to an all-important injunction, the least deviation from which would exclude this "confection" from the service of the sanctuary, placing "flies of Eccles. x. 1. death [margin] in the ointment of the apothecary," causing it "to send forth a stinking savour," instead of an accepted "perfume." Observe how the Spirit of God ushers in this subject to our notice; mark His most significant preface to the recorded ordinances of the great day of atonement—"The Lord spake unto Moses *after the* Lev. xvi. 1. *death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died*"—a reference to this event, which embodies in it a truth, by way of solemn caution, to which the psalmist afterwards gives this inspired expression, "God is greatly to Ps. lxxxix. 7. be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."

With a censer full of burning coals *from off the altar* before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense, beaten small, Aaron was to enter within the vail; he was then to put the incense on the fire before the Lord; and the issue of this act of Israel's high priest, as regarded himself, was, that "the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy- Lev. xvi.

seat, that he die not;" and, as concerned the people, that, as by the offerings of the brazen altar, satisfaction had been made for what had been displeasing to God, so, by the transactions of the golden altar, what they did according to prescribed rule might meet with divine acceptance—acquitted from guilt by the bloodshedding at the one, accepted in service in the ascending smoke from the other. But woe betide the offerer, whether, as here, on the day of atonement, or in the daily presentation of the "perpetual incense," who presumed to generate that smoke with other fire than that which had been consecrated to the uses of the brazen altar!

Num. xvi. Presumption such as this we see in Korah and his party. Very observable is the contrast between their mode of dealing with the incense and that prescribed to Moses and Aaron. Korah's party took every man his censer, and *put fire* in them, and laid incense thereon. But when "the plague" is said to have begun, and wrath to have gone out from the Lord, the commandment to Aaron was, "Take a censer, and *put fire therein from off the altar*, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make atonement for them;" and, conforming to God's ordinance, Israel's high priest "stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed." Of the censers of "the two hundred

and fifty men that offered incense," "broad plates for a covering of the altar" were made, "to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord; that he be not as Korah and his company."

There is "a holy priesthood" now; yea, "a royal ^{1 Pet.} priesthood," who, "loved" and "washed" in atoning blood, have been made "kings and priests unto ^{Rev. i. 5, 6.} God." On every side there are the "sons of Levi" too, of whom, in their religious aspect, it may be truly said, "Ye take too much upon you." Let the significant brazen memorial of the covered altar convey a word of needed warning and instruction to such. We read that "Moses was very wroth, and said unto the Lord, Respect not thou their offering." How overwhelming the conviction which forces itself upon the enlightened Christian, that Moses, in wrath, still speaks out, in the thunders of the unsatisfied law, the same invocation of vengeance, alas! alike applicable now, as of old, to the religious acts of religious men of the present day.

Solemn, very solemn the thought, that identical in principle is the offering of these "sinners against their own souls," with that of him who would act on the vain conceit of having dealings with a God of love, and a God of love having

dealings with him, except as he regards Him in Jesus, or is regarded by Him in Jesus, on the ground of his atoning sacrifice. May these references to Old Testament Scripture be brought under serious consideration, in the light of that awful passage in New Testament revelation—

Heb. x. 29. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

The Holy Ghost, by the pen of the disciple of love, has challenged our attention not so much to the love of God as to the *manner* of that love. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us," &c. Love, in this passage, is made to issue in sonship and heirship. It will not have told out its whole tale of wonders; it will not have made exhibition of its full provision for man, until it shall have invested him with the inheritance to which, as an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ, he has been born. Having given the Son, "that we might receive the adoption of sons," "God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father," telling

Gal. iv. 1-7. us that "we are no more servants, but sons; and

if sons, then heirs of God through Christ." While God's call of us as sons meets with no recognition from "the world, which knoweth us not because it knew him not," that call finds an echoing response in our hearts, and, realizing the relationship in which the love of God has placed us to a God of love, we can predicate, without presumption, of our present *status* before Him. "*Now are we the sons of God;*" and in this assured fact we find a firm footing, on which we may take our stand, and thence survey the "eternal glory" to which "the God of all grace" has called us in the call of sonship. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Each of these sons and heirs, as he looks backward by faith to what Christ has done, and reaches forward by hope to what is yet to be done in him and for him, (experiencing "the work of righteousness" to be "peace," and "the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever,") may *sit*, as did David, before the Lord, in an attitude of calm repose; and with him admiringly exclaim, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing, O Lord God, in thy sight"—to call me thy son—"but thou hast spokén also of thy servant's house for a great

¹ John iii. 1,
2; 1 Peter
v. 10.

Isa. xxxii. 17.

² Sam. vii.
18, 19.

while to come ;” thou hast made me an heir of coming glory ; “and is this the *manner* of man, O Lord God ?” O no ! “My ways are not your ways, neither are my thoughts your thoughts, saith the Lord.” “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end”—the expected end of the consummation of grace given in glory promised.

Mark how the same apostle awards a like issue to this love, acting for us and in us, illustrating its *manner*, by giving special prominence to the element of atonement, as the exponent thereof : “Unto him that loved us AND washed us from our sins in his own blood,” &c. Let us hear him again in his epistle : “Hereby perceive we the love,* BECAUSE he laid down his life for us.” Again, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son, that we might live through him.” Let us not overlook a notable check and caution in the next verse : “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, AND sent his Son to be THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.” The Spirit of God, knowing the tendency of man’s self-righteous heart to deduce not only *love* from God, but *life* from Christ (if, indeed, in his pride, he lets Christ

* Let the emphasis here be noted—“THE LOVE”—“God” is not in the original.

at all into the matter), without the humiliating necessity of atonement, as the glorifier of Jesus, dictated, in the latter verse, an exposition of the *manner* of the love which, through a propitiatory sacrifice, gave the life set forth in the former. Then follows that wondrous "so," which seems to be but an echo of the same monosyllable recorded by John, as proceeding from the lips of Him out of whose bosom he was privileged to draw such deep lessons of this love.

Let us for a moment look at the passage alluded to—"God so loved the world." How? God's own John iii. 16. measure of it is to be found in the immediately preceding context—not in the fact of Jesus being, as admitted by Nicodemus, a "*Teacher* sent from God," to teach the way to God; but, as expounded by Himself, as such Teacher, to be an atoning victim, and Himself "*the way*"—a "John xiv. 6. new and Heb. x. 20. living way, consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh." In the anti-type of the brazen serpent, in the expiring agonies of the uplifted Son of man, faith finds the full and just estimate of the *measure* and the *manner* of the love of God to a sinful world.

Let us further listen to John, as the recorder of other words of Jesus, which fully bear out this most precious truth—"I am come," says Jesus, "that they might have life." If *life* is to be the

- portion of the sheep, then, as a condition precedent, *death* must be that of the Shepherd. "The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." The "eternal life" which He gives to them is *life taken up out of death*. "I am he that liveth and was dead, and, behold! I am alive for evermore," is the language of Him who, in the immediately preceding context, is said to have "washed us from our sins in his own blood," and who therefore rightfully holds "the keys of the grave and of death." Let us add another to these words of love recorded by the same loved and loving John:
- John xv. 13. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his *friends*."

- Let the no less loving heart of Paul now find utterance, and, in a most striking contrast to this sentiment of Jesus, bring out, in all its fulness and blessedness, the truth under consideration.
- Rom. v. 6, 8, 10. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet *sinner*s"—"*ungodly*"—"enemies"—"Christ died for us." And when he would
- 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. supply "the love of Christ" as the *constraining* principle, the impelling motive of our every action, it is in immediate connection with the assertion of *his dying for us*; and twice in another epistle we have the love of Christ to His Church proved
- Eph. v. 2, 25. and manifested by His *giving Himself for it*.

In the estimation of the great apostle, the

“mercy” must be “rich,” and the “love” must be “great,” which issues in our identification with Jesus, in his death, resurrection, and glorification. As not only *power*, but more, the *greatness of power*, yea, more still, the *exceeding greatness of power* must be put forth by God to work in us that faith which constitutes us members of the body of which the risen Christ is the Head; so Eph. i. 19, 20. not *grace* only, nor even *the riches of grace*, but the *exceeding riches of grace* must be *shewn*, ere, by this union with the glorified One, carried through death and resurrection with Him, we are “made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;” and the procuring cause of the bestowal of all this marvellous grace and glory is said to be—“Eph. ii. 4-7. HIS KINDNESS TOWARD US, THROUGH CHRIST JESUS.”

Paul more than merely enunciated the truth under consideration, for the instruction of others; it was the *element* in which he spiritually lived and moved and had his being; it was the very *aliment* which nourished his own soul. “The life Gal. ii. 20. which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME.” With the death of Christ, His resurrection and intercession fully before his mind, “the love of Christ,” or, as it is immediately explained, “the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” as a divine loadstone, brings him within its un-

controllable attraction; and nought within the wide range of creation can be found of counter-acting power strong enough to detach him from the attracting object—tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, heights, depths,—any other creature!

Rom. viii. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us"—*so* loved us as to procure for us no condemnation, and secure for us no separation.

I have reserved for fuller comment on this part of my subject a word of Jesus, containing, it appears to me, a deep, rich vein of truth and instruction, very helpful towards the elucidation of the position in hand; viz., that alone through the sacrifice of Calvary can the love of God reach sinful man, so that he should be the blessed *object* thereof, or the happy *subject* of a love

John x. 17. responding thereto: "THEREFORE DOTH MY FATHER LOVE ME, BECAUSE I LAY DOWN MY LIFE, THAT I MAY TAKE IT AGAIN." In how marvellous a manner are *love* and *atonement* here brought into juxtaposition! Jesus, in foreview of His incarnation, was the elect of God, in whom His soul delighted

Isa. xlii. 1. —"daily his delight, rejoicing always before Him"
—while He himself, in the same foreview, had

Prov. viii. 30, His "delights with the sons of men;" and when

He did assume our nature, and was "Immanuel, Col. i. 13,
Greek. God with us," He is noted down, by the pen of inspiration, as *the Son of His Father's love*, as pre-eminently "the Beloved." If such from eternity Eph. i. 6. were the outgoings of a love that was infinite toward the person of the Son of God, wherein lies the force of the causal particle which ushers in our Lord's declaration of His Father's love to Him, *because of* the voluntary surrender of Himself to His avenging justice?—"THEREFORE doth my Father love me."

One of those very few words which are vouchsafed to us respecting the mysterious childhood of Jesus may help to throw light on this point. As He "increased in stature," we may easily conceive how He increased, as it is said He did, "in favour with man;" but it is also stated that *He increased "in favour with God."* Previous to the Luke ii. 52. sixth day of creation, of all that had been made it was said that "God saw that it was good;" but when "the first Adam" was created a full-grown man, wholly and at once furnished with all that was necessary to fulfil the divine purpose concerning him, and when he stood forth on the platform of creation, reflecting his Maker's image on all that was around him, there came forth a development of glory, in this the grandest specimen of the handiwork of God, which drew forth

from Him a manifestation, as yet unknown, of His complacency and satisfaction. The word "behold" now challenges our attention to the fact, that all that before had been seen as "*good*" was now, in the divine estimation, regarded as "*very good*."

Let us shift the scene from creation to redemption, and fix our adoring contemplation on "the last Adam"—the great "mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh."

1 Cor. xv. 45.
1 Tim. iii. 6.

"Home of the Christ-child of Nazareth,
Let our thoughts within thee dwell;
There where, shrouded in man's weakness,
Dwelleth light ineffable."

Then, beginning with "that holy thing," an embryo in the virgin's womb, then a babe in Bethlehem's manger, then,

"As the mystery advanceth
Of this wondrous mystery,"

behold Him

"Cradled by a human mother,
Though with grace divine imprest,
Playing, with soft, aimless touches,
On her cheek and on her breast.

“Joyfully she clothes and feeds Him,
And she trains Him day by day,
Till the beautiful child Jesus
Has at last been taught to pray.

“Humbly were the small hands folded,
Bended was the golden head;
But God only, in the heavens,
Understood the prayer He said;

“For of all the cries and pleadings
That have yet ascended there,
None has ever come before Him
Mighty as that infant’s prayer.

“’Twas the highest act of homage
That the world has ever shewn,
And the purest pulse of worship
That man’s heart has ever known.”

It may well be comprehended that, with the increasing stature of the “holy child Jesus,” the concomitant gradual development of this unvarying bent and tendency of his young heart’s devotional affections *Godward* brought down into His human soul ever fresh and increasing manifestations of His Father’s love; and equally so, if we regard His bearing *manward*, through the glimpse which we get of Him at the age of twelve years :

“Meek, submissive, and obedient,
 And with simple, winning grace,
 In the peasant home of Joseph,
 Filling all a child’s true place.”

“Filled with wisdom,” yet He “increased in
 Luke ii. 40, wisdom,” and “the grace of God was upon Him;”
 52. the prayerful, devout student of Scripture, to
 which, in His after ministry, He loved to refer, as
 to a touchstone, His every word and act, submit-
 ting His human intellect to the teaching of His
 own Spirit; conscious that He was about His
 Father’s business, while exhibiting the docility
 and rightful inquisitiveness of childhood, and in
 accord with what He afterwards said to the
 multitude and His disciples—“The scribes and
 Matt. xxiii. 3. the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: all therefore
 whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe
 and do,” we may behold Him, at the age of
 twelve years, in the midst of the doctors of the
 temple, so attentively “hearing,” and so *teachably*
 “asking them questions,” that all were “aston-
 ished” at the expansion and penetration of His
 understanding, and the aptness and intelligence
 of His answers; subject at the same time to His
 earthly parents, while realizing His responsibility
 to subordinate this subjection to His heavenly
 Father’s glory—“Wist ye not that I must be
 Luke ii. 42-49. about my Father’s business?”

The curtain here falls, and it is not for man to lift up the veil which has been thrown over the period which intervenes until "Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age." We may be well assured, however, that these eighteen years witnessed the merging of the loveliness of such a childhood in the growing development, at a maturer age, of all the graces with which it was possible for the Holy Ghost, imparted without measure, to adorn a human nature, which had never been tainted with sin, nor possessed the capability of sinning; and equally certain we may be, that during this period, the entire subjection of His human will to the will of His Father not only made tolerable to Him, but acceptable to His judgment and His heart, the withholding from Him of all authority to give to the burning love and missionary zeal of His yearning soul aggressive action on the sin, spiritual death, darkness, and desolation which must have daily oppressed Him. Wonder of wonders, to our finite comprehension (if we except the wonder of the incarnation itself), that thirty years out of a little more than thirty-three of the life of such a being, assumed by Him for such a purpose, should have been passed in the obscurity, loneliness, and inaction (as far as public ministry was concerned) of the peasant homestead of Nazareth! But here

the garden of the human soul of Jesus was under the cultivating hand of the heavenly Husbandman; here, in the mountain district of Galilee,

Isa. liii. 2. He was growing up as "a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground," before the Lord, though withdrawn from public observation; here, as in His own lovely parable of *the Vine and the branches*, what was at first "*fruit*," must become, under the process of pruning, "*more fruit*," to eventuate ultimately in "*much fruit*." He was

John xv., &c. a man of faith and a man of prayer, and, acknowledging and testing, as He afterwards did in His public ministry, the anointing power of the Holy Ghost to qualify, sustain, and carry Him through to the end (to accommodate to our subject a simile from Scripture, and apply language belonging to the Bride to the great Bridegroom Himself), we can well conceive that in His own experience, during this period of retirement and of discipline, in answer to His prayer of faith,

Can. iv. 16. the "north wind" did "awake," the "south wind" "come," the Spirit's influences did "blow upon" His "garden," causing the spices thereof to "flow out." "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits," is a challenge on which the Bride, so often faithless to her beloved, could not at all times venture; but this is language expressive of the normal bearing of the

soul of the Beloved Himself toward Him whose formative hand we have been considering as upon Him; the constant outgoing of whose love and favour toward Him we may gather from those responsive words—alas! how partially, and with such broken and frequent intervals, applicable to the Church, but at all times, and to the fullest extent, belonging to the human experience of Him who is its glorious Head!—"I am come Can. v. 1. into my garden; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk."

The Husbandman, whom we hear so pathetically mourning over His fruitless vineyard of old, met Isa. v. with no disappointment in this "Plant of renown," Ezek. xxxiv. 29. which He was rearing and maturing for Himself; it ever rewarded, with an abundant yield, all His outlay of training and fostering care; and, as His hand gathered fresh fruit, we may well understand that He, whose words were, "Herein is my Father John xv. 8. glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples," as the God-man, "*increased in favour with God,*" while, as His eternal Son, He was, as we have seen, the object of a love which was infinite, and therefore incapable of increase.

The first recorded word of the "Nazarene" Matt. ii. 23. which directs our attention to Him, outside of His Galilean home, brings unmistakably to view, as

the result of the lengthened discipline He had experienced therein, a matured spirit of dependence on His Father, and obedient submission to His will, which well qualified Him now to stand forth on the platform of public action, not more as *the declared Son* than as in the realized character which prophecy had awarded to Him of *the obedient servant*. To the meekly objecting Baptist

Matt. iii. 15. we hear "Jesus answering," "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Wondrous "*us*." Not more was it incumbent on John to fulfil his commission, than on

John iii. 30. Jesus to discharge His—John as one that "must decrease," Jesus as one that "must increase." He, whom we have seen to increase in wisdom and stature, is now to "increase" in service, and, as He did before, "in favour" with Him whom he served.

It is here worthy of remark, that one of the strongest expressions which the Scripture supplies of the outgoing of God's love from eternity towards the person of His Son, stands between the contemplation of Him as a "servant" and that descent of the Spirit which was to qualify Him for and instal Him in His service. "*Behold my servant, IN WHOM MY SOUL DELIGHTETH; I have put my Spirit upon him.*"

At the commencement, then, of His public

ministry, and when Satan was about to experience the first pressure of His "heel," we see Him, as the servant anointed by the descending Spirit, stepping out of Jordan with this endorsement—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and, "when the time was come that He should be received up," and He was about "steadfastly" to "set His face to go to Jerusalem," for the last time, He receives, on the mount of transfiguration, a renewal of the testimony of Jordan, and this at the very moment when Moses and Elias were speaking of "the *decease* which He should accomplish at Jerusalem," in fulfilment of those typical shadows and those prophecies, the economy of which they may be said to have respectively represented.

As Jesus at His baptism had been declared the especial object of His Father's love, when confronting in prospect the stern requirements of the holy law, and, with loyal heart, nerving Himself to the fulfilment of "all righteousness;" and as that love, shed abroad in His heart by the descending Spirit, was the impelling motive which *drove* Him into and carried Him through His sphere of *active* service, so now that, with *steadfast* face, He was about to enter upon its *passive* phase, and to confront the suffering with which it was to close, a second declaration of that love, in

Matt. iii. 14.

Luke ix. 30,
31, 31.

Rom. v. 5.

“a voice to him from the excellent glory,” is vouchsafed, to cheer Him on His onward rugged path to Calvary; and, as that voice yet lingered on His ear, “as he came down from the mountain,” we hear Him recurring to the theme of His two glorified attendants, pointing forward to the event which was to give to His Father’s voice of complacent love a full bodied tone of melody which it had never carried with it before—He

Mark ix. 12. told His three companions, “how it was written of the Son of man, that he must suffer, and be set at naught.”

The foregoing remarks may enable us now to enter, with some intelligence, into the force of the pregnant “*therefore*” of the passage which has given rise to them—“Therefore doth my Father love me,” &c. At the death of Christ, which was to issue in a *life taken up out of death*, to be the resurrection life of His Church united to Him, the favour of God, which we have seen, in an increasing degree, attendant on the gradual development of His whole course of obedience, from the cradle hitherto, may be considered as reaching its culminating point when He became “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Phil. ii. 8. Hitherto, “though He were a Son,” yet, “as a Son that serveth,” He had been *learning* “obedience by the things which he suffered:” the

prescribed lesson was here fully learnt; the cup of Gethsemane had brought out the entire subjection of His human will to that of His Father, and had proved that He could now bear the test of Calvary. At the cost of "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears," He was at length "made perfect." He had told out, before the eye of infinite holiness, and at the feet of outraged justice, in His "precious blood," the full price of the ransom of souls; and, as the consummating act of His unbroken career of obedience, He had bowed His head, under the pressure of avenging wrath, in all that spirit of a *servant* which is implied in His words—"This John x. 18. *commandment* have I received of my Father." Other words of His also imply *the response of love* from His heart to that love which His faith, penetrating through the dark cloud which veiled the sunshine of His Father's countenance, could discern, even on the cross, in such rich abundance in His Father's heart toward Him—"That the John xiv. 31. world may know that *I love the Father*; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." This was the language of Jesus, when about to leave the guest-chamber, "He went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron . . . knowing all things which should come upon Him." Thus the words, "*If ye love me,*

keep my commandments," convey an injunction, in which He demanded no more from the hearts of His disciples than, as He apprises us, His Father had received from His own. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; **EVEN AS I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love**"—wondrous farewell words of Jesus, which, in marvellous grace, affix on their poor imperfect efforts lovingly to obey Him the same stamp of His Father's complacent love which His own infinitely perfect obedience bore, even as He puts the impress of the Father's love to Him on the love borne by His Father Himself toward them. Those words, "Thou hast loved them **AS thou hast loved me;**" and those other words, spoken by Him to His disciples, "*As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you,*" taken together, present to our faith *the love of the Father to the Son*, as at once the gauge or standard of the love of the one and of the other to us.

John xvii.
23.

John xv. 9.

"Hast thou sounded the depth of yonder sea,
And counted the sands that under it be?
Hast thou measured the height of heaven above?
Then mayst thou mete out a mother's love.
There are teachings on earth, in sky, and air;
The heavens the glory of God declare;
But more loud than the voice beneath, above,
He is heard to speak through a mother's love."

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?” is a challenge which directs our search through the whole range of human affections, to receive no check till we find ourselves before the judgment-seat of Solomon, where, by the side of “the woman whose the living child was,” we can select, out of all the varied manifestations of earthly love, that which among them all knows the greatest intensity of yearning; then, confronted, in regal presence, also with that other woman who, in “the great famine in Samaria,” avowed that she had boiled her son, and did eat him, and within hearing also of the bitter lament of captive Judah’s mourning prophet—“The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people,” we are furnished with a justification of the inspired verdict of the *possibility* of failure even in a mother’s love. “Yea, they may forget; yet,” adds Jehovah, “will not I forget.” Thus would the Lord, in unspeakable condescension, carry us above and beyond the wide department of all human loves, to find the *measure* and the “*manner*” of his love to us.*

* An old Puritan writer remarks on this subject, “The love of Christ toward His own (and added thereto, as we

The paramount importance of the opening sentiment in the above remarks, that *the love of man to God is but the reflex of the love of God to man*, will be my justification for evolving at so much length from the Scriptures the *objective* part of my subject, and fully setting forth its nature, "manner," and extent. The latter, when known and enjoyed, in fact, as much implies and involves the former as do the correlative terms *father* and *son*, and *master* and *servant*, each other. It is often asked, whether *the love of God* said to be *shed abroad in the heart* be God's love to us or our love to God; so also as to the *constraining love of Christ* mentioned by Paul. But as

Rom. v. 5.

2 Cor. iv. 14.

"It is not all of life to live,
Nor all of death to die,"

so it may be predicated that

It is not all of love to love,

regarding love as *subjectively* wrought in us as a fruit of the Spirit. Blessed indeed it is *to love*. Eph. vi. 24. "Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," and awful the woe to him 1 Cor. xvi. 22. who loves Him not. "If any man love not the

have seen, also the love of the Father to us in Him) is matchless, and can be resembled by no love on earth; but is like the Father's love to Him as being eternal, sincere, and intimate, incomprehensible, infinite, and unchangeable as is the other."

Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maranatha.* "Exceeding great and precious promises" appertain to those who are animated by this love. Such are the "called according to God's purpose." "All things work together for good to them that love God:" theirs is heirship to the kingdom, theirs "*the crown of life,*" "*the crown of righteousness,*" "*the crown of glory.*"* All-important therefore it must be, that to the searching question, "*Lovest thou me?*" we should, with the seat of our inmost affections laid bare before the scrutinizing gaze of the divine interrogator, be able to say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." But let it be solemnly noted, that a previous question must be satisfactorily resolved by us, or Simon's reply can never be ours—"Do I know that I am loved? loved as God tells me *sinner*s must be, in the person and work of his Son?" The Lord had "turned and looked upon" Peter; and the voice of forgiving love had spoken in the eye of Jesus, and had placed the bitter tear of repentance on that of Peter, which,

Rom. viii. 28.

Jas. ii. 5.

2 Tim. iv. 8.

Jas. i. 12.

1 Pet. v. 4.

John xxi. 15,
17.

* Though *the love* mentioned as belonging to those destined to wear the two first crowns is not in this passage of Peter expressly stated respecting those to whom *the crown of glory* is promised, yet it is fully implied in John xxi. 15, where *love to Jesus* is, in the Lord's words addressed to the same apostle, made an indispensable pre-requisite to the *feeding of the flock* alluded to also in this passage.

too, had its voice, to find its utterance in terms of responsive, grateful, and adoring love. Let the poor prodigal, in the rags of the "far country," but espy the outstretched arms of a compassionating Father, or, much more, realize His embrace of love, with its assuring kiss, then will vanish all thought of a *hired servant's* reception. "Not worthy," he feels himself, to be called His son; but the blessed *fact* is placed beyond all doubt. The threshold of his Father's house has been crossed; "the best robe" is now on him; the "ring on his hand and shoes on his feet;" the table with "the fatted calf;" the feast and mutual merriment;—all, all tell him that he is indeed a son, a son that "was dead and is alive again." And who can doubt *the after service of love* which

Luke xv.

was the response to such manifested love as this?

1 John iii. 16.

Let us only "perceive the love" which has been the handmaid of infinite wisdom, in effectuating its mighty plan, that "Mercy and Truth"

Ps. xxv. 10.

should "meet together," and "Righteousness and Peace kiss each other;" that there should be an harmonious blending of all the attributes of God, in the adoption into His family of guilty, polluted, hell-deserving sinners, "by nature the children of wrath, even as others;" let us but realize to ourselves that there is blessed truth in the statement of Scripture, that by simple faith

Eph. ii. 3.

in the incarnate embodiment of His love, we become the children of God; let the Holy Spirit, whose *objective* witness we have in the Word, that, "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name," bring us *subjectively* under His new creating influences, begetting within us the faith which believes this truth, and which appropriates the Christ presented in it; then is it witnessed to our spirits, that "we are the children of God," enabling us to address Him as "Abba Father." John i. 12.
Gal. iii. 26.

"If God were your FATHER," says Jesus, "ye would love me." And wherefore? Because the lips which spake these words could also proclaim, "I am the way; NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," is an invitation often quoted, without its immediately following or preceding context; and thus the *teaching* character of the gracious inviter, and the great *lesson* to be taught, as set forth in the passage, are lost sight of. "Learn of me," are words which bring us to the feet of Jesus, like Mary, to hear His word; and that word is the weighty and blessed truth under consideration: "No man knoweth the FATHER save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him . . . Come Rom. viii. 15,
16.
John viii. 42.
John xiv. 6.
Matt. xi. 27-
29.

unto me . . . LEARN OF ME." This was the very essence of the Messiah's mission. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the FATHER, he hath declared HIM." Here is the resting-place of faith. Here it finds the promised "rest" of the passage just quoted—in the bosom of the FATHER'S love.

After the transactions of Calvary (to which attention has been so fully directed) had terminated, and the Lord Jesus could stand forth as the *representative Son* in resurrection, "the first-begotten of the dead," "the first-born among many brethren," we find that, though all His disciples had been ashamed of Him in His hour of need, He is not ashamed of His brethren; and as the closing act of His life had been one of *characteristic* homage to all that was "written concerning Him," when, knowing that all things "were accomplished," in order that one remaining Scripture might be fulfilled, He saith, "I thirst," so in the *risen Saviour* we may see the same reverence for, and devout reference to, the written word. "*I will declare thy name unto my brethren*" was a prophecy concerning Him, which His loving heart hastens to fulfil the very moment that He leaves behind Him the grave-clothes and the tomb. "Go to MY BRETHREN, and say unto them, I ascend unto MY FATHER AND YOUR FATHER:"

John i. 18.

Compare Ps.
ii. 7, Acts
xiii. 32-37,
John xx.
17, Rev. i.
5, Ho. viii.
29.

John xix. 28.

John xx. 17.

His Father *in* resurrection, our Father as "be- 1 Pet. i. 3.
 gotten again *by* the resurrection of Jesus Christ
 from the dead." Thus, as the lips of a woman,
 into whom Satan had entered, first brought sin
 and death to her husband, so a woman, out of
 whom "seven devils had been cast," bears from
 the lips of the risen Bridegroom, for the comfort
 of His Church—His Bride—in all ages, the an-
 nouncement of the blessed fact, that the *father-*
hood of God was for ever established in the
brotherhood of Jesus. Self-evident, then, must be
 the proposition of our blessed Lord alluded to:
 "If God were your FATHER, ye would love me."

If we thus love Jesus, let Him tell, in His own
 wondrous language, the glorious issues of such
 love: "If ye love me, keep my commandments,
 and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you
 another Comforter, and HE shall abide with you
 for ever.....He shall be in you." Again: "He
 that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and
 I will love him, and manifest myself to him."
 And again, on a question as to this manifesta-
 tion, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; John xiv. 15,
 16, 17, 23.
 and MY FATHER will love him, and WE will come
 unto him, and make our abode with him."

The realized influential inabiding of the Father,
 Son, and Spirit in the heart is thus made to
 result from the entwining of its loyal affections

around Him, whom we have traced into eternity as, by anticipation, having His "delights with the sons of men;" whom, loving His own unto the end, we have followed through all the stages of His abode on earth, from the cradle onward, persevering on the pathway of obedience until, on Calvary, that obedience was consummated, and the Father's ultimate end, as concerned Himself and His Church in Him, had been attained, when He could say of all that He was to do and suffer, **John xix. 30.** "It is finished."

Now, and not till now, was there opened a channel of *holiness* and *righteousness*, through which **MERCY**, in the yearnings of pitying love, could reach us, so as to meet our need and remedy our ruin.

John xvii. On turning to our Lord's concluding intercessory prayer, as likely to minister appropriate thought on the subject in hand, it would appear that the variations in the three titles given to Him whom He addresses may throw light thereupon. When speaking more immediately of His own glory, and the result of His personal ministry to His chosen ones, and when formally presenting them as the objects of His prayer, the appellation is simply that of "FATHER;" but when the marvels of His grace, in His thoughts of love towards them, are to be unfolded in such full and blessed

detail, when the sanctification of His people is to be brought out through the previous sanctification of Himself, the mystery of union propounded—the Father in Him, and He in the Father, that His people might be one in them, He in them, and the Father in Him, that they might be made perfect in one; and again, by a necessary law of grace, the glory appertaining to Him as the *Head*, belonging to them as the *members*; and all this made traceable to the fact, that the Father had loved them as He had loved Him—with all this “travail of His soul” and resulting satisfaction, as “the joy which was set before him,” the endurance of the cross must needs object itself to His view; the cup of Gethsemane and the averted countenance of His God on Calvary—the pleasure of the Lord “to bruise him”—must be realized, as to be encountered by Him, ere “the pleasure of the Lord,” in securing for His people such glorious privileges, could “prosper in his hand.” The Isa. liii language of the men of Bethshemesh may well express the feelings of “the Man of sorrows,” when thus about to take the realized “chastisement” of His people’s “peace upon Him”—“Who 1 Sam. vi. 20. is able to stand before THIS HOLY LORD GOD?”

This long concatenation of privilege and blessing is, in a marked manner, it would appear, purposely linked with the *holiness* and *righteousness*

- of God. "HOLY FATHER" ushers in, from the Lord's lips, this wondrous passage, as RIGHTEOUS
- Hosea xi. 8. FATHER concludes it. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together." One is tempted here to exclaim, Behold the *perplexity of Love!* Where and how is it to be resolved? Look to Calvary, and there contemplate what may be termed the *ingenuity of Love*, in that combined harmonious action thereof with Justice, which we have been contemplating, as there displayed. The "heart" mentioned here is that of Him who could say, with the cross fully
- Luke xii. 50. in view, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" The heart turned inwards, with its kindled repentings, must find vent outwards. Love, as a burning fire, shut up in the bones, is weary with forbearing, and cannot stay; it must speak, and when it does, in language of grace and mercy, to cheer the heart of sinners, let us note, in the answer to the pathetic queries of this passage, how great a prominence is given to the *holiness* of God. "I,
- Jer. xx. 9. THE HOLY ONE in the midst of thee, will not execute the fierceness of mine anger; I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man"—"*I am God AND man*" might also be
- Hos. xi. 9.

added, as the glorious fact, which we have seen to be the warrant of Love to act in a world of sin, while Justice sits by, endorsing all with the smile of its entire approval! Thus "Israel was not Jer. li. 5. forsaken, nor Judah, of his God, of the Lord of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL."

The covenant of mercy and truth with David, or rather with the Son of David, was verified on the oath of God's holiness, and it has been well remarked on the words,—“I have sworn in my holiness”—that *this attribute is engaged in every promise*. We may now, in this view, understand how, in Psalm ciii., the removal of “our transgressions from us,” “as far as the east is from the west,” is in immediate context with mercy extended toward us, great as is the height of heaven above us, yea, the experience of continuously *forgiving, healing, redeeming, crowning, satisfying, mercy, and the yearning pity of paternal love.**

* The “*tender mercies*” of the fourth, God's *mercifulness* of the eighth, and the *Father's pity* of the thirteenth verse, are expressed by the same word in Hebrew, as is also woman's “*compassion*” on the son of her womb. (Isaiah xlix. 15.) The same Hebrew word expresses also the yearning “*bowels*” of “the woman whose the living child was,” as she stood before the judgment seat of Solomon (1 Kings iii. 26); and the “*bowels*” of Joseph, which “did yearn upon his brother Benjamin.” (Gen. xliii. 30.) We thus find

Hebrew. The attributes of *holiness* and *righteousness* are made to form an integral part in the melody of this incomparable song of praise—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless the *name of his holiness*"—"His *righteousness* is unto children's children."

Com. Isa. vi.
and John
xiii. 41. How strikingly, in the vision of Isaiah (which our Lord interprets as the exhibition of His own glory), do we see the awe engendered by the view of infinite holiness at once relieved by the application of the "live coal from off the altar" to those lips which had just confessed their own uncleanness, and which, "iniquity" being "taken away" and "sin purged," become the fit vehicle to convey to "Judah and Jerusalem" the warning denunciations, and the gracious promises of the *thrice Holy One*.

Psaln li. Finally we may notice the royal penitent, not only with his aggravated sin *ever before him*, but the vile original to which he traced it vividly present to his view, anticipating the return of "joy and gladness" to his "broken spirit" and "contrite heart," through the operation of the *renewing, restoring, upholding* "lovingkindness and tender mercies" of the God of his salvation.

Hebrew. "Take not from me the Spirit of thy *holiness*"
the word in question used to exemplify *paternal, maternal,*
and *fraternal* love.

is his plea, and, in juxtaposition with his own "blood guiltiness," *righteousness* is the attribute which he selects to be the special subject matter of his loud song of praise for deliverance therefrom. This psalm, with its unmistakable reference to atoning blood, in the light thrown upon it in the latter part of Romans iii., will be found to supply materials to fill up the mighty chasm between the penitent's confessed sin of nature and life, and the two divine attributes in question.

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that Prov. xv. 15. condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." On the wondrous platform of redemption, God stands forth as doing both the one and the other. The intervention of the cross causes that to be not only grace but glory in Jehovah, which would be "abomination" if transacted among men. God "*justifieth the ungodly*" Rom. iv. 5. simply and solely on the ground of His having *condemned the just*. He has done the latter in the person of His Son, of Him who is presented to us as "that Just One," the "Holy One and the Just," who "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust."

Acts iii. 14,
xxii. 14;
1 Peter iii.
18.

Only in view of the transactions of Calvary, whether seen by David, obscurely, it may be, through Levitical ordinances, or more clearly in

the full blaze of New Testament revelation ; only in the light of the death of the Son of man, who was the Son of God, not as a martyr, sealing with his blood the truth of what He taught, but as the Surety and Representative of His people, bearing in His own divine person the penalty due to the breach of the law of a *holy* and *righteous* God ; only as our faith apprehends and appropriates such a provision as this, can we understand how God can be “just, and the justifier of the ungodly” who believe in Jesus. On the ground alone of the truth set forth on the title-page of this treatise, and so abundantly established throughout its pages, could be effected, consistently with the character of Jehovah,—the opening of a channel of *holiness* and *righteousness*, through which the yearnings of redeeming love could reach, so as to meet the deep need of the sin-stricken, ruined, and lost family of Adam.

Love bridged the vast abyss
Which severed earth from Heaven ;
Love left its native home of bliss,
Came to a guilty world like this,
To speak to rebel man of peace,
And tell of sin forgiven.

Lost man it doth behove
 To greet the heavenly Stranger :
 With lightning speed behold Him move ;
 Admire that reach—that plunge of Love
 From Heaven's exalted throne above
 To Bethlehem's lowly manger !

As loud as sinners can,
 Let them, from hell exempted,
 Proclaim how Grace devised a plan
 Which leaves no space 'tween God and man ;
 How Love essayed the chasm to span,
 And did what it attempted !

My soul, adore this grace,
 Not only grace, but glory !
 Taking at Jesus' feet thy place,
 The lines of both united trace,
 Reflected from Emmanuel's face,
 And read Redemption's story !

What mean these notes of mirth,
 Of sacred mirth and gladness ?
 They sing the Babe of Bethlehem's birth ;
 They tell that Love hath reached our earth,
 Bringing a boon of matchless worth,
 To give man joy for sadness.

Of "peace, goodwill," I hear,
 To fallen man extended ;
 But other words first reach the ear,
 Which tell that Love's blest mission here
 Did not with justice interfere—
 Man's peace, God's glory, blended !

Love ne'er had left the sky,
Justice had barred Heaven's portals,
Were not a means devised whereby
Law's outraged claims to satisfy,
And glory give to God on high,
While Mercy came to mortals!

Love did the task assume,
Personified in Jesus,
Incarnate came from Mary's womb,
Lived, died, and rose from Joseph's tomb,
To free us from the Law's dread doom:
Yes, LOVE INCARNATE frees us!

Love thus redemption wrought,
Love thus procured our pardon;
Glad tidings now to man are brought,
Pardon by Love from Justice bought;
The price—(transcending human thought!)
The Cross reached through the Garden.





