

“Helps in Things Concerning Himself” — Vol. 4, 1894

“We Spend Our Years as a Tale that is Told”

Psalm 90:9

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was manifested: at verse 14, as is said, *historical* Christianity begins. The Word became flesh; it was not an *appearance* as in olden days, but a real man in the midst of men; then we are introduced by the Spirit to the two great things resulting from His becoming man, first *grace* and *truth* have come in Him; secondly, the only Son in the bosom of the Father reveals Him as known by Himself in that position. Oh how well it is that we can say as here we wonder and worship, that there is nothing like that, and how surpassing all knowledge is the thought of it! Further, how much higher (if we are permitted so to speak) is this to what Rev. 19 or Psalms 45 unfold to us; in these we are instructed as to His relationship to man *in government*, but in what our hearts are now contemplating, we see Himself in His *essential relationship* to the Father; and may we not again say that as we behold Him so revealed and revealing as in it, the bosom of the Father, we fall at His blessed feet and worship and adore. The third glory found here is that of His blessed work in its two parts.

He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, this is its blessed first aspect; it is well to note that this passage does not treat of the *guilt* in which men are, that is a subject of the deepest moment and interest, and has its own place as such in scripture; but here we are instructed as to the *state of things before God*. The *majesty* and *holiness* of God both demand that sin be removed from before His eyes. Jesus is the Lamb of God, He comes, as it were, from God's side, He was perfectly suited to the glory of God, He and He alone could establish it, and that too where sin was found. Another has most blessedly thus expressed it:

The cross is the basis of this blessing. All the moral elements of good and evil have been clearly brought to light, and have been shown each in its proper place, and Christ is at God's right hand, as Man, in the divine glory, in virtue of having resolved every question that was thus raised.

How blessed thus to contemplate with adoring heart and affection His glory as the Lamb of God; its *full import* is most precious set forth in the words,

And I beheld, and lo in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain, &c.

How precious to the heart that has been taken into His love, are these words, "Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain"; and in its worshipping homage, it delights to treasure up the fact that has been stated, namely, that as in His deepest humiliation, His glory was not veiled from the opened eye, so the glories of His heavenly throne do not conceal the tokens of His sufferings. Thank God, He never can be hid, be the scene what it may.

The other aspect of the glory of His work is that He baptizes with the Holy Ghost, and this of course implies His ascension into the heavens and His being glorified. Oh how blessed to contemplate Him in this, from the "*lower parts of the earth*" to "*far above all heavens*," so that as Man victorious, Man in the glory of God, He might receive the Holy Ghost for others, and thus the blessed Spirit of God, third Person of the adorable Trinity, He Son of God, in due season did shed forth on others. Lastly for His own the deep significance of this second aspect of his blessed work is apparent; it is thus they are brought into an *entirely new position*, and this too as the result of His glory as the ascended Man. Now may we not ask, What subject could be more precious than this to the hearts of His own? Oh that the affections of all that are His may be not only called forth, but also detained in true worship and adoration, as each part of His glory passes before our souls.

"Yet sure, if in Thy presence
My soul still constant were,
Mine eye would more familiar
Its brighter glories bear.

And thus Thy deep perfection
Much better should I know,
And with adoring fervor
In this Thy nature grow."

"We Spend Our Years as a Tale that is Told" (Psalm 90:9)

The shadows of the expiring year are lengthening upon us, the end is fast approaching, another milestone in life's journey will soon have been past. The sunrise and the sunset belong to this world, the eternal day lies *beyond* it all and *above* it all.

Let us then, standing on the verge of the closing period, pause and listen to the voice which speaks to us to-day.

Wherever we turn the eye, one great fact is clearly seen, namely, that we have reached in very earnest the era of universal instability and change. "The foundations of the earth are out of course." The great moral obligations, which in times past have bound society together, are all in a state of dissolution.

In every department of life here, the same sad sight forces itself upon us.

The two spheres on which the eye is most fixed at the present moment are the church and the world. In the first, the symptoms of approaching judgment are thick on every side.

The apostasy from *the faith* has well-nigh reached its summit, so complete and far-reaching has the surrender of truth been, that but little remains to be given up. Blasphemy against God and His Christ is the pervading atmosphere of the professing church, and the blasphemy is nourished by *pride*; "proud blasphemers" abound on every hand; verily we are in a far-spent night, and a *very dark night* as well. Those who

occupy this standpoint, and who witness from its elevation, are decried and refused as alarmists, pessimists, and so forth; in this, as in all else, history repeats itself.

Further, external *appearances* are all against them it is said, there is the increase of knowledge, the tremendous strides of science, the rapid growth of philosophy, the clear light of a deeper and more enlarged scholarship. All these are flung in their faces, and they are bidden to be silent in the presence of such indisputable testimony; thus the word of the living God is set aside, and its solemn and precious contents scattered to the winds -- these as not worthy of this enlightened age, are characterized as puerilities, composed for a bygone ignorant generation and unworthy of present credit. Oh what a sight does the professing church exhibit! *Superstition* and *rationalism*, hand in hand, overflow the face of the land, carrying the great bulk of people on their flood-tide. In view of all this how solemn are the words of our blessed Master and Lord: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find *the faith* [*την πιστιν*] on the earth."

When we turn and look at the condition of the world, how ominous the signs on the horizon. The lull of the armed peace is already broken, and a conflict for the *existences* of kingdoms is looming in the *near future*. Who can tell what complications may be at hand, what embroilment of nations may arise out of this present struggle between China and Japan? It needs but an open eye to see the dark cloud which overhangs the world; it will ere long burst, then oh, what a crash when the war fever asserts itself! Weapons of deadly power and magnitude are prepared, and in hand, too; man's inventive powers having been all exercised to their utmost in devising the most effectual engines of destruction.

Amid all these time marks, and above and beyond all this upheaving, that is in sure progress, the bright and blessed *heavenly hope* shines in all its own brilliancy and warmth before the eye and heart of the *watcher* and *waiter* for the One who is coming for His own. The *heavenly hope* is the heart's affectionate longing for Himself, it is not to be absent from the sphere and scene of trial, but to be *with Him for his own sake*, to be in His *blessed presence and company above and at home forever*; this has ever been the hope of the church, her *heavenly hope*. She will be no doubt *associated* with Him in other scenes, and her heart delights to know that He who was cast out *here* will reign *here* and have His rights here; but above and beyond that, her own special bright prospect and longing is to be *with Himself where He is*.

How near is this to faith and affection! How blessed to think that ere another year runs its course, we and all His own, so scattered here, may be gathered to Himself, raised or changed, and caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so to be ever with the Lord. May the Lord awaken, by His grace, the slumbering hearts of His own to go forth in greater distinctness and affection to watch for Him.