

NOTES of a SERMON preached by Mr. KEMP at Biddenden on Sunday Afternoon, September 27th, 1896, after the death of Albert Smith, of Smarden, Kent.

"And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."—John vi., 40.

SOME who are here this afternoon have not been here under similar circumstances before. It is a time of great sorrow with some in this congregation. There is a bereaved widow who has lost her partner, and she is left desolate to mourn her loss, and my desire is that this bereavement may be sanctified to the widow, that she may feel "underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. xxxiii. 27) to support, and to carry all her sorrows, and that God will manifest Himself as that Husband who lives for ever, and who is the "Judge of the widow" in time of trouble. Then there are bereaved parents who have lost a son, and a sister who has lost a brother. I sympathise with them, but it is a very different thing to really stand in the place of another. They are in the trial. I desire the Lord may give supporting grace in a special way—that it may be sanctified to each. There are those, too, who are come to shew a tribute of respect to the departed one, as members of the Society (Forester's Society) to which he belonged, and you have done well in presenting yourselves in God's House; may you feel it is His House, and His service, and prostrate yourselves before Him, acknowledging His Sovereign right to deal with you as He will, whilst you lie as sinners at His feet. Death will take first one, and then another, from every Society—every family will be divided by death. All will have to part, every wife from her husband, every husband from his wife, every child from its parents, or the parent from the child, and every relative with every earthly friendship must cease. I should like to speak in a solemn, soul profiting, and God-honouring way this afternoon. I do desire we may bear the rod, and who hath appointed it (Micah vi., 9.) We are apt to banish the thought of death from our minds as quickly as possible. When we lose a member from a society, we are apt to soon forget it, and the solemnity of death. But we are all dying mortals, and it is true—

"Our life is ever on the wing,
And death is ever nigh;
The moment when our lives begin,
We all begin to die" (498)

Oh, if you and I could feel this, and ponder this, it would profit us. A good many think we are not right to ponder over death, they say it would spoil their comforts and prospects. I know it would spoil their false comforts, but it would bring right comfort and profit, where nothing else can profit us. Some would naturally expect I should preach a funeral sermon; but some of you know I am not in the habit of preaching funeral sermons. I would rather speak to the living than of the dead, because what we may say of the departed, it would make no difference, for "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." (Eccles xi., 3.) And nothing can alter it.

"Man departs to heaven or hell,
Fix'd in the state wherein he dies." (Watts.)

Sometimes we can speak a word of comfort to the mourners, and a word of warning to the ungodly.

We were speaking on Wednesday at the funeral, a few things about the departed. We could not say anything very definite about him, but there were certain things before his death which looked well. He wished to have the word of God read to him, and it is a good thing to find one cleaving to the word of God; neither was he against the solid, discriminating grace and acts

of God being set before him, and seemed to like plain dealing rather than flattery, nor could he do with the false teachers of free-will and creature-power—some of whom visited him in his affliction. Another thing, he clave to the prayers of his godly parents and others, desiring an interest therein. There seemed some ground to hope there was something more than natural union felt toward these, and if there be union of spirit to the godly,—as such,—it is a sign of life and a union of spirit proceeding from life, will issue in eternal glory. I should have liked to have seen and heard more positive evidence, and for him to have spoken out freely of what he knew and felt, but God has seen fit to hide it from us, and so we must leave it. I know that naturally one may have serious thoughts in the prospect of death. And also, morality is not spirituality. When a man's bodily powers are decaying it will make him consider naturally.

Well, we shall try and speak from our text; you will find that this is a discriminating part of God's truth. In professing religion most people have something they have their eye upon, and in this case it was He had multiplied the bread and fishes—five barley loaves and two small fishes amongst five thousand people (verse 9 10). "Then they would have taken Him" by force, to make Him a King (verse 15). Some took up religion for this cause, and probably thought "If our business comes to nothing, He will be able to feed us." Now that is about as far as some people's religion goes; it must yield temporal prosperity, and the moment their religion clashes with that, it is all over. You know the dead fish will go with the stream, but the living will struggle against it.

Well, now, how stands thy case before a heart-searching God? It is not whether we make a profession of religion, but whether we have the grace of God in our hearts.

Christ shews here who will rightly follow Him, for it says "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (verse 37). These were His, in covenant, before time began. They were given to Christ by the Father, and He undertook to bring them to heaven; for "all that the Father giveth me shall come to me," and He makes them "willing in the day of His power" (Psalm cx., 3), giving them a spiritual concern, while necessity presses, and love draws them. If you and I are given to Christ, we have come to Him, or we shall come to Him. Not that you will come bodily, but it is this—the living, grace-taught soul goes to Him spiritually. There is a feeling after Him, and a longing to lay hold on Him, and He says, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out" (verse 37). Now if you know what a spiritual hunger and thirst is, and you are desiring spiritual consolations, He will not cast you out. Oh how this part of the Word of God helped me fifteen years ago or more, when I could feel no spirit of prayer, when I could not produce a heart-felt cry.

That will make one look about him, if quickened, when he comes to that place where he feels utterly unable to perform one spiritual act, cannot love, believe, nor repent feelingly as he would, and cannot pray. Then when the Lord favoured me again, it was with this: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

I found then I could both pray and take hold on His promises, and His faithfulness, and in a measure I rejoiced in Him. You see, with the promise He gave the spirit of prayer.

"And this is the will of Him that sent Me." We shall try to speak a word of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for our text contains the grace of each glorious person in the God-head. All our mercies flow from the Father, He is the Father of all by creation and providence, inasmuch as He supplies creatures and every living thing on the earth, according to their needs. Christ is the Son of God in truth; He is the eternal co-equal Son of God; and as the Son of Man takes the nature of His people in union with His own divine nature, and is their Brother. Thus He says: "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John xx. 17).

God the Father has loved and chosen a people, and given them to Christ, who has redeemed them by His blood, and this people the Holy Ghost quickens and instructs by His gracious influence through Christ as the channel; putting a cry in the heart for mercy from a felt need, and such a one is alive from the dead, and lives a life of faith on the Son of God. The Father sent the Son to be the Representative of His people; and it was in love and compassion to His people, for we read, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii., 16).

The Apostle Paul says, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians iv., 4-5).

There is a set time for all His works, and Christ was born a babe, and "made under the law," and God the Father placed Him at His right hand as the Head and Representative of His people. As God Man, Mediator, Christ was "made under the law," thus He atoned for sin under the law, after He had fulfilled that law in Himself by a spotless life.

"And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son." God's people see the Son here by faith as a suitable, needful, "altogether lovely" Saviour, but their vision of Him is not so clear as they desire. When they get to Heaven they see the Son as He is, and not till then. Naturally we have no spiritual discernment, therefore one's eyes must be opened spiritually, for it is not a bodily vision. And the Apostle Paul in the first chapter of Ephesians, 18th verse, speaks of "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling . . . and what is the exceeding greatness of His power—His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead" (verse 19). Man is dead by nature, and can discern nothing spiritually (Ephes. ii., 1).

You might have natural understanding in the doctrines of grace, but be spiritually blind. The Apostle Paul says, "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor. iv., 3-4). Satan is the god of this world, and his blinding power influences the whole human race, till the Lord gives the light of life.

"That every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life." What a mercy it is to see out of obscurity! "Seeth the Son." How do His people see Him? God has appointed means that He may be seen, "and as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii., 14-15). You remember the circumstance of Moses, making, by the

Lord's command, a serpent of brass and putting it upon a pole, that everyone who was bitten by the fiery serpent when he beheld it, he lived (Numbers xxi., 8-9). You might have thought that looking at the serpent of brass would not have healed them, but it was a type of Christ, who "was wounded for our transgressions" (Isiah liii., 5). So Christ is to be exalted on the Gospel pole. This is God's method, and poor sinners whose eyes are enlightened, they see that in Him which the world cannot see. To them He is "as a root out of dry ground" (Isiah liii., 2). But respecting God's children, we read, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty" (Isiah xxxiii., 17).

"That every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life." The Son is seen in that spiritual discernment He gives to His people when He quickens them to spiritual life. Oh how different some of you felt when your heart began to go out after Christ the glorious, and suitable Saviour of poor sinners! They see Him in a very different light to what they did before. Now they feel they are dying mortals, and that sin has wounded them, and stung them to death. They know what it is for Christ to stand out as the "altogether lovely." Do you know what it is for Christ to stand out thus, and by faith to venture upon Him? Faith views both the danger and the hiding place. As Noah, who "moved with fear," "by faith prepared an ark to the saving of his house (Heb. xi., 7). "He being warned of God of things not seen as yet," believed God, and believed the flood would come. A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself" (Prov. xxii., 3, 27, 12). Such poor sinners look upon Christ different to others, as He is revealed to them. Look at the city of refuge which was provided for the manslayer to flee unto: How welcome to the guilty slayer! We, who feel our guilt, would flee unto Christ, the city of refuge. So we read: "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (Prov. xviii., 10). He is the only remedy for those poor sin bitten sinners whose consciences are made tender to feel and mourn over sin, and after cleansing in His most precious blood. And what a beauty these sin-bitten souls see in that blood of atonement!

You must see and feel your naked condition in the eyes of His righteous law, before you can see Him who justifies the ungodly. Now, this know—the faith of God's people sees Him by revelation as the Son of God. You look, when Christ was on earth, He asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" And they said "Some say one thing, and some another." But He said unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew xvi., 13-17).

The living grace-taught soul believes in the God-head of Christ; he believes, were he not the Son of God and the Son of Man combined, there would be no coming together of a holy God and far-off ruined sinners. This poor soul sees Him as the spotless Son of God and man, and thus a perfect Mediator. I believe all God's people see Christ in this same state,—they see the necessity of Him. Hunger comes before eating, nakedness before clothing, and being lost before one is saved, in their experience. "Every one which seeth the Son, every one who looks upon the Son of God as perfect Mediator with the eye of faith, and the grace of hope. Poor soul, what you want is to lay hold on Him for yourself; and when He has been exalted on the Gospel pole. Oh, how your affections have run out to Him! He is exalted on your affections. He says; "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending" (Rev. i., 8).

And so you view him.

"And believeth on Him." There is a believing on Him; *i.e.*, a receiving of His fulness with an appropriating faith, although it might not be an overpowering confidence. You have known what it is when Christ has been set forth, it has "strengthened you with might in the inner man," and encouraged your drooping hope. A believing on Him is cleaving to Him, and putting up one's petitions and thanksgiving in His name, and feeling there is no other way for mercy to flow down to poor needy sinners. I believe many see Him who stand in doubt about it, — they want the Lord to increase their faith. They say—

"O that I had a stronger faith,
To look within the veil;
To credit what the (my) Saviour saith,
Whose words can never fail."

Oh what a mercy to have a little faith that has to do with the blood of atonement, so that it brings peace and comfort to your heart as you journey on through this wilderness world.

"And believeth on him, may have everlasting life."

May here, does not mean he may, or may not. It means here they possess eternal life, for we read, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me *hath* everlasting life" (verse 47). That life prompts his faith and prayer, and all spiritual devotion, so that the Father hath *willed* that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life." It is the will of the Father it should be so. It is His will that they should be quickened by His Spirit (John v, 21), and being quickened to a sense of their lost condition, should find salvation in Christ.

"May have everlasting life." This is handed down for the encouragement of poor sinners. If you know what it is to see the Son with the eye of faith, so as to cast anchor in Him with full purpose of heart, cleaving to Him by love and obedience — for faith works by love — that is the earnest of heaven.

If you tell me you believe in Christ, and revel in all things contrary to His Word, I shall say it is a dead faith and worthless.

There are those who have "little faith," they cleave to God's people, to His Word and to His ways, and that is the proof of the tree being good by its fruit. I do not mind how much faith and confidence you have, if there is nothing of godly fear and tenderness; your faith is vain, your confidence is worthless.

But Oh what a mercy to have genuine faith! This will make you afraid to trifle with men's souls, and your own, for to your own Master you stand or fall, and you want to be assured you are on the right foundation.

He says "I will raise him up at the last day." Well, now we believe every one of us possesses an immortal principle which will live for ever, for when God made "man of the dust of the ground," He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Genesis ii., 7). Thus each of us possesses an immortal soul; but this know, there are two places of abode after death — heaven and hell. There will be two parties — the goats and the sheep, the righteous and the wicked. "The righteous shall go into life eternal" (Matt. xxv., 46), whilst the wicked "shall be cast into outer darkness" (Matt. viii., 12).

What Christ means here by "everlasting life," is everlasting happiness in glory. The ungodly, who sink to hell, of them we read "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix, 48); and we read of "everlasting burnings" (Isiah xxxiii., 1), and "the smoke of their torments ascendeth up for ever and ever" (Rev. xiv., 11). That is the second death, because it is banishment from God, and from His presence. But this "everlasting life" here mentioned is that state which the soul enters into, when there is "not a wave

of trouble rolls across his peaceful breast." He enters into the joy of his Lord (Matt. xxv., 21).

There, 'tis sacred, high eternal noon." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away" (Rev. xxi., 4).

Then there will be no more mourning an absent God, and those who see the Son and believe on Him have this "everlasting life."

Many would have us believe that one might go to the ale-house, and card table, and from thence to heaven, if they die in that state, but no such thing. It is "everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life." *He only* "enters into the joy of his Lord." What a blessed state! What an important matter to be right!

"And I will raise him up at the last day." We are fast coming to our last days. With regard to our departed friend, he has come to his last day, and we shall come to that last day, each of us, as far as our bodily existence on earth is concerned. But consider the last day, when all nature will be burned up, when He will come to bring them all before the judgment seat of Christ; and then He will divide the goats from the sheep.

We believe all will come to a resurrection of the body — both the righteous and the wicked. O what an awful difference there will be between the righteous and the wicked then. "Them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel xii., 2). We are speaking of those who see the Son, and believe on Him, whom He will raise up at the last day.

We cannot speak much of our departed friend; I must leave that. I am speaking of the believer, who sees the Son, and hath everlasting life. Everyone who finds Christ precious and sees a beauty in Him, He will raise up at the last day, and body and soul shall be glorified together.

You see at "the last day" we shall all be there, and "every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. i., 7).

"And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isiah lii., 10) in the complete happiness of His dear people.

Not only those who pierced His heart on Calvary's cross, but those who hate and despise his people; *they* will see Him, and dying in that state it will yield them no consolation. They will see Him — we shall *all* see Him; but with this difference — He will openly declare the "blessedness of the righteous; they will enter the joy of the Lord, — and the "cursed" state of the wicked.

We read of the rich man who "died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (Luke xvi., 22-23). He saw from hell to heaven.

By Abraham's bosom there is meant heaven, the Jews called it heaven. The rich man saw Lazarus in "Abraham's bosom," and he cried and said "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame" (verse 24). I believe the righteous will be lifted up before the ungodly — openly owned by Christ.

They will see Him, their Brother upon the throne. Raised up in the Word of God means raised up soul and body, and the righteous shall thus enter into the joy of His Lord,

It will be an unspeakable mercy to be there. I desire every one of my hearers might know what it is to be saved with an everlasting salvation; but I know this, that salvation is of the Lord from first to last. Amen.