the New Year. Never mind the past! Confess and you are forgiven! God both forgives and forgets. Imitate God and forget—forsake your thoughts and think God's thoughts after Him. Now, He who forgave the past has strength for the future—that strength is yours, just as forgiveness, a new heart, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit were yours once—offered to your faith. You believed, appropriated and experienced. Believe again, and this time for the indwelling, incoming, almighty power of God to keep you—always to lead you in triumph. "God is able to make all grace abound unto you, that ye always having all sufficiency in every thing may abound unto every good work." There is the promise, and it covers everything for every child of God who will put up the "trolley" of faith to the "wire" of power. Put out the hand of faith, step out upon the waters, launch out into the deep, abandon yourself utterly and eternally to God, have no "string" tied to your trust, have no conditions, no qualifications, no ifs to your surrender, burn your ships to that all is behind and let one year, this year of 1899 be lived, loved and suffered for your adorable Lord!

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WHITE RAMMENT.

PASTOR A. J. GORDON.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." Rev. viii: 5.

THE CHARACTER OF THIS REWARD. PART I.

It is a grateful duty to bring God's promised rewards before men, on the ground of their obedience to the gospel. And while there are undoubtedly many who can be moved only by the threats and terrors of the law, I would fain believe that there are more who can be best constrained by the holy allurements of grace. For however devoid of natural goodness the heart may be, it is rarely devoid of the desire for the rewards of goodness. There is an undying instinct, an inextinguishable longing in the heart of man to regain his lost estate of purity. And though you may be unable to move him to the necessary efforts to attain it, he will confess to the presence in his breast of the unquenchable wish, of the immortal homesickness for a paradise once lost.

Like the wounded bird that pants and flutters to mount to its native skies, though its broken wings each time fail, and it falls wearied and defeated to the earth; so in the mind of the most hardened sinner, there is at times a rising up of the deepest longing of the soul for that white purity so sadly forfeited, though the will can make only a few feeble flutters towards its attainment, and fall back again into the bondage of sin.

Now I hardly know of any promise so human in its rewards, as this of the text, "shall be clothed in white raiment." And from the man clothed in filthy rags without, to the man stained with foul transgressions within, there is not one who will not stretch out the hand in instant desire for this gift of God.

It is so universal in its uses! Other rewards of the future life seem to appeal to classes;—the "crown" to royal saints; the "harp" to those skilled in music and in song; the "golden streets and jasper walls" to the dwellers in the city; the "pure river of the water of life" and the "tree of life" to those who abide among the hills and valleys. But the "white garment" has a meaning for all. From the poor work-house woman, of whom Chalmers tells us, whose thought of heaven was of "a place where she could sit all day long, in a clean white apron and sing psalms," to that other woman, whose soul wore a deeper stain than that of dust or soil, and who loved much because much had been forgiven her; from the slave of toil whose clothes from Sunday to Sunday are black with the grime of his grinding labor, to the murderer who would give worlds if he could wash the stains of his neighbor's blood from his garments; to all these alike, there is the tenderest voice of God, and the sweetest music of heaven in these words "To him that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment."

In this text the character of the reward, and the conditions of its attainment, are suggested.

"The white raiment." White is everywhere in scripture the distinctive color, the exclusive livery of heaven. In those glimpses which the Revelator gives us into glory, we see the "great white throne," the "white cloud," the "white stone,"
the “white linen” and the “white robes.” It would seem as though all things had caught the reflection of Him “whose countenance is as the sun, and whose raiment is exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them.” Here, even the sun casts a dark shadow always, because of the opaqueness of the bodies on which it shines. But in that city of which it is written “the Lamb is the light thereof,” all things are white with his whiteness,—clouds, and thrones, and garments,—and even man no longer casts a shadow of darkness, so bathed and permeated is he with his light who is the “light of the world.”

There is something wonderful in the description that is given of this whiteness of heaven as it appears in those who are clothed with it. It is not any mere dull leaden whiteness, which marks the absence of all color, rather than the presence of any distinct line. Nor is it that ghastly whiteness such as the moonlight invests objects with by night. No, it is a lustrous white, the whiteness of the light.

Recall the description in Luke of the angel who appeared at the sepulchre in “shining garments,” of the one who appeared to Cornelius, who was clothed in “bright clothing”; and of our Lord in his transfiguration of whom it is said that his “garments were white and glittering;” and though we may not fully understand these statements, it seems strongly probable that these are descriptions of the glorified body. Of God it is said, “Who clothest thyself with light, as with a garment.” Christ as he was transfigured on Tabor, “appeared in glory.” “And when he shall appear,” to raise the dead and change the living, “we shall be like Him.” In other words we shall be in glory, as He is in glory. “It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory,” and the glorified body will be invested with an unchangeable robe of light. Its whiteness cannot soil, for the whiteness will depend upon no external thread or fibre, but will be rather the shining out of the purified soul within. “There can properly be no garments in heaven,” as one has said; for these pertain only to the necessity, the humiliation, the pride of our present state of existence. But neither shall we be “unclothed.” We shall be “clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life;” a transfigured body enfoldings a sanctified spirit like a vesture of light.

To be “clothed in white raiment” then, is to have the resurrection body that is promised to the just at the appearing of our Lord. Those that are in the resurrection of the unjust will not have it. They shall rise we are told to shame and everlasting contempt. The halo of glory on the contrary will be an inseparable accompaniment of the resurrection body of the redeemed—a light at once covering and revealing it, enfolding it and radiating from it.

And yet alas! how can I describe what eye hath not seen? But if I cannot tell all that is meant by that word “white raiment,” I can tell you what is not in it. No stain of sin is on it,—no spot of fleshly defilement,—no dust of earthly contamination,—no blood of human crime. And that is enough to make us reach out like a shivering, naked child of poverty, praying our Lord to “come quickly” that we may exchange these garments of our mortality for the robes of glory. We hear the voice of God in Scripture saying, “Let thy garments be always white;” and we say, “How, Lord? there is not a clean thing upon the earth which I walk; there is not an unsoiled thread in the garment which I wear.” And the Lord assures us that if not here, yet hereafter, “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.”

(To be concluded.)

Satan came to man in the garden as an oculist, and said he would open their eyes to wonderful things, and he opened them only to sin and shame and sorrow, and from that day man has been “BORN blind.”—Thomas Newberry.

God’s grace is great, but it cannot do much for the Christian who is only trying to serve the Lord an hour or two a week.

You ask God to perform as real a miracle when you ask Him to cure your soul of sin as you do when you ask Him to cure your body of a fever.—Jellett.
WHITE RAIMENT.
BY PASTOR A. J. GORDON.

PART II. CONCLUDED.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." Rev. xxi: 5.

HOW is this reward attained? By the cleansing of the blood of Christ. There was but one answer to the question in the Apocalypse. "What are these that are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?" "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." It is only the soul that has been cleansed by the blood of Christ, that can be clothed at last with the raiment of Christ. Spiritually, as literally, the wearer must be fitted to his garment, since it will be the outshining of the clarified and redeemed soul that will constitute that garment.

Now what do we mean by being washed in the blood of Christ, for the phrase is many times used in scripture? Of course we do not mean any process of literal application of the blood. The terms are figurative. But the idea is none the less real on that account; for figures do not supercede the reality: they imply and recognize it. Every figure of scripture has a fact behind it; and every shadow is the shadow of something which casts it.

The fact then is this: We are all sinners, and stained with the spots of an impure life, and the only power that can cleanse us, is in the death and atonement of Jesus Christ. The atonement acts upon the unclean conscience to make it pure, not by any mere natural process of moral influence, the whitening out of the soul under the power of an illustrious example of martyrdom, as colored fabrics will bleach under a strong sun-light. No it is not by any such mechanical means as this. It is by the mysterious and supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. The blood does not cleanse without the spirit, and the spirit does not purify without the blood. The one applies the other.

See that man aching with the pain of inward remorse; the memory of impure thoughts, of evil words, of ingratitude to God, and slights of Jesus Christ come back to him from all the years of his past life. There is an unwritten wail in his deepest heart of "unclean, unclean," "God be merciful to me a sinner." But the Holy Spirit enables him to see Christ as He is set forth in the scriptures, the propitiation for human guilt, and he hears that wonderful gospel "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin." He believes the words, and prays "O Christ, cleanse my soul of its stain of sin," and the prayer is answered, the ache of his conscience ceases, his disquietude is gone. What has happened? He has been washed and made white by the blood of the Lamb.

We do not ask you, incredulous naturalist, to bring your microscope and note the chemical transformation, as God now fulfills his promise, and makes the sins that were as "scarlet to become as white as snow," and the guilt "red like crimson to be as wool." But we do contend that in the sphere of the spiritual and supernatural the process is just as real and just as radical, as when by the aid of some powerful acid you remove the ink stains from your hands or the soil spots from your clothing. And as physically there are only certain agents that are adequate to the cleansing, so spiritually there is no other means given from heaven or known to men, whereby we can be purified, but the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb without spot or blemish.

Question each class of that innumerable company of white-robed saints in glory, and learn from them how their brightness came!

Ye whose life was one unceasing scene of sorrow and weeping, tell us, was it your tears that washed your raiment so clean? Ye who passed through the furnace of affliction heated seven times hotter than its wont, was it the cleansing fires that wrought that stainless purity? Ye whose life was a discipline of goodness, and who reached the highest ideal of human virtue, was it the action of your own morality, that bleached your vesture into such unearthly whiteness? Ye martyrs who entered heaven bathed in your own blood; Ye apostles who lived in the light of that greatest human exemplar; Ye saints who strove with almost angelic might to overcome the world; tell us, is there nothing human, or of yourselves, to which you owe your purity? And the answer comes back...
from rank upon rank, and tier upon tier to the very throne of God, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Amid the constant assertion throughout the New Testament, that we are saved by grace through faith, and not of works, it has appeared as if there was a passage of a contrary import—the benediction upon well-doing on the last page of the Bible: Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." But the Lamb must have all the glory, for the latest discoveries among the manuscripts of the New Testament have revealed the fact, that the true reading of this passage is: "Blessed are they that have washed their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life," and so all scripture is in unison in the declaration that it is the blood of Christ alone, that can make us "worthy to walk with Christ in white."

There is one other condition to the attainment of this reward, viz: the overcoming of the world. "He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment."

In the epistle to the Hebrews, it is intimated that some who are brought under the power of the blood, will turn away from it, to their destruction. We are not only justified by the blood of Christ, but sanctified by the same. Here is the danger to which believers are constantly exposed; that they will resort to Christ's blood for pardon, but that they will not rely on it daily for holy living. The Lord's supper teaches us that we have need of the constant application of that which first purified us. "This cup is the communion of my blood." Ah, how many of us have brought the stains again upon garments that were once as the snow! Who of us does not need to repeat day by day that first act of faith in which we brought our souls to the cross of Christ.

For conquest over the world is not to be gained by reliance on ourselves, but through trust in the same sacrifice that saved us at the first. In that shout of victory over Satan which we hear from the twelfth of Revelation, the battle cry is the same as at the beginning. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." That will be the weapon of our conquest, if we overcome at last. Not Christian heroism, noble as that is; not moral resolves or powerful self-restraint, great and effective as these are; but the atoning work of Christ upon which we shall fall back from every discomfiture of temptation, as our only impregnable fortress—"the strong tower into which the righteous run and are safe."

Mark how explicitly John teaches this in his epistle. "This is the victory that overcometh the world"—what? Your courage? Your spiritual energy? Your persistent steadfastness in conflict? No. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The faith that unites us to Jesus Christ—that enables us to appropriate his victory. "Be of good cheer," Jesus says, "I have overcome the world," and through our faith his triumph will be ours, because of our oneness with him. We may resist even unto blood, striving against sin, and yet be defeated. But if we stand in his might, who overcame death by his own dying, who shall turn us back?

Are you preparing your white raiment? For that raiment must be begun here and woven from the texture of a regenerated, sanctified soul.

May not the Lord, who shed his blood that he might wash us from all iniquity, and present us before his Father without spot or wrinkle, may He not be compelled to ask any of you in the last day, the question, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" If He shall, like the servant of old, you will have no excuse, and will stand before Him "speechless."

Satan came to man in the garden as an oculist and said he would open their eyes to wonderful things, and he opened them only to sin and shame and sorrow, and from that day man has been "BORN blind."—Thomas Newbury.

Ye'll aye get what ye gang for.—Duncan Mathieson.