

TO BE COMPLETED IN VI PARTS.

THE DIVINE PRIVILEGES
OF
THE CHILDREN OF GOD

AS SET FORTH IN

JOHN XVII.

BY

W. R. H.

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PART III.

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THE DIVINE PRIVILEGES
OF THE
CHILDREN OF GOD.

τέκνα, the family relationship.

As many as received Him,
To them gave He [the] right to be
CHILDREN OF GOD,

To those that believe on His name;
Who have been born,

not of blood
nor of flesh's will
nor of man's will,
but OF GOD. John i. 12, 13.

Ye have received a SPIRIT OF ADOPTION,
Whereby we cry, ABBA, FATHER.

THE SPIRIT itself bears witness with our spirit
that we are
CHILDREN OF GOD.

And if CHILDREN,
HEIRS ALSO:
HEIRS OF GOD,
HEIRS, JOINTLY WITH CHRIST.

Harmless and simple, irreproachable
CHILDREN OF GOD. Phil. ii. 15.

I and the CHILDREN WHICH GOD Heb. ii. 13.
has given ME. John xvii. 6.

See what love the FATHER
Hath given to us, that we should be called the
CHILDREN OF GOD.

Beloved, now are we
CHILDREN OF GOD,
And what we shall be has not yet been manifested;
We know that if it is manifested we shall be like
Him, for

WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.
1 John iii. 1. 2.

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and these are in the world,

v. 11.

The twelve were to carry on the work which He had begun and was about to give the finishing stroke to. The disciples were now to occupy the official place of "sent ones" which He had occupied hitherto of *The Sent One*. This could not be, in their then condition. They would be specially endowed. As far as *Israel* was concerned, they had already been sent forth. The tenth of Matthew is the epitome of it from first to last. But the apostolic commission in John's gospel is a very different thing, and is not given until after His resurrection from the dead; in fact, on the evening of the day He rose: "When therefore it was evening on that day, which was the first [day] of the week, and the doors shut where the disciples were, through fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and says to them, Peace [be] to you. And having said this, He shewed to them His hands and His side. The disciples rejoiced therefore, having seen the Lord. [Jesus] said therefore again to them, Peace [be] to you: as the Father sent Me forth, I (emphatic) also send you. And having said this He breathed into [them], and says to them, Receive [the] Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; whose soever sins ye retain they are retained" (John xx. 19-23). This is a totally different commission from that of Matt. x. Words fail to mean anything if He did not put them upon the basis of the commission that Himself had received, even to the forgiving or non-forgiving of sins, save that they were sent by Him, whereas He was sent forth by the Father. They were to carry on His work on the earth, indwelt by His Spirit given at Pentecost.

and I (emphatic) come to Thee.

v. 11.

The Lord taking His place on high, the work was to be carried on by the Twelve below. Although the work given *Him* to do on the earth was finished, the cross remained. On the cross, the work of redemption was finished; for the Sacrifice Himself said so when, "Jesus, knowing that all things were now finished (*τετέλεσται*), that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. . . . When therefore Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished (*τετέλεσται*); and having bowed His head He delivered up His spirit" (John xix. 28-30). That the most complete and absolute termination is put to His own work, as Scripture had laid it down; is evidenced by His making fulfilment of that one last prediction, "I thirst," before the memorable announcement, "It is finished," should be declared by His lips. The EFFECT of this finished work, would be carried further on, both in heaven and on earth, in pursuance of the vast plan; but the WORK ITSELF WAS DONE: proved by Scripture to be DONE: the most perfect word in its perfect passive tense used twice, to show its FINALITY. On that grand foundation the plan goes on, the spirit is surrendered, the blood and water flows, the body is buried, and rises triumphant the third day according to the Scriptures; and not even then touched (John xx. 17) till He had ascended to His Father; though incredulity is invited to do so (John xx. 27). The nature of Matthew's gospel permits it (Matt. xxviii. 9). It is the King! But *our* knowledge of Him, by the Holy Ghost, is of One ascended to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God. For such, the touch *on earth* is not in harmony.

THE BESTOWED NAME OF SON. 31

Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given
Me, v. 11.

Consecration is the key-note here struck. "Holy Father," is a fitting opening to it. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. i. 16, from Lev. xi. 44). Holiness thus brings in with it consecration, which is the putting of anything on a new footing to that which it had before. No creature could, of itself, maintain such a position. It must be "kept" by superior power. There is only one means by which this staying power can be effected, even that by which Jesus, as Man, perfected *His* spotless course. It is the relation of "Father and Son." God hath spoken by a Son (Heb. i. 2). God never called an angel "Son" (Heb. i. 5). But of Jesus He did say, "I will be His Father, and He shall be My Son" (2 Sam. vii. 14; Heb. i. 5). It will be seen on reference to the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that He, who is the effulgence of God's glory, inherits a name far more excellent than that of any angel. It is the name of "Son"; and this name of "Son", is shown under four aspects. First—Thou art My Son, I (emphatic) have begotten Thee. Second—"Father and Son" relationship, as shown above. Third—First born Son, object of angelic worship. Fourth—The Royal Son, God anointed by God. The first, He must needs be. The second, is the name of "bestowal"; hence He asks in our text that it may be the method employed to keep His own; that *they* may be kept in the bestowed name of "Father and Son." The third, has to do, not with us, but with our fellow-servants the angels. The fourth, is between Him and God, as the One appointed to the throne. In John i. we had authority given to *become* children. Here, we see what it carries with it.

that they may be one as We (emphatic).

v. 11.

This request supports the previous one, inasmuch as it is the "effect" answering to the "cause." A bestowed relationship of "Father and Son," must needs keep in oneness every member of it; for that is the exact cause of its bestowal. A creature can be endowed with privilege up to any extent the Almighty Giver chooses to go to; but oneness, unless planned by Omnipotence, in consistence with Itself, would give to finite creatures the sense of infringement on Divine prerogative. Only God could have planned such a thing; and His wisdom is infinite in doing so. He has done it by bestowing a relationship of "Father and Son" upon One who is His Fellow, and at the same time, the Son of man. So that, while man can be brought into this relationship by virtue of the Son of man, yet is there no infringement; because the Son of God maintains the dignity of the Godhead, while bringing the creature into this place of bestowal of "Father and Son." We remember how indignant the Jews were, that Jesus had broken the Sabbath (acted as God, really); but said also that God was His Father. Making Himself equal with God, *they* said; but really using the name indicated to David, which was His path at that moment. Therefore, that beautiful oneness—ever seen with Him; as, "My Father worketh, and I work." That inseparability which is involved by the relationship seen all through His ministry, but specially told out by John, is what He desires for all His own; and it is the reason that John, in his epistle, presses, above everything, that, if you dislocate this established relationship, by depreciating the Son, the Father is affected likewise.

When I was with them I (emphatic) kept them in Thy name ;
v. 12.

That is, the blessed One knew the relationship which they were ignorant of, and all its resources were drawn upon; not only for His own wonderful path upon earth, but He drew upon it for them also. They were, so to speak, privileged persons, who, while in His company—which as His disciples they necessarily were—had all the resources of heaven at their backs, through Him. He spent the entire night in prayer with His Father before selecting them, and this selection was made with this joint deliberative counsel; for while the Father had given, the Son had chosen—diversity of action, as one has said, but unity of purpose always seen between the Father and the Son. And so, in every step of His career, *they* share the benefit of His communion with His Father; although personally, they know nothing about it themselves. Serene in the most exciting moments, He knows exactly what is fitting for the whole position—not because He is God, but as a Man, working upon a “Son and Father” relationship, and using that relationship to keep, and stay, and steady, and correct, their timid, hesitating, blundering, though loving hearts. Hear Him, when one, in the most reckless and purposeless way, drew a sword and cut off a man’s ear! “Return thy sword to its place. Thinkest thou that I cannot now call upon My Father, and He will furnish Me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?” Poor, loving, hasty Peter. He was sheltered yet, under his Lord’s Father’s name,—and even the man got his ear healed under it. His power laid down; but, “Suffer thus far,” resumes it momentarily.

those Thou hast given Me I have guarded,

v. 12.

. John's usual word is "keep." "I kept them in Thy name." Three times he has used it already in our chapter, but now he is employing a different word altogether. When a strong man armed *guardeth* his palace. Paul was allowed to remain by himself with the soldier that *guarded* him. So that here we have not only what He kept them *in*, but what He kept them *from*. He shielded them from the devil. Nothing would have kept them, but for His sanctifying presence who could say to the adversary, when he tried to get a word in through the disciples,—and generally through Peter,—Get thee behind Me, Satan. Again: Satan hath demanded to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but *I* have besought for thee that thy faith fail not. The wolf was always lurking about, to scatter and worry the sheep; but no power had he, while the Good Shepherd was there. They had been given into His hand, and none could pluck them out of it. And we see too, the importance of these beloved sheep being His personal property,—given to Him,—and yet not parted with by the Father; for "all that is Mine is Thine, and Thine is Mine." So, though given by the Father to the Son, and thus the Son's property; they were yet the Father's also. Therefore He could add, My Father who gave them Me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are One. One in thought, One in purpose, One in many other points which could be enumerated; but of course not One in Person; else it could not be said, "I come to Thee," "I came out from God," etc.

and not one of them has perished, but the son of perdition, *v.* 12.

It may well strike us with the deepest awe to think that a being could exist in the presence of ineffable goodness,—to go in and out among that loving and loved band,—and yet be insensible, impervious, impenetrable to the benign influences. But even further mystery meets us. John vi. 70 says, not, One of you *has* a devil, but, “One of you *is* a devil.” Had we not been carefully warned that this inclusion among the twelve was according to the divine counsel, and foretold (Ps. xli. 9), we should have been not only amazed, but our foolish hearts might have got speculating whether there were any mistake in selecting him. But this selection was after a whole night of prayer (Luke vi. 12, 13). Besides, the Father had *given* them to Him,—and God never makes mistakes,—could not. While it is right to shrink from unhallowed inquiry as to what God does, we may at least say that what the Lord did, was never done in a corner. “In secret have I said nothing” (John xviii. 20), and not only did “the world,” “the synagogue,” “the temple,” “the Jews’ assemblies” (John xviii. 20) hear the words He uttered; but the faithful eleven, ever about Him, and—Satan’s delegate, The Iscariote, also. Oh, the drag upon His spirit! “How am I straitened!” “Troubled in spirit!” with Satan’s spy always there! But, oh, the rebound, when the traitor had gone out to sell the Lord of glory for £3 10s. 8d.! The brief interval employed to unfold the glories of the fulness of the ages, in those words, precious beyond rubies and the finest gold; found between John xiii. 31 and John xvii. 26!—for the last word of it saw Him cross the brook and enter the garden to undergo the conflict with the traitor’s master.

that the scripture might be fulfilled.

v. 12.

An architect draws his plans. The mason fashions the stone to scale. The artist elaborates the detail and finish. Thus it is with man. But thus also it is with God. The Holy Scriptures are His plan. His providence fashions all things to the scale of His plan. His Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ; and thus gives beauty or completeness to His designs, As well ignore the alphabet in writing a book, as disavow the Scriptures. As well say letters will not form words, as say they are Holy writings not verbally inspired. The Book that cannot be proved? Glory in it, ye royal sons of God! Here is a Book that challenges every soul of man, and brooks no challenge from any. Prove its truth? The hoary mountain takes no notice of the tiny insect; let it walk up, or down, or round about; the mountain makes no sign! Dig up all the pottery that ever was buried. Does it prove the Bible? Nay, rather, the Bible foretold the sin, that caused the ruin, under which the pottery lay hidden so long! God has spoken by His Word, and God has spoken by the Word-become-flesh; and the two,—if two they can be called, except to meet man's enfeebled intellect;—speak the same thing, viz., that what God says He will do, *shall* come to pass. Faith lays hold of it, and thanks God for Christ and glory. Religion, superstition, and self-will, deny the existence of the Devil, and of Hell, and of the perpetuity of torment. Is the Scripture affected by it? Will its impugnors be called upon to give their own answer without scripture aid, where aid is *never* known? Solemn thought, that those who speak so flippantly of the Word, will be judged by it!

And now I come to Thee.

v. 13.

Here we have what men call a new departure—a new phase—another attitude of the wonderful display. Nothing to do with the mere *historical* fact that His ministry was over, for in truth it was not. The greatest part had yet to come, if comparison be made where all is equally great. That the era He is now entering on, is of a different character to that which He is passing from; is disclosed at the outset of this display of counsel. It is the third member of His thesis. “Jesus, (1) knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands and (2) that He came out from God, and (3) goes to God” (John xiii. 3). That is, that He who came with His face *towards* the world for blessing, now leaves the world *behind* for judgment. As to His own, it was different entirely. Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them to the “end.” But even this, barely expresses what is intended. It means “the *full completion* of that which He had come to accomplish.” Now for this, the next step was in another sphere. He came *from* God to accomplish redemption by atonement. He went *to* God in order that the Holy Ghost might come forth, and continue the vast work, in its new phase. But even that, is not “the end” in the sense of *finality*; although it is the end of the dealings with man, in grace, in this arena of suffering. How touchingly the loving One says, “None of you asketh Me, Whither goest *Thou*? But because *I* have said these things unto *you*, sorrow hath filled your hearts. But *I* say the truth to you. It is profitable for you that *I* go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to *you*.”

And these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in them. v. 13.

The Lord speaks but twice of His joy. On each occasion it is to desire that His beloved ones might realize it. What was this joy? So great, that on account of it,—“in view of the joy lying before Him, He endured the cross, having despised the shame”! We may get divine instruction from Matt. xiii. The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hid in the field [not among the busy haunts of men], which a man having found, has hid up again; and for the joy of it [*i.e.*, the discovery], goes and sells all whatsoever he has [notice how complete the surrender], and buys that field. Now we must go to another scripture to hear another testimony. John Baptist declares, that He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom. He [John Baptist], as the friend of the Bridegroom, rejoiced in his heart because of the Bridegroom’s voice. “This my joy, then,” he adds, “is realized.” He must *increase*. We have now sufficient instruction to illumine us respecting our text. His going to God, was the stepping-stone to possession; which was to go on increasing, and increasing, till there was nothing left to possess. But nearest and dearest to His heart ever abides His own, His people, His church; for all His possessions are to be enjoyed in company with her. Thus, she is the pearl that transcended all pearls that had met His gaze previously. Say, What is intense love without reciprocity? Would it not be anguish? That cannot be. *My* joy, fulfilled [or realized on their part] in *them*, becomes, in them, the spring of all divine action during His absence. Peter puts it thus: On Whom [though] not now looking but believing, ye exult with joy unspeakable. . . . (1 Pet. i. 8.)

I (emphatic) have given them Thy word,

v. 14.

The difference between *logos* and *rhēma* we have seen. Here it is *logos*; the word of God in testimony—the whole plan, not a part or a paragraph of it. The Lord, like a man going to a far country, is putting His servants into possession to act for Him, in His name, and by His authority, during His absence. While *He* was in the world, that Word had been His *vade-mecum*—now it is to be their own. How little do we compass the thought that we live in a world of pitchy darkness,—a world without one solitary speck of light, except what shines directly or indirectly from the word of God! And that which does so shine, is not like the beneficent arrangements of the atmosphere,—each particle of which reflects and transmits the governing orb. In the moral world, each reflector is a separate entity; few and far between, like the stars—as compared with the vast expanse of night; united action of light is only possible by the uniting power of the Holy Ghost. And what is this light, which shines in every saint with more or less brilliancy, during the livelong night, *until*, and for a brief space, *with*, and *while*, the Morning Star presents His majestic rays at dawn? Let the word declare it. “Irreproachable children of God, in the midst of a spotted [Septuagint] and perverse generation; among whom ye [children] appear [as stars do] as luminaries [word only used here and of the heavenly city, Rev. xxi. 11] holding forth [*lit.* clutching tightly] the WORD [*logos*] OF LIFE.” Why does the apostle pile all these intensely forcible expressions one on the other? “That in Christ’s day, you may be my boast” (Phil. ii. 16).

and the world has hated them,

v. 14.

And for precisely the same reason that the world hated its lawful Owner. "Me it hates, because I (emphatic) bear witness concerning it that its works are evil" (John vii. 7). By the Fall, the world,—man's kingdom,—and the devil, man's elected sovereign;—are not merely passively *against*, but actively *hate*, the children of its true and sovereign Lord. It is the innate sense of usurpation that gives this emotion of hatred; just as the sense of having a weak cause gives rise to unrighteous anger. The hatred of thought, expanding to cruelty, and developing in murder, is the correlative to consciousness of false position. It is, so to speak, the effort to make up by *might*, what is lacking in *right*. To meet hatred,—one of two alternative: Either yield to it, or suffer and die under it,—which exhausts its power;—for after it has killed the body, there is no more that it *can* do (Luke xii. 4). Now the Lord met hatred (without a cause, too), by suffering under it. The church, also, has suffered, up to a point. Until Constantine, when the devil changed his tactics, the church suffered nobly; and we owe them, and the Lord who sustained them, our very deepest gratitude. They were far more worthy than we, who imitate and defer to the world every hour of the day. If any one doubts this, let him study his Bible in a public conveyance; or give thanks for his food at a public resort. He that has by grace overcome this shame, will remember many a scowl that has met his gaze. To court singularity, of course, would be pride. To be natural, is to be modest. To be Christ-occupied, is simplicity.

because they are not of the world,

v. 14.

This is what "the world" has never been able to comprehend. The subservient demeanour observed before the world, and taken note of by the world, is often designated hypocrisy, when really it is not such. But what has the world to judge by? The feeblest believer can always make his appeal to the Word for justification or direction on every occasion. The world has no such court of appeal. "Common sense," "What everybody says," and the application of reasoning powers are its only methods of arriving at a conclusion as to conduct in God's children. Sometimes, alas! its judgment is right, owing to the Christian's laxity or carelessness; but in the main the reproduction of Christ in the believer is as inexplicable as was Christ Himself. Motive is the stumbling-block. They cannot see an adequate motive for that of which self is not the centre. Now, self is the worldling's centre. If not presented in its naked deformity of "I myself," it takes means to reach that centre by getting benefit from its acts to others. A good done, is expected to be returned in some form, or the recipient is designated "mean." Not so with the knowledge of God through Christ,—not that there is any other knowledge of God,—but if God be known as He has revealed Himself in His Son, then Christ becomes the centre of motive, and God through Christ. We keep His commandments, and practise those things that are pleasing in His sight (1 John iii. 20), that present or absent we may be acceptable to Him (2 Cor. v. 9), and this was the measure of His service to His Father: "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him" (John viii. 29).

as I (emphatic) am not of the world.

v. 14.

Peter, exhorting the children of obedience, tells them that as He who called them is holy, they too are to be holy in their lives, calling to their remembrance the word (Lev. xi. 44): "Be ye holy, for I am holy";—the children are to be like the Father. We could not say, *As* I am holy, because it would imply the *measure* of holiness in which to approximate to Him who has called us. It would be entirely out of place for us to say what is only true of Him who dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim. vi. 16). But here it would be out of place to say, "FOR" I am not of the world. Here it is the *character* of the position into which He has brought His own. They are a reproduction of His position outside a world which has placed Him outside it, and with which neither He nor they will ever again be identified. Once they were, for they had been given to Him by the Father *out of* that world in question. Whatever His place therefore, is theirs also; no difference, save that He as Head can never cease to be Head, neither could the Head share His position with that of which He is Head, for it is His prerogative (and we worship as we name it), to have pre-eminence in all things. As to the fact, however, of identity of position, so much is this the case that "Christ" the anointed One, becomes the name given to the anointed ones (the Head having His rightful place of supremacy as ever) when the completeness of the Church which is His body is in view (1 Cor. xii. 12): For *even as* the body is one and hath many members, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, SO ALSO [IS] THE CHRIST.