

CHRIST OUR LIFE,
OUR PATTERN, OUR OBJECT,
OUR STRENGTH.

A CHAIN OF BLESSINGS.

OUR HEAVENLY PORTION.

J. M. HOOKE.

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ONE PENCE.

CHRIST OUR LIFE, OUR PATTERN, OUR OBJECT, OUR STRENGTH.

PHIL. I. 20, 21; II. 5-8; III. 12-14; IV. 11-13.

WE are often in the habit of thinking that Paul stood alone—that no other could say what he said, “For to me to live is Christ.” We think, Ah! yes, it was the apostle Paul who said that; none but he could possibly make such a statement with truth. Why not? The words were uttered by a man, and a man of like passions as we are.

If any were to ask me, “Could you say that?” my reply would be, “I object to the way in which the question is put.” If you were to ask me whether I should be satisfied with being able to say anything short of that, I should at once say, “No, I long to be able to say that truthfully, and nothing short of that.” But there is something far better than being able to *say* it, and that is to **LIVE IT**.

We are living in a day of sham and form. Oh to be characterised by their opposites—**REALITY AND POWER!**

Do you think it was necessary for Paul to say, “for to me to live is Christ,” for the people about

to learn the fact? No, indeed, they could all see that it was true in his life.

Why was not Paul taken "to be with Christ, which is far better"? Because Christ was the gainer by his remaining on earth. And why are you and I, poor, weak, stumbling things, left here a day longer? Is it to make us fit for heaven? No, blessed be God, even our Father, who *hath made us fit* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. (See Col. i. 12-14.) We are as fit to be in heaven as the Lord Jesus is fit to be there—as fit as the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ could possibly make us: "AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD." (1 John iv. 17.) Is He free from our sins which He had upon Him on the tree? So are we in Him. Is He free from death and judgment? So are we in Him. Is He accepted by God? So are we in Him. Is He near and dear to God? We are equally so in Him. Then why are we left down here in this defiled and defiling world? Because the blessed Lord can get more gain by our being left here than by taking us to heaven. If we went to be with Him, we should be the gainers; He leaves us here that He may be the gainer.

I have met with those who have told me that they had such love to the Person of Christ, and such longings to be with Him, that they could not live down here. But I discovered, in conversation with them, that it was the rest and joy that they would enter upon, their gain, and not

His; in short, that it was selfishness—spiritual selfishness, if you please—that made them desire to depart, and be with Christ.

He said, “ I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil ” (John xvii. 15); and if we had Christ’s glory, Christ’s gain, and His church’s blessing at heart, we should pray and desire to be left down here, remembering that if we live, He gains; if we die, we gain.

If we have the earnest desire in our hearts to be satisfied with nothing less than being able to say, “ for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain,” God will produce it in us. Have we this intense longing?—that is the question—the longing that Christ only shall be the gainer by our being left down here; if we have, God will fulfil the longing desire of our hearts.

Now let us turn to chapter ii., and look at Christ as our pattern: “ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Three things are said of the blessed Lord. (1.) He made Himself of no reputation. (2.) He humbled Himself. (3.) He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Do we make ourselves of no reputation? Alas, how tenacious most of us are of our reputation! We talk and write about death and resurrection; we profess to be dead and risen with Christ, but let any one tread on our reputation, and how soon we prove how very little we are living in

the power of these blessed truths. If we really believed that our good and bad characters were gone at the cross of Christ; if we had really been to our own funerals, we should never feel what are called "insults," because they simply touch ourselves; if we were really living in the power of death and resurrection, we should only feel what touches Christ's reputation, and never what touches our own.

These are days of high talk and low walk; we say and write the most beautiful things, but our walk shews that, while our lips and pens are full of these beautiful things, they have little or no place in, and power over, our hearts and lives. Oh FOR REALITY! for all was reality with Christ.

"He humbled himself," the yoke never galled His neck, He never had to be put down, He was always going down, until He reached the dust of death. There never was any resistance in Him to the Father's will. When He came into the world, He said, "I delight to do thy will." As He passed through this world, He could say, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me;" and when He was passing out of the world, He said, "Thy will be done." His whole course down here was coloured by His Father's will.

I tremble for persons when I hear them asking God to humble them. It is our privilege to look to God so to fill us with the mind that was in Christ, that, by His grace, we should humble ourselves. I have known persons who have been

praying for years that God would make them humble, and yet every year they have grown in pride; they are constantly putting on bits of worldliness, instead of giving them up. How is this? Simply because they make humility their object instead of "Christ once humbled here."

THERE IS NO GETTING ON WITHOUT GIVING UP. But Christ was obedient unto death, and He is our pattern in this, for we are set apart to the obedience of Christ, to obey as He obeyed, and upon the same principle, and He is surely saying to us, "Learn of me," to make yourselves of no reputation; to humble yourselves, and to be obedient unto death. Oh for grace to get near to Him, and learn of Him!

In chapter iii. we have Christ as our object: "This one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus."

The heart must have an object, we could not live without it. There are only two objects in this world—Christ and self; and all our thoughts, words, ways, and walk, emanate from, centre in, and revolve around, one or the other of these two objects. Which is it?

There is a proneness to live on our laurels, to rest on our oars, instead of "to advance be all my care." There are two striking words in this chapter—"behind" and "before." Are we looking back, or looking ahead? In Colossians iii.

are two more significant words—"below" and "above." Are we looking down or looking up?

If we have not Christ for our object, then it is self; we rise early, sit up late, to advance self, our families, our belongings; everything is looked at in connection with self. If Christ were our only object in this world, what a change it would make in the way we dress ourselves, furnish our houses, conduct our businesses—in short, it would affect everything we eat, drink, say, and do.

The great tendency among us is to improve our positions in this world; what is this but to further self? Surely it is looking "behind" and "below," and not "before" and "above."

What a rare thing it is to find a satisfied heart in this world! Satisfied means much more than being content. Many a one says, "I am like to be content, because I cannot alter or improve my circumstances." But Paul could say, "for as to me, I have learnt in those circumstances in which I am, to be satisfied in myself." The word translated "content," in chapter iv., comes from two Greek words, which means a country wanting no help of others, that supplies itself, that wants no imports, because it has sufficient. What is a satisfied heart? It is one that has found a perfectly and everlastingly satisfying object, and never looks about for a second one. This is what it will be in glory, we shall never look about for a second object there, we shall be supremely and eternally satisfied with Christ, and it would

be so now, if He were our absorbing object. Oh! to make Himself and His concerns our life-object, and allow Him to make us and our concerns His affairs; and then what rest and joy of heart we should find in life and service. There would be no panting for change of circumstances, for we should know and believe that those we are in are the best possible, that our Father is always doing the best thing for us—the thing that is most for His own glory, and our present and future, our deepest and truest, blessing; and the result would be, unbounded confidence in unbounded love.

In chapter iv. we have Christ our strength: “Without me ye can do nothing.” It is well to learn this lesson. Have we learnt it? Paul had, and hence could say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.” This is the secret of how Paul, a poor, weak, failing creature like ourselves, could say, “for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” How is it possible for Christ to be the gainer but by our being left down here, where the Holy Ghost is, and where the church, the body of Christ, is?

We become correspondingly like what we are occupied with. If we are occupied with Christ, He will strengthen us to be patient in this trying scene, and satisfied in this unsatisfied and unsatisfying world; we shall be “strengthened with all might, according to his power in the glory, unto all patience and longsuffering, with joyfulness.”

And now we have Christ for our life. Do we want a better life than that? We have Christ for our pattern. Do we want a better pattern? We have Christ for our object. Do we want a better object? We have Christ for our strength. Do we want more than His strength? Are we satisfied with Christ? May He be the gainer whilst we are left here, until we shall gain by being caught up to be with and like Himself for ever, for His worthy name's sake. Amen.



A CHAIN OF BLESSINGS.

DEUTERONOMY XXXIII.

MOST of us know that it is necessary to get hold of the scope of a book to be able to understand that book. And it is thus with these books of Moses.

Genesis is what we might call our birth book, and is the lesson book for the nursery. Of all the books of the word of God, it is the book you find children revelling in. And yet there are deep truths hidden in Genesis: you find in it the germs of everything; it has been truly called the seed-plot of the Bible.

Exodus is our redemption book. We learn in Exodus how we can be sheltered under the blood; how God brings us out of the land of our tyrannical enemy into the land flowing with milk and honey, His own land, upon which His eyes are always resting, "from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." The Red Sea is the door out of Egypt, while Jordan is the door into Canaan; in which we see, first, Christ's death for us, and then our death and resurrection with Christ.

In Leviticus we are a worshipping people. We get in Leviticus instructions as to worship, all

the different sacrifices giving us types of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost, unfolding to us typically Christ's work for us, furnishes us with subjects that raise worship in our hearts. In Leviticus God is filling us with His thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ as He met all the claims of His glory, and all our need as well.

In Numbers we are brought into the wilderness. It is true that we are brought to God, and that we are a worshipping people in His presence, but we are also going through the wilderness. And it is grace only that can take us through that. Moses could not take the people through. Moses is a picture of the law. The law could not do it; it was only Aaron's rod that could—that rod that speaks of grace. *Priesthood* had to come in for a failing people, if they were ever to be brought safely through.

Lastly, in Deuteronomy, we are seen in figure in the land. We are put there, *God for us*, and *we for God*. It is not only that God is for *us*, as we find in Romans viii. : "If God be for us, who can be against us?" But if we fail to be for God, will God then give us up? No; God will be *God*, and His love for His people never fails. He never found in us a motive to love us; the motive was in Himself; and that abides. Israel failed, and God could not bless them because of their failure. Moses, the best man of them all, could not go into the land, though he only failed *once*; he "spake unadvisedly with his lips,"

it says. But that is just what the law is: "he that offends in one point is guilty of all." So Moses could not take the people over the Jordan into the land; Joshua must come in for that; Joshua, who is the type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now Deuteronomy xxxiii. contains the blessings with which Moses blessed the people before his death, blessings that were to have their fulfilment in the land of promise, so that he must die before they could get them. Joshua must take them in, Joshua, the picture of Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost leading on His people, leading the bride of the Lamb home.

I have no idea of attempting to unfold the different blessings of the tribes; what I wish particularly to look at is the magnificent stream of blessings that are the portion of God's people *now*, and which are laid out before us here. Israel will get them all by-and-by literally, but we have them now in a much higher way than they could have had them in the land, or will have them in the millennium. You get the Omega of them in the last verse: "Happy art thou, O Israel!"

We find then a string of eight precious S's, if I may say so, in this chapter, which are the portion of God's people in this present time. The first is Salvation, in verse 29: "O people *saved by the Lord.*" And if Jehovah could say this then to Israel, how much more can the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our God and Father in Him, look down on His people now and say, "Happy art thou, O people saved by the Lord!" He starts with this, that we are saved by *Himself*. We had no hand in our salvation. We can come in as delivered Israel did in Exodus xv. and say: "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously." Or, as we often sing:

"We triumph in Thy triumphs, Lord!"

God can look down on us and say, *saved*; actually saved; not merely quickened, but saved, and sealed by the Holy Ghost. Not *saved* by the Holy Ghost: "By *grace* are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." But being sealed by the Holy Ghost, we are a people who have not a doubt about it; we *know* that we are saved. Saved, too, independently of our prayers, independently of our tears; God works independently of ourselves altogether. "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people *saved* by the Lord?" The first S is *salvation*.

The second is in verse 12. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him." Now we have *safety*. We are not merely a saved people, but we are also a safe people. We are in safe keeping. And it is as *the beloved of the Lord*. Oh, what a thought that is! Do you enjoy sitting down in His presence and saying, I am beloved of God? We are all Benjamins in

that sense. He does not love one of us more than another. And He can never love us less and never love us more than He does at this moment. Do we all believe that? He will never love us more in eternity than He does at this present time.

"O Lamb of God, still keep us
Close to Thy piercèd side."

Because it is only "by *Him*" we can dwell in safety.

"And the Lord," Jehovah Himself, "shall cover him all the day long." Think of that! Jehovah covering him all the day long. He was Jehovah to Israel; He is Father to us. And do you think He will be to His children less than He was to Israel? Never! Indeed He takes both names in relation to us in 2 Corinthians vi. "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty;" where the word "Lord" answers to "Jehovah" of the Old Testament.

"And the Lord shall cover him all the day long." Look at that! Look at the safety of it! Look at the shelter that it is! He covers us with His own wing. Do you know what it is to be right under the soft downy part of that strong sheltering wing of everlasting love? "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." That is where His saints are all the day long.

“And he shall dwell between his shoulders.” The shoulders are the place of strength. We are weakness itself, and there is where He puts us. The place of safety we have got by being under His wings; the place of strength, by being between His shoulders.

But there is a very different thing now to those that have gone before, as we pass on to verse 23: “O Naphtali, satisfied with favour!” It is *satisfaction*. May I ask you, beloved, and I would ask my own heart, too, are we satisfied? That is what God can say of Naphtali. “*Satisfied with favour.*” It is one thing to know I am saved by the Lord and safe with the Lord, but it is quite another thing to be able to say, I am satisfied. Are you satisfied? I ask my young brothers and sisters, are you? I fear many are not. You would not find souls wanting a novel to amuse them if they were satisfied. You find people running here, there, everywhere, for something to fill them; whereas, if the Lord were the satisfying portion of their souls, they would be like a ship at anchor in the harbour, at rest, moored to Christ, satisfied with Christ. Perhaps nothing more distresses those who go about much amongst the saints than the discovery of how few souls are satisfied.

A satisfied heart is so full that it can afford to turn aside from itself to minister joy to the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that is a Naphtali condition of soul: “satisfied with

favour." We are in the favour of God, which is "better than life." We are going to be satisfied when we get home to glory, all allow; but it is the same Jesus that we have now, who will satisfy us then; that same Jesus who revealed Himself to us at our conversion; and if He is going to satisfy our hearts in the glory, surely we can let Him satisfy them here!

Do you know what it is to leave first love? It is written of the church of Ephesus: "Thou hast left thy first love." I answer it is having a second love; it is leaving Christ, and hankering after the leeks, and garlic, and cucumbers of Egypt. What a portion God has given us! His own goodly portion! His own best portion. He could not give us more. "The bread of *God*" is "the bread of *life*" for us. (John vi. 33, 35.)

Is not God satisfied with Christ? Oh, God deliver us from a second object! We shall never have one in heaven; why seek one here?

There are three beautiful verses about satisfaction.

The first is Philippians iv. 11: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content." "Content" there is really "satisfied"—a much stronger word. It is formed from two words that signify an island producing in itself everything that it needs. Christ so satisfies me that I am independent of everything here to give me satisfaction. I am asked: "Why do not you go

here, there, everywhere? Why do you not read this, that, and the other?" I answer: Because I do not want them; I have that which satisfies me in Christ. Paul had *learned* this lesson; he was not at school any longer. He says: "I *have* learned." He had passed through his examination and come out with honours; he could say: "I have learned to be satisfied in myself."

The second scripture is 1 Timothy vi. 8: "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." "Sustenance and covering" the words really are; and "*satisfied*," not "content." You often hear people say: "We are like to be content, for we cannot alter things." It is not that here! I *would* not change them if I *could*. My Father is doing the very best thing He can for me, and I am satisfied with His dealings.

The third verse is Hebrews xiii. 5: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Here again the word "content" is "*satisfied*."

Now, beloved, can you echo this and say you are satisfied? Are you a Naphtali? God looks down upon you and says: "O Naphtali, *satisfied* with favour, and *full* with the blessing of the Lord!"

And what then? Is there no response from your heart? You never find a full heart sitting down and saying, I have nothing to do now; it

is all done for me! No! It is "Possess thou the west and the south." As we sing:

"To advance be all my care."

Go on! Advance! But there is no going on without giving up; and the more we give up, the more we get on.

The next blessing is that of Joseph. It begins at verse 13: "And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren." Here we have *separation*.

If we had separation before this the soul would go back from it, because it was not previously satisfied. Those who seek to be in separation to Christ can never be happily in that place, except as they are attracted to it by the Person of Christ Himself. Otherwise they must be disappointed, for the church of God is but a wreck now. But, wreck though it is, thanks be to God, the Holy Ghost is down here, and He

will safely guide God's people home to glory; and with Him as our guide, we can maintain that the ground we are on is divine, though maintaining it in feebleness so far as we ourselves are concerned. If after taking the separate place you are disappointed, then it proves you did not see the wreck before. If you were not already satisfied, you had no right to take such a position at all. Only satisfied people can be happily separated people.

Only in connection with Joseph do we find the word "precious" in this chapter. We know who this precious One is, who is the antitype of Joseph. And we know where He blessed His disciples: as "He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven," and it is thence He still blesses us. He is the separated One. He says: "For their sakes I separate myself." And there, from the Father's right hand, He sends down all these blessings on His people. Look at them all here. What "precious things"! Given as they are here to Israel, they are earthly types of what are fulfilled to us in heavenly things.

Do we know what it is to be separated to Christ? In Hebrews xiii. 13 we read, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." If all goes to the bottom I shall be just where I was before: *separated to Christ*. It is a wonderful thing to go forth without the camp to Christ. Beloved, there is God's centre; He is the One to whom God separates us. And

how blessed a place to be found in! that of His gathered ones, gathered to the name of Christ. I often hear it quoted: "Where two or three are *met* together in my name." But the word is "*gathered*," not "*met*." If it were "*met*," it would leave liberty to each of us to meet as we thought best in our own eyes. It is "*gathered*;" which implies that there is a gathering power; and that power is the Holy Ghost. Christ Himself is the centre to which God, by the Holy Ghost, gathers.

Neither is it a *promise*, as I often hear it said in prayer, that the Lord will be with His two or three "according to His promise." He has not promised that He will be there. It is a fact stated that He *is* in the midst. If His saints fulfil the first part of the verse, He fulfils the last. The Spirit of God is down here purposely to gather us to Christ, the Holy One and the True, who then delights to take His place in the midst of His gathered people.

True, it is a place of reproach, but His presence makes up for it all. If going forth "unto him without the camp," necessitates "bearing his reproach," we read in Peter: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." This is the reward God gives for it.

Well, this is the place He has set His people in—a place of separation.

But there is a fifth thing in verse 3: "Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words." That is exquisitely lovely, tender, and touching to the heart. He *loved* them! And what were they? *Reb-ellious!* He loved them in spite of all that they were, because He found the motive in Himself.

And "all his saints are in thy hand." What a place of security! In John the Lord says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." So here. A poor lonely saint up in an attic, in a garret, in an asylum, in an hospital, that poor, weak, failing, suffering saint is in His hand. What have we to fear if in His hand?

And more than that: "They *sat* down at thy feet." At *His feet*, notice; not at the foot of the cross, as is often said. What a place! Do we know what it is to rise up by faith to where He is now in the Father's glory, and sit at His feet?

And more: "They shall receive of thy words." This is the place to learn His mind. This is the blessed place of security, of restfulness of heart; just sitting down at His feet.

"More careful, than to serve Him much
To please Him perfectly."

It is just what Mary did. She knew this blessed place. Martha did not know that sitting comes before service. When the Lord saw Mary at His feet, He would not allow any one to disturb her. We would sometimes disturb saints who are sitting at His feet. This is the place of strength. May I ask, Do you take this place? I invite myself to sit there and gather strength to go and serve Him the little while till He return.

The next I would notice is in verse 25: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." This tells us that the soul who sits at His feet is made superior to circumstances. Do we know this blessed superiority? By this I do not mean that we are to be stoics; but I do find that often those who are moved the most easily are really the people who feel things the least. How am I to get this blessed superiority to circumstances? It is by sitting at His feet. Paul was most blessedly in the power of this. He said: "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." He had learnt what those words mean: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

"And as thy days, so shall thy strength be." God does not give strength to-day for to-morrow's trials. He gives special strength for special trial at the moment of need. This, is

why, after a victory, we are in such danger of breaking down; more so than at any other time; we think we have achieved something, and are elated, and living on our laurels. But it is only as I keep in the place of dependence, only as I cleave to the Lord, and am in the present enjoyment of my portion in Him, that I am made superior to the trials of the way. It is then I am "strengthened with all might unto all patience." (Col. i. 11.)

There is a seventh thing in the last verse of the chapter: "The Lord, the shield of thy help." The Lord is our shield round about us. Have we the sense of this in our souls? "The Lord is a sun and shield," says the Psalmist. When Moses besought the Lord to go up with His people, He answered: "My presence shall go with thee." It is so for us now. I can say: His presence goes with me, and nothing can reach me unless that presence moves aside to let it, and then I can take it from Himself, no matter what it is that comes. He moved to let it come. We have His presence on the vessel's deck in the storm or in the calm: we have Him with us in health or in sickness, in life or in death. What a thought it is! We may indeed "boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

And now there is one last S in verse 19: "They shall call the people unto the mountain: there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness:

for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand." Here we find sacrifice. What a crown to it all that is! "They shall offer sacrifices of righteousness." Truly we have not bullocks and calves as the Israelites had to offer; but we may bring the bullocks, and the calves, and the goats, and the turtle-doves of our lips. Only let us take care that they are the sacrifices of *righteousness*. This word studs the pages of God's word from one end of it to the other. It says: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." But it must be a "*righteous*" man. Also, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the *righteous*, and his ears are open unto their cry." And here it is "sacrifices of *righteousness*." We may say: "With such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Now, in closing, I would ask, **Are we all in the enjoyment of these eight S's?**

First: *Saved* by the Lord.

Second: *Safe* in the Lord.

Third: *Satisfied* with the Lord.

Fourth: *Separated* to the Lord.

Fifth: *Seated* at His feet, hearing His word.

Sixth: Himself as our *Strength*.

Seventh: Himself as our *Shield*.

Eighth: Offering to Him the *Sacrifices* of righteousness, the fruit of our lips.

The Lord grant that each of these precious blessings, which I feel are intensely practical, may lay hold of each one of us, and be brought out in power in our lives for His name's sake, Amen.

OUR HEAVENLY PORTION.

EPHESIANS I.

I WISH to say a little as to the way heavenly truth is presented in the scriptures of the New Testament, especially in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

There is a false idea current, that the knowledge of our present heavenly portion is not essential. Now, although heavenly truth is what is designated as "high truth," it is intensely scriptural, simple, and practical.

We often pray—and rightly so—to be preserved from high talk and low walk. In Ephesians we have high talk and high walk, in consequence of our high position, and if the high or heavenly truth is refused, we shall be earthly-minded, trying to make ourselves comfortable in a world that cast out Christ, and endeavouring to surround ourselves with the choicest gifts earth can afford; in short, we shall seek to be happy millennial saints.

The magnificent doxology in this chapter begins upon the highest note: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." This is true *now*, it is not

a future thing, nor true of only advanced saints, but of all in Christ who are sealed with the Holy Spirit. Why is there so little joy? Saints do not live up to their income, if they did, there would be more joy, and more worship.

Seven spiritual blessings are unfolded in this chapter: first, We are taken back into God's eternity, where He made choice of us in Christ ere ever the world's foundations were laid, that we should be holy, and without blame, before Him in love; secondly, God marked us out beforehand for adoption, through Jesus Christ, to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will; thirdly, God has taken us into favour in the Beloved. We are told that verse 6 does not mean what it says. I warn you against trusting to Greek. On the cross the accusation against Christ was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. I am not speaking against languages, but against trusting them. Trust to the Spirit's teaching. Are simple saints, all over the world, to lose the preciousness of this verse because they do not understand Greek? Do not allow yourselves to be robbed of the blessedness of being accepted, or taken into favour, in the Beloved. It is not necessary to know Hebrew and Greek to understand the word of God. Saints need more heart, and a subject mind. These things are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes; "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Fourthly,

We have redemption through Christ's blood. Fifthly, We have the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace. Sixthly, In Christ, also, we have obtained an inheritance; and seventhly, Having heard and believed the gospel of salvation, we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. What a rich cluster of blessings is ours now, as the fruit of God's grace and the redemption-work of Christ!

In John iii. 13, Jesus said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even *the Son of man which is in heaven.*" Here is the perfect pattern of a *heavenly Man on earth*, for He was upon earth when He uttered these wondrous words, and yet He could say, "The Son of man which *is in heaven*;" and we are here to represent him as heavenly men upon earth. Hence He says, "As thou hast sent me into the world, *even so* have I also sent them into the world."

Acts ix. 4. A voice from heaven says, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Where was the One who thus addressed Saul? In heaven. But Saul was not there. What, then, do these words mean? Whom was Saul persecuting? A despised people, who were, nevertheless, one with Christ in heaven, united to Him by the Holy Ghost. Is He in the heavenlies? So are we, for we are one with Him. The Head and feet are united, and the Head cannot say to the feet, "I have no need of you." If you hurt my feet, you

hurt ~~me~~. This is the first time the Holy Ghost reveals the truth of the one body.

1 Corinthians xv. 48. "And such as the heavenly [one], such also the heavenly [ones]." This is new creation. By the Holy Ghost we are one with the heavenly One, and are consequently heavenly ones now. We may not have very heavenly manners, but if we believed, and remembered always that we are heavenly people upon earth, it would produce heavenly ways.

In Ephesians there are five mentions of the heavenlies:—

(1.) God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. (Chap. i. 1-3.)

(2.) God has wrought in raising Christ from the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, as Head of the new creation. (Chap. 1-20.) Adam was the head of the old creation; he was not the head of a million creations; he was the head of the one old creation: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." All connected with the first Adam came in for death; so also all connected with Christ, the last Adam, come in for life, and eternal life too. "If any man be in Christ, new creation;" not only a new creation, but that he is brought into new creation, of which Christ, risen and glorified, is the Head.

(3.) "And hath raised us [Jews and Gentiles]

up together, and made us *sit* together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." (Chap. ii. 6.) Observe the words, made *sit together*, not standing, before the throne, forgiven and justified. On state occasions, when the Queen is in the throne-room, the Prince of Wales stands before the throne, and he dares not, at such a time, call her mother, he is there in the position of a subject to the sovereign. There is no relationship before the throne. But we are *seated* in the heavenlies in Christ, in present restful enjoyment of the place and portion that His redemption-work has won for us, and in Himself, the Person who has done it all. (Chap. ii. 6.)

(4.) We are a lesson-book, in which the inhabitants of the heavenlies are to learn in us the manifold wisdom of God. (Chap. iii. 10.)

And lastly, our conflict is in the heavenlies. (Chap. vi. 12.) This Epistle has given us the grapes *in* Eshcol, and now we find there are giants to withstand our enjoyment of the place we are in.

I cannot forbear turning you to three other scriptures bearing on this point. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." (Gal. i. 4.) Christ gave Himself on purpose that we might be freed from our sins and this evil age, and be a heavenly people: as another had said, "He will have a heavenly people, redeemed according to that love

which has given us a place on high with Himself, and a life in which the Holy Ghost works, to make us enjoy it, and cause us to walk in the liberty and in the holiness which He gives us in this new creation, of which Jesus Himself, risen and glorified, is the Head and the glory."

Again, in Philippians iii. 20, 21, we have our home and our hope put before us. "For our conversation [or citizenship, or commonwealth] is in heaven." We are born again from above, we are therefore citizens of heaven, and all our politics and living associations are there. Soon He will come for whom we wait, and then we shall be there, not in spirit, as now, but actually, in bodies of glory, like our glorified Saviour.

And now, lastly, in 1 John iv. 17: "Herein is love with us [margin] made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because, AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD." Is He free from our sins? So are we. Is He free from death? So are we. Is He free from judgment? So are we. Is He accepted by God? So are we—He is the measure of our acceptance. Is He heavenly? So are we in this world.

You may think of other kindred scriptures, but I content myself with these, and I ask, with this magnificent range of scripture which we have viewed, as presenting our present blessed portion in Christ in the heavenlies, will you suffer yourself to be deprived of the present enjoyment of it?

I would just ask you, in closing these remarks, to observe the seven mentions of walk in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and see how heavenly truth touches our walk, and all the relationships of life. (1.) "Ye *walked* according to the course of this world [or age]," &c. (Chap. ii. 2.) This is what characterised us in the past, when we were unsaved and earthly. (2.) "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained [or marked out], that we should *walk* in them." (Chap. ii. 10.) This is what is to distinguish us now that we are heavenly men. (3.) "I . . . beseech you that ye *walk* worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." (Chap. iv. 1.) The vocation is unfolded in the second chapter. (4.) "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth *walk not* as other Gentiles walk." (Chap. iv. 17.) Their walk is to be our warning, and Christ's walk our pattern. Our blessed privilege is, henceforth to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us, and rose again. (5.) "Be ye, therefore, imitators of God, as beloved children; and *walk in love*, as Christ also hath loved us." . . . (Chap. v. 1, 2.) Here the heavenly walk of the heavenly Man is presented to us for our imitation. (6.) "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: *walk as children of the light*." (Chap. v. 8.) The grace of God, and redemption-work of Christ, have brought us into the light, and we are there accord-

ing to the nature of God. "God is light," and "God is love." Light has opened the way into love, and love keeps us there; our walk now, is to be according to God's manifestation of Himself in Christ as light and love. (7.) "See, then, that ye *walk* circumspectly." (Chap. v. 15.) God describes the whole scope, or circle, of heavenly walk in these seven mentions of it.

Heavenly truth reaches down to the very dust of earth, and tells me how I am to walk upon it. It touches the tongues of the formerly untruthful, and says, "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another." It touches the hand of the one used to live by thieving, and says, "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." It teaches the wife to submit, the husband to love, and the children and servants to obey. Oh, how holy and practical is heavenly truth! God give us a state that shall better answer to our standing—a condition that shall be a more truthful echo of our position.

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