

# “The Master’s Yoke.”



“The word of the Lord was precious in those days.”

I Sam., iii., 1.

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We praise Thee, glorious Lord,  
Who died to set us free ;  
No earthly songs can joy afford  
Like heavenly melody.

Love, that on death’s dark vale,  
Its sweetest odours spread,  
Where sin o’er all seemed to prevail  
Redemption’s glory shed.

## Exodus XV.

Among many blessed truths contained in this lovely song of Redemption, (led by Moses, inspired by the Holy Spirit) are three references to the Glory of Jehovah. Verse 1, “He hath triumphed gloriously.” Verse 6, “Glorious in power.” Verse 11, “Glorious in holiness.”

The glorious triumphing of our Saviour God seems to relate to what God has wrought for the blessing of man. It comes in verse 1 as an individual thought, and is repeated in verse 21, when Miriam led the women in singing to the Lord, this a collective thought bringing in the whole of the assembly. There are several things connected with this triumph in redemption. First, the delivered soul is prompted to respond to the delivering grace of God and build Him an habitation, and this is followed by praise and exaltation. These things are written for our learning. What are we to learn from this?

Is it not that we who have been delivered from "so great a death" should see that we enter into the thought of Eph. ii. 22? This is the great truth of the glorious triumph of the Lord Jesus Who went through death's dark vale, not only that we should be delivered from our Pharaoh (Satan) and our Egypt (the world), but be brought out through Him that God may have a holy habitation, and His people praise Him in the beauty of holiness. It is applicable to this day of grace and the wilderness.

"Glorious in power." Here the prominent thought is the effect upon all who oppose God and His people, all who reject His Christ. How awful will be the end of this world, with its power against Christ, its learning or wisdom, its religion. We see these three typified at the Cross, where the Romans (power), the Greeks (wisdom), and Hebrews (religion) all subscribe to the death of God's beloved Son. But His will must be accomplished. All things must be subject to the Man at God's right hand—Christ. He must reign until all enemies are subdued. Of this His glorious power is suggestive. It connects with the Millennial reign of Christ particularly, when all the earth will be subject.

"Glorious in holiness." This great thought links us at once with the presence of God Himself. Isaiah had a glimpse of this in chapter 6. So had the three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration; and John in Patmos. Glorious indeed in His Holiness! We are brought to think of the eternal day when the full results of the Lord's triumph and power are seen in a condition of things wherein God can dwell with man without anything to disturb, when His full thought will have been reached and the Tabernacle of God will be with men, His dwelling-place, His habitation, and righteousness will dwell in the new heavens and the new earth (2 Pet. iii. 13). Then indeed will the glory enjoyed and reflected during the Millennium be characteristic of the universe, and we shall not only share the glory given to Christ and behold the glory which is His, but the glory of God will be fully upheld, and no one come short of it.

### The Church of God.

1 COR. x. 32:

MATT. xvi. 13-19.

In the scripture I have quoted in 1 Cor. x. 32, there are

three classes referred to.

There is the Jew, the Gentile and the Church of God. The Jews were a wonderfully privileged people. They were a people who were outwardly near to God and they were specially favoured in that they had the oracles of God committed to them. But at the same time they went about to establish their own righteousness and would not submit to the righteousness which was of God through faith. It was for this reason that no mercy was shown towards them Stephen could say of them, "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it." Acts vii 53. What about the Gentiles, amongst whom we have our part? These were a people who were away from God, a people who were without hope in the world, but a people to whom God has drawn nigh in showing mercy to them.

The third class, the Church of God, are a people who have been drawn out from both Jews and Gentiles, yet are distinct from both. That is the thought of a church or assembly, in scripture, it is a called-out people. It was so with Israel, they were a called-out people, but there was a great difference between the Jewish assembly of old and the church of God in our day. They were a people called out of Egypt to inherit the earthly land of Canaan. On the other hand, the Church of God which is called out from both Jews and Gentiles, is called to eternal glory. So that while the Jews had an earthly hope, the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ has a heavenly hope and forms part of the Church of God.

The two scriptures I have read to-night were suggested to my mind in connection with the Church of God. The first mention we have of the church of God in the scriptures is found in Matt. xvi, and it is instructive to note the place in which that revelation was made known. It was in Cæsarea Philippi—a place which had once been marked by a great civilisation, but which had now fallen into ruin and decay, and this was used in striking contrast by the Lord Jesus to that glorious Church which He was about to build, and which would never decay or pass away.

The Lord, by way of opening up the subject, says to His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" and they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias." Where there was no revelation known from God men had all kinds of thoughts as to the Person of

Christ, and every one of them were wrong. No man knoweth the Son but the Father, and we can only know anything of the Son as He is revealed to us by the Father. Having heard what the disciples had to say about the thoughts of men, the Lord Jesus turns personally to His disciples and says: "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter at once answers—zealous Peter, a man with a big heart, but so often rash, in word and deed, but one we can admire in spite of his failures, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the Lord in answer says to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

We are told by those who know Greek well that there are two words used here. The word Peter in the Greek is "Petros," which signifies a little rock or a little stone, but when the Lord says "upon this rock," the word used is "Petra," which signifies a rock. Surely this is not a little rock, but a great rock, and capable of sustaining the great building which is reared upon it. We have to turn to other scriptures in connection with the foundation to see that Christ Himself was the foundation to which He was referring, and that He referred to the confession of Peter when He says, "On this rock." The Lord was referring not to Peter, but to his confession as to His being the Christ, the Son of the Living God. On this rock, the Lord says, referring to the confession of Peter, "I will build my church."

He does not say "I have built it," neither does He say "I am building it," but He says "I will build it." I believe He was referring to the time when He Himself would have gone to the Cross, and the Holy Ghost come down from the glory. With the descent of the Holy Ghost there would be power manifested in the conversion of precious souls, who would be baptised into one body, and would compose the church of God. It was not revealed that there was a body or a church on earth until later. Paul himself was converted to this truth, and it was revealed to him as one of the great mysteries. In Eph. v, Paul says, "I speak concerning Christ and the church." It is no longer a mystery: it has all been revealed to us now, and we have His word telling us about the church. It was a mystery before Paul was used to make

it known, but there are pictures given to us in the Old Testament as to this wonderful truth.

There is one scripture to which we may briefly refer, and that is found in Gen. iii, 18-25. Here we have a wonderful picture concerning Christ and the Church. I know some would say it is more a picture of a bride or the body of Christ, but these things are inseparably linked together. Naturally there are differences, and one is often developed where the other is not, yet Ephesians links the two things together even in the first chapter, where it speaks of the church which is His body. So again in the 5th chapter, in connection with the first man being formed as being a figure of Christ and the church. There we are told that as believers we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. That is a scripture quoted in connection with Adam, and shows what God had in His mind when forming the first woman. When Eve was formed she was brought to Adam in all the beauty which God had bestowed upon her. No wonder Adam loved her as he looked upon her. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh"; she formed part of the body of Adam, and he received her as his wife. So it is with all believers in our day. When they are brought to know how the Lord has loved them, and how He has given Himself for them; to know that He has loved the church and given Himself for it, they are truly won for the Saviour. They are brought to Him, and they form part of that wonderful church of which Christ Himself is the builder.

And does the Lord cease to have a care for that church? Eph. v., shows that His love is past, present and future. He loved the Church and gave Himself for it. That was the love of yesterday, but Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Yesterday was the cross, to-day speaks of His present position on high. To-morrow is the glory with Christ.

When we get to the glory we ourselves will be there in the likeness of Christ, without a spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. There will be nothing to mar, neither will there be any sign of age, but we shall be there in the beauty and freshness of youth; in the glory and there in the likeness of Christ. What a wonderful place then is ours. In closing, it reminds me again of Eph. ii, in connection with His blood bringing us nigh, where also it speaks of the church as an habitation of

God through the Spirit. "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners." No longer Jews, no longer Gentiles, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. The apostles and prophets helped to form the foundation. Their preaching and teaching were only concerning Christ for He alone could be the true foundation upon which the soul could rest: He was the chief corner stone upon which the whole of the building rested.

### The Unity of the Spirit.

(Eph. iv., 3)

It is a humbling fact that the testimony of Christians as a body, their collective testimony, as it is sometimes called, is a shameful failure. The unity of the Spirit referred to by the Apostle is something which is affected by our negligence, wilfulness or sin, and we are therefore exhorted to use diligence to keep that unity in the uniting bond of peace. What does it mean?

The state of believers in the few days following the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost can help us to see what is meant by "the Unity of the Spirit." We read in Acts iv., 32, that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." Each one for himself—for herself—was responding to one and the same Spirit, and so necessarily found themselves of one heart and one soul.

Then in Chapter v. we find a man and his wife who sold a possession and kept back part of the price. Was the unity of the Spirit still being maintained? Certainly not. Alas for the way human failure brings a cloud on such a wonderful "unity." It will be noticed there was no open division in the assembly of God about Ananias and Sapphira's sin, nor was there in Acts vi. when the Grecians murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were over-looked in the daily ministrations. All the Christians, all the brethren, were outwardly one. The brethren appeared united, but the unity of the Spirit was broken.

Many believers to-day are apt to think that keeping the unity of the Spirit applies only to maintaining outward unity. Some believers would say, with truth, that every one who, having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, is united to Christ

and to the body of Christ by the Holy Ghost, should be recognised as eligible for fellowship as Christians. Conversely, that those who, unbelieving, are not so united to Christ in the one body cannot be treated as part of God's church. All this is very true, and not to be neglected in its place. But while many believers to-day stop short here, the exhortation of Eph. iv., 3, which takes this in, goes much deeper.

We are exhorted, when we have already been received and have received others spiritually as brethren, to use diligence to preserve the mind of the Spirit with them in the uniting bond of peace. In the world men can sometimes go on with others for a long while by refraining from subjects of disagreement, or by ignoring each other as much as possible. Such an attitude is not to be adopted by brethren. The uniting bond of peace is on the sole basis of the unity of the Spirit, and this blessed unity consists of this—the mind of the Holy Spirit controlling each individual on every subject that affects the relationship of believers.

And we must use diligence to keep this unity of the Spirit. It can only be done "with all lowliness, and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love." (Eph. iv., 2). This must be my character, but although impossible to nature, this is the evidence that we are a new creation in Christ Jesus. Above all there is the Throne of Grace, where we can find grace to help in time of need. Only so shall we be able to obey the Word.

## Questions and Answers.

QUESTION—

"I do ~~not~~ know so many very dear and sincere and earnest Christians in the sects . . . while it would be wrong to join their "church" I am not at all sure if they do wrong to stay where they are. During the war . . . I wandered into a Roman Catholic Church . . . a booklet "What think ye of Christ?" could not have been clearer or better. How often I was refreshed and strengthened in the protestant churches and had to admire the men who "stuck to their guns." The churches (protestant) were mostly packed with men, women, and soldiers on leave . . . and not one of them could say they had never heard the pure gospel.

What about "where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them" as regards the

many different "meetings"? Surely one dare not say the Lord is not in the midst of the "X" Brethren or the "Y" Brethren or whatever their names are? It seems to me that wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name (and we must be very careful to say "they are" or "they are not" gathered to His Name) we can break bread with them (join them?) Of course where we know there is evil doctrine . . . it is another question."

ANSWER—

I agree with all you write about there being "many very dear and sincere and earnest Christians in the Sects." And there is no doubt whatever that many of the truths recovered one hundred and twenty years ago are now to be found, and are clearly taught, in churches and chapels. The "Church of Rome" has, I believe, been used of God for the preservation of the old manuscripts of the New Testament just as corrupt Israel was used for the preservation of the Old Testament. Although the Church of Rome teaches the adoration of the Virgin Mary and the Saints, it has never-the-less maintained the Deity of Christ as a doctrine.

I feel it is not for us to decide in regard to individuals that they do wrong to stay where they are. While on the one hand we are all responsible to read the Scriptures if we can obtain them, and every believer in the Lord Jesus has the Holy Spirit indwelling to reveal to him the mind of God in the Scriptures; on the other hand, tradition, environment, and seductive teaching obscure the truth. Who can adjudge the degree of responsibility of each individual but the Lord Himself? All I can say on the point is that to know the Lord's will and not to do it is sin. That applies to all.

As regards the "gospel" it is a matter for thanksgiving that salvation through faith in the work of the Lord Jesus on the Cross, alone, is preached in churches, chapels, etc. The more fully this good news is preached the more cause for thanksgiving — forgiveness, reconciliation, justification; deliverance from the dominion of sin, from the power of Satan, from this present evil world, from "this body of death," from the wrath to come; sonship, membership of the body of Christ—what a vista of blessing leading right on to the sharing of Christ's glory! The preaching of the gospel is always refreshing and strengthening to those who love the Lord.

I am not surprised that during the war you often found

help and refreshment listening to the gospel. And I am quite sure that pressure of events resulted in a return, in churches and chapels and elsewhere, to the fundamental truth, and that the "Shibboleths" of the "isms" disappeared into the background. It was so even in the Far East when I was there, where missionaries of various sects lost many of their sectarian characteristics when they were up against naked heathenism. So, at the battle fronts, British Christians met and read the Scriptures together and had prayer meetings, and even "remembered" the Lord, in all the simplicity of unity. Alas, when the tension is removed sectarian tradition reappears, and such outward unity can only be continued on the basis of mutually ignoring one another's evil teaching or evil ways. The sad thing is that the return to simplicity—the simplicity of the early Christians of the Acts of the Apostles—is not maintained when circumstances relax.

Now, as regards the question of being gathered "in My Name," there seems to me to be two aspects. First, as regards our responsibility, we have no right to associate the Lord's Presence with evil. In order, therefore, to enjoy in our own souls the consciousness of His Presence in the midst we must ourselves separate from what the Spirit of God has shown us to be evil doctrine or other forms of evil. Secondly, the Lord is sovereign, gracious and full of compassion. None of us can say we are absolutely free from evil, yet I believe many companies are gathered to His Name in sincerity of purpose, seeking to exclude evil. But for His grace, owing to our inherent failure, none could say they were gathered to His Name and therefore He was in the midst. I have felt emphatically that it is wrong for me to judge others, but that my path is clear. To put it concretely, I could not go to an "X" meeting, to break bread or for other purposes, and feel I was gathered "to His Name," in view of their teaching denying the eternal Sonship and many other evil doctrines held by them, but I do not feel called upon to decide whether the Lord in sovereign grace may be in the midst of some (at least) of such companies.

I will leave it at this. In the glory we shall learn how much we have all failed and how He alone has been faithful. God forbid that we should sin that grace may abound, but it will be the riches of His grace that will be displayed in the ages to come in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ.

## Maranatha.

The Lord has undoubtedly been speaking to many in recent days to make us realise that He is indeed coming quickly, and surely to animate us by the power of this blessed hope, and of His glorious appearing, that we may realise "what manner of persons we ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness." It is stirring to realise that this truth is living, and to go on in the ever present expectation of hearing His shout in the air.

We are going home. The Father's house will receive us as Jesus our Lord Himself brings us there. And we shall enter into all the glories and pleasures of the heavenly scene—a scene of which Christ is the centre, and the joys of which all relate to Himself. And it has occurred to me to wonder to what extent I shall be a stranger there. For much that obtains there is, according to our measure provided for us here; may we not say that the counsel of the Godhead is to excite, to stimulate our present appetite for heavenly things, so that having enjoyed the earnest, we shall enter into the inheritance with a full capacity for its appreciation? Peter speaks of an "abundant entrance" into the everlasting kingdom that is dependant upon our diligence to-day (2 Pet. i, 10-11). I do not doubt, for myself, that our capacities are enlarged in this scene according to our honest desires after "things above"—enlarged to a varying extent perhaps, but waiting to be filled to that extent, neither more nor less, when we are where we would be.

An instance of the pleasures now available is to be found in the last chapter of the Revelation. There is the river of the water of life. We all know this water. It is the water of the well of John iv, 14. We have drunk and we drink and never thirst. It is our cheer, our present pleasure in this dry and thirsty land where no water is. It suffices us, this well springing up in us. But this is a river. Well, we too may know the river. That which satisfies us is Christ. That which flows out—"out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"—is Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. And while we ourselves may be satisfied from the well, yet the river is more—it is Christ going out to others from us. There is surely an ever enlarging satisfaction in this; a continual fresh ministry overflowing the vessel and pouring its life-giving streams around so that the desert may blossom as a rose to the glory of Christ. This abounding is what we need to covet, for

it partakes of God's own nature who Himself cannot be bounded even by our failure, but will see that the river of His grace shall ever flow out to meet need. But how much happier when we too grow into a fuller harmony with His purposes and can watch with praise and thanksgiving the fulfilment of the Lord's promise. We are soon to be brought to the source of that river of water of life—the throne of God and of the Lamb, but how much more might we to-day experience and enjoy God's thoughts of grace and His ever flowing acts of refreshing.

Then comes the tree of life with its continual fruits. The bride has declared that "his fruit was sweet to my taste" (Song. ii, 3): in this city the fruit - and the sweetness that the taste alone enjoys—is continual and perpetual. Christ alone is that tree, with fruit brought forth for every season and an evergreen leaf. We know this sweetness: we sit together around Himself and savour it; we find it along the pathway as some especial delight gladdens our heart. But then there is no other food, no other sweetness than in Christ—are we ready for this? May there not be something even in this scene that our souls hanker after—secretly perhaps, but still making occasions when Christ appears as "light food" It is to our shame that we have to confess it, for the tree of life has fruit for every season. There is no occasion when we may not go up to find that which shall refresh us; no season when we shall be disappointed. But if we have, so to speak, tasted only one month's fruit and have sought other satisfaction on other occasions, shall we have a capacity for the fruit of every month? The Lord set our affections more wholly on Himself.

And then there is that blessed place of service, where "his servants . . . shall see his face: and his name shall be in their foreheads." We are oftentimes busied in service, but let the prophet of olden days speak to us: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand," (I Kings, xvii, 1). Happy servant! He alone is fully conscious of his Master's desires and approval who is constantly in His presence. I am sure the greatest value is attached to service that is done as in the presence of the Lord, even as He Himself was ever in the bosom of the Father. In that day to come no cloud will intervene to interrupt the fullness of intelligent communion—need we add that every cloud that arises to-day comes

from ourselves? We shall see His face—our desire for to-day is surely that we may have become so familiar with His presence, have sought it so continually before going anywhere or doing anything that it will be nothing strange, only the complete unveiling to “see His face.” And again if it is the desire of the servant or disciple to be like his Master, then this is the way. For “we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit” (2 Cor. iii, 18).

“His name shall be in their foreheads” would lead us to expect a complete identification of master and servant. It is the seal of His approval, for His servant is now fully like-minded. This is His gracious dealing, and of what is it the reward? Surely more than anything else our readiness to be named with the name of Christ to-day, and to suffer the reproach that His name brings. When the apostle wrote to the Galatians there were those who were anxious to escape the contempt the world has for an ‘other worldling’ who accepts the reproach of the cross. If it was the case then, how much more so to-day, when the mark of the beast, not the reflection of Christ is the passport to success and a measure of ease. But He wants us to walk with Him so that He may be able to crown our labours with His fullest approval and to bring us into the joy of our Lord.

I would repeat that I believe the Lord wants us to know these things and to act on them, so that to-day our hearts may be enlarged by the enjoyment of heavenly delights. The prayer of Jabez was just the desire that Jehovah was looking for in Israel and so he is commended as “more honourable than his brethren . . . And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.” (1 Chron iv 9-10). It is the diligent soul that is made fat. The Lord is at hand and what we refuse of His teaching, what exercise and instruction we shun will, I am sure, be eternal loss. Let us be diligent. “Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” (Matt. xxiv 46).

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