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Servitude and Sonship.

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GREAT are the privileges of believers. They have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, regenerated by his Spirit, and adopted into his family. The blessedness and high dignity of being in such a state, over being in the condition of the unsaved, is made to appear by the Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians (ch. 4-7), by a very striking contrast—the contrast between servitude and sonship. "Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son." What he says is practically this: You who are Christians are no longer under the servitude of sin, or to be treated as servants, bound under the oppressive rites and ceremonies of the law; but you are children of God, adopted into his family and, under grace, have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. Paul simply reminded those Galatian Christians of their early state, and calls them to consider in comparison their present condition. Once they were servants; now they are sons. Once they were in bondage; now they are free. Every believer will find it of advantage occasionally to recall his former condition under the divine law, previous to the glad day in which grace came to him with full redemption.

We have a very dear friend who spent many years in Europe. He says it is the custom in the city of Munich to arrest every mendicant child that is caught begging in the streets, and put him immediately at school under some proper supervision until he is able to obtain a moderate support. As he enters the institution his picture is taken, precisely as he appears in his uncleanness and rags. This picture is carefully preserved so that when he is educated and matured enough to appreciate his position it may be shown to him. Then he will know how much has been done for his good. Furthermore, he is made to promise that he will keep the likeness ever afterwards, not alone to remind him of his former position and keep him humble, but also to make him think of others in misfortune and prove helpful to them. And it is said in the reports that some of these castaways thus saved make the strongest and most helpful friends for the recovery of others, even the most unpromising.

It was some such purpose as this the apostle seems to have had in mind; for he begins with a description of men in a state of nature, showing how deeply in sin and bondage they were, and the proceeds to set forth their exaltation and glorious privileges after having received the adoption of sons. He would lead us to look back to what we once were, then gratefully to consider what we have become; and then look about to see how, moved by gratitude and love, we can best glorify God in the service of others.

It is certainly a gracious relation in which Christians stand. They are not servants, but sons. True believers are sons of God by a new creation—by the new birth. By nature they are the children of wrath, even as others; but through the agency of the Holy Ghost a spiritual and vital influence is felt and a spiritual and vital principle is imparted. Believers are the sons of God also by their union with Christ. Believers are the sons of God, too, by adoption. "Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God."

This blessed relation brings about a blessed result: "If a son, then an heir." We are heirs, of heavenly possessions. The treasures to which we are entitled as a result of adoption are vast and immeasurable. We are heirs of the promises. Christians may have little in possession, but they have much in prospect. We are heirs, too, of the righteousness of Christ. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." We are heirs to heaven. "If a son, then an heir

—an heir of God and joint heir with Christ "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

It is a blessed state of privilege we come into through adoption as the sons of God. Its realization may receive very helpful emphasis by an illustration Mr. Moody once used at Northfield, to show a distinction between a servant, guest, and a son. He said we ought never to forget that through adoption we become actually God's sons. He pictured a reception room in a private residence at an early morning hour. It was entered by a man who proceeded to open the shutters and put things to rights. No one needed to be told that he was a servant. Shortly after another man entered. He walked around the room examining the portraits, paintings and ornaments as if they were new to him; and finally taking a book sat down to read. Evidently he was a guest. Next came rushing into the room a rollicking boy of sixteen. After a bright "good morning" to the guest, he darted into the library, overhauled the mail lying there on the table, hurried into the dining room to see if breakfast was ready, lifted one or two covers to see what was to be served, and then, hearing familiar footsteps in the reception room, he rushes there and flings himself into the arms of the master of the house, who had just given the guest a warm handshake of welcome, but to this boy gave a hug and a kiss. No one needed to be told that this boy was the son.

Mr. Moody finished thus: "Truly we are the servants of God, and it is a blessed privilege to serve him. Surely we are the guests of God, and it is an unspeakable honor to visit the King." Then raising his voice with one of his glad shouts, thrilling his great audience, he added: "But we are more than servants; we are more than guests; we are the children of the great King. God is our father, and Jesus is our elder brother; we are joint heirs with Christ."

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God." What manner of men therefore should we be when entrance into membership of the very family of God has been secured for us by the sacrifice and death of Christ our Saviour? No wonder the apostle closes his exhortation with a statement of wonder at the folly of return—of ever desiring to go back again into bondage. How could anyone wish to go back into the service of Satan after he had experienced these advantages of sonship? We are told that the Israelites, even when they had manna, wished for the onions and leeks of Egypt, and, even when God was feeding them, sighed for garlic. That was bad enough; but what was it beside the folly of those who accept anything in place of the blessedness of sonship to God in Christ Jesus.

Much Fruit.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

During my recent visit to Southern California, I was feasting my eyes on the beauty of, the affluence of the orange orchards and the lemon groves. I was especially interested in a dwarf orange tree in front of my window at Redlands. The little fellow was not higher than my head, but he was a most bountiful bearer. He bore golden fruit with all his might and main; not an ounce of sap ran to waste, and not one tiny branch was idle. He shamed some of the bigger trees, which, with larger opportunities, were yielding smaller revenues. As I looked at that brave and beautiful little tree, I saw a fine illustration of the Master's declaration, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

That word "much" is a comparative word. What would be much for a disciple of slender means or small talents would be shamefully little for a millionaire, or one endowed with great gifts.

Our Lord's scale of measurement was, "for unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required." The shekels of the rich given into the sacred treasury made a poor show in comparison with the big-hearted widow's two mites; for she gave all that she had. Occasionally we see a flourish in the newspapers over a donation made by some millionaire to some charitable object, whereas, if the truth were known, he has only given his income for a single week. Good old Auntie R—, who used to trudge with her tired limbs for a long mile to our monthly concert in order to save her carfare for the missionary collection, far outshone the millionaire in liberality. Her gift meant a real sacrifice; his gift cost him almost nothing.

"Much fruit" does not mean occasional and spasmodic service. A follower of Jesus Christ, who is habitually laborious in every good enterprise, who is always abounding in love deeds, and sweet words of sympathy, and in ministrations of mercy at sickbeds or in poverty's cellars or attics, who distills true piety like holy oil into every day of his life, who loves to do good and cannot help it, such a Christian fulfills Christ's description of "bearing much fruit." He has a habit of loving his Master and loving his fellow men; not on special occasions, but all the while. It is his way. We can count on him; and we go to him for a contribution of money, or a timely prayer or a testimony in a prayer meeting, or a good service of any kind, just as confidently as the owner of that bountiful little orange tree counts on a basket of fruit every spring. The blessed fruitfulness is the gift of the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in him; he is always alive because Jesus Christ abides in his innermost soul, and supplies the vital sap.

I once had an elder in my church who had received only a moderate common-school education and lived on a very moderate salary. His power was not purse-power, or brain-power, or social power; it was sheer heart-power. He was a prodigious force in our church simply from the momentum of his godliness. When any hard work was to be done, he never complained of being made a pack-horse. On the evenings for prayer meetings or church services of any kind he never consulted thermometer or barometer. He had the same kind of holy knack in Christian service that Philip and Gaius, and Dorcas and Onesiphorus, and Lydia and Luke had. When any one saw faithful, modest, untiring Elder W—, he saw just what Jesus meant when he said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Such cases are a great encouragement to the "rank and file."

If any one had gone into the American Tract Society House seventy years ago, he would have seen a plain-looking man, filling orders and putting up packages of tracts. The man had come from a common school and a carpenter's workshop in Connecticut, with no gift of eloquence in a public assembly, and no literary culture. Yet that plain, modest, humble-hearted man was in reality the most effective layman in the City of New York, and was a pioneer in the work of personal evangelistic labors for the conversion of souls, whose influence has gone out over the whole land. His name was HARLAN PAGE; and the secret of his prodigious usefulness was that every day and everywhere he was *abiding in Christ*, and Christ abided in him. He could not but bear much fruit; and it was very choice fruit also. The crown which Harlan Page will wear in heaven will be the diadem worn by those who have turned many to righteousness, and who have never allowed a day to go by without trying to win some soul to the Saviour.

A great deal is said in these days about "consecration." Some of it savors of sentimentality, and some of it borders on cant. Genuine consecration means, letting Jesus Christ have the best we have to give—the first place in our affections the first claim on our purse, our time, our influence and our all. In order to yield this, we must let the Master prune us, even if sometimes