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Relationship to Christ.

REV. WM. MEIKLE, LATE OF OAKVILLE, NOW OF TORONTO.

REV. W. MEIKLE was born in the County of Ayr, not far from the fine old town of the same name. He received the first part of his education in the parish school of Monkton, and commenced there his study of Latin. He was prepared for college mainly in Leithwinnoch and commenced his Arts and Philosophy course in Glasgow, in 1810. He took prizes in most of these classes, given by the votes of fellow students. He entered on the study of Theology in the autumn of 1843, in connection with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and enjoyed the instructions and personal intercourse of Drs. Brown, Harper, McMichael and Eadie. He was licensed in January, 1848, was called to Anstruther, Fife, in the following May, and shortly after was ordained in that quaint old burgh of the kingdom of Fife, the native town of Dr. Chalmers. In November, 1853, he was called to Mobile, Alabama, reached that distant sphere of labor in the first week of 1854, and continued there till 1860. A handsome new church was built for him in Mobile, and though the congregation has passed through a chequered history, it has prospered, and is still doing an excellent work. Through the trying nature of that semi-tropical climate Mrs. Meikle's health failed, and at a consultation of physicians they were ordered north, and not to return for at least eighteen months.

Mr. Meikle spent some two months in the City of New York. One day, with an old college friend, who then held an important ministerial charge in that city, they had gone into Carter's bookstore on Broadway. A few moments after they entered they were talking to the senior partner of the firm, when two gentlemen entered. They addressed Mr. Carter, saying, they had heard that Mr. Meikle, of Mobile, was in the city and would like to find him. Why, said Mr. Carter, that is easy, he is here at this moment. This resulted in a unanimous call to Dobbs' Ferry, on the Hudson, presented in July, and in this pleasant locality and important charge he remained seven years. Mr. Meikle's pastorate in Dobbs' Ferry ceased in 1867. In that year he was admitted to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, had numerous appointments assigned to him and was soon called to Millbank, to North Monington, to Listowel and Molesworth, and a little later to Drummondville, and Chippawa, to Clarendon and Mayfield, and to Oakville. He chose the last of these, and was there inducted in January, 1868. This position was held by him for twenty-three years, and very considerable success was secured by diligence and devotedness to every department of work. A handsome new church was built, and opened in May, 1888. Shortly after a number of the people expressed a desire for a younger man. This led to Mr. Meikle's retirement from the more active duties of the ministry. He is now comfortably located in Oxford street, Toronto, and is still preaching as he finds opportunity.

TEXT—Matthew xii. 50: "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother."

Many who have been most successful in interesting those whom they addressed have been careful to turn to good account any peculiar circumstances that have lain around them. On one occasion, a celebrated orator of France, Massillon, in the great Church of Notre Dame, Paris, with the remains of Louis the Fourteenth lying before him, held his audience waiting in suspense; he then, apparently in a careless manner, announced his text; "So I have become great." He spread his hands over his chest, he fixed his eyes on the bier for some moments, he lifted up his hands with rapid gesture, and in tones most thrilling exclaimed, "There is none great but God." The whole audience rose in a mass, they looked above them, beneath them, around them, they felt that God incarnate was present.

Even the Lord Jesus Christ turned everything to the very best account. Look at all the parables that follow in the next chapter. He made them and the impressions he wished to produce.

The scene connected with our text, perhaps, surpasses all that. He is surrounded by a mighty mass of people. His mother and his brethren come to interrupt him; He must give up these exhaustive labours; He must go with them. They cannot get near Him. They send their message from lip to lip, and when he is told "Thy mother and thy brethren desire to speak with thee," with a dignity proclaiming his Deity, he says, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" Then with a love revealing both Deity and humanity he stretches his hands over his disciples, and says, "Behold my mother and my brethren."

These words are for us all, and they show that we are nearer to Christ; we have a closer connection with him than with any other being. This grand truth we would illustrate in the following manner: Our relation to Christ is more *rital*—is more *endearing*—is more *dignified*—is more *enduring* than we have to any other, to all other beings. May the Holy Spirit aid in expanding these great truths!

First.—Our near and close relation to Christ is more *rital* than we have to any other. The proof of this is brief and complete. He

created us all. All things were made by Him. Our bodies and spirits are his creation. Moreover, He every moment preserves us; without His upholding power we would sink into annihilation; still further, we are dead in trespasses and sins—we are like the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision. He creates us anew. He lifts us from the fearful pit and from the miry clay. Thus we are nearer to the Saviour than the babe to the mother, and this relation is indeed most vital.

Second.—Our relation to Christ is more *enduring* than any other. This is strong language, but we are fully warranted in employing it. We love with fond affection the parents God has given us. We find love to them incorporated with our very natures by the great author of our being. We have learned to love them through their unwearied devotion to us, through the years of ceaseless care they have given to us in helpless infancy, in tender childhood, amid the frivolities and foolishness of youth. What though these parents were quite superior to the ordinary class of men, presented a greater number of excellences, and adorned in every way the noble lives they led; they were withal infinitely inferior to Him who is chief among ten thousand. They did not die for us, and we have no such claims to our love as the blessed Jesus. He Himself puts forth these claims: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." We find Him infinitely exalted above all human kindred. His love shed abroad in our hearts produces corresponding love in return. His love is like Himself, purer, dearer, stronger than all human love. The poet Cowper correctly puts it:

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death."

Third.—Our relation to Christ is more *dignified* than we bear to any other other. In this world of iniquity, wickedness and crime there must be distinctions made between different classes of men, and the varied merits they possess. The good and the bad, the pure and the impure, the exalted and the degraded cannot occupy the same level, and cannot be treated in the same manner.

Many families value highly the honourable, the dignified, the noble position they have reached. They confer rank and renown on all who are related to them, and guard with the utmost care their family name from anything that would bring dishonour on their illustrious line of progenitors. All this is felt most keenly in contemplated matrimonial alliances. The royal families of Europe feel that they are degraded by any such alliance other than royal.

Oh, how much more important is it, how much more exalted, how much more dignified in the true, large sense of the word to be related to the King of kings, to the Lord of lords, to the Prince of the kings of the earth, to Him who is over all, God, blessed for ever! In the past we have been enemies to God; we have been reconciled; we are brought nigh by the blood of Christ; we are no longer strangers and foreigners; we are fellow-citizens with the saints; we are partakers of the Divine nature, "Now are we the Sons of God."

All that our kinsman Redeemer is become ours, His rank, His name, His rights, His honours. He is the Son of God, and we become sons and daughters in Him. He is the heir of God, and we become joint heirs with Christ. On His head are many crowns; He places on our heads the crown of righteousness, the crown of life, the crown of glory. He reigns supreme over all; we sit

with Him on His throne, we are made kings and priests unto God, and shall reign with Him for ever. Thus, through this *rital*, this *endearing*, through this *dignified* relation we bear to Christ, we have royal honours, we have inconceivable felicity.

Fourth.—This is a more *enduring* relation than any other. There is ceaseless change in this world. Here there is no abiding, the prince and potentate, the sovereign and the emperor, the high and the low are not allowed to continue by reason of death.

"Friend after friend departs.
Who has not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts,
That knows not here an end."

All secured to us on earth, all that the Saviour has gone to prepare in heaven's all be continued forever. We are made pillars in the temple of our God, and shall go no more out.

"For ever with the Lord
Amen, so let it be,
Live from the dead in that word
'Tis immortality.
Here in the body pent,
Absent from Him we roam,
Yet nightly pitch our moving tent
A day's march nearer home."

All that has been described is *privilege*; where are our *obligations*? Christ is spreading His hands over us; let us give our hand of faith to Him. Let us take this great gift of God by this simple act. Christ's eye of mercy is on us; let us look by the eye of faith to Him. Let us look to Him on the cross, but specially to Him on the throne, the Prince and the Saviour to give repentance and remission.



REV. WM. MEIKLE.