

# The Wesleyan.

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"WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING; THEREFORE GET WISDOM"

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## Theology.

### LOVE TO GOD THE SOURCE AND SUPPORT OF TRUE OBEDIENCE.

To dispose our minds thoroughly for those religious performances to which we are called, we should above all things possess our hearts with such a conviction and remembrance of God's love to us, as will naturally tend to excite us to return all possible degree of love to him. Love is a most vigorous affection of the soul, a principle of action that works and exerts itself after an omnipotent manner, as if it resembled that miraculous faith which could remove mountains. It is an affection that bears up against all difficulties, that breaks through all opposition, that spares no cost, that begrudgeth nothing either of time or labour, and that engageth all the faculties of the soul in such generous undertakings as dull and selfish natures are hardly capable even of understanding. In short, it is such a commanding passion, as brings a man into captivity with his own consent, and makes him pleasantly and cheerfully a vassal. And as this affection is more and more purified, so it increaseth in its vigour, and when it is a divine love, placed upon God, and upon the Son of God, it is a most active and delightful principle of obedience to his will in all things. It is that which inspired the Apostles, and other such saints of Christ, (especially in the beginning of Christianity,) to do and to suffer all that was possible for Christ's name, with that resolution, cheerfulness, and zeal, which has made them so renowned throughout all ages. "The love of Christ constraineth us," saith St. Paul (2 Cor. v. 14). And to omit other instances, I cannot but remember the ardent zeal of that famous imitator of St. Paul, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who declared, that all the kingdoms of the world would do him no good without martyrdom; and that he had much rather die for Christ, and to be with Christ, than be monarch of the whole earth; and the true cause of this his flaming zeal was, the great sense he had of Christ's wonderful love in dying for the world.

I have briefly observed these things to show that love is a most powerful affection, when it is sincere and earnest. Of all the affections of the soul, it is that which will not be concealed or lie idle. There is a vehemence in the nature of it which will break forth, and discover the desires and delights that are within. And therefore, to fit and temper our minds duly for those performances which God looked for, as a genuine return on our part for his abundant love to us all, and as necessary means in order to the final and everlasting fruition of himself, we must raise our affections to this high and noble pitch, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind. Our Saviour there calls it the first and great commandment, not only because it is of prime obligation, but moreover, because it is the main genuine spring whence all acts of obedience to God do naturally flow.

Indeed, Solomon tells us that the "fear" of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and doubtless the consideration of God's power and justice is a very necessary thing to keep people in awe; nay, the only thing that is a check upon those who would not stick to commit iniquity with greediness, were it not for fear of God's judgments in this world, and of hell torments in the next. But though there is (and ought to be) in the best and most holy people, a fear of God, and a dread of his displeasure,—a fear that is well pleasing to God, and very useful to themselves,—yet in those truly pious hearts it is attended and mixed with a very ardent love; and so it is an ingenuous fear, a filial reverence, like that regard which dutiful and affectionate children have for their dear parents; at the same time that they are afraid of their displeasure,

sure, they obey with cheerfulness and love. It is love,—that most generous affection of the soul,—which makes this fear such a good and kindly principle of action, and the warmer our love is, the more extensive, hearty, and acceptable will our obedience be.—*Dr. E. Pelling.*

(For the Wesleyan.)

### THE HEAVENLY MANSIONS.

"In my Father's house are many mansions."

The above beautiful sentence forms a part of our Lord's valedictory address, delivered to his disciples a short time prior to his final passion. He had previously apprized them of his approaching departure; and now, finding that their faith failed, that their hopes were fled, and that their hearts were filled with sorrow, he proceeds, with all the sympathy and affection of an elder brother, to administer to their consolation. "Let not your heart be troubled,"—indulge not excessive sorrow; "ye believe in God," as your sovereign, protector and guide; "believe also in me," as the promised Messiah, as the Saviour of the world; I care for you. "In my Father's house are many mansions," and though I go away, I go to prepare a place for you," &c. Their consolation is not drawn from any thing earthly, but from heaven itself. They are not pointed to the "living spring in the desert of earth; but to that opened above, the everlasting spring and fountain, in the paradise of God. They are not directed to the temporary lodging in the wilderness, but to their eternal residence in the heavenly Canaan. "In my Father's house are many mansions."

In this passage there is, an evident allusion to the temple at Jerusalem, in which were several mansions or apartments, appropriated to the use of the priests and Levites; and by keeping in view this allusion, we have a beautiful illustration of the heavenly state, and, at the same time, a striking confirmation of the delightful and unbroken harmony of holy Scripture.

It is observable that whatever, as the Scriptures furnish of the heavenly state, they are all drawn from the most magnificent and instructive figures. Heaven is here, as we have just intimated, compared to a number of mansions or apartments in the Jewish temple; and though the comparison fails, as does every other, to set forth such an object in all its glory and grandeur, yet it leads us to observe respecting these mansions,—FIRST, THEIR SACRED CHARACTER. The temple at Jerusalem was appropriated to the most solemn and sacred purposes; to the services of the Lord Jehovah exclusively. The building itself was stupendous and magnificent, its ornaments were beautiful and grand, but it was pre-eminently distinguished by special marks of the Divine presence, and by those sacred offices in which the anointed priests and Levites alone were commanded to engage. How striking the illustration of that glorious and heavenly temple, where God especially resides and displays himself; where his creatures, the seraphim that surround his throne, and angels, as ministering spirits, stand to do his pleasure;—that temple where He is "worshipped day and night," where his "chosen generation," his "royal priesthood," his "holy nation," his "peculiar people," shall for ever "show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light;" where they shall incessantly sing—"unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6.) Heaven is a holy place; the mansions are sacred; and none can enter there but those who are anointed by the Holy Ghost, sanctified and set apart for God's service. Reader, art thou such? Art thou prepared for the noble and sacred employment of the heavenly state? Oh, secure and maintain "a sweetness

for that happy place," that thou mayest "in heaven," receive "a happy lot with all the sanctified."

Secondly, THE INACCESSIBLE MANSIONS OF THESE MANSIONS. "In my Father's house are many mansions." The apartments in the earthly temple were very numerous, yet limited, but the number of the heavenly mansions is beyond conception and calculation. There are "many," sufficient for all—one for each—enough for the countless hosts of angels, intelligences who worship there, and for the multitudes of the saints of the most High. How great the number of those who already inhabit mansions in the upper temple! St. John, in his apocalyptic vision, "beheld, and a great multitude, which he could not number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, of the Lamb, white robes, and palms in their hands." (Rev. vii. 9.) And how many have entered since! How has the vast family of heaven been daily increasing! How many of the true Israel of our God are now crossing the swelling flood of Jordan, and entering the promised rest of the eternal Canaan!

"Part of his host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now."

How many spirits of departing saints are now flying to the paradise of God! Pious a poetic hyperbole.

"Ten thousand to their endless home  
This solemn trumpet fly."

"And yet there is room!" Yes, there is room in heaven for the thousands of the spiritual Israel who are still in the wilderness; and there is room for the untold millions who may yet come out of spiritual Egypt into the promised land. "Satan tempteth followers of the Lamb, Faithful worshippers of the Lord Jehovah go forward, 'yet there is room' in your mansions are there! And yet, perishing sinners! why will ye die? Christ hath died for you. Why will ye die the second death? There is room in heaven for you. Oh, make haste to Christ, seek for mercy, so shall you

"Make your own election sure  
And when you fall on earth, secure  
A mansion in the sky."

Thirdly, THE GREAT VARIETY OF THE HEAVENLY MANSIONS. The apartments in the temple at Jerusalem were different in size and situation. So the original, recorded "many" denoted not only that there is much room in heaven, but also that there are different degrees of glory and happiness there. The measure of our happiness in heaven will all depend on the measure of our holiness and devotedness on earth. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii. 3). "For as one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead;"—as it is with the saints in glory. They will all shine as stars; but those who by constant diligence, in well-doing, attain, on earth, a higher measure of purity than others, shall shine brighter than others in heaven. They shall appear as more glorious stars. How reasonable to suppose that those who excel as receivers and dispensers of divine light and moral influence in the hemisphere of man, will form the brightest luminaries in the regions of immortal bliss! True religion brightens the intellect, refines the soul, elevates the affections, enlarges the capacities, in proportion as we possess it; and prepares us for corresponding degrees of glory in the world to come. Now is the time to lay up a "weight of glory." Reader, let this thought stimulate thee to higher attainments in Christian holiness, and to renewed acts of Christian usefulness, that thou mayest "rise high in the climax of bliss."

Lastly, THE PERMANENCY OF THESE MANSIONS. The temple, to which allusion is made, was a firm and durable building, and

was designated a temple in contradistinction to tents or tabernacles, but was never to be destroyed. The heavenly temple is distinguished for its permanency—its durability, in opposition to things earthly, which are temporary, passing away. In harmony with this are all the scriptural representations of the heavenly state. Is it a city? It is "a city which hath foundations," which can never be moved, "whose builder and maker is God." Is it an inheritance? It is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Is it a kingdom? "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." Or, according to the phraseology of the passage under consideration, is it a "house"? It is "a house not made with hands, eternal as the heavens."—"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Thus the tabernacle in the tabernacle of the Most High, and continue to dwell in the same, shall take up their eternal residence in that permanent temple, the church triumphant in heaven.

It stands securely high,  
Indubitably sure  
Our glorious mansion in the sky  
Shall evermore endure."

May God accompany with his blessing these thoughts on his word. Amen.

R. H.

December, 1841.

### THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

Scriptural views of Christ's kingdom are very natural to the mind of man, and have, therefore, in all ages, been very common. The empire of the Saviour is an authority in the world, it is supported, not by might or power, but by the Divine Spirit. It is not evident to the senses of the natural man; it must be spiritually discerned. Even a man be born again he cannot even see the kingdom of God. The Jews had no other conception of the Messiah's kingdom than that of his reigning in great power and majesty visibly upon earth. The Apostles were of the same mind before the Spirit was poured out upon them, and looked for the visible reign of the Saviour, residing and ruling upon the earth, and expected that they themselves should be exalted with him here below, and that the saints should enjoy pre-eminence, and exercise lordship over the nations. Many were the intimations they received that Christ's kingdom was not of this world. But they understood them not till they were taught from above.

The same earthliness of mind revived the same doctrines amongst the Millenniumists, who dreamt of an earthly paradise during a thousand years, in which their re-animated bodies should enjoy, in innocence, all earthly satisfaction and delights, instead of the glories of heaven. But while these were dreaming of an empire still future, the Papists seized on the present enjoyment of it, and reigned as kings and priests over the earth, not with the Saviour, but in direct opposition to his saints and his cause. Since the Reformation, the notion of the saints, snatching the ungodly, and taking possession of the earth, has always had its advocates from the Anabaptists downwards, and, above all, in times of convulsion, as when Venner, with his equal, but determined band, proclaimed the fifth monarchy, filled the whole of London with alarm, and fought with a courage which has never been surpassed, and scarcely ever equalled, except by some fanatic warriors among the early Moslems.

But our Saviour's kingdom is to be established by no other sword but the sword of the Spirit. It comes not with outward observation, but with inward power. Christ's sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness, of truth, and persuasion; and not a rod of force and coercion, except towards his enemies. His enemies must indeed perish, but they