

ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED
AND
ONE SPIRIT WITH THE LORD.

Fellow-believer, do you know in your soul, as taught of God from His word, the above two blessings that are ours through grace.

Look up into the heavens, look up at the man in the glory, the accepted man at God's right hand, for that is where Jesus is now. And then hear the words of the Holy Ghost, the words of God, saying to you (in Ephesians i. verse 6) "He hath made us *accepted in the Beloved*," and just let your soul take it in. For that is how, "to the praise of the glory of His grace," He, the God of all grace, looks at you and me, as to our acceptance. Oh, what rest, what joy, what peace, to know this? Yes, "As He is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) What a perfect standing God's perfect love has given us. But you ask, perhaps, "What about what I am in myself? I find that the more I go on, the more I learn that 'in me, that is in my flesh dwells no good thing.' What about that?" Listen again to the written word. "*I am crucified with Christ.*" (Galatians ii. 20.) "Knowing this, that *our old man is crucified with Him.*" (Romans vi. 6.)

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and *by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh*, (as well as judged sins) (Romans viii. 3.) And now, though it is actually

in us, (till we actually die, or the Lord comes, and we get glorified bodies like His own,) (Romans viii. 11; Philippians iii. 20, 21; 1 John iii. 2,) yet in God's reckoning, *we are dead, as sinful children of Adam*, (as well as cleared from our guilt) in the death of Christ. And our life is hid with Christ in God, for *He* has become *our life*. (Colossians iii.) And so we may truthfully sing:—

Like Thee, O Lord, how wondrous fair,
Lord Jesus, all Thy members are.
A life divine to them is given,
The bright inheritance of heaven.

Just as we were we came to Thee,
As heirs of wrath and misery,
Just as thou art—now we are Thine,
We stand in righteousness divine.

Or again,

Once we stood in condemnation,
Waiting thus the sinner's doom;
Christ in death has wrought salvation,
God has raised Him from the tomb.

Now we see in Christ's acceptance,
But the measure of our own;
Him who lay beneath our sentence,
Seated high upon the throne.

Quickened, raised, and in Him seated,
We a full deliverance know:
Every foe has been defeated,
Every enemy laid low.

It may be that some one reads this and says, "Yes, I know all this is true of me, but I do not enjoy it as I did when I first learnt it. Why is this?" Because dear brother or sister you have

not been holding fast what God showed you, or it may be you have not been walking consistently with this place God has put you in. And then of course you do not and cannot enjoy it. For if, though you know "ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God," and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory," you seek the things below, instead of the "things above," where Christ sitteth. If "having put off the old man with his deeds," and "having put on the new man," as every true believer has, you do not "put to death your members which are on the earth," (see Colossians iii. 5 to 13.) and do not put off the old man's ways and put on the new man's ways, thus allowing the sinful flesh in you to act in some way or other, of course you cannot enjoy the place that God's grace has put you into: (for though "not in the flesh but in the Spirit," the flesh is in us, as bad and vile as ever it was,) *our enjoyment of it depends upon our walk.* We must not take the standing and acceptance we have in Christ and through His sufferings and death for us, and then expect to enjoy it, when we are not walking consistently with it. Indeed we cannot do so. But if you know that "you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." And as He tells you to do, "*reckon yourself dead to sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord,*" then "*yield yourself up unto God, as one that is alive from the dead. And your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*" "Present your body, a living (*i. e. a continual*) sac-

rifice unto God." "Put to death your members which are upon the earth." *Put off* the old man's ways, and *put on* the new man's ways. Yes, dear brother or sister, give yourself up to *God*, and for *others*, instead of living to please self, as Ephesians v. 1 to 7 tells us we are to do, and thus "walk in love," and you will enjoy your place and acceptance in Christ before God, more and more as you go on, thus walking with the God who has given you such a place. But now as to our being united to Him. For the true Christian is both *accepted in Him*, and *united to Him* also. Christians are united to Christ in glory, and to one another here, by having the Holy Ghost in them. Please look at 1 Corinthians vi. 15-17, also verse 19. "What know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" "What know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and ye are not your own?" And in verse 17, "He that is *joined to the Lord is one Spirit*," in contrast to "he that is joined to an harlot is one body, for two, saith he, shall be one flesh," verso 16. Ephesians i. 12, 13, tells us, *when* we get the indwelling of the Spirit, viz., "After ye believed." 1 Corinthians xii. 12, 13, that the one Spirit baptizes all believers into one body. The passage in chapter vi. already referred to, shows us we are "joined to the Lord." And in Colossians i. 18, ii. 18, 19, Ephesians i. 22, 23, also chapter v. 29, 30, we learn that every real Christian is a member of Christ and members one of another, therefore *united to Him* up there in glory,

and to one another down here on earth in one body.

"One Spirit with the Lord,"
 Oh blesséd, wondrous word,
 What heavenly light, what power divine
 Doth that sweet word afford.

"One Spirit with the Lord,"
 Jesus the glorified,
 Esteems the Church for which He bled,
 His body and His bride.

Now, if you read in the 1st of Colossians, from verse 14 to end of verse 19, also in chapter ii. verses 9 and 10, and then read verses 18 and 19 of chapter ii. you will I trust see first of all, what a glorious Person the Head of this body is, to whom we are united, One who is "*the image of the invisible God.*" who *created everything, for whom everything was created, was before everything, and upholds everything.* One in whom *all the fulness is pleased to dwell. All the fulness of the Godhead bodily;* and then I trust you will see as you read again verse 19 of chapter ii. (which tells us that from this glorious Person, the Head, to whom we are united, flows down to us the members here on earth all our spiritual nourishment and strength,) what an infinite source of supply we have in Him as thus united to Him, who loves us too, as a man loves himself. (Ephesians v. 29,) and what a blessing it is to be "*united to Him,*" as well as "*accepted in Him.*"

Yes, we are livingly united to this glorious Person, up there in glory. And there is no telling what blessing and comfort and power would be

ministered to us, both individually and corporately if we only took in more simply who He is, to whom we are united, and if we only were more constantly "*holding the Head,*" as we are exhorted to do in Colossians ii. 18, 19.

If you ask me, what is "holding the Head"? I believe, it is not allowing anything, or any person, angel or man, to come in between us and the One who is our Head.

Now this is just what Satan is always trying to get us to allow. Just as a clever general tries by manœvering to get some of his forces in between his opponents army and their source of supply, because he knows that if he can, then he can more easily overcome them, their supplies being cut off from coming in to them of food and ammunition, etc. So Satan tries in all manner of ways to get something or some one in between us and our blessed infinite source of supply, our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. For if we allow him to do so, he knows well that then we are practically cut off from the one from whom *all* the nourishment and spiritual power, etc., flows, and then he can easily overcome us as to our walk and ways down here.

Here in Colosse he was getting angels in between the Christians there and their Head. But it does not matter what it is, whether angels or men, we must be careful not to allow any one or any thing to come in between us and the blessed One up there in glory, to whom we are livingly united by

the Holy Ghost. For though this union between us and Him can never be actually broken, yet the practical enjoyment of it, and the blessing that should be flowing consciously down from the Head to us the members on earth, can be, and is hindered if we are not "holding the Head."

May God give us to be going on then steadfastly, and continually, not only knowing we are "accepted in Him" and "united to Him," who is up there at God's right hand, the accepted man, and the Head of the body, the Church; but so walking, through His grace, according to the place we are in, that we may be filled with joy and peace in believing, and that, allowing nothing to come in between us and Him we may know the wonderful sweetness of being "one Spirit with the Lord" as well.

And though by storms assailed
 And though by trials pressed,
 Himself our 'Life, He bears us up
 Right onward to the rest.

There we shall drink the stream
 Of endless bliss above:
 There we shall know, without a cloud,
 His full unbounded love.

DISCIPLESHIP.

LUKE ix. 23.

We have here an important lesson, indeed, more than one lesson. First the Christian needs to understand well that the way which leads to glory and

to heaven, the way in which Christ Himself walked, and in which He wishes us to follow Him, is a way in which we must *deny* ourselves, suffer and conquer. Secondly, that a Christian can have true faith, and be taught of God, as in Peter's case (Mark viii,) without having the flesh in him judged, so as to render him capable of walking in the way into which this truth brings him. It is important to remember this; sincerity may exist without knowing oneself. Peter's heart was not ready for the cross; how many hearts there are in this state! Sincere, no doubt, but they have not spiritual courage to accept the consequences of the truth they believe. See the difference in Paul, made strong by the presence of the Holy Ghost, and by faith. He says in the presence of death, "To know Him (Christ) and the power of His resurrection and the communion of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death"—Phil. iii. 10. There was in him the power of the Holy Ghost, and "he bore always in his body the death of Jesus in order that the life of Jesus should manifest itself in his body." Happy man! always willing to suffer everything rather than not follow fully the Lord Jesus, and to confess His name whatever the consequence might be: and having walked faithfully, by grace to obtain at last the prize of His heavenly calling.

But the Lord does not conceal the consequence; He warns us that if we wish to be with Him, if we wish to follow Him, we must deny ourselves and

take up our cross. Let us receive the Lord's words—if we wish to go after Him, we must follow Him, and, if we follow Him, we shall find upon the road that which He found. Of course it is not a question of expiatory sufferings—of that which He suffered from God's hand for sin—but of His sufferings from man, the contradiction of sinners, the opposition of men, abuse, and even death. We know but little what it is to suffer for the name of Jesus; but remember, Christians, that which the Lord says first, "Let him deny himself;" you can always do this by grace. It is by doing this that we learn to suffer with Him, if God should call us to it. And what shall we give in exchange for our soul?

Man's heart, alienated from God, tries to make the earth, where he was set at a distance from God, as pleasing to himself as possible; and in order to accomplish this, he uses God's gifts and creatures to be able to do without Him. It is said that there is no harm in these things; it is said that there will be music in heaven also, but in heaven it will not be employed in order to divert the mind without God. It is a question of the use we make of these things. For instance, there is no harm in strength, but in the manner of employing it: with it one does harm to one's neighbour. Is it not true that the world, which knows not God, uses all kinds of pleasures to enjoy itself without Him?

For the Christian, too, amusements only lead him away to a distance from God, and destroy his communion with Him. All that is in the world, the

lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. The world and its lust pass away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. The prince of this world is Satan, who seduced Eve with these things, having first of all, destroyed her confidence in God; and it was with these things that he tried to seduce the Lord also, although, we know, in vain. But with little trouble he succeeds but too often to seduce the hearts of men and of Christians; and to cause the pleasures of the world to have more power upon the soul than Christ Himself, than the love of a dying Saviour. . . .

The Lord puts these two principles before the disciples: first, the soul is worth more than everything, it is not to be exchanged for anything; secondly, the Lord is about to come in glory, and whosoever shall be ashamed of Him in this corrupt world where He is rejected, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when He shall come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

Beloved reader, are we following Christ? Or in other words, are we *denying ourselves*, and taking up our cross *daily*? Or are we *pleasing ourselves*, and going after the pleasures of the world? Oh, that the love of Christ may so constrain our hearts, (His blessed, unchanging, wonderful love towards us) that we may heartily and willingly, in the strength He gives to those who wait upon Him, give up ourselves wholly, to live for Him, who gave Himself up wholly to save us.

"I'D RATHER SUFFER LOSS."

"It was that very spot, sir," said a working shoemaker, pointing to a place in his little workshop; "Yes, in that very place, sir, six years ago, that the Lord spoke peace to my troubled soul; and how good and gracious He is." Such was almost the beginning of our happy and profitable intercourse, on paying a visit to this dear servant of the Lord Jesus. . . .

After talking generally together, and having had sweet fellowship in the things of our precious Saviour and Lord, and we were about to leave, he said, "I should like to let you know something about the exercises of soul I have been lately passing through." To this we readily assented.

He then said something like this: "When I was converted to God, and knew the Lord Jesus Christ His Son as my Saviour, I thought I shall now surely prosper in my little business; but in this I was sadly mistaken, for my earnings very soon fell off. The first year I earned three shillings a week less, the second year three shillings a week less, the third year four shillings a week less, and of late my earnings have been so little that I thought I must give it up, and seek some other employment, though I have so enjoyed the Lord's presence with me in this little place.

"Accordingly, knowing Mr. M. to be a kind christian man, and that he held a good situation in a large factory near this, I asked him if he thought

he could procure me employment of any kind in his place of business, and he promised to let me know when there was a vacancy.

“But after this I became deeply exercised before the Lord as to what I was about. Is this that I am seeking according to my own will or the Lord's will? Is He bidding me to give up my present calling and seek another? for I have had much of the Lord's presence, and enjoyed His sweet company when working alone in this corner.

“And just then the Lord seemed to say to me, Which will you have? Will you go into the factory, and mix with the ungodly multitude with large wages, or remain in this corner and enjoy my presence with small earnings; which will you have?

“I assure you, sir, it was a serious moment. I turned it well over in my mind. I considered how weak I am, how easily turned aside, and began to think that if I went into that factory to work, I might soon be drawn away, and lose my blessed Lord's sweet company.

“So I said, ‘Lord, let me have Thy company even if it must be with small earnings; I'd rather suffer loss, than not enjoy Thy presence with me.’ From that time I became perfectly settled, and told Mr. M. not to think anything more about procuring a situation for me. Now, sir, it is remarkable that from that time work began to come in more than for a long time before.”

We could not help thinking that the result was

just what we should have expected. We believe that one of the greatest hindrance to souls is their being so taken up with desire for worldly prosperity. The consequence is that the Lord hath not got His rightful place in their hearts; and, however many excuses they may make, the question really is, "Am I seeking earthly gain, or the enjoyment of the Lord's presence?"

"Is communion with Him the uppermost desire of my heart?"

Perhaps no point is of more importance for us really to settle in the presence of God. If worldly advantage, to say nothing of the accumulation of wealth, has the *first* consideration, let it not surprise us if such go further and further away from the Lord; but if we are willing to suffer loss, and to lay aside everything that hinders our enjoyment of His sweet company, then we may be sure that He will not forsake us as to food and raiment.

We believe the Scripture is as true as ever, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." We do well to remember that to the believer it is said, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ. not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Matt. vi. 33; Phil. i. 29.)

LIVING to God inwardly is the only possible means of living to Him outwardly. . . . I dread great activity without great communion; but I believe that where the heart is with Christ, it will live to Him.

THE POSITIVENESS OF LIFE IN CHRIST.

1 JOHN III. 1-10.

If we weigh the state of the church, we shall find a great deal of what is negative in the Christian life, and contentedness with what is negative. For example, a man sees sin, he takes for granted that there must be sin in him, and it is true and well that he should know it, providing it be not working; he sees the blood of Christ and is happy. If his flesh is kept in check as to positive sin, and the blood of Christ is seen, he is content. That is what I call *negative*—a person settling in himself that sin is, and is met by the cross of Christ. (It is not as speaking lightly of the cross that I say this. There is nothing like the cross. God Himself is glorified by it. The glory we can have with Christ. On the cross He was alone.)

This condition flows greatly *from all that is of nature not having been judged*, and the heart then occupied with Christ. When there is a positive life in exercise which attaches itself to Him, and sees the excellency in Him, it never can be satisfied without seeking to have, and to be, that which it sees in Him. Being free from sin, freed, if you please (for when this word is used in Scripture it refers to slavery), there is the positive activity of delighting in Christ. The heart is so far delivered from sin as to delight positively in Christ.

John takes up a positive active life, in the activity of which he supposes the Christian lives, and which has joys and delights of its own, "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons (children) of God!"

I get the nature of which we are made partakers shown from the life which is lived. If He is righteous, we know that every one who doeth righteousness (has the manifested character of that nature) is born of Him. Where has it come from? From God. I recognize this relationship of a child by the nature that is manifested. The Apostle is not merely thinking of what we are in the title of righteousness, but of whom we are born—whence we draw our life. Hence it is that he says in verse 9, "cannot sin," for it is the nature of God *in which we live as born again*. He takes the truth up, as he does on every subject, in its own absoluteness, without modifying it by the contradictory principle in us. But the result of the possession of this life is brought in in remarkable terms. We are born of God, but the life which we have received is that eternal life which was manifested in Christ. (Chap. i. 1-3.) Hence he says, "It doth not appear what we shall be," no one has seen the glory, "but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We shall be like Him; it is from the blessed consciousness of

this, and the object thus set before us, that the activity of this life now flows. "And every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself," (he does not say, is pure, but) "even as He is pure." That is, the measure and standard which he has before his soul is that which belongs to Christ as the object before his soul. How different this is from the negative state, occupied with sin, perhaps thinking how I shall get rid of it! I am a child of Adam is the thought of such an one; no, I say, I am a child of God.

If we are sufficiently emptied of self to have Christ before us in this double way, *as the life in which we live*, and the *object for which we live*, then the affections are associated with the object we like; and He is not merely object, but life. The power of the life is exactly in the measure in which Christ is the object. There, is where a Christian is happy. His soul's affections are set free and occupied with Christ. He is the one we love and delight in, and we want to be like Him and with Him.

If your heart is dragging through the world, and you are trying to get as free from all the spots as you can, you cannot be happy. This positive life is real liberty of heart, and that is what happiness means. He purifies himself as He is pure.

If I am not living this life of Christ, the old lawless thing is active. When there is not the activity of divine life, there is not merely failure in this, but there is the activity of the Adam life, and it is always lawless.

(To be continued, D. V.)

"AH! NOW MY HEART IS WON."

Ah! now my heart is won,
God the great deed has done,
My soul has found her Sun,
Jesus, in Thee!

Now as the days roll by,
In Thy strong arms I lie,
Known is my heart's deep cry,
Saviour, to Thee.

All times I know Thee near,
Naught in Thy presence fear,
Life's journey is not drear,
Jesus, with Thee.

Lord, may I to Thee cleave—
Should'st Thou my heart bereave,
Be willing all to leave,
Jesus, for Thee.

As moments flee away,
Welcome each finished day,
They speed me on my way,
Jesus, to Thee!

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