

## SATISFACTION.

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*"I shall be satisfied."*—Ps. xvii. 15.

I shall be satisfied,  
But not while here below,  
Where every earthly cup of bliss,  
Is wisely mix'd with woe.  
When this frail form shall be  
For ever laid aside,  
And in His likeness I awake ;  
I shall be satisfied.

*"He . . . shall be satisfied."*—Is. liii. 11.

He shall be satisfied,  
When all He died to win,  
By loving kindness gently drawn,  
Are safely gather'd in.  
When, in the glory bright,  
He views His glorious bride,  
Sees of the travail of His soul ;  
He shall be satisfied.

"**THY WORDS** were found, and I did eat them ;  
and **THY WORD** was unto me the joy and rejoicing  
of mine heart : for I am called by **THY NAME**, O  
Lord God of hosts."—Jer. xv. 16.

"For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept  
**MY WORD**, and hast not denied **MY NAME**."—Rev.  
iii. 8.

## SANCTIFICATION.

† THESSALONIANS V. 23.

Let us examine a little into that which this passage teaches us with regard to sanctification. It is connected indeed with a nature, but it is linked with an object ; and it depends for its realization on the operation of another, namely, of God Himself ; and it is founded on a perfect work of reconciliation with God already accomplished. Inasmuch as it is founded on an accomplished reconciliation, into which we enter by the reception of a new nature, the Scriptures consider Christians as already perfectly sanctified in Christ. It is practically carried out by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who in imparting this nature separates us—as thus born again—entirely from the world. It is important to maintain this truth, and to stand very clearly and distinctly on this ground, otherwise practical sanctification soon becomes detached from a new nature received, and is but the amelioration of the natural man ; and then it is quite legal, a return—after reconciliation—into doubt and uncertainty ; because, though justified, the man is not accounted meet for heaven—this depends on progress ; so that justification does not give peace with God. Scripture says, “Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (1 Col. i. 12). Progress there is, but it is not in Scripture connected with meetness. The thief was meet for Paradise and

went there. Such views are an enfeebling, not to say destructive, of the work of redemption, that is, of its appreciation in our hearts by faith.

We *are* then sanctified (it is thus the Scripture most frequently speaks) by God the Father, by the blood and the offering of Christ, and by the Spirit—that is to say, we are set apart for God personally and for ever. In this point of view, justification is presented in the word as consequent upon sanctification, a thing into which we enter through it. Taken up as sinners in the world, we are set apart by the Holy Ghost to enjoy all the efficacy of the work of Christ, according to the counsels of the Father; set apart by the communication of a new life, no doubt, but placed by this setting apart in the enjoyment of all that Christ has gained for us. I say again, it is very important to hold fast this truth, both for the glory of God, and for our own peace; but the Spirit of God in this epistle does not speak of it in this point of view, but of the practical realization of the development of this life of separation from the world and from evil. He speaks of this divine development in the inner man, which makes sanctification a real and intelligent condition of soul, a state of practical communion with God, according to that nature and to the revelation of God with which it is connected.

In this respect we find indeed a principle of life which works in us—that which is called a subjective state; but it is impossible to separate this operation in us from an object (man would be God

if it were so), nor consequently from a continual work of God in us that holds us in communion with that object, which is God Himself. Accordingly, it is through the truth by the word, whether at first in the communication of life, or in detail all along our path. "Sanctify them through thy truth ; thy word is truth" (John xvii. 17).

Man we know has degraded himself. He has enslaved himself to the lusts of the animal part of his being. But how? By departing from God. God does not sanctify man apart from the knowledge of Himself, leaving man still at a distance from Him ; but, while giving him a new nature which is capable of it, by giving to this nature (which cannot even exist without it) an object—Himself. He does not make man independent, as he wished to be ; the new man is the dependent man ; it is his perfection—Jesus Christ exemplified this in His life. The new man is a man dependent in his affections, who desires to be so, who delights in, and cannot be happy without, being so ; and whose dependence is on love, while still obedient as a dependent being ought to be.

Thus they who are sanctified possess a nature that is holy in its desires and its tastes. It is the divine nature in them, the life of Christ. But they do not cease to be men. They have God revealed in Christ for their object. Sanctification is developed in communion with God, and in affections which go back to Christ, and which wait for Him. But the new nature cannot reveal an object to

itself ; and still less could it have its object by setting God aside at its will. It is dependent on God for the revelation of Himself. His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost whom He has given us ; and the same Spirit takes of the things of Christ and communicates them to us. Thus we grow in the knowledge of God, being strengthened mightily by His Spirit in the inner man, that we may understand with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height ; and know the love of Christ, and be filled unto the fulness of God. Thus, gazing with open face upon the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. " For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." We see by these passages, which might be multiplied, that we are dependent on an object, and that we are dependent on the strength of another. Love acts in order to work in us according to this need.

Our setting apart for God which is complete (for it is by means of a nature that is purely of Himself, and in absolute responsibility to Him, for we are no longer our own, but are bought with a price and sanctified by the blood of Christ according to the will of God, who will have us for His own), places in a relationship, the development of which (by an increasing knowledge of God, who is the object of our new nature) is practical sanctification, wrought in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, the

witness in us of the love of God. He attaches the heart to God, ever revealing Him more and more, and at the same time unfolding the glory of Christ and all the divine qualities that were displayed in Him in human nature, thus forming ours as born of God.

Therefore it is that we have seen in this epistle that love, working in us, is the means of sanctification (chap. iii. 12, 13). It is the activity of the new nature, of the divine nature in us; and that connected with the presence of God; for he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God. And in this chap. v., the saints are commended to God Himself, that He may work it in them, while we are always set in view of the glorious objects of our faith in order to accomplish it.

We may here more particularly call the reader's attention to these objects. They are, God Himself, and the coming of Christ: on the one hand, communion with God; on the other, waiting for Christ. It is most evident that communion with God is the practical position of the highest sanctification. He who knows that he shall see Jesus as He now is, and be like Him, purifies himself even as He is pure. By our communion with the God of peace we are wholly sanctified. If God is practically our all, we are altogether holy. (We are not speaking of any change in the flesh, which can neither be subjected to God, nor please Him.) The thought of Christ and His coming preserves us, practically, and in detail, and intelligently,

blameless. It is God Himself who thus preserves us, and who works in us to occupy our hearts and to cause us continually to grow.

But this point deserves yet a few more words. The freshness of Christian life in the Thessalonians made it, as it were, more objective ; so that these objects are prominent, and very distinctly recognized by the heart. We have already said that they are God the Father and the Lord Jesus. With reference to the communion of love with the saints as His crown and glory, he only speaks of the Lord Jesus. This has a special character of reward, although a reward in which love reigns. Jesus Himself had the joy that was set before Him as sustainment in His sufferings, a joy which thus was personal to Himself. The apostle also, as regarded his work and labour, waited with Christ for its fruit. Besides this case of the apostle (chap ii. 19), we find God Himself and Jesus as the objects before us, and the joy of communion with God—and this in the relationship of Father—and with Christ, whose glory and position we share through grace.

Thus it is only in the two epistles to the Thessalonians that we find the expression, "To the church which is in God the Father." The sphere of their communion is thus shown, founded on the relationship in which they found themselves with God Himself in the character of Father (1 Thes. i. 3, 9, 10 ; iii. 13 ; 2 Thes. ii. 16, 17 ; and here v. 23). It is important to remark, that the more vigorous and

living Christianity is, the more objective it is. It is but saying that God and the Lord Jesus have a greater place in our thoughts, and that we rest more really upon them. This epistle to the Thesalonians is the part of Scripture which instructs on this point ; and it is a means of judging many a fallacy in the heart, and of giving a great simplicity to our Christianity.

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## THE CLOSING STATE OF THE CHURCH.

LAODICEA. REV. III.

The closing state of things comes next—church, as to its place in the world, it yet is. It stands with its angel before Christ to be judged as such. He takes its works into consideration as such. But it has settled down into taking things quietly. It has not a name of excellence compared with Jezebel, but death. *The living elements have been concentrated* in the Philadelphia state. It would not renounce Christ, but would keep up profession, would sacrifice nothing for Him, it would keep the church's place and credit, yea, claim it largely on many grounds as a body ; but spiritual power, in *individual* association of heart with Christ or trouble for Him, was gone. Christ abhorred such a state. It was as luke-warm water, which would be spued out of His mouth. Such was the judgment unconditionally pronounced on the church of Laodicea. But as ever, till actual judgment



comes, God continues to work, if any man may have ears to hear. So in Jeremiah ; the plainest declaration that they would go to Babylon ; yet continual calls to repentance, and a statement of God's ways in this respect on repentance.

In Laodicea, all that they professed to hear, all that man could estimate the value of, was false and human. I do not mean mere outward riches, but all that could give a large pretension to wisdom and knowledge and learning, perhaps a fuller view of Christianity itself ; self-satisfaction in what was possessed ; this characterized the professing church in Laodicea, but utter poverty as to Christ, nothing of Him. A name to attach to learning and human thoughts, but of Him nothing. Hence His counsel was to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, true divine righteousness in Him never separated from life, for it is His nature ; and white raiment, the power of this association with Christ in what is displayed in man, living righteousness ; and to have that true intelligence of the Holy Ghost which makes us see, the unction of the Holy One. In a word, the divine gifts and power of Christianity *in contrast* with what man possesses as man, with that of which he can say "*gain to me*"—man's conscious possession of that which gives importance and value to man in his own mind. The relationships of Christ to the professing church here are remarkable. The Christian is a new man, a new creation in Christ, risen into a wholly new place, on the utter rejection and proved

insuperable evil of the first man—proved insuperable in the death of Christ. Man's business and Satan's business are to exalt and give place to the old.

It is not here in the world, not at any rate in his own eyes. The professing church goes decidedly back here into that out of which we are taken in Christ by faith. Hence, though this has still the name of the church, and professes to be Christian, it is really wholly in its own claimed moral place, though thinking itself wiser than ever, off the ground of Christianity, and on that of the world or natural man, which consequently comes on the scene in its own place; and the church closes. What was wholly wanting was what was divine and new in man. It was the first man enriched, even if Christ enriched him. That would be admitted. There was no divine righteousness; no specific Christian clothing—the righteous life, according to Christ, of a new nature to be had only in Him. The teaching of the Holy Ghost was wanting. Man's intelligence was wonderfully and wholly in place. The things counselled to be got make this character of the evil clear; they are specifically divine things connected with man's rejection, and acceptance in Christ alone, to be had only in Christ, and from Christ, and nowhere else; not an improvement of man, but what was divine found in, and obtained from, Him.

To this, and the fact of its being the closing state, all answers. Christ reveals Himself as the

“ Amen ” who secures every promise of God, now man has failed, even in the church. He is the faithful and true Witness in Himself. The witness of the church, as a witness of Him, is gone. He is the beginning of that new creation, of which indeed the church ought to have been a witness in the Holy Ghost ; but of which He in resurrection was the Head, the spring and manifestation ; all taking, in the *new* creation, its starting-point of existence from Him, its place under Him. Adam had such a place in the old, the image of Him that was to come ; Christ, in the new, of which the saints are the firstfruits. But here, the church, which in profession as founded on His resurrection had this character, having wholly failed and gone back in professed riches of human nature to the old, Christ comes forward as the beginning of it all, the One in whom it had its rise and its truth ; all the rest being wholly dependent on, and flowing from, Him. The *Amen* maintains the promises now to be fulfilled—the faithful and true Witness. One who had, and now would make fully good, the character of God, which man, His image, and the church, too, had failed to do. The beginning of the creation of God, one who, when God made all things new, as He was now about to do, was the *archee*, the *fons* and the *principium* of it all, the first in, and the first from, whom it all flowed.

The position He takes in respect of the church, shows the same relationship to it. He was practically outside it, looking at it as gone, though it

were not yet spued out of His mouth. It is a question, though He warned it yet, of individuals hearing His voice that they may escape—may have fellowship, and He with them. He has not given it up ; but it has become wholly human in its real state, as judged by Him ; so that He has to come in to the individual *if* he was anything to Him, or Christ to him : “ I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

The *whole* body of members of the professing church were *judged* to be *men* now, *not sons of God* or *Christians*, though judgment was not publicly executed, but Christ still acting in grace ; divine things (the only true ones) recommended, human things boasted in. *If* the individual heard Him who still called and knocked, though as outside at the door, He would have communion with him. The promises answer to the bringing in of the new order of things, not heavenly joys, still a share with Christ. As they listened in time, they would be on the throne in the kingdom. It was immense grace, but no more is promised ; not the tree of life, no hidden manna, no white raiment spoken of to the soul, to encourage it in faithfulness within ; they would not miss the kingdom. Blessed, surely, and wonderful grace, but *only just not shut out*.

This, of course, closed the church's history. The reader will remark that the instruction being moral, a state that is judged, promises ever precious, the warnings and exhortations are avail-

able to the saints at all times. The special application may be more or less seized. The words of Christ have power at all times for the heart and conscience ; and this is the force of the exhortation at the end to every church ; " He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."



### UTTER RUIN THE GROUND OF COMPLETE BLESSING.

I believe that which greatly keeps us from the strength of our joy, is our ignorance of the utter ruin of man. Not merely should we be acquainted with the evil into which the ruin has brought us, but also with the ruin itself. The moment that this ruin came into the world, everything went wrong. Not only has man gone wrong, but all his activities have gone wrong also.

Now, Christ has provided for us a way wherein the activities of the *new man* have their exercise. This is our own proper and peculiar portion—to have the mind of Christ, and to be brought into fellowship with God. But for the enjoyment of this, it is essential that we should be introduced into a knowledge of the *complete apostasy* of our own natural will. The purpose of God for His children is, that they should be associated with Him in *His own joy*, and to this end we must know Him. Now the main sorrow of Christ's life, was man's ignorance of God. God was never under-

stood, but the poor sinner understood Him much better than the self righteous Pharisee. Jesus came forth from the Father, having the knowledge of His mind, knowing that God loved the poor sinner ; not merely the sinner's joy in being blest, but God's joy in blessing him ; and this is the joy in which God would have us to be associated with Himself. Another most blessed truth is, that we should be associated with Christ in *His sufferings*, "That the trial of our faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 7.)

The first departure of the believer from God, is a departure from the knowledge of his fulness in God and nearness to Him, his *conscious sonship with God*. If I am *one* with Christ, I must be *as* He is. If I have anything at all, it must be what *He has*—what He is. There is no medium between being nothing in ourselves and being everything in Christ.

If I have no title of my own, if I am nothing but wretchedness in myself, and have no natural understanding of God's good-will to man, where is my claim? Therefore true humility is the knowing what I am *in Christ*. So the moment I say I am not *as* Christ, I lose the knowledge of my glory *in Him*, and I stoop down to the flesh. This we see in John, when he fell down and worshipped the angel. Here was that voluntary humility and

worshipping of angels which the Apostle warns us against. Had John remembered the glory he had in Christ he would not have done this, for "as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.)

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### ECCLESIASTES AND CANTICLES.

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"The words of the preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Eccles. i. 1.

"The song of songs, which is Solomon's.' Cant. i. 1.

In Ecclesiastes we see a man capacitated to test everything under the sun. He is high and wealthy, endowed with wisdom, and has all under the sun at his disposal and command; and he uses his resources and capabilities, does great work and that of all sorts to find out the good that would satisfy. Nothing that is great, or expensive, or magnificent, is withheld from him. He walks the full and ample range of all human promises, and traffics in all the productions that spring up under the sun.

In the Canticles we see one that is as it were nobody; that has no memorial on the earth at all; that has nothing and is nothing. He may be an object of the least possible amount in the reckoning of the world. In palaces, and vineyards, and servants, and singers, and instruments, and wisdom, in all this and the like he is poor indeed. It is the contrast that strikes us in these two little writings. The one was king in Jerusalem, the other nobody.

But dissatisfaction attends the one as he travels the wide and rich domain of his kingly earthly resources ; deep and unspeakably precious delight and satisfaction are the portion of the other, in company with the one unchanging object. The one little ewe lamb does for the one what the flocks and herds of the other never did, never could bring.

All that she, whom we find in the Canticles, possesses, is her "Beloved." But He satisfies her, and it matters not how poor in all besides she may be, it matters not either *whence* she has Him, so that she has Him. There are the lovely gardens and there are the lofty mountains, there are the shade of the apple tree and the bed, and the vineyard, and withal the king's galleries. But it is evident throughout, that it is *Himself* that makes her *all in all*. This is the deep contrast. The king in Jerusalem has nothing in the midst of everything, the unnamed, unendowed soul in the Canticles has all in all !

Are the experiences of our souls in the same company with all this ? The grief of the one is, that everything has disappointed him ; the grief of the other is this, that she cannot make as much of her *one thing* as it deserves, having tasted its capacity to satisfy her. What a difference !

The flocks and the herds, I may again remember, left the rich man unsatisfied ; the one little ewe lamb as it lay in his bosom, taught the poor man that he wanted nothing else !



## MEDITATIONS ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

(Continued from page 20.)

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*A Fresh Revival in Israel.*

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(Chap. x. 6-18.)

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The peaceful times of Tola and Jair did not prevent the people from sinking lower and lower. The declension increased, and the evil became more pronounced. "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of Jehovah, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook Jehovah, and served not Him" (ver. 6). Never before had such an assemblage of false gods been seen in Israel. The people were wholly given over to idolatry. Ammon was raised up as the rod of Jehovah and oppressed Gilead eighteen years. He also passed over Jordan to fight against Judah and Benjamin. Then, under the pressure of circumstances, grace wrought in the *conscience* of the people. It is a remarkable fact, that, in proportion as apostasy approaches its final development, the awakenings in conscience became deeper. I do not say that they widened. We have but to call to mind the song of Deborah, which brought out in the clearest light all the *privileges* of the people of God. But Israel, at that time, had but a slight sense of their responsibility, the conscience of the people was

less aroused, and self judgment less marked. We find here, for the first time, divine light penetrating the conscience of the people, and leading them to judge themselves deeply (*c. f.* chap. vi. 7-10). "We have sinned against Thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim" (ver. 10). Then God reminds them of all His grace and His deliverances on former occasions, and of the number of the nations out of whose hand He had saved them, adding: "Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods"—driving home, like an arrow in their consciences, the word which their distress had wrung from them, and He closes with these words: "Wherefore I will deliver you no more (ver. 13). Israel, as a whole, could not be restored. This finds its counterpart in the history of the church.

On hearing these words, the children of Israel took a further step in the salutary path in which the Spirit of God was leading them. "We have sinned; do Thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto Thee." Confessing their sin, passing judgment upon themselves, and acknowledging the righteousness of God's judgment, they added: "Deliver us only, we pray Thee, this day" (ver. 15). They appealed to His grace. Could He turn a deaf ear to their cry? Impossible! Repentance led them to a fuller knowledge of Jehovah than they had ever had before.

This restoration would not have been real, had it not borne fruit. "And they put away the

strange gods from among them, and served Jehovah" (ver. 16); turning to God from idols they served the living and true God. Then Jehovah opened to them the treasures of the pity of His heart.

God wishes that this should be the character of revivals in the sorrowful days in which our lot is cast. It is well for souls to be acquainted with their privileges and heavenly position; but it is also necessary that a deep work in the conscience should accompany the revival, in order that fruits of true holiness, humble devotedness, complete consecration may be borne by Christians, and that without ostentation or putting themselves forward to speak of themselves, but, forsaking idols, to serve the Lord.

However blessed this day of revival was, one thing was painfully lacking—a knowledge of the fundamental truths which God had confided to His people. "And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, *what man is he* that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? *he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead*" (ver. 18). They had no sense of the unity of the people. Gilead made of himself a party. The authority and guidance of the Spirit of God were but little known, for they said: "What man is he?" They had only another step to make—to choose for themselves; this step they took in vs. 4-11 of the following chapter. Not that Jephthah was not raised up of God, but Gilead took part in the

choice. How widely different was this from the call of Gideon, and how painfully characteristic of the last days of declension—this inter-meddling of man.

(To be continued, D.V.)

ROMANS VI. 22.—If we live unto God, there will be the knowledge of what good and evil is *in the eye of God*. Not only that you live to Christ as to outward devotedness, but you will get your heart withdrawn from the influence of the things which drew it formerly away from Him. Therefore, in plain, common life, O let God be everything! Be not like one slipping and getting on, and slipping and getting on—as Christians often are—but be advancing quietly and steadily; increasing in separation to God: then you will have “fruit unto holiness,” yourselves being servants to God.

FRAGMENT.—How little can we say as Christ could, “I live by every word of God,”—everything in His moral nature being the expression of that word.

Does everything in you so flow from God, that your minds are merely channels of His word? *That is Christian life*. Is your life spent either in looking to God, or in coming forth from God? *That is Christian life*. Or, how far are you going on merely holding your head just above water, that you may not be drowned, and may breathe the fresh air of heaven enough to preserve life?