

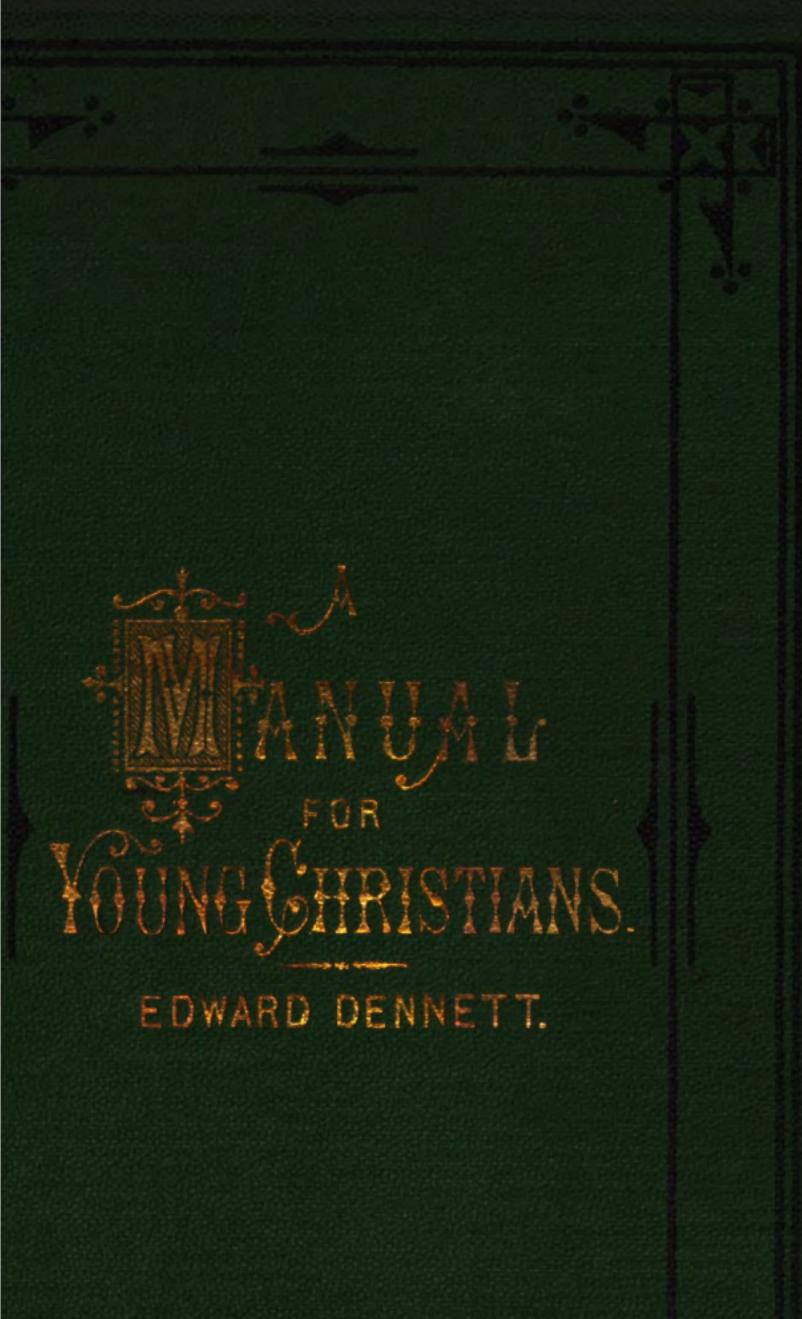
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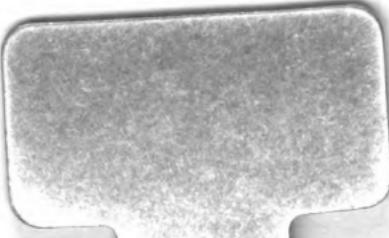
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A  
MANUAL  
FOR  
YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

EDWARD DENNETT.



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# A MANUAL

FOR

# YOUNG CHRISTIANS;

BEING

*A GUIDE TO THEIR PATH, POSITION,  
AND SERVICE.*

BY

EDWARD DENNETT



LONDON:

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER, ROW.

1871.

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TO

My dear Wife,

A TRUE YOKE-FELLOW IN THE

SERVICE OF CHRIST,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS

MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.





## P R E F A C E.

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HE author, in dealing with young Christians, often found that their knowledge of the elementary doctrines of our faith was exceedingly limited, if not defective. He, therefore, endeavoured to discover a book which would meet the need: that, as soon as inquirers had found peace in believing, he might place it in their hands for further instruction. He was unsuccessful. Many books were to be found, but not one that answered to his requirements. The consequence was that the following pages were written. They claim to be no more than a simple exposition of the questions that so early encounter the young convert. Everything has been subor-

dinated to conciseness and plainness of statement ; and, as precept must be upon precept, if the learner is to acquire what is taught, the author, on this very account, has not been careful to avoid repetition where it was likely to subserve this end. He would be extremely sorry if this little book were, in any way, to usurp the place of the Bible. His hope is rather, as the last chapter but one will show, to promote the study of the Scriptures, convinced as he is, that the Christian's growth and increase are very much in proportion to his love for, and the time he spends in meditation upon, the Word of God.

The author's prayer is that God may condescend to use these simple pages for the help and guidance of young Christians. If, thereby, he is honoured to give but a single cup of cold water to "one of these little ones," to God alone shall be the praise!

LEWISHAM,  
*January 1871.*



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- “ THERE is an everlasting home,  
Where contrite souls may hide ;  
Where death and danger dare not come,—  
The Saviour’s side.
- “ It was a cleft of matchless love,  
Opened when He had died ;  
When mercy hailed in worlds above,—  
That wounded side.
- “ Hail ! Rock of Ages, pierced for me,  
The grave of all my pride ;  
Hope, peace, and heaven are all in Thee,—  
Thy sheltering side.
- “ There issued forth the double flood,  
The sin-atoning tide,  
In streams of water and of blood,—  
From that dear side.
- “ There is the only Fount of bliss,  
In joy and sorrow tried ;  
No refuge for the heart like this,—  
A Saviour’s side.
- “ Thither the Church, through all her days,  
Points, as a faithful guide ;  
And celebrates, with ceaseless praise,  
That spear-pierced side.”

MATTHEW BRIDGES.





## CHAPTER I.

### WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED ?

**W**E assume that the reader has some anxiety of soul concerning salvation. We desire, indeed, to meet him just at that point when he is beginning to say, "What must I do to be saved?" As to the means by which you have been brought into this position, we shall here say nothing; but, supposing you to have been awakened by the Spirit of God, convinced by Him of sin, our hope is to be of some service in directing you to the only method by which you can obtain pardon and acceptance with God. We must, then, first of all, ask if you believe God's record concerning yourself? And what is that record? It is that you are a sinner; that, as such,

you are under condemnation and wrath ; that you are hopelessly lost in yourself, because dead in trespasses and sin. (See Rom. iii. 9—28 ; John iii. 18—21, 36; Eph. iii. 1 ; etc.) For “the wages of sin is death ;” and hence every one who is not yet saved lies under the condemnation and penalty of sin.

Are you prepared to accept this statement of your case ? If you are not, we cannot help you in any way ; for as long as you retain any hope as to yourself, any thought of merit or self-righteousness, or try to evade the force of the Scripture declarations concerning man’s entire depravity, so long must you remain in your present unhappy condition. Examine yourself, therefore, well, and do not rest until you believe God in what He says of you as a sinner.

If, now, you have reached this point, we ask you a second question—Do you believe God’s record of His Son ? Do you accept as true what He says of the Lord Jesus Christ ? That there may be no mistake, we ask further —What is God’s testimony on this head ? It is that Jesus is the only Saviour. (See Acts

iii. 10—12; 1 Cor. i. 22—24, iii. 11; Heb. vii. 23—28; etc.) Of necessity He is the only Saviour. Man (all men) sinned, and was therefore lost. The Son of God became man, in order to be our Redeemer. By the grace of God, He took our place in life and in death. He lived a life of perfect obedience. He was without spot or blemish, or any such thing. He was harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He died on the Cross. God accepted His life and His death in the place of all who should believe. In other words, Jesus was our substitute. A substitute is one that renders service in the place of another; and he to whom it is rendered cannot demand it again from him on whose behalf it has been paid. In the light of this explanation let us look upon Christ. God accepted His death in the place of the death of sinners; and hence, if Christ is mine, *i.e.*, if I believe in Christ, the penalty due to my sin is remitted, because paid by another. God accepted the life of Jesus on behalf of His people; and hence, if Christ is mine, I have a perfect righteousness wherewith to come

before God. Whoever thus believes is saved; for his sin is pardoned on account of the death of Christ, and hence is said to be washed away by His blood; and he is righteous before God, because God, in grace, reckons, imputes to him all the merits of Jesus. This is the explanation of the Apostle's words, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). Now, to be justified is not to be pardoned only, but it is to be made righteous. Many a criminal is acquitted who, by no means, is regarded as just before the law. But when God acquits the sinner, He also makes him righteous, and He does it on the ground of the merits of Jesus as our Redeemer. Believing, His life and death are both reckoned to our account. We are, therefore, justified; and, justified, we have peace; for every claim God has upon us is met and satisfied in the person of our Substitute.

Do you, then, believe that "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law?" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). That God made Him

to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him?" (2 Cor. v. 21). That Jesus "His own self bare our sins in His own body, on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness?" (1 Pet. ii. 24). That He was "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world?" (John i. 29). That "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them?" (Heb. vii. 25). If you do, we may then answer at once the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

You want, as we have shown, pardon and acceptance. How, then, may you obtain pardon? By believing that Christ is to you what God says He is—a sacrifice for sin. Trust in Him as your sacrifice, and your sin is gone; for, taking Him as yours, as the invitations of the Gospel warrant your doing, God has no further question with you about sin; for your sin is cleansed by the blood of Christ. Again: How may you be accepted as righteous? In the same way—by believing

that Christ is to you what God has said He is. Trust in Him as your Substitute, and you have all the merits of Christ to bring before God ; and God will graciously accept, nay, has accepted, them, and so accepted them, that He will accord to you the same position as that which Christ Himself occupies. The way of salvation is thus exceedingly simple. It is renouncing all self-methods, and, as utterly helpless, accepting what another has done—what Christ has done in our stead. This is the only way of salvation. God has provided it, and we must accept this or be lost.

DIFFICULTIES.—(1) "*I cannot feel my sin as I ought.*" This is a very common difficulty with those who are newly awakened. The answer to it is, that God makes no condition with us about feeling sin. Search the Scriptures through, and you will find nothing of the kind. The only condition is faith. It is "believe," not "feel." Besides this, no amount of effort on your part can produce feeling. Such an experience can only come from the Spirit of God. We are thus told

that Jesus is exalted to give repentance, as well as remission, of sin (Acts v. 31). You must come, therefore, "as you are;" and, whether feeling your sins enough or not, if you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be assuredly saved.

(2) "*My sins have been too many and too guilty.*" Many remain in bondage for years, by nursing the thought, that while others may believe and be saved, they are excluded from hope by the nature of their past acts or lives. A moment's candid examination of the method in which God deals with men would meet the difficulty. God deals with men as sinners, irrespective of their degrees of sinfulness (Romans iii. 9, 10, 19, 23; v. 12, 19; x. 11—13; xi. 32). It is our condition, as sinners, not our acts of sin, that comes into question. Moreover, to suppose that only sinners of a certain degree of guilt will be accepted, is in fact to doubt the efficacy of the blood of Christ. God is always willing to receive all who are willing to come.

(3) "*I cannot feel that I am saved.*" How often is this said by those who think they

have believed, and who yet have no peace. Let such ask themselves how the knowledge of salvation, or assurance, as it is sometimes termed, is gained. If you expect some sudden intimation of it, some sudden disclosure, or some sudden accession of joy, you will probably be disappointed. Now it is plain that before you feel, you must know that you are saved. How then can you know it? Mark the answer—*by faith*. If God promises salvation to all who believe in the Lord Jesus, *if I believe, I am* entitled to say I know that I am saved; for my knowledge is based on the truth of God's word and promise. If a friend tells me that he has a book for me at home, I do not hesitate to tell another friend, even though I have not yet actually received it, that I have had a book given to me, for I believe in the word of my first friend. Much more may I depend on the promise of God, and say, "I am saved, for I am resting on Christ." Thus, knowing that I am saved, peace follows, my heart is pacified. I feel now that I am saved. This then is God's order, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; know-

ledge as the result of faith in the promise, and then peace. For we cannot have peace until we know that we are saved, and we cannot know that we are saved until we believe.

(4) "*I cannot believe.*" This difficulty often arises from delusion or misconception. Let us then look at it. What is it that you cannot believe? Are you not able to believe that you are a sinner? The experience of a day will convince you of this. Can you not believe what God says of His Son? If you believe that God is holy, it is but a simple consequence that you should believe His word. Is it, then, that you cannot put your trust in Christ for salvation? This is, no doubt, what is meant. Let us then look at the position. You believe that you are lost, and that Christ is the only Saviour, and yet you cannot trust Him. See the man who is dying, and knows it, and by his side one who can yet save him, and he believes it; and yet will not permit himself to be saved. He wants to recover; there is one who can meet his wishes, and yet he refuses. What must

we think? Is it not that he is unwilling to be saved in the way in which he must, if at all, be saved? For if he were satisfied with the Saviour, and the way of His salvation, he would joyfully leave himself in the Saviour's hands. That is your condition. "Cannot believe" means unwilling to be saved on the conditions of salvation. Ask yourself, therefore, what it is—whether there be not some lurking self-righteousness yet remaining? whether you are not still cleaving to some forbidden thing? whether you are not unwilling to cut loose from all that holds you to the old state in order to be saved? For be assured that all this must be done. The hymn is perfectly true, and we must, in order to be saved, be in the state which it indicates, which says,

"Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

When this is reached, in utter self-distrust and self-renunciation you *must* believe, and the difficulty will have vanished.

Be sure, indeed, of this, that there is no difficulty whatever except in your own will,

that whatever obstacles may seem to lie in your path, and however many arguments may be presented to your minds *against* Christ's willingness to receive, or *for* delay on your parts, all these are but hindrances raised up by Satan to prevent your salvation. The remedy is to fix your mind resolutely on two things : your utter need and the Saviour's power and willingness to save. Planting your feet on these two things, resolve by God's help to go to Christ at once, and as you are, and it will not be long ere you rejoice in the knowledge of salvation ; for God is on your side, and He will divide the waves that roar so angrily before you ; and shielded by His power, believing on Christ, you will pass from death unto life. Your sins will be washed away in the blood of Christ, you will be saved with an everlasting salvation.



“ AROUND Thy grave, Lord Jesus,  
Thine empty grave, we stand,  
With hearts all full of praises,  
To keep Thy blest command :  
By faith, our souls rejoicing,  
To trace Thy path of love  
Through death’s dark, angry billows,  
Up to the throne above.

“ Lord Jesus, we remember  
The travail of Thy soul,  
When, in Thy love’s deep pity,  
The waves did o’er Thee roll :  
Baptized in death’s cold waters,  
For *us* Thy blood was shed ;  
For *us*, the Lord of Glory  
Was numbered with the dead.

“ O Lord, Thou now art risen,  
Thy travail all is o’er,  
For sin Thou once hast suffer’d,  
Thou livest to die no more ;  
Sin, death, and hell are vanquished  
By Thee, Thy Church’s head ;  
And lo ! we share Thy triumphs,  
Thou First-born from the dead.

“ Into Thy death baptized,  
We own with Thee we died ;  
With Thee, our Life, are risen,  
And in Thee glorified ;  
From sin, the world, and Satan,  
We’re ransom’d by Thy blood,  
And now would walk, as strangers,  
Alive with Thee to God.”

JAMES GEORGE DECK.





## CHAPTER II.

### BAPTISM.

**I**F you believe and are saved, the very first question that ought to engage your attention is that of baptism; and for several reasons.

Twice in the Scriptures it is made a condition of the reception of the blessings of salvation. Our Lord Himself says, "He that believeth, *and is baptized*, shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16). Peter, likewise, in answer to the enquiry of the Pentecostal converts, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" said, "Repent, *and be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 37, 38). Plainly, therefore, if a condition—and no amount of

reasoning can make it otherwise—we dare not, if followers of Christ, neglect its consideration. (2) All believers, during the Apostles' days, were baptized immediately on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not a single instance recorded in the Scriptures of any but believers being baptized; and everywhere we find that the new convert received baptism. (Acts ii. 41; viii. 12, 13, 36—39; ix. 17, 18; x. 44—48; xvi. 14, 15, 30—33; etc.) (3) The Lord commanded His Apostles to baptize those who should believe. (Matt. xxviii. 29). (4) And we might add, as a fourth reason, that the Lord Himself was baptized at the commencement of His mission. The King of the kingdom passed through the waters of baptism, that He might be the perfect example of all who should be born again, and thereby enter the kingdom.

For these reasons, the convert is under the responsibility of considering the meaning and obligation of baptism. We shall, then, first of all, endeavour to explain its meaning.

I. *The meaning of Baptism.* This is set

before us in two different places by the Apostle Paul. He says : " Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death ? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection " (Rom. vi. 3—5). Again : " Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God " (Col. ii. 12).

Speaking generally, two things are taught by these passages—first, that the believer is completely identified by God with the death and resurrection of Christ ; and, secondly, that this identity is shown forth in the act and mode of baptism. As to the first point, we saw this in the last chapter. Christ being our substitute, by the grace of God, we are regarded as having done what He did. His death is, therefore, my death, and His resurrection, my resurrection. The second point

is, that this oneness with Christ, in all that He has done for us, is typified in the baptismal ordinance. This will be clearly seen, if we consider the several parts of that ordinance. There is the water—there is the act of baptism. We must also consider that it is the ordinance of the Lord, and that it is the voluntary act of the believer.

(1) *The Water of Baptism.* What does this signify? There are two types in the Old Testament which will give a certain answer to this question—the Flood and the Red Sea. We do not say that there are no other types of baptism; but these two have been selected and endorsed by the Spirit of God in the New Testament. Speaking of the ark, Peter says, “wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water” (“through water” is the literal translation). “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21). Although it is of no importance for our present purpose, it may yet be remarked

that the actual words of the inspired Apostle are, that baptism is the *antitype* of the Flood, thereby teaching that, as Noah was brought through the Flood by the ark, we are brought through the flood of death, which that typified, in Christ, and that this is the truth declared in baptism. The Apostle Paul also teaches that the Red Sea was a type of baptism; for he says of the Israelites, "They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and the sea" (1 Cor. x. 2). If, then, with the guidance which God has thus vouchsafed, we now ask what is the meaning of the water of baptism, the answer is clear—"Death and judgment;" for the inhabitants of the old world were drowned in the flood, and the Egyptians in the Red Sea, by a direct judgment from God, on account of sin. Corresponding typical meanings of waters and floods may often be found in the Old Testament—*e.g.* Jonah ii.—but we have limited ourselves to these two, because the Holy Spirit has stamped these with His own authority.

(2) *The act of Baptism.* This consists of

two parts, the act of immersion and the act of raising out of the water. See, then, how significant these acts are in the light of the typical meaning of water. "We are buried with Christ by baptism;" and the immersion publicly proclaims this, for the believer is buried under the waters of death. But not only are we "buried with Christ in Baptism," but in baptism we are also "risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12); and this is also evidently set forth in raising the believer out of the water. The very form of the ordinance, therefore, embodies great spiritual truths—the truths of the believer's death and the believer's resurrection with Christ. It is this truth which the Apostle enforces in Romans vi., and which Bunyan explains in the following words: "I saw that Christ Jesus was looked upon of God, and should also be looked upon by us, as that common or public Person, in whom all the body of His elect are always to be considered and reckoned; that we fulfilled the law by Him, died by Him, rose from the

dead by Him, got the victory over sin, death, the devil, and hell by Him ; when He died, we died, and so of His resurrection" (*Life and Times of John Bunyan*, p. 200). Thus, we repeat, the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, the substitutionary work of Christ, is preserved in the form of baptism. Change it, and you utterly destroy its significance, for sprinkling speaks neither of life nor death ; but immersion speaks of both, and thus preserves for all time the identity before God of the believer in Christ with His death and resurrection.

(3) *It is also the ordinance of the Lord.* Looked at in this aspect, God ever reveals to us the light in which He regards His people. By having enjoined it upon us, and connecting it as He has with such important truths, it becomes a seal to us of our position. It tells us, in a word, that God graciously regards us as having died and risen with Christ ; and thus that we now stand in the full light of His reconciled face.

(4) *It is the personal act of the believer.* He asks to be baptized ; and what does he, in so

doing, declare? That he owns himself to have died and risen with Christ, and thus confesses before God and men his obligation to "reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin, and to be alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The baptism of the believer, therefore, is a constant remembrancer of his responsibilities, and a witness against conformity to the world, the flesh, or the devil. It is, on this account, often well for those who have been baptized to go back and examine themselves by the light of the profession they then made.

II. *Concerning the obligation of baptism* there is need to say very little. Two questions will elicit this little in its most distinct form. On whom does the obligation rest? and when does the obligation begin?

(1) *On whom does the obligation rest?* We have answered this question by implication at the commencement of this chapter. From the very terms of our explanation, it can only rest on those who have died and risen with Christ. Who, then, are these? Let the Word of God answer for itself: "He that believeth

on the Son hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). Again: "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; *but is passed from death unto life*" (John v. 24). Once more: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in Me, shall never die" (John xi. 25, 26). It is by faith, and faith only, then, that we become participants in the death and resurrection of Christ; and, consequently, the ordinance of baptism is incumbent only on believers. Have infants died and risen with Christ? If they have believed. If they have not, it is but a perversion of the meaning of baptism when they are baptized. To meet the difficulty, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration has been broached and taught—one of the deadliest of all deadly errors. Its antidote is the doctrine that baptism is only for believers.

(2) *When does the obligation begin?* As soon as we believe, because obedience to the Lord becomes then a duty and a pleasure, and

because the ordinance itself is a representation of the new position into which we are brought of our passage from death unto life. This is also seen from the facts already mentioned, that in two places it is made a condition of salvation (*e.g.* he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved), and that we find new converts being immediately baptized on a profession of their “repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is, however, on the fact that the Lord commands His people to be baptized that the obligation must be based. And if we once admit that Jesus is our Lord, we cannot escape the inference that it is our duty to obey His commands. But, surely, duty is a cold word when used in respect of Him who bore shame, sorrow, and punishment on the cross! If, indeed, our hearts have been melted before Him by His unspeakable grace; constrained by His love, our feet will be swift to run in the way of His commandments.

All that has been said on this subject may be admitted; but the objection may be raised, “Baptism is not essential to salvation.” If

not, this fact will not justify disobedience ; and our Lord lays down the principle, that “ he who knew his Lord’s will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.” Again this objection really does not apply. There are many things which are not essential to salvation, which, however, we dare not neglect. For example, the Lord’s Supper rests on the same footing ; and do you think that this could be neglected without serious, and perhaps eternal loss ? Once more, have we any right to say that it is not essential to salvation, when we remember the words already cited, “ He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ”?

It may also be said, by way of difficulty, that since good men are so divided on this subject, it may well be left undecided. That good and devout men are so divided, is a fact which we, alas ! cannot deny. But our duty remains the same. It is to enquire what the Scriptures teach ; not what the fathers, good men, or ecclesiastical writers teach. And once having discovered the will of God, that will, with all its solemn sanctions and en-

forcements, becomes for us inflexible, and the authoritative law of our conduct; and this will is expressed in the apostolic commission (as well as in many other places), “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them *to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*” (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). The honour of the Triune Jehovah is thus concerned in our obedience.



“By Christ redeemed, in Christ restored,  
We keep the memory adored,  
And show the death of our dear Lord,  
Until He come!

“His body broken in our stead  
Is shown in this memorial bread,  
And so, our feeble love is fed,  
Until He come!

“His fearful drops of agony,  
His life-blood shed for us we see ;  
The wine shall tell the mystery,  
Until He come !

“And thus that dark betrayal night,  
With the last advent we unite ;  
The shame ! the glory ! by this rite,  
Until He come !

“Until the trump of God be heard,  
Until the ancient graves be stirred,  
And with the great commanding word,  
The Lord shall come !

“O blessed hope ! with this elate,  
Let not our hearts be desolate,  
But strong in faith, in patience wait,  
Until He come !”

G. R.—.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE LORD'S SUPPER.

 HIS is the second of the two ordinances—baptism, which we have just considered, being the first. Concerning this, we shall also ask two questions—For whom is it intended? and what is its meaning?

I. *For whom is it intended?* For the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is shown at the institution of the ordinance, and by its nature; for it was to His own disciples that Jesus said, “This do in remembrance of Me;” and none but His followers can appropriate His words respecting either the bread or the wine. It were, therefore, to commit sin to come to the Lord’s table before we are converted, for then we

could not (as Paul teaches) discern the Lord's body ; and " Whosoever," he says, " shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord " (1 Cor. xi. 27—30). But as soon as we believe, and are saved, we are bound to come, for it is a command of our Lord, and, as His servants, we dare not disobey. But it may be that some will be disposed to ask whether they are at all times fit to come. The only qualification for coming is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The want of realisation of the comforts of salvation ought, in no sense, to be a hindrance or disqualification. Of course, if you are cherishing sin, or cleaving to aught that is inconsistent with your profession, you could not rightly eat the bread, or drink the cup. On the other hand, no sense of sinfulness, no failure or darkness, if humbly confessed before God, though you may fail to realise the sense of forgiveness, or the light of His face, ought to keep you away ; for, as a believer, you are under the obligation of obedience, and when our Lord gave the com-

mand, He said nothing of states of mind or feelings, but enjoined His disciples as such to obey.

The question—How often ought we to break bread, or partake of the Lord's Supper, is not so important as some would pretend. There is no command of Christ as to the frequency of its observance. At the same time, we most freely concede that the early disciples appear to have obeyed this ordinance every Lord's-day, and, perhaps, even daily. We conclude this from Acts xx. 7, and ii. 46, the only passages from which we get any intimation of the practice of the primitive church. There being, however, no direction as to this, our Lord would seem to have left it to the hearts of His people. As often then as convenient, or as often as the Church with which you are in fellowship has decided to hold it—neglect not to come to the table of the Lord, which He hath prepared for us in the presence of our enemies—that we may celebrate and thereby remind ourselves of His unspeakable love to us in His passion and death.

II. *Its meaning.* We shall best arrive at this by considering the two parts in which the ordinance falls—the bread and the wine.

(1) *The bread.* Concerning the bread the apostle says, “And, when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. xi. 24). The bread was thus the symbol of the body of Christ; and, being broken, was the symbol of His body as broken on the cross. It brings to our minds, before all, the fact that Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the tree, “He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities”—that, in a word, He was our substitute in His sufferings and death on the cross. But we are enjoined to eat the bread thus broken—what does this signify? First, that we appropriate Christ as our sacrifice; and so, every time we take the bread, by the act itself we declare our faith in the Lord Jesus as made sin for us. We, therefore, perceive again how impossible it is for any but believers to partake of the Lord’s Supper. Secondly, by eating the

bread, we confess that we are sustained in life by the Lord Jesus—that He is as necessary to our souls as bread is to our bodies—that, indeed, He is the bread of life.

There are higher aspects of this truth into which this is hardly the place to enter. They must be learnt from increasing acquaintance both with Christ and His Word. One of these may be briefly indicated. Inasmuch as Christ, in every respect, was our perfect substitute, His bodily service, (if I may so speak), stands in the place of ours. Or to put it in another way, our flesh is evil—utterly corrupt. The flesh of Christ was sinless—holy. When, therefore, most depressed on account of the evil of our flesh, we may, with inexpressible delight, feed on His, appropriate His, and present it before God as our answer to His claims. We are, also, taught that we can only live and grow, as we feed upon Christ. Once more, the unity of all believers is herein declared. Thus, the Apostle says, “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body: for

we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. x. 16, 17).

(2) *The wine.* The wine sets forth the blood. "This is the New Testament in my blood" (1 Cor. xi. 25).

In this, also, the prominent idea is that of substitution; for the life is in the blood, and "it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (see Leviticus xvii. 10—14). The wine, then, tells us of a life poured out for us on the cross, the life which constituted our ransom; for we are "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). In addition to this, we may indicate three things:—(1) We are assured, by the remembrance of the blood, that our sin is gone, that we are safe from its penalty and judgment. Just, indeed, as Israel was secure under the protection of the blood, sprinkled by God's direction, on the Passover night, so are we. Nothing can touch us, while covered by the value of the blood, and every believer is so covered. In perfect safety we sit,

therefore, and feast at the Lord's Table; yea, He brings us there into His house of wine, and the banner over us is love: for the blood, which the wine displays, has made atonement for our souls. (2) In another view, the blood is the seal (as it were) of the new covenant. In Matthew we have the words, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28). We are thus reminded that the forgiveness of our sins is based on an everlasting covenant between God and Christ, and that the covenant has been ratified by the blood. It is, therefore, full of comfort to "drink of the cup," because we hear God speaking to us by it, and declaring that our sin is for ever blotted out by the blood of the new covenant. (3.) Once again, we drink the blood. The blood is the Life. Christ is our Life. We are taught, then, when we drink the wine that we have no life in ourselves—that the condition of our life is that we abide in Christ. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John vi. 53).

III. *The meaning of the whole.* Each of the parts of the Lord's Supper has its distinct significance ; and the parts combined have another. In other words, the Lord's Supper looks back to the cross and onward to the glory of the Second Advent. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death until He come." So also our Lord, "I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God," etc. (Luke xxii. 15—19). Thus, we have the cross connected with the crown—the humiliation with the exaltation ; we are shown that the Saviour did not die in vain, that, because of His sacrificial death, He is exalted to the right-hand of God—there waiting for His promised inheritance. By consequence, it also teaches us both our true position and attitude. If our Lord is coming to receive us to Himself, this is not our rest, our citizenship is in heaven, and we are separated from the interests of this time-condition. If, moreover, the Lord is coming, we should watch for His coming. The Lord's Supper in this way enforces

some of the Saviour's most solemn appeals, and is thereby calculated to awaken those that sleep by bringing them face to face with the certainty of His second advent.

We might almost say that the Lord's Supper comprises in itself everything relating to our redemption; for as long as we eat the bread and drink the wine, we cannot forget the true doctrine of the Cross,—that Christ crucified is the source of our pardon, acceptance, and life; nor can we forget the object of all Christian hope, our resurrection from the dead to be glorified with Christ, when He comes “to be admired in all them that believe.” The Lord's Supper, thus, includes the substitutionary work of Christ, our dependence on Him for all things, and the promise of our resurrection as connected with His coming.

Much more might be added, but we must leave the reader to pursue the subject farther by himself. And it will help him in so doing, to study it in connection with the Passover. We have said enough to help him to come with a sweeter joy to celebrate the death of his Lord.



“ Hallelujah ! who shall part  
Christ’s own Church from Christ’s own heart ?  
Sever from the Saviour’s side  
Souls for whom the Saviour died ?  
Cast one precious jewel down  
From Immanuel’s blood-bought crown ?

“ Hallelujah ! shall the sword  
Part us from our glorious Lord ?  
Trouble dire, or dark disgrace,  
From His heart our names erase ?  
Famine, nakedness, or hate,  
Us from Jesus separate ?

“ Hallelujah ! life nor death,  
Powers above, nor powers beneath,  
Satan’s might, nor hell’s dark gloom,  
Things which are, nor things to come,  
Men nor angels, e’er shall part  
Christ’s own Church from Christ’s own heart.”

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CHURCH.

**W**HAT is the Church? According to some, a more difficult question could not be propounded; but, if we disentangle ourselves from all preconceived opinions, from all human teaching, and confine ourselves to the Scriptures, we shall not find this to be the case. Nothing, indeed, is clearer than that the Church of Christ is composed of all believers; that every believer, therefore, every one who savingly believes, is a member of the Church—the body of Christ. The mention of this latter term shows that the complete definition of the Church is all believers, together with Christ, for He is the Head, of which all believers form the body.

But when we speak of the Church in a general way, we mean all believers. That this is the Scriptural view of the Church is seen from the very word used by the inspired writers. It is "ecclesia," *i.e.*, the assembly. Assembly of what? The only answer to be returned is —of believers; for it is they whom God has called out of the world, and formed into a people for His praise. Consequently, *any assembly* of believers, however small, is *a* Church; all the believers of any given place, are *the* church of that place; but when we speak of the Church of Christ, we must include in our thoughts all believers throughout the world (*See Acts ii. 41—47, iv. 31—35, xiii. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1, 2, xii. and xiv.; Gal. i. 1, 2; Ephes. iv. 1—16; Rev. i.—iii., &c.*).

It may be well to state, specifically, several important points in connection with the true nature of the Church.

I. *No one section of the Church has the right, but sins in claiming the right, to call itself the Church.* For if all believers are included,—and organically included, for they are members of the body of Christ,—none can be lawfully ex-

cluded. If any human organisation, therefore, terms itself "*the Church*," or "*the Church*" of any country or place, implying thereby that those believers who are outside of that organisation are not in "*the Church*," it places itself in opposition to the revealed will of God, and deals unjustly with the followers of Christ.

II. *No human authority can exclude a true believer from the Church.* This is a necessary consequence of the point above stated. Any one assembly may decide to withdraw from a believer, on the ground of "disorderly walk," or, it may be, on account of differences of opinion. But although—in the first of these cases certainly—the action of the church would be commanded and sanctioned by the Word of God, yet, if the disorderly member, though sinful and erring, has not lost his hold upon Christ, or penitently returns to Christ, his membership of the body of Christ, and consequently of the Church, is not forfeited. The point to be observed is that membership is the prerogative of every believer, and is in no way dependent on human

opinion or the decision of God's people respecting him, but belongs to him as a consequence of the new birth. Should, therefore, a single church, or any section of the church, refuse to acknowledge our claims, our standing in the sight of God is not affected. On the other hand, if they admit to their fellowship those who are unbelievers, having been deceived by their professions, they confer no benefit whatsoever, and in no wise make them members of the Church of Christ. Only believers can be members of the Church ; and no believer can be shut out—though he may be from the fellowship of other Christians—from the Church of Christ.

*III. No society, organisation, or so-called church, can claim to be a part of the church of Christ, as a whole, if it professedly admits unbelievers ; if it does not demand repentance and faith, as a condition of membership.* For since Christ declares His Church to be composed of believers, and believers alone, if we depart from His order, we lose our standing, and degrade ourselves to the level of human societies, corporations, and clubs.

In this, we have a true test of every body of men who claim to be a part of the Church. Are they formed on this foundation? or do they admit members indiscriminately? If they do, though they may have excellent individual Christians among them, they cannot, *as a whole*, be considered as a church, or as a part of the Church; nor, consequently, can we, as Christians, be united with such, for we should be acting again in plain contravention of our Lord's will.\*

IV. *It is our duty to consider every believer as one with us in the Church of Christ.* Our Lord prayed that all His followers might be one. And His prayer has been answered. As we have seen, all believers, as to nature, whatever their outward divisions, are one. Whether, therefore, other Christians will look on us as brethren in the Lord, or not, we must look on them as such; for the title to brotherhood is independent of our views and actings, and is dependent wholly upon the fact of regeneration. If regenerated, they are our brethren; and according to

\* See next chapter.

opportunity, we owe all such the offices of brotherly love. If a Roman Catholic is a true believer, while we deplore his errors of position and doctrine, and should seek to guide him into the truth, we may not refuse to consider him as our brother; for Christ has received him, and we dare not reject those whom He has received.

V. It seems superfluous to add that a building—the house in which we meet for worship—is not a church. And yet, error is so subtle, and our minds are so unconsciously influenced by the words we use, that it is better plainly to declare the truth. At first, no harm was meant, but, gradually, by the use of the term, the idea of sacredness began to be attached to the building, and then it could not be used before it had been consecrated, *i.e.*, made sacred. Upon that followed another almost deadly error—that it was only in a “consecrated” building that the presence of God could be manifested. The next step was the ordering of daily and private prayers in the “consecrated” buildings, from the idea that they

would be more acceptable with God, and more efficacious if offered in a “sacred” place. It was, or it seemed, a small thing, no doubt, at first, to call the house the church in which God’s people met for prayer and praise; but to this “small thing” may be traced almost all the hierarchical establishment and Romish errors that corrupt the Christianity of to-day in every land where the Gospel is preached. For, thereby, the church (the building) became a temple, and the temple required a priesthood, and a priesthood needed sacerdotal privileges and powers, in order to intervene between God and man; it was then deemed wise to wear priestly garments, and thus, proceeding from one step to another, they succeeded at last in obscuring altogether the Scriptural conception of the Church of Christ.

The antidote to this is to hold and proclaim that the Church of Christ comprises all believers, and that all believers enjoy the same standing and the same access before God; that the Church, therefore, is a spiritual house, founded and built upon Him who

is its chief corner-stone, and inhabited by the Holy Spirit; that the Church is composed of all whom God has called out of darkness into His marvellous light, and who have been formed into one body by the Spirit of God.

“ ‘Tis heaven begun below  
To hear Christ’s praises flow  
In Zion, where His name is known :  
What will it be above  
To sing redeeming love,  
And cast our crowns before His throne ?

“ When we adore Him there,  
We shall be void of fear,  
Nor faith, nor hope, nor patience need !  
Love will absorb us quite,  
Love, in the midst of light,  
On God’s eternal love shall feed.

“ Oh ! what sweet company  
We then shall hear and see !  
What harmony will there abound !  
When souls unnumber’d sing  
The praise of Zion’s King,  
Nor one dissenting voice is found !

“ With everlasting joy,  
Such as will never cloy,  
We shall be fill’d, nor wish for more ;  
Bright as meridian day,  
Calm as the evening ray,  
Full as a sea without a shore.

“ Till that blest period come,  
Zion shall be my home ;  
And may I never thence remove,  
Till from the Church below  
To heaven at once I go,  
And there commune in perfect love !”

SWAIN.





## CHAPTER V.

### FELLOWSHIP OR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

**N**OTHING is more obvious to those who have studied the Scriptures, than that it is the duty of every believer to unite himself with the people of God.

I. *The grounds of this duty.* (1) The fundamental ground of all is the essential unity of believers. We are one by nature. We have the same life, the same indwelling spirit, the same Lord; or, to use the exact words of Scripture, there is “One body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” And on this the exhortation is grounded that

we are to "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 6). To maintain isolation, the one from the other, would thus be to contradict our oneness in Christ, and the consequent fact that we are members one of another. (2) The Lord Jesus Himself desires us to manifest our unity. He thus prays: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." The fulfilment of this prayer necessitates visible fellowship—makes it an imperative duty for every follower of Christ. (3) Many of the duties enjoined upon us can only be discharged in fellowship with other believers. We are bidden to rejoice with those who rejoice, to suffer with those who suffer, to minister to the wants one of another, to be to our fellow-Christians, in a word, what Christ has been to us, in service and self-sacrifice. We cannot even partake of the Lord's Supper if we stand alone. (4) In every place where the Gospel was first preached, those who were converted were

gathered into an assembly or church. It was so in Jerusalem, in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica—everywhere God's people were united in fellowship. Hence, the letters of the inspired writers are addressed, as, for example: To "*the Church of God which is at Corinth*" (1 Cor. i. 2). (5) The confession of the name of Christ involves the same duty. On these, among other grounds, no believer is in his right position who has not sought fellowship with the people of God. Not only so, but out of fellowship, he places himself in great temptation and peril. To stand alone is ever a difficult task; and, when our standing alone contravenes the order of God, it is next to impossible that we should stand safely. Christ, indeed, is all-sufficient; but He pours His sufficiency through His own appointed channels—and, if we are outside of these, we must not be surprised if He teach us our weakness and sin by suffering us to fall. If, then, you have believed, seek, at once, to be united with your fellow-believers.

II. *The purposes of fellowship.* Some of

these have already, necessarily, been indicated; but they demand a fuller notice. And it will help us, if we first explain clearly what is meant by the term "fellowship." It is one constantly used in the New Testament, and is the same word with communion. That is to say, fellowship and communion are used to translate the same word from the original. Its most simple meaning is to share something in common—or a common partnership. The purposes of church fellowship, then, are to share with our fellow-believers in all things which belong to them as the people of God.

(1) We are to share with them in worship. Hence the exhortation, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." And it is of the utmost importance that we obey the injunction; for experience abundantly shows that there is a close connection between life and growth, and love for fellowship in worship. If, indeed, there are professing Christians who seldom thus unite with other believers—who only unite with them as often as they deem it necessary for the maintenance of their Chris-

tian character—it may be regarded as certain, that they are in a cold and unspiritual condition. It is a bad sign if we do not love the assemblies of God's people. (2) We are to share with them in all their obligations to service. Ministering to the wants of the poor, the sick, the afflicted—carrying the Gospel to those who are benighted, at home or abroad—all these duties devolve upon believers as united together as a corporate body. It is true that many of them may be discharged, in a way, individually. But it was not the Saviour's intention that they should be thus discharged; for all His directions on these points were given to the disciples collectively, or to churches through His servants. On this account, greater blessing may be expected on labours for Christ, in which the union of His people are manifestly seen. For, thereby, we honour Him ourselves, and glorify His name before the world. (3) We are also to share with them in common blessings. "All things are ours." But, in God's dealing with souls, the blessings of His grace are often more fully realised by some than by

others. If in fellowship, those who receive special blessings become the channel of blessings to all who are associated with them. "For we are members one of another," and, consequently, the joy of one is the joy of all, and the sorrow of one is the sorrow of all. How often has this been experienced in meetings for prayer or worship! We have gone, cold and barren; but, while assembled, God has made another to minister to our state, and we have returned to our homes rejoicing.

These are some of the purposes for which we unite in fellowship, according to the will of our Lord. They are so important—so essential for the maintenance of Christian life, as well as for the fulfilment of the responsibilities of our position—that no one, as has already been said, can afford to neglect fellowship; for if he does, he both imperils his safety, and is disobedient to the expressed mind and will of God.

*III. The question may be asked with whom shall we unite in fellowship?* The question is important, as many a young convert is perplexed by the number of different bodies of

Christians that exist round about him. It most generally follows that a convert unites himself with the people amongst whom he was brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light. Sometimes, however, he may have received his blessing by other instrumentalities; or, he removes to another locality, and, in these cases, the question becomes one of great perplexity. We will then lay down a few Scriptural Rules that may be helpful at such a time, and in such a condition. (1) In the first place, it is a clear duty not to unite with any whose terms of fellowship contradict the Word of God. One example may be given. If the standards or creeds of any church contain the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, the real presence in the Lord's Supper, or the power of the human priesthood to absolve from sin, or any other false doctrine, you cannot, consistently with your duty to the Lord Jesus, unite with that church. And, be it especially observed, that it is not what is proclaimed from the pulpit, but what is embodied in their doctrinal terms of fellow-

ship, or their doctrinal standards that constitute the foundation of fellowship. This general example admits of a wide application. Before, therefore, any one seeks fellowship with a church, he should examine its creeds and doctrines (for many Christian churches have such in a printed form) by the light of God's Word. (2) It is very important that you unite with the church with which you most nearly agree; for agreement in doctrine and life is an essential condition of fellowship. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" And, it must be remembered, that the more perfect our fellowship, the more we honour our Lord. We have seen that He prayed that we "all might be one;" and He also said, "By this, shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Where this agreement does not exist, it is occasionally the cause of much disaster. We have seen cases of members of churches differing from the pastor, differing from the church, and using all their influence covertly or openly to destroy the unity of the church,

and to mar its prosperity. The spectacle is not only unseemly, but unwittingly such are instruments of Satan. They, in fact, mangle the body of Christ. Hence the urgent importance of uniting with the church with which you are most at one.

(3) Once more, you should not unite with any church in which you would be expected to conceal any truth whatsoever. If it would constitute an offence to teach and propagate any doctrine of God's Word, you ought not to be found in such a place. Neither openly or tacitly may we consent to hide anything which God has revealed to us. If we do, not only are we unfaithful to Christ, but we shut ourselves out from increasing light and knowledge. For if we are not faithful to what has been revealed, God will not reveal more. "To him that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not shall be taken even that he hath."

These rules and remarks will be sufficient to supply an answer to the question proposed.

*IV. The duties of fellowship.* Most of these

will be gathered from what has been said under its purposes. A word or two, in addition, will therefore suffice. (1) We belong to the church with which we are united. We ought, therefore, to hold ourselves at its disposal for service. (2) We are bound to submit to its discipline, if occasion should arise for its exercise, when administered according to the Word of God. (3) We must submit ourselves to its constituted authority, on the same condition that the authority be exercised according to the Scriptures. (4) It is our duty to contribute, as God may prosper us, towards the necessary expenses of the church. (5) It need scarcely be added that service of love and self-sacrifice is owing from all to all.

The following Scriptures may be studied in connection with the above points. (1) Acts xv. 22; xiii. 1—3; 1 Cor. ix. 19; 2 Cor. iv. 5. (2) 1 Cor. v. and vi.; 2 Cor. ii. 1—11; 1 Thess. v. 14; 2 Thess. iii. 11—15. (3) 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 17; 1 Peter v. 5, etc. (4) 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2; 2 Cor. viii. and ix. (5) On this point read carefully the first epistle of

John ; and on the whole subject, the practical portions of the epistles generally.

Fellowship, entered upon and carried out in the Spirit thus advocated, will be no mean foretaste of the fellowship of heaven. By sin, not only have the ties which bound man to God been rent asunder, but also those which bound him to his fellow. In Christ, God is reconciled to believers, and believers are formed into one holy brotherhood, baptized into one body. Love is the great cementing power. God's love in Christ binds us to Himself ; and His love in our hearts flows out to all our brethren, and perfects our unity. Love, therefore, is the atmosphere, as indeed it is the condition of Christian fellowship. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii. 35). The more perfect, therefore, our mutual love, the more perfect will be our mutual fellowship.



“ ART thou a saint ? And doth  
Thy God thee own ?  
Call thee a child, an heir, a chosen one,  
One with Himself and His belovèd Son,  
Heir of His crown ?

“ Hast thou the love of Christ,  
Thy Saviour known ?  
The love that passeth knowledge, the rich grace  
That stooped to poverty and death, to place  
Thee on His throne !

“ Know’st thou the Christ of God ?  
His cross and love ?  
Then art thou severed from this drossy earth,  
Linked to the city of thy better birth,  
The land above !

“ Dead, yet alive, thou art,  
Alive yet dead ;  
Thy old life buried in thy surety’s tomb,  
Thy new life hid in God ’bove death and doom,  
With Christ thy head !

“ Thy life is not below,  
’Tis all on high !  
The Living One now lives for thee above,  
The Loving One now pleads for thee in love,  
Thou canst not die !

“ Live then the life of faith !  
The life Divine ;  
Live in and on this everlasting One,  
Who bears thee on His heart before the throne,  
His life is thine ! ”

BONAR.





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION.

 T is of the first importance, that every believer should clearly understand the position he occupies before God—the standing which God gives him in grace; for, otherwise, he knows not how to use the blessings and privileges which are therewith connected. It is, indeed, no uncommon thing to hear Christians pray for blessings which are already theirs, by virtue of the place into which they are brought in Christ Jesus. A knowledge, therefore, of the actual position we occupy is essential both to our peace and growth.

(1) *Every believer is pardoned.* His sins are utterly gone. Christ has “blotted out the

handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and taken it out of the way, having nailed it to His Cross" (Colossians ii. 14). We may thus confidently say—"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. ciii. 12); or, 'we are reconciled to God in Christ Jesus,' and God can only be reconciled to us when all our sin is put away. So far, probably, there will be no misunderstanding. You will say "Yes; we quite believe that our sins were put away when we first found Christ; but, then, we are continually conscious of sin, and cannot, therefore, realise that it is put away." If you cannot, it arises from a want of knowledge of what God has really done for you in redemption. Not only does He blot out our sins when we first believe, but, on certain conditions, He does not impute to us the guilt of our after sins. "*If we walk in the light*, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7); for God has punished our sin, once for all, in the body of

Jesus Christ. The blood, therefore, which represents His death (for the life is in the blood) covers us with its efficacy from the commencement to the end of our life of faith. Sin, thus, cannot come between God and the believer who is walking in the light. This will be also seen if we refer again to our death and resurrection with Christ. When speaking of baptism, we saw that God regards the believer as having died with Christ. Regarding us as having died with Christ, He looks upon us *as having paid the penalty for sin*—not simply the penalty for sins, but for sin, our sinful condition and nature, and, consequently, He will not—indeed, He cannot—exact a penalty already paid. The believer, thus, dwells continually in the light of God's face. “But,” you will perhaps say, “will not this lead to carelessness of walk and conduct?” It ought to have precisely the contrary effect, for the greatest power in the world is love, and God's love, as exhibited in redemption towards the believer, is the mightiest of all, and this ought to bind us in gratitude to God. There is, however, a provision

made, even for this contingency. God never imputes the guilt of sin to, and thus never punishes, a believer for sin. But He chastens him. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. xii. 6). If a believer thus falls into sin—and does not confess it, and so have it put away—God will come near in chastening power, and scourge and chasten him until He has weaned him from his iniquity. This is the secret of most of the sharp trials, afflictions, and adversities, through which the Christian has to pass.

We should, then, remember that our sin is for ever put away. We should maintain unbroken peace and communion, by constant humble confessions of sin and iniquity; and never forget that if we cleave to that which is evil, God will chasten us, and not spare us for our crying that He might separate us from all iniquity.

(2) *Every believer is holy before God.* Do not mistake our words. We do not say that the believer is holy in himself, but holy before God. That is to say, in other words,

he has a perfect standing, because He stands in God's eyes, clothed in all the merits, the perfectness, the righteousness of Christ. We, thus, read that we are "justified by faith" (Rom. v. 1); that, "by one offering He (Christ) hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14); that, "we are complete in Him" (Christ) (Col. ii. 10). This, in another aspect, is only to say that God sees us in Christ Jesus, and looking at us in Him, He does not see spot or blemish, or any such thing in His people. Our standing before God is, thus, the standing of Christ; for we are raised to sit together in heavenly places in Him (Eph. ii. 6). Again, we might say, that this necessarily results from our union with Christ. As you know, every possible figure is used in the Scriptures to explain the oneness of Christ with His people (e.g., the Vine and the Branches—the marriage relationship—the body and its members, &c.) As He is, therefore, so are we in the presence of God. This position—so wondrous in its exaltation and

blessing—entails upon us corresponding obligations. These will be dealt with on the chapter on the Christian's Walk; now, we confine ourselves to expounding the ground or position which we occupy.

(3) *Every believer is a child of God.* Not a child by adoption, but a child by birth and nature. The term adoption is misleading. It is used in our translation of the Bible, but the proper word would have been “sonship.” This distinction should never be forgotten. An “adopted” child might be disadopted, might cease to be a child at the will and pleasure of the adopter. A child, by birth and nature, always remains a child, and such a child is the believer. Our Lord teaches this when He said to Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again.” Peter speaks of our being “partakers of the Divine nature” (2 Pet. i. 4). John says, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, *and are*” (John iii. 1). These last two words form part of the true text. Paul also says, “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with

Christ" (Rom. viii. 17), showing that our sonship is made to rank with that of our Lord.

We *are*, then, the children of God; and this fact reveals to us the endearing aspect of our relationship towards God—the nearness of our standing. We, thereby, see that He has redeemed us, made us righteous, and given us the nature, and together with the nature, all the privileges of children. We also see that as children, we dwell in the Father's presence, are the objects of the Father's complacent delight, of His love; and, thus, the position we occupy is the nearest that can be imagined.

(4) *Every believer is a priest.* Peter, writing to Christians, says, "Ye are an holy priesthood"—"a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9). The latter of these expressions answers to the ascription of praise by the Apostle John in the Apocalypse, "and hath made us kings and priests unto God (Rev. i. 6). This position of ours follows upon the complete work of our Lord and Saviour. Under the Mosaic economy, only the priests were

permitted to go into the holy place, and only the High Priest into the holy of holies. But, when Christ died, the veil of the temple was rent, signifying that access to the holiest of all was henceforward open to all believers : "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. . . . But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us " (Heb. ix. 8—11). And, in several places in the Epistle, the writer points out that in consequence of this, we have ever access into the holy of holies, to the throne of grace (See Heb. iv. 15, 16).

Our position, therefore, in this aspect also is in the immediate presence of God. As worshippers, we come at once to the throne ; as suppliants, we bow before the mercy seat.

Our title is the presence of Christ Himself in the holy of holies—seated (not standing, but seated) at the right hand of God, as our advocate and intercessor—and we, as has been said, are accepted in Him. When we pray, therefore, we need not stand at a distance, and beseech God to come near to us, for, by faith, we may cast ourselves down at once, before the mercy seat; we need not doubt the acceptance of our prayers and praise, for, ascending as they ever do, through our great High Priest, they are perfumed with the sweet-smelling fragrance of His precious blood—yea, they come up before God with all the acceptableness of the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb that was slain. It is true that, owing to the weakness of our faith, we do not always apprehend this; but the blessing attaches to us notwithstanding the imperfect character of our apprehensions. We should, therefore, ever seek more perfect knowledge and a stronger faith, that, by God's help, we may “come boldly unto the Throne of Grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

It need hardly be added, and yet it is safer to do so, that since every believer is a priest, there can be no order of priests in the Church of Christ.

To assume the title, therefore, as distinguishing one class of men from another, is both to ignore the claims of Christ and to usurp the rights and privileges of His people; for all believers have the same standing and the same position of blessing.

(5) *Every believer will reign with Christ.* The ascription in the Apocalypse, to which reference has been made, speaks of our being made kings, as well as priests. "If we suffer with Him," says Paul, "we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12). Our Lord, also, reveals to us the same thing, when He says, in the prayer contained in John xvii., "The glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them" (22). Hence it is that the coming of Christ is ever set forth in the Scriptures as the goal and consummation of the hopes of the Christian; for when He comes, He comes to be glorified in His saints;" "when He who is our life shall appear, then shall ye

also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4); for then it is that "He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21); and thereupon we shall "live and reign with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. xx. 4). This expectation of the believer adds dignity to his position. It gives us a glimpse of the wondrous exaltation to which we are raised in Christ; and fills us with adoring love, as we contrast our past with both our present and our future condition.

These are some of the aspects of our standing before God. Each one of them needs to be studied, and apprehended in order to a right sense of our responsibilities, as well as to a true enjoyment of the blessings of redemption. Combined, they show us that the measure of our position in grace is the measure of the exaltation of Christ. Already we are seated with Him in heavenly places.



“ I give my heart to Thee,  
O Jesus most desired !  
And heart for heart the gift shall be,  
For Thou my soul hast fired :  
Thou hearts alone would’st move,  
Thou only hearts dost love.  
I would love Thee as Thou lov’st me,  
O Jesus most desired !

“ What offering can I make,  
Dear Lord, to love like Thine ?  
That Thou, the God, did’st stoop to take  
A human form like mine !  
‘ Give Me thy heart, My son : ’  
Behold my heart,—’tis done !  
I would love Thee as Thou lov’st me,  
O Jesus most desired !

“ Thy heart is opened wide,  
Its offered love most free,  
That heart to heart I may abide,  
And hide myself in Thee :  
Ah, how Thy love doth burn,  
Till I that love return !  
I would love Thee as Thou lov’st me,  
O Jesus most desired !

“ Here finds my heart its rest,  
Repose that knows no shock,  
The strength of love that keeps it blest :  
In Thee, the riven Rock,  
My soul, as girt around,  
Her citadel hath found.  
I would love Thee as Thou lov’st me,  
O Jesus most desired.”

RAY PALMER (*from the Latin*).





## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK.

**T**HE position of the believer—the position as defined in the last chapter—determines the character, or rather, indicates what should be, the character of his walk. He is cleansed from sin, and he is accepted in the beloved, and, therefore, in his walk he should be separate from evil, and holy unto the Lord, consecrated to His service. There is one passage of Scripture which embodies these two aspects of Christian walk. Speaking of the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Apostle proceeds, “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus ii. 14).

(1) *The Christian should be separate from all evil.* This is enforced, in every possible way, in the Scriptures; and in none more forcibly than by the minute regulations which were given to govern the conduct of God's ancient people Israel. It will suffice to allude to these generally.

They were, in the first place, separated from all the peoples of the earth, by the action of God; this represents their position. In accordance with this, they are told, with the most scrupulous exactness, of the difference between things clean and unclean. Of the clean only might they eat, and the clean only might they touch, and if they disobediently or accidentally ate, or came into contact with unclean things, they became themselves unclean, and were compelled to undergo a process of purification, before they could again be in communion with the people of the Lord. And, in some cases, the most severe penalties were exacted from those who did not attend to these commands. (See Lev. xi.—xvi. chaps., also xviii.—xxii. etc.) Considered in themselves, these things might

appear to the unspiritual mind to be trivial and unimportant ; but, examined in the light of their moral significance, they reveal God's hatred of sin and uncleanness, and the imperative obligation which He lays upon His people of being separate from evil.

The same lesson is enforced by direct exhortations. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18; read from the 14th verse.) Pass, indeed, to any of the Epistles, and you will find that they abound in injunctions to walk "not after the flesh but after the Spirit." (See 1 Pet. iv. 1—3; Gal. vi. 7, 8; Rom. viii. 1—4; Eph. ii. 1—3; Col. iii. 5—11; 1 Thess. iv. 1—8, etc.) And the ground of the exhortations is invariably the position into which we are brought in Christ. Take one, as an instance—that in Colossians, third chapter. "If," says the Apostle, "ye be risen with Christ, seek those

things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, *not on things on the earth*" (1-2 verses). The argument is this—' You have died and are raised with Christ. The life, therefore, you have, is a resurrection life. Being so, what have you to do with evil, unclean things—"things of the earth;" for all these are connected with death, your old condition. To go back to these, then, would be to deny your standing, as well as to incur the chastisement of God.' As we have said, in previous chapters, more than once, you are regarded by God as risen with Christ, and thus as having passed into a new sphere of existence, and this entails upon you the responsibility of "keeping your garments unspotted from the world."

The several aspects of our position, presented in the last chapter, indicate the same lesson. The believer is pardoned—cleansed from guilt—will he, therefore, pollute himself with uncleanness? He is holy before God; can he publicly deny the grace of God by

going back to sin ? He is the child of God; ought not the child to obey the precepts of his Father? He is a priest; and can the priest carry defilement into the very holy of holies? He expects to reign with Christ; and entertaining this hope, will he not purify himself even as Christ is pure?

The obligation, then, is undoubted. The more difficult question is to decide what it is to be separate from evil. But this difficulty may be surmounted by a careful study of the Scriptures. It is evident, then, that we must begin with the heart. "Set your *affection* on things above, not on things of the earth." "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." "*Love not* the world, nor the things that are in the world (Col. ii. 1; Matt. vi. 21; 1 John ii. 15). If the heart be changed—is set on things above—is absorbed with Christ, we cannot love evil. Nay, in proportion to our love to Christ, we shall hate, and thus be drawn from evil. But, with the heart set on Christ, we need to be very circumspect in walk and conversation, because oftentimes, we un-

wittingly become mixed up with unclean things. We should, therefore, watch and pray that we enter not into temptation—we should stand aloof from everything that is not concerned with Christ. If we may speak in a figure—Christ and the world form two circles, whose circumferences touch, but never intersect, and we, as believers, should never step out of the circle Christ, into the circle, world. It will sweep a host of perplexing questions to remember this: for then, instead of saying—May I do this? or may I go there? you will say—Shall I honour Christ by doing this? or shall I find Christ by going there? There will be no question about positive sin in any one's mind; the question will rather be about what are considered indifferent things. Take, then, amusements. If they begin with the world, have the world for their object, and end with the world—they are evil, for they belong to the things of the world, which we are commanded not to love. The same test will apply both to enjoyments, associations, and friendships. “This is a hard

saying." No doubt it is, and yet we ask you to look upon the path of the Lord Jesus. Is He not our example? Let us not fear, then, if, following closely in His steps, we are isolated from much that we have held dear, even from many dear Christian friends who may be lax in opinion and practice, for His love will more than compensate for every earthly loss, and the more entirely we are separated from all that is not of Him, the nearer shall we be to Him, and the warmer shall we feel this loving embrace.

" Oh, fix our earnest gaze,  
So wholly Lord on Thee,  
That with Thy beauty occupied,  
We elsewhere none may see."

Then we shall be separate from evil, and shall love to be separate from evil, and shall " hate even the garments which are spotted by the flesh."

(2) *The other aspect of the Christian's walk is consecration.* We are separated from sin unto God for holy uses—like the vessels of the temple—yea, like the priests who ministered in the sanctuary. This follows from

the fact that we are holy before God. Hence, He calls us saints, holy persons, and, *in this sense*, we are sanctified, from the moment of our acceptance, *i.e.* separated unto the service of God. Separation from evil and consecration ought to be intimately connected; the latter, indeed, will be in proportion to the former. Let us, then, inquire what consecration is? It is the yielding ourselves up wholly to God—the surrender of the whole man—with all that we love to the service of God. It is to regard ourselves as the absolute servants of the Lord, even as the Apostles often termed themselves, “the slaves of Jesus Christ.” This involves utter self-renunciation, yea, death to self in all its forms, and living unto God. It involves our sitting at the feet of Jesus, with this question ever on our lips, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” *The will of Christ in that condition is our only law.* We are His, and He is the only object of our lives. We desire nothing; we seek no object; we form no plan; we do absolutely nothing apart from Him. We have laid ourselves wholly on the altar;

this is entire consecration, and entire consecration is the obligation of every believer. But, to be entirely consecrated, necessitates our being filled with the Spirit ; for it is only in His energy and power that we can "yield ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. vi. 18). On the other side, entire consecration ; *i.e.*, reckoning ourselves as belonging wholly unto God, is a condition of our being filled with the Spirit ; for if we are cleaving to anything that is evil, or keeping back any part of the price, any part of the inheritance which Jesus has redeemed by His own blood, we hinder His power and limit His operations in our hearts.

(3) No one will dispute the positions we have laid down ; but the question may be asked, "*Have we any fixed rule of walk and life laid down for us in the Scriptures ?*" Undoubtedly, and in a two-fold manner, so that every difficulty might be removed to the end that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, might not err" in the path of holiness.

(1) In the first place, God's law, as revealed in the Scripture, and explained by our Lord and Saviour, is our rule of life. It is not forgotten that this is denied ; that there are many who profess to believe that the law is a very low standard, that, indeed, the Christian is expected to go infinitely beyond what is commanded in the law. But the answer to such dangerous assertions (for their tendency is to practical antinomianism) is easy. Surely it is not possible to go beyond loving God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and it is therein—in loving, as Paul tells us—that we fulfil the law. Moreover, the law which was, and is, "holy, just and good," was the standard of the life of our Lord ; for He Himself says, speaking in the Psalms, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God, yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Ps. xl. 8) ; can we, then, go beyond the holy example of the Lord Jesus? The very thought is blasphemy; and, hence, we cannot be too careful to maintain the everlasting obligation of God's holy law upon every believer ; for, if you nullify it,—

and it is practically nullified, when it is depreciated, under the pretence of setting up something higher and better,—you release men from all obligations and tempt them to do whatsoever is right in their own eyes. (2) The life of the Lord Jesus is a perfect embodiment of God's holy law, and He is, therefore, our perfect example. He fulfilled all righteousness ; He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. We have, thus, a perfect guide to walk and conversation. In the law we can read of what God has forbidden, of those things, evil things, which we may not do ; and, turning to the life of our Lord, we shall find that He never once did a single thing which the law prohibited.

We may, also, read of what God enjoins ; and, if we would know, how these commands are to be translated into the life, we can see it in the example of the Saviour. The example of Christ, then, is the guide to the Christian's walk. "He that saith He abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6). In Him we may see, both the separation from sin, and

the consecration to God ; and He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps (1 Pet. ii. 21).

(4) *It only remains, then, to inquire how we may attain to this holy walk—a walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.* Everything we have said will show the need of sitting continually at the Saviour's feet. This involves the childlike spirit—a felt desire after conformity to this image. Having this, like Mary, you must constantly sit before Him to hear His words, to learn His will, to ask “what will Thou have me to do?” to learn how He would have felt, acted, or spoken, in circumstances similar to yours; and, only thus, will the way in which you should walk become plain before your eyes. And do not forget, that it is in meditation on the Scriptures we sit at the feet of Jesus. When on earth, He spoke with the living voice; now, He speaks through the written Word, and it is, therefore, in converse with it, that we learn His will. Besides this, we have to remember our powerlessness to walk after

the example of Christ. Like Paul, we are made often to feel that the thing we would we do not, but that which we would not, that we do (Rom. vii.). This should teach us our entire dependence upon the energy of the Spirit. God has given us the Spirit, and He writes God's laws on our hearts, and it is He who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

We should, then, ever cast ourselves on His power, to accomplish in, and by us, what we cannot effect for ourselves. In other words, we must walk *by faith—by faith in Jesus Christ*; for we are told to “watch and pray that we enter not into temptation;” to “resist the devil;” but whence do we derive the power to comply with these exhortations? It is from Christ alone, and, consequently, we must look to and rest in Him; for we are mightiest when we rest in Christ, as then we are linked on to Omnipotence, all of which He wields for our defence, safety, and support. Do not suppose, however, that rest in Christ means sleep, or carelessness. By no means. He who rests the most perfectly

will watch the most vigilantly; for it implies the steady upward looking to Christ, through all storms, perils, darknesses, temptations, ever looking to Christ. Cast yourself thus wholly on Christ, and supporting you in His strong arms, He will make your feet swift to run in the way of His commandments. “Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Heb. xii. 1—3). So doing, your life will be a continual proclamation of Christ, and as continual an exaltation of His name. Looseness of walk, inconsistencies of life, on the part of God’s people, have been, and are, the great stumbling blocks in the way of the

Gospel. Strive, therefore, by God's help, so to walk, "having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. ii. 12.)

"Lord, I desire to live as one,  
Who bears a blood-bought name;  
As one who fears but grieving Thee,  
And knows no other shame."





“ HOLY SPIRIT, gently come,  
Raise us from our fallen state,  
Fix Thy everlasting home  
In the hearts Thou did’st create !  
Gift of God most high !  
Visit every troubled breast :  
Light and Life and Love supply ;  
Give our spirits perfect rest !

“ Heavenly unction from above,  
Comforter of weary saints,  
Fountain, Life, and Fire of Love,  
Hear and answer our complaints !  
Thee we humbly pray,  
Finger of the Living God,  
Now Thy sevenfold grace display,  
Shed our Saviour’s love abroad !

“ Now Thy quickening influence bring,  
On our spirits sweetly move ;  
Open every mouth to sing  
Jesu’s everlasting love !  
Lighten every heart ;  
Drive our enemies away ;  
Joy and peace to us impart ;  
Lead us in the heavenly way !

“ Take the things of Christ and show  
What our Lord for us hath done ;  
May we God the Father know  
Only in and through the Son :  
Nothing will we fear,  
Though to wilds and deserts driven,  
While we feel Thy presence near,  
Witnessing our sins forgiven.”

HAMMOND.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### SANCTIFICATION.

**A**S soon as we believe in Christ we are sanctified. This statement is often made, and is quite true; but needs explanation. Inasmuch, then, as the believer stands before God in all the merits of Christ, God cannot see him otherwise than as sanctified. But this refers to standing rather than to condition—and we have ever need to recollect, whenever sanctification is the matter of discourse, the distinction between these two things. In regard, then, to the former, we are sanctified at our conversion, otherwise we could not have access into the presence of God—we are, therefore, sanctified by the blood of Jesus (Heb. x. 29, 1 Cor. i. 2); in regard to the

latter, we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and this work is both gradual and progressive, and made dependent, to a large extent, upon the walk of the believer. We may, then, explain this subject by asking what is sanctification, as so defined, and how is it accomplished.

I. *What is this sanctification?* It is the formation of Christ in us, it is conformity to Christ in the whole life, the subjection of the whole man to the will of Christ, so that we become living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men. It is thus, inherent, not imputed righteousness; *i.e.* it is inner righteousness, or, holiness, which streams out through our whole lives, robing us in garments of light and beauty—not the righteousness of Christ which God so graciously reckons to us, on faith in the Redeemer. It is, indeed, holiness of heart, and consequently holiness of life.

II. *How is this accomplished?* By the Holy Spirit of God (Rom. viii. 1—14, Gal. v. 16—26, etc.). By what means does He effect this in us? An allusion to one of His titles will,

very largely, answer this question. Our Lord terms Him the Comforter—the Paraclete. Now, this word—Paraclete—is so comprehensive that we cannot, by any single term, express its meaning. There are two extremes, between which it vibrates—“Comforter” is the one, and “Advocate” is the other. The Paraclete *comforts* by revealing Christ—bringing His words to our hearts—some, it may be, of the exceeding great and precious promises, in times of darkness and temptation; He *advocates* our cause within us, stirs us up to lay hold on God, in times of conscious need and weakness; He also *exhorts* us (for that is another meaning of “Paraclete”), urges us forward, rouses us up out of our lethargy, and incites us to follow Christ. This—all this—implies that He is displeased when we are disobedient, and hence we are bidden not to grieve the Spirit; and so His very displeasure becomes a motive to holiness. His work, therefore, is very extensive in us; and the object of it all is our sanctification. His instrumentalities are, mainly, twofold. In the first place, He employs the Word of

God. Hence the prayer, “Sanctify them by Thy truth.” The same thing is seen in the utterance of the Psalmist—“Thy word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against Thee;” and again, “By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the path of the destroyer.” He guides us into all truth, as our Teacher, *i.e.* enables us to understand its meaning, and then in the presence of temptation, as in the case of our Lord (Matt. iv.) brings it to our remembrance, and thereby keeps us from evil. By the Word of God He reveals to us the path of holiness, urges us to walk in it, and supplies us with the power to walk in it, and thus He conforms us to the image of Christ.

In the second place, He avails Himself of our co-operation. We are, thus, commanded to “walk in the Spirit,” by the Spirit “to mortify the deeds of the flesh;” “to mortify our members that are on the earth;” “to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure.” Not that we are to understand that we have strength in ourselves; but, as several of the exhortations show, we are

urged to do these things, because God has supplied us with strength in the gift of the Spirit to enable us to do them. In the presence of temptation, therefore, we have to cast ourselves on Christ to enable us by His Spirit to overcome ; we are not to listen to the flesh, but we are to mortify it—mortify it, by heeding the teachings of the Spirit, and obeying them in the power which He imparts.

He is, therefore, the absolute Author of all inward holiness—of our sanctification ; for it is He who indicates the path, warns us against transgression, incites us to obedience, comforts us in the conflict, urges us to faith and prayer ; and strengthens us to walk in His ways. This is His constant work in our hearts, and because it is constant, He begets in us holy habits of soul, deepens and strengthens our aspirations after conformity to God's Will, creates in us a love for holiness, and a hatred of evil ; develops the powers of the new man by training and exercise ; and thereby brings us into closer and closer communion with God, and causes us day by day to grow in grace and in the know-

ledge of Christ Jesus, that is, in other words, He gradually sanctifies us, and His work is not done until we see the Saviour face to face.

The Spirit's work in us, as the sanctifier, may be more clearly apprehended if pointed out in another aspect. When the Lord Jesus came into the world, He said : “ I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, *Thy law is within my heart* ” (Ps. xlv. 8). God promises concerning His people, “ I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts ” (Heb. viii. 10). In this way God will conform His people to the image of His Son—sanctify them. But how does He accomplish this ? By the Holy Spirit. It is He who forms the new man in us, and on that new man—the new nature which we receive from God—He writes that holy law of God; and dwelling within us, He develops and strengthens our new man, in order that the old may be brought into subjection to His will. But since the old man is incurably corrupt, the conflict will never cease, and we can only go forth conquering and to conquer, because He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world.

Hence the exhortation: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." The fact that God, by His Spirit, dwells in us becomes an incentive to constant effort, watchfulness, and prayer, that we enter not into temptation.

III. We said, above, that the Spirit's work of sanctification depended largely upon the believer's walk. *It follows from this remark, that we may both retard or hasten our sanctification.* We may, in the first place, retard it. If, for example, when the Spirit and the flesh are in conflict, we listen to, and obey the promptings of the flesh, we limit, of necessity, the power of the Holy Ghost. If, in the presence of temptation, we turn a deaf ear to His pleadings, and yield to the seductions of the Evil One, we throw ourselves out of the path of holiness—we then walk after the flesh and not after the Spirit. Every act of sin—unbelief—every act of opposition to the strivings of the Spirit, hinders His working. He may not, indeed, does not, retire from us; but grieved, He is often silent, and

ceases in His gracious work of purifying our souls. On the other hand, we may hasten our sanctification. By watching and prayer, we may escape temptation (Matt. xxvi. 44); by feeding on the Word of God, we may ever have a light to our feet and a lamp to our path; by dwelling in the presence of our Lord, we shall be delivered from many a snare; by constant waiting upon Him, both in private, and in the assemblies of His people, we shall continually receive grace and strength to aid us in our journey;—by these things, if I may use the expression, we shall encourage the working of God's Spirit, and thus shall go from strength to strength, until we appear in Zion before God.

But we would again remind you that, for strength to avoid limiting God's Spirit and to hasten His sanctifying work, we must look to Christ. By faith we pass from death unto life, by faith we live (John xi. 25, 26), and by faith we make war and conquer. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith (1 John v. 4, 5). The whole secret of sanctification is hanging upon Christ; and

the soul that thus depends on, and looks to Him, will never fail of the Spirit's presence and power. It should also be remembered, that God is sovereign in His choice of instrumentalities for our sanctification. Every trial, sorrow, and difficulty, when we submit ourselves to Him, is made subservient to this end. In this fact, lies the secret of our different experiences. Our particular path is determined by our spiritual needs. Joys and sorrows, prosperities and adversities, have all their appointed work; for they are all so many weapons and tools wielded by the Divine Spirit to slay our sinfulness, and to fashion us after the image of Christ. If, therefore, we would grow in the likeness of our Lord, and be sanctified, we must yield ourselves up to the energy of the Spirit. Let Him fill our souls, reign in us, subduing every lust, mortifying each sinful motion of the flesh, purifying us as gold in the furnace, and then, at length, we shall reflect the face of the Refiner, be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."



“ THINE, Jesus, Thine,  
No more this heart of mine  
Shall seek its joy apart from Thee ;  
The world is crucified to me,  
And I am thine.

“ Thine, Thine alone,  
My joy, my hope, my crown ;  
Now earthly things may fade and die,  
They charm no more my soul, for I  
Am Thine alone.

“ Thine, ever Thine,  
For ever to recline  
On love eternal, fixed and sure,—  
Yes, I am Thine for evermore,  
Lord Jesus, Thine.

“ Then let me live  
Continual praise to give  
To Thy dear name, my precious Lord ;  
Henceforth alone, beloved, adored,  
So let me live—

“ Till Thou shalt come,  
And bear me to Thy home,  
For ever freed from earthly care,  
Eternally Thy love to share :  
Lord Jesus, come !”

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## CHAPTER IX.

### CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

**G**NE of the first questions that meet the young believer is,—what can he do for Christ? Nor can he afford to leave it unanswered. At the same time, it is beset with difficulty and temptation; and it not unfrequently happens, that the whole character of his Christian life is determined by the answer which he gives. It may, therefore, not be without service, if we add a few words on this subject.

I. Nothing can be truer than that every Christian is under the obligation to serve Christ; for, indeed, we are not our own, and we are exhorted to present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1). What ever powers or energies, gifts or talents, we

possess, we are thus under the obligation to lay at the feet of Christ ; for He is our Lord, and we are bound to do what He commands, to spend and be spent in His service.

II. While this is undoubtedly true, there can be no greater mistake made than by engaging in work for the sake of work, or undertaking service for which we are not qualified. There are, thus, many ministers of the Gospel who have been miserable all their lives, because they persuaded themselves, or allowed themselves to be persuaded, that it was their duty to enter upon this department of labour. We have known, in like manner, Sunday-school teachers—devoted and conscientious—struggling on with their work, but labouring, week after week, with the wearying sense of want of aptitude for that special work. So in other departments of Christian service. Now, when such cases occur, it is at once evident, that those who are so unhappily situated, have made a mistake as to their calling ; that, in fact, they are attempting to do what is not their duty to do.

III. We will, then, give a few hints, or rules, which may assist the young Christian in coming to a decision as to what he ought to undertake for Christ.

(1) *Above all, remember that the impulse to activity should proceed from within, and not from without.* That is, listen to the teachings of God's Word, and the promptings of His Spirit, rather than the persuasions of fellow Christians; for if you engage in labour, only because you have been persuaded by some zealous friend, you will find yourself, it may be, committed to duties for the discharge of which you have not the necessary spiritual power. In that event, the work, so far from being a means of grace, will become destructive to the life you already possess. The friction will wear you out. We may, perhaps, illustrate this principle by a reference to Pentecost. When did the disciples begin to preach the Gospel? When they were filled with the Spirit. Then they began to speak with other tongues as *the Spirit gave them utterance.* They began to speak because they could not be silent. This should be the

rule of Christian labour. We should work, because we cannot be idle—because, like the prophet, we are weary with forbearing and cannot stay. There is a danger in the assertion of this principle, though it is entirely Scriptural. Some may say, “We feel no spiritual impulse to labour, we may, then, be at ease in Zion ?” The answer is, “If you do not, evidently your heart is not right ; but the remedy is not in work, but in waiting before God.” Yes ; in that case, the believer has to wait for a mightier baptism of the Spirit, so that he may go forth in the strength of the Lord ; for should he attempt to go otherwise, it will be to certain defeat and disaster.

(2) *Constrained to work, carefully ascertain what your special gifts are.* Or, to put this in another way, patiently ask the Lord what He would have you to do ; for He will only give the work which you are most qualified to perform. If you are most qualified by His grace and Spirit to visit the sick, do not go into the Sunday-school. If you are most fitted for the Sunday-school, do not become

a tract distributor. If you are most fitted to be a tract distributor, do not become a preacher of the Gospel. Remember, also, that, if you have no active work, it does not follow that you are neglecting your duty. In some cases the Lord places us where we are, and deprives us of opportunities of active work—in order to discipline us and teach others by our example. If, indeed, you look simply to Christ, and are willing to do what He gives you to do, you may rest content whether you are in active labour, or whether you are sitting still at His feet. To be unhappy because we cannot do this or that, is really insubmission to Christ.

(3) *If what we are doing for Christ leads to the neglect of any duty, it cannot be right.* Suppose, for instance, a married man, or a married woman, were so engrossed with different activities which they had undertaken, that they could not attend to their home claims. We cannot believe that such activity could be pleasing to our Lord. He has, indeed, often rebuked such labours, for, now and again, we have seen in the

Church the spectacle of men traversing the length and breadth of the land in their zeal, while their homes have been so neglected that their children have become a bye-word and a reproach. This, we are aware, is a strong illustration. But the principle is infallible, that no supposed work for Christ can relieve us from the obligation of any one duty of our natural position.

(4) *If Christian activity absorbs our opportunities for private prayer, or worship with our fellow-believers, it cannot be right.* The cases of Mary and Martha illustrate the former supposition. Martha was very busy, and she was ministering to the supposed needs of Christ; but it was Mary who sat at the feet of Jesus, and listened to His words who received the special commendation. Since, also, we are commanded not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, no thoughts of ours about duty can justify a departure from, or disobedience to a written precept.

The more active we are, in fact, the more urgent our need of silent communion with God and fellowship with other believers. We

must feed every day on the bread of life, or, very soon our souls will droop, and though our activities may be more energetic than before—and probably will be, to conceal our defects—they will be lifeless and mechanical. And, remember, that it is not the time we spend in labour, but the power we bring to it; and our power will be in proportion to the time we spend in waiting on God. One word spoken in the spirit will effect infinitely more than ten thousand spoken in the energy of the flesh.

(5) *The object of all labour should be the glory of Christ: not to please ourselves or others, but to please Christ.* This principle will help in many ways. “Why am I doing this? Is it to please my fellow Christians or my Lord?” “Will this work of mine glorify Christ?” Such questions will clear away from our path many of the activities that have grown up round the professing Church, and give us a firm principle on which we can rest, in refusing, or accepting, whatever work may be proposed to us. Our time is short, and we are bound to redeem that time, and

redeeming the time necessitates our employment of it for the best possible ends and purposes. Let us not be, therefore, led astray into accepting work or offices which any one, whether a Christian or not, may do or fill; but, as servants of Christ, let us hold ourselves at His absolute disposal. Let our eyes be fixed on the Lord, waiting, and ready to do His will, and happy only in doing that will; for then we shall think less of the character of our work than of doing His will; and so we shall become imitators of Him who said, when He came into the world, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." We are His, and His alone. Our time, thoughts, energies, and capacities, are all His, and all must therefore be held at His disposal and for His service; and it is when we realise this that we enter into the joy of entire consecration to the service of God.

(6) *Be careful to observe that all your labour proceeds upon Scriptural principles.* Such a caution may seem unnecessary after the rule last laid down. But it is often seen that although work may have been entered upon

with a sincere desire to glorify Christ, after a time this object is lost sight of, or it is sought in an unscriptural way. Nothing whatever will justify a departure from the Word of God, whatever the professed aim in view. For instance, since God tells us to "owe no man anything," it cannot be right to go into debt even to increase our usefulness. Or, again, worldly methods of raising funds for religious purposes can never command God's blessing. Hence the importance in this, as in all things which concern the Christian life, to make the Scriptures the light to our feet and the lamp to our path.

If the reader carefully ponders the above hints, he will not have much difficulty in answering the question proposed; for if he, above all, seeks to be filled with the Spirit, and humbly waits before God willing to do His will, his path of service will become as plainly marked as if he had heard a voice behind saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." And then his work, his service, whatever its character, will become a most blessed means of grace, because he will be walking in

fellowship with his Lord. And he will be encouraged to do this by a constant study of the Saviour's example, by marking the meekness, the humility, and the utter self-sacrifice of all His labour. He was among His disciples as One that served ; He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister ; and hence He washed their feet, bore their burdens, and laid down His life for them and for us. If then, we are His, we shall be able to say,

“ I love to kiss each print where Christ  
Did set His pilgrim feet ;  
Nor can I fear that blessed path  
Whose traces are so sweet.”

“ ALONE with Thee ! alone with Thee !

O Friend Divine !

Thou, Friend of friends, to me most dear,  
Though all unseen, I feel Thee near ;  
And, with the love that knows no fear,  
I call Thee mine.

“ Alone with Thee ! alone with Thee !

Now through my breast

There steals a breath like breath of balm,  
That healing brings and holy calm,  
That soothes like chanted song or psalm,  
And makes me blest.

“ Alone with Thee ! alone with Thee !

Thy grace more sweet

Than music in the twilight still,  
Than airs that groves of spices fill,  
More fresh than dews on Hermon's hill,  
My soul doth greet.

“ Alone with Thee ! alone with Thee !

My softened heart

Floats on the flood of love divine,  
Feels all its wishes drowned in Thine,  
Content that every good is mine  
Thou can'st impart.

“ Alone with Thee ! alone with Thee !

I want no more

To make my earthly bliss complete,  
Than oft my Lord unseen to meet ;  
For sight I wait till tread my feet  
Yon glistening shore.

“ Alone with Thee ! alone with Thee !  
There not alone,  
But with all saints, the mighty throng,  
My soul unfettered, pure, and strong,  
Her high communings shall prolong  
Before Thy throne.”

RAY PALMER.



## CHAPTER X.

### PRAYER.

**A**CCEPTED in Christ Jesus, we may come whensoever we will to the mercy-seat ; for through Him we have access by one spirit unto the Father (Ephes. ii. 16).

If, at any time, we doubt this the presence of Jesus, at the right hand of God, as our great High Priest ought to dispel the doubt ; for, it is on the ground that He has entered into the heavenly place, in this capacity, that we are exhorted to come boldly to the Throne of Grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. It will be thus seen at once, that until we are saved, we are not in a position to offer acceptable prayer. We do not say that God never hears

the prayers of unconverted men. Out of His abounding mercy He may even grant them the desires of their heart, in pursuance of His own purposes. It is, however, still true that it is not until we are saved that we have the title to pray, and the assurance that our prayers shall not be in vain. But, when we are saved, prayer is one of the most important elements in the Christian life. There could not, indeed, be such a thing as a prayerless Christian; for what breathing is to the child, or what eating is to the body, prayer is to the soul.

I. Its importance may be seen from the Scriptures. The saints of old were all distinguished by their prayerfulness. The Lord Jesus was most emphatically a man of prayer; we have continual notices in the gospels of this feature of His life. On more than one occasion, we are told that He spent the whole night in prayer. The chief events of His life are, also, connected with prayer. He was praying when he was baptized; when He was transfigured; and, when He was bowed down with sorrow, in the garden of Gethsemane. Most

of His mighty acts were, in like manner, preceded by prayer; and His last words on the Cross were words of prayer. His servant Paul was characterised by the same spirit, as every one of his epistles abundantly testify; and it is this apostle who exhorts us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. v. 17). No Christian, therefore, can lightly neglect prayer.

II. *The meaning of prayer.* The simplest idea of prayer is asking in order to receive. The term is generally used with a wider significance; for we often include under it, confession, thanksgiving, and praise, as well as petition; and perhaps it is better to keep the wider meaning before our minds, for then it covers almost the whole ground of our communion with God, and enables us to understand more fully the exalted nature of the exercise, that it consists in the utterances of the saved soul before God—that, in a word, it is the adoring language of the redeemed soul, now breathing forth its gratitude and love, and now telling out its needs and sorrows. Prayer is thus the meeting place, in Christ, between God and the believer; God

listening and the believer speaking; God's yearning love going forth to meet and satisfy the believer's needs; the believer's desires going out after the fulness of God. Prayer is thus communion in its highest sense; for in it the believer is made a partaker of God's boundless stores. Yea! how often, when lying in the dust before the throne, is he made to feel that he is sitting at the same table and feasting with God; for if, on the one hand, the believer feasts in prayer on God's provision in Christ, on the other hand, God feasts on the sacrifice which the believer presents through Christ when he prays. God, therefore, delights in His people's prayers; and hence we ought to delight in the exercise.

III. *Some different aspects of prayer.* It is a *duty*. Not only is it a duty because we are commanded to pray, but also because of the mercies we continually receive. Every blessing bestowed demands our thankful praise. Living, as we then do, in God and by God, our every breath should go out in prayer. We are utterly dependent on Him in Christ;

everything we are and have, we have received from Him ; we owe Him everything, and hence we can never be released from the duty of prayer. It is a *necessity*. When our hearts are borne down by conscious need, we *must* utter our wants before God ; when filled to overflowing with the joys of His presence, or the realizations of His love, we *must* pour forth our thanksgivings and praise. The possession, therefore, of life in Christ necessitates prayer ; for it is the channel alike of our needs and praise. It is, also, a *privilege*. To have permission to stand in the presence of the Most High ; to tell the King of kings and the Lord of Lords our sorrows and our wants ; to carry, indeed, every thought of our souls to Him, as children to a father, is a privilege of the most exalted kind. It involves the utmost condescension on the part of God, and the most dignified exaltation of His people in Christ.

There is every reason, then, looking at it in whatever aspect we may, why we should cherish prayer ; and this, no doubt, accounts for one of the most noted facts of Christian experience—that the most eminent Christians

have always been distinguished by eminent prayerfulness.

IV. *The conditions of true prayer.* It is essential that we should understand these, as otherwise we may often pray in vain.

(1) All true prayer must be offered in the name of Christ. He thus, Himself, says, "If ye shall ask anything *in my name*, I will do it" (John xiv. 14). That is, first of all, we can only approach God through Christ. He is the only Mediator, the only High Priest, the only recognised channel (if we may so speak) through which prayers can be offered or received. Whenever we pray, we must thus pray in dependence on Him, in believing union with Him, resting ourselves alone on His merits and death, as the ground of our acceptance. His name must be our plea, the foundation of our hopes of being heard and answered. Not only so, but praying in the name of Jesus implies seeking His glory; and thus it is almost asking *for* Christ, as well as *through* Christ. The nearer we approach His condition, the mightier, the more prevailing will be our prayer.

(2) True prayer must be offered in accordance with God's revealed will. Every one who has heard prayers offered in public, must have noticed that petitions are sometimes presented which cannot be answered, because they are opposed to God's will. It is necessary, therefore, to search the Scriptures that we may know, both concerning ourselves as individuals, the church, and the world, what God has promised to do, that we may pray according to His will, and be able to plead His promises in support of our petitions. One illustration may be given. Believers sometimes pray for the gift of God's Spirit. Now they have the Spirit as a constant indwelling guest, and what they need, therefore, is not the gift of the Spirit, but the manifestation of His energy and power; and it is for this they should pray. True prayer must be intelligent prayer, prayer, that is, instructed from the Word of God. (3) True prayer demands the putting away of all known sin. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. lxvi. 18). Hence the need of confession, in connection with all our

prayers—confession of sin known and unknown, that we may ever approach the mercy seat with purged consciences, cleansed from all sin by the precious blood of Christ. (4) True prayer must be offered in the Spirit. As Christ intercedes for us above, the Holy Ghost intercedes for us within our hearts, “with groanings that cannot be uttered. And if we yield ourselves up to His power, it is He who will prompt our desires, quicken our sense of need, and open our lips to pray. Then, we shall ask not what we think we need, but what He teaches us that we need ; and this will be that which the Apostle Jude terms ‘praying in the Holy Ghost.’ (5) It need hardly be added that faith is indispensable to true prayer. All that has been said implies this ; for without faith we cannot pray in the name of Jesus. It is, yet, important to examine the ground of our petitions ; to ask ourselves what title we have to offer any particular request, what promise we have for encouragement, and whether we are able, resting on the promise, to expect the answer sought. Our prayers would be fewer, if we

pursued this plan, but far more effectual, as it would ever remind us of the need of faith, and this would induce in us the cry for ability to believe, so that we might claim the answer to our prayers (see Matt. xxi. 21, 22). (6) A holy walk gives efficacy to prayer. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." For a holy walk enables the believer to realise the nearness of God, and close communion increases faith, and hence, the ever increasing prevalency of his prayers.

V. *Recommendations.* (1) Have stated times for prayer. Your particular circumstances must decide, when and how long these should be. McCheyne's rule, however, should always be adopted, unless impracticable—that is, to see the face of God, in the morning, before you see the face of men. Fixing your times, keep to them resolutely. It will, sometimes, happen to you that you cannot pray, that every effort to do so will end in failure. When that is the case, do not give up your time of prayer, but wait on, though your thoughts wander to the end of the earth—

wait on in silence, and you will often find that the spirit of prayer will come. Satan would be delighted to frustrate your prayers; but waiting upon God will frustrate Satan's designs. Language is not always necessary. God sees the heart, "and He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. viii. 27). (2) Form the habit of carrying everything to God. The smallest trouble, the most trivial need, the slightest difficulty, tell it all out before the mercy-seat—and, at the time when they arise—and it will give you ease and peace of mind, as well as strengthen your faith. You cannot be too minute in prayer, or carry too many things, or go too often to the Throne of Grace. Adopting this recommendation, you will live in the very atmosphere of prayer; to tell your heavenly Father everything will become the habit of your lives; you will pray without ceasing. (3) Never be weary of waiting for answers to prayers. If not heard at once, do not conclude that your prayer is in

vain. Rather see in the delay a test of faith; and a call to patient waiting on God. Thus, regarding delay, you will seldom be disappointed.

Having said so much, we must now leave the subject to your own consideration. Experience will teach you many things; and you will soon learn that everything is to be valued which increases your prayerfulness, and everything is to be avoided which mars the spirit of prayer. One of the most devoted missionaries the church has lately possessed, but who has now received the recompense, took the Apostle's words—"pray without ceasing"—as his motto, because he found that all blessing and strength were connected with obedience to this precept. It will be an everlasting gain to all who follow his example.

" Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air;  
His watchword at the gates of death,  
He enters heaven with prayer."



“ WHAT is the Christian’s power and might,  
What is his boast and strength in fight,  
His shield and buckler, ward and weapon,  
Whatever ills or dangers happen,  
His help in trouble ? ‘Tis the Word,  
The sure, the strong, the mighty Word.

“ What’s sharper than a two-edged brand,  
Unsheathed and gleaming in the hand ?  
What like the barb of wingèd arrow,  
Pierces asunder joint and marrow ?  
Sharper than arrow, or the sword,  
Is the sure Word, the mighty Word.

“ What thunders in the sinner’s ear,  
What makes him tremble as he hears ?  
What peals more loudly than the thunder,  
Which rives the forest oak asunder ?  
What pierces heart and soul ? The Word,  
It is the sure, the mighty Word.

“ What whispers soft as vernal breeze,  
Which scarcely stirs the leafy trees ?  
What whispers words of peace and healing  
To hearts, which keenest grief are feeling ?  
What dries all sorrows ? ‘Tis the Word,  
It is the sure and mighty Word.

“ O Word of power, O Word of might,  
The Christian warrior’s strength in fight ;  
Abide with me, when soft winds whisper,  
Or thunder rolls, at morn, or vesper,  
My shield, my buckler, and my sword,  
Abide with me, Thou mighty Word.”

C. M. ARNDT.





## CHAPTER XI.

### STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.



ROM much that has already been said, the necessity of constant meditation on the Word of God will be apparent. When we are first brought to Christ, we are comparatively ignorant—ignorant of the character of God, of His work in redemption, of His purposes in respect of the future, of our standing in Christ, of the path of duty, and of the inheritance of the saints in light. We become disciples, that is, learners ; we are introduced into the field of our service, to learn by teaching and experience both the relations of God in Christ Jesus to us, and of ourselves to Him. The Bible contains God's revealed will. All that is necessary for us to know,

whether of the past, present, or future—all that is needful for our own health, strength, and growth—all that concerns our worship and service, is therein contained. If, therefore, we would know much, and accurately, concerning these things, we must study the Scriptures; and it is because this has not been sufficiently seen that there are so many weak Christians. They have been taught the elements of the plan of salvation; they are saved, but still feeding upon the simple milk which is only adapted for babes, and neglecting the strong meat which men require, they continue in a spiritual state of infancy; and the consequence is that, instead of walking with a firm step, they must either be supported in the arms of another, or they are frequently stumbling and falling: they become, in fact, the sport of every passing wind, are carried about with divers doctrines, and are thus a continual source of weakness to the Church. The remedy for all this is to be found in a constant feeding in the green pastures, and a lying down beside the still waters of the Word of Life. The subject is

so vital that it may be advisable to deal with it both in the way of caution and direction.

I. *Caution.* There is no benefit whatever in reading God's Word for the sake of reading it. By this is meant, that reading—the act of reading, the Bible cannot of itself benefit us. It is to be feared, that many are tempted, as a duty, and it may be from a little superstition, to read a few verses every morning and evening from the Bible, and to feel satisfied with doing this, without asking themselves at all if they have understood what they have read. It is a similar feeling which prompts many to meet with God's people for worship, because they feel unhappy if they do not. Now any peace which follows, in either case, from the reading or from the worship, must be both illusive and deceptive. Let it then be most distinctly understood that reading God's Word cannot benefit us, unless we understand what we read. There is no magic influence streaming from its pages which will purify us, apart from the meaning opened up, and applied by the Spirit of God.

II. *Direction.* This general caution will

be sufficient, as other warnings will either be given, or implied in dealing with the positive side of direction—giving helps for the more efficient study of the Word of God. (1) From what has been already said it will be seen that the *mind* must be brought to the work. Whatever of thought and intelligence we possess, must all be brought to the examination of what is written. To remember this will save us from just opening the Bible, and letting the eyes glance down the page to catch at anything that may arrest the attention, and then closing the Book, thinking we have *read* our portion.

Indeed, we should never pass a sentence without trying to understand its sense. There will be many which may surpass our utmost efforts for a long time; but the habit formed of questioning every word and sentence will, in time, yield astonishing results. One simple illustration may be given. The writer had passed over the statement, for years, “He shall come down like rain on the mown grass,” without following the direction just given. One day, however, he said,

“What does this mean?” He had not the slightest idea; it seemed, at first sight, unintelligible. But, pondering upon it, he suddenly saw that it meant that “He shall come down like rain on the meadow newly-mown,” and, thereby, he discovered the richness of the promise—that just as the rains descend on the newly-mown meadow, and cause the grass to spring forth luxuriantly, so shall Christ come down, at the period indicated, upon His people. Thus used, the Bible will become a new book. (2) As the Spirit caused the Word of God to be written, inspired the holy men of old to write it, only the Spirit can teach us its meaning. This, at once, shows the need with all our activity of mind, of entire dependence on Him who is sent to guide us into all truth. One of the eminent saints of this century never took his Bible without crying, “Lord, open Thou my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.”

In like manner, whoever would grasp the mysteries of our faith, as recorded in the Word, must read in the attitude of prayer, in

child-like dependence on the teaching of the spirit. Otherwise, the simplest things of God will seem dark, confused, and incomprehensible.

A striking exemplification of this is seen in the matter of commentaries on the Word of God. Some of the acutest minds and intellects, of almost all nations, have ever been engaged in the exposition of the Scriptures ; and some of the acutest of the acute have been men who have not known what it is to listen to the teachings of the Spirit. The consequence is, that while they have done immense service in the elucidation of historical, grammatical, and geographical details, they are worse than useless when they come to the things of God. On the other hand, there are devout men who have expounded portions of the Bible, who are utterly untrustworthy in all that concerns critical knowledge, but who are very masters in Israel when they deal with spiritual truths. If, therefore, we have not the Spirit of God, and do not prayerfully depend on His teaching and guidance, the Bible, in regard to the

main purposes for which it has been written, must for ever remain a sealed book. (8) It must be read with a subject mind. The mind, as has been seen, must be exercised in dependence on the Spirit to discover the meaning of the Word ; but when the meaning is discovered, we must bow implicitly to it. If there is no dispute as to what the Word of God says, we may not sit in judgment upon it, explain it away, or justify its non-application to ourselves, but must confess to its authority over us. We must neither say "unreasonable," nor "impracticable;" but, by God's help, we must own our obligation to yield obedience to all its teachings, precepts, and commands. To place ourselves in this attitude, presupposes our hearty assent to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. This subject is too large for the purpose we have now in view. It may, however, be said that a full and hearty assent to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is a necessity of faith. A writer says that, "our first word is 'yes,' our second 'no,' and our third 'yes' again." This is true in our views of the

Scriptures. As children, we doubt nothing that is told us from the Word of God; as young men and women, in the strength of our wisdom in the things of this world, we begin to question and dispute, but maturer life, and larger experience, and closer communion bring us back to our old childlike confidence in every word that God has spoken. And of this we are quite sure, that the more you study the Scriptures, the more will you be convinced that its every word, and part, and design, came direct from the mind of God. (4) Ever lay down, as a rule of interpretation, that the Bible means what it says,—that it is to be taken literally, unless there is something in the nature of the thing said, or in the context, to indicate that it is to be taken symbolically. No one can express what the Church has lost, in the Psalms and the prophets, from an unfortunate theory that all the prophetic statements are, more or less, to be spiritualized. Thus, Zion is made to mean the Church, and Babylon, Rome,—not that there is any indication of these meanings in Scripture, but because we are told

that these terms are to be interpreted after a spiritual manner.

The effect of such a theory is that the Bible, in these particulars, becomes a most uncertain book, and utter discredit is thrown upon some of its richest portions ; for if one says that (*e.g.*) Babylon means Rome, another is at liberty to say that it means London. It is, in such a case, not what the Bible says, but what men think it says. Do not listen to any such teaching, but take the Word of God as you find it, and believe that God writes what He means us to understand.

(5) Another very important thing to inculcate is, that when commencing any single book of Scripture, you should first ascertain the special object or scope of that book. This remark applies to both Testaments. Thus, Exodus has for its subject historical redemption : Leviticus the access of God's people to the Divine Presence, or worship ; and, to keep this in mind, wonderfully helps in their study. For when you have their central idea, light is thrown at once upon all their details, however apparently trivial. So with the

Prophets. The commencing chapter generally indicates the time of the prophecy, the special nature of the prophet's call and work, as well as the object of his mission, and a careful comparison or combination of these particulars will prove very often a most efficient key wherewith to unlock their secrets. It is, also, so with the New Testament. Take the four gospels. Each has its special work, each presenting Christ in a different aspect. Thus Matthew describes Him as the Messiah, the King of the Jews; Mark, as the Servant of God; Luke, as the Son of Man; and John, as the Son of God. Concerning the Epistles we need hardly speak, because it is so obvious that they deal, for the most part, with distinct subjects. We may specify two, that to the Romans and that to the Hebrews. In the Romans, the subject is justification by faith. God there tries the sinner in His courts of justice, and thus the believer is said to be justified. In the Hebrews, the subject is access to God—temple worship. God there deals with the believer as a worshipper, and hence, here he is not said to be justified,

but sanctified, because the only question is his qualification for worship, and that qualification is sanctification. These hints will be enough to show the great advantage of reading with a knowledge of the object of the writer, and the disadvantage of reading here and there favourite chapters, or but portions of a book. To be read intelligently, Scripture must be read consecutively, and with the design of the Book ever in view. (6) The connection of Scripture is also important and instructive. This is often obscured by the unfortunate arrangement of our Bibles in chapters and verses, and from the habit of preachers taking single verses for their sermons, without any regard to the context in which they are found. If you would comprehend the whole scope of God's teaching, you must often disregard every division introduced by man. Open your Bibles, for instance, at Isaiah xxiv. and read the chapter. You will have much consoling truth; but, if you examine closely, you will see that the prophecy, of which it forms part, does not end till the close of the twenty-seventh chapter; and, hence,

all must be read if you would understand the whole. Turn, again, to 2 Cor. vi. and you have a beautiful chapter; but if you leave off at the end, you will miss a great deal, as the first verse of the next chapter is the summing up and application of the whole subject. These are only specimens. You will find that the sense of Scripture is continually marred by the rending of a subject into two chapters or more, as the case may be.

The connection and order of incidents and subjects is also, at times, most striking. Look, for instance, at Luke xviii. In the first verse, we have an exhortation to pray always and not to faint. Then follows (1—8) an illustration and application of an instance of successful importunate prayer. Next, we have a parable (9—14) teaching us as to the spirit in which such prayer ought to be made. Thereupon, we have an incident (15—17) showing the necessity of conversion in order to the possession of this spirit. After that, comes another incident (18—30), which reveals to us that self-renunciation—a forsaking of all—is an indispensable condition of con-

version. Every prop must be knocked from under us before we can rest on Christ. Then we are taught (31—34) that the way to this change is by the Cross of Christ; and, last of all, we gather from another incident (35—43) that we need Christ to open our eyes in order to understand these things. Instance after instance might be multiplied of the same kind—all showing that there is a reason for the position of every statement and every incident.

It is helpful in another way. Sometimes debates are raised as to the cause of the different arrangement of the same events in different books (as, for example, in the Pentateuch, the Kings, and the Chronicles, and especially in the gospels). The answer, and the only answer which effectually meets the difficulty, is that there is a spiritual reason for the difference—God teaching one truth by one arrangement, and one by another. A patient investigation of these things will soon make the Bible for you, not only the most instructive, but the most interesting, of all books.

(7) The comparison of Scripture with Scripture should never be neglected. Thus, in the prophetical books, you may find a slight hint in the one, which is expanded in the other, and the details given in one place, where you have, in another, only the barest statement of a fact. It is a most important rule that the Bible is sufficient for its own interpretation. Do not despise helps; on the other hand, avail yourself of all such. But, if you have none, remember that, within the Bible itself, you have everything necessary for its interpretation. The all-sufficiency of the Scriptures is as true a doctrine, as is that of the all-sufficiency of Christ.

We have dwelt, at large, upon this part of our subject. We need, therefore, only add that industry and patience are prerequisites. Then, attending to the few hints given, in dependence, at all times, on the teaching of the Spirit, you will soon become mighty in the Scriptures. Other books are good, sometimes; but the tendency, at the present time, is rather to the supplanting of the Bible by religious books. But, when you have once

drunk deeply into the spirit of the Scriptures, the magazine, the religious treatise, or lighter religious reading (useful in their way) will become almost distasteful to you. Or if this be too strong a word, you will always choose the Bible, in preference to other books. You will then understand the words of the Psalmist—

“ Thy testimonies are wonderful,  
Therefore doth my soul keep them.  
The entrance of Thy words giveth light,  
It giveth understanding unto the simple.  
I opened my mouth, and panted,  
For I longed for Thy commandments.”

Ps. cxix, 129—131.

For “ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works ” (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). It is impossible, therefore, to give too much time to the Scriptures; for they contain everything that it is necessary for the Christian to know on earth.



“ ONE name is on my heart engraven,  
    A name of fragrance rich and rare ;  
‘Mid storms, this Name’s my quiet haven,  
    In darkest days I’ve sunshine there.  
Yes ! I repose on Jesu’s name,  
    My joy ’midst want, and grief, and shame.

“ In this sweet word there blooms my heaven,  
    The very sound is bliss untold ;  
I’ve proved it’s worth in troubles seven—  
    This anchor, come what may, will hold.  
Jesus, my Lord ! I’m safe in Thee :  
    Speak but the word, my foes shall flee.

“ My heart beats high, it bounds with pleasure,  
    If one but breathe that precious name !  
In Christ, I’ve heaven’s all of treasure,  
    Who knows Him, needs must sing this fame.  
As honey-comb, as choicest wine,  
    Is, Lord, this peerless name of Thine !

“ Oh ! that I could but tell Thy glory !  
    Shout ‘ Jesus,’ heart and hand and voice !  
Sing loud ! that all may hear the story,  
    Say Christ has made me to rejoice !  
Say none but Christ will do for me,  
    Christ my eternal joy shall be !

“ ‘Tis as I say,—Christ shall be ever,  
    My Lord, my God, my strength, my song !  
The hollow world may mock—ah, never,  
    Did she aught else than Jesus wrong.  
My riches none can take away,  
    Jesus is mine through endless day.”

CLAUS HARMS.





## CHAPTER XII.

### CHRIST IS ALL.

**C**HRIST is all. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Before all things, by Him all things consist. He is, and was, and is to come; and, being Divine, is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. He is the commencement, the continuation and consummation of our salvation. We need nothing outside of, or beyond Christ. Possessing Him, we have all things—every need is met and satisfied. He fills our hearts, and we have, therefore, peace, rest, and joy. Christ is, thus, the first object of our spiritual vision. It is He that opens our blind eyes, and we see Him standing before us full of mercy, grace and love. Commencing our

pilgrimage, we follow Him, keep our eyes fixed on Him who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Encountered by foes, or by difficulties, or oppressed by needs and weaknesses, we gaze on Him at the right hand of God, who ever maketh intercession for us. Surrounded by darkness, we watch for His appearing, and our hearts are unquiet, until His voice pierces the gloom—"It is I, be not afraid." Laid on beds of sickness, we, with feverish restlessness, toss to and fro, until He comes and lays His hand upon us; thrown into the fires of persecution, we are satisfied when we see His form by our side. Through all our journey,—from the time we cross the Red Sea until our feet dip in the cool waters of Jordan,—we want nothing, if He, as our Pillar of Cloud, by day, and our Pillar of Fire by night, is kept before us in the path.

Rising in the morning our first thoughts are of Christ, laying ourselves down at night, we whisper to ourselves—

" Be my last thought how sweet to rest  
For ever on my Saviour's breast."

And so, when we are about to die, our last words will be of Him, and our first thoughts, when we unclose our eyes in eternity, will be of Him. Jesus bounds our horizon on every side, in life, in death, or in eternity. By His death we have been redeemed, by His life we live, and His life will be ours in the New Jerusalem. In our prayers He is our way. He is our plea, and He is our sacrifice and priest; when we sing He is the object of our praise: when we read the Scriptures we remember that He is the Word, and His face beams upon us in every page.

Christ is everywhere for the believer. At home it is His presence that cheers his soul and blesses his household; in business it is Christ who gives him strength, and who shields him from temptations and snares; and it is for Christ that he labours and toils; away from home, in a strange land, Christ is still with him, and becomes to him, in his lonely solitude, more than all besides. Christ goes where he goes, and dwells where he dwells. He is thus light in darkness, joy in sorrow, strength in weakness. He is every-

thing to the believer, for indeed He is all and in all. Seek then nothing apart from Christ, nothing but Christ. Abide in Him, and He will abide in you, in perfected communion. Be filled with His love, that you may ever tell forth His praise. Yea, cry daily,

“ Vain, delusive, world adieu,  
With all of creature good !  
Only Jesus I pursue,  
Who bought me with His blood ;  
All thy pleasures I forego,  
All thy wealth and all thy pride,  
Only Jesus will I know,  
And Jesus crucified.”















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