

BIBLE HERALD 1882

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Bible Herald 1882, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

4 Chapters

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Bible Herald 1882

Christ and the Church

Fragments from Notes.

DOES the Head judge the members? (Whatever may be the incapability of the Church to take care of the members of Christ, I have seen that the feeblest soul is nourished and cherished, in the midst of all, by Christ Himself.) My feet may get soiled by my walk down here, and this ought not to be. Christ will wash them again and again, but He does not judge His members. I have been quickened and raised up together with Him, and that identifies me with heaven, and with the center of heaven itself.

as apprehended of Christ for this place in glory. But is the heart really occupied with the glory we shall have? As a stream of heavenly blessing in all my troubles, is it the thought of my soul, I am to be up there with the Son of God in the glory. He has apprehended me for this, and my citizenship is there? Then amidst all the wretched short-comings of one's own heart, I may have present rest and peace in Him who cannot fail. If I have a consciousness of my fellowship in life with Christ up there (Col. 3:1-4), there will be a throbbing of joy in my heart, flowing from communion with Him, sitting on the right hand of God, and from setting my mind on the things that are above, a communion which is to flow on forever and ever, and which I date back to the quickening in His grave, His life then flowing back to us (Ei). ii. 5-6).

If I love God I want to be holy, for He is holy. "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." The desire for sanctification has thus no limit at all. The effect of God letting me know His plan of associating me with Himself hereafter is to associate me with Himself now.

And has that Christ who has brought piece-meal to you this wonderful love of God, as you were able to bear it, has He no jealousy over you, think you? What is your present state? Does He see your heart's affection linking itself round the God who has, by Him, associated you with Himself? Does He see the pulse of thought in you beating for God? You cannot hide yourself from Him. He, the good Shepherd, is leading and watching every individual sheep, and not a lock of -wool can be taken from one of them that He does not see. Does He, then, see welling through your minds unceasing thoughts of the glory awaiting you, your heart dwelling there, and your walk corresponding? Or is it like Jacob with you, halting on the thigh, because of the flesh needing crippling?

God has spread an expanse of glory all wrapt up Christ for us. He has told of, and described the golden city, and the light and the joy of all there, and He would have us occupied with Him who is the center of all, the center of His mind, even Christ. Are we following in His wake? Is His center ours, and the hope of Christ, the hope of His coming connected with our every thought and act? There may be failure, there may be something clinging to you that would drop off in the presence of Christ, but He will not let you off that hope. Is the future of your mind at all like His? A poor reflection it may be, but a real one, having its source from the center of God's mind, which is Christ.

Has it ever come into your mind what a thrill the delight of God in Christ must cause in heaven? And is it indeed true that we are accepted in the Beloved, and that God loves us as He loves Christ, because we are in Him, and He in us? What in you or me shall interfere with the delight of God in His Son? His delight in believers is not in themselves, but in connection with Christ and redemption. His blood has washed all sin away; my soul is saved, is in Him, one with Him, all my guilt and misery judged on the cross. Oh, it makes one feel very little, it sinks one into real insignificance as being nothing, but then Christ is everything. God looking on His Son with ever the same delight, seeing His members and loving them. Ah! yes, it is pure grace from first to last.

I cannot get anything like happiness without Him. How much happier a way of learning that our rest is not here is that thought, that nothing can make us happy till He comes. I may see what appears attractive down here, but looking up into heaven, I see Christ and feel that till He comes earth cannot be blessed. This world without Him is only a wilderness, no rest, for all earth's blessings, as well as heaven's, are shut up in Christ; all happiness and joy hid in the person of the Lord. It is all vanity, seeking rest whilst He is absent, filling our mouths with sand and gravel..

.. "I am the bright and morning Star." Does not God delight in seeing the Lord Jesus His people's hope? When the hour is come, God will give the word, and Christ will leave His throne to bring up His bride. "The bright and morning Star" is not for God, it is the hope for the bride in the dark night. This title does not come in once in the Old Testament. There we find the Sun of Righteousness; but this bright and morning Star comes before, to usher in the day, a morning without clouds.

The Lord knows what the hearts of His people want here. It is Himself, His own blessed Person. Is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself looked for by us? It is not the glory, but Himself, that is put forth. "I am the bright and morning Star." And, oh, it is Himself that I want. What would glory be to me without my Lord?

Just observe the sort of glory here. What is the shining forth of this bright and morning Star, as to glory, compared with the shining forth of the Sun of Righteousness? Ah! but they who love Christ now, during the dark, dark night, know the sweetness of this title. All their heart's affections are bound up in His Person, it is that their love is set upon. How sweet to connect the hope of His coming, while in

the weariness of all this wilderness scene, with "I am the bright and morning Star; and the spirit and the bride say, Come." In 2 Cor. xi. 2 we get just the true idea of this bride, a people affianced to Christ. How that title of "bride" supposes all affection on the part of Christ. He looks down and sees one here and another there, who believe in Him, poor feeble things in themselves, but He has washed them in His blood. If the marriage of the bride, the Lamb's wife is to be (Rev. xix. 7), and I am part of that affianced body, where can creature merit, or title come in? He has done all (Eph. v. 25-27). What can He see in us but failure, but He has given us the Spirit, and made us one with Himself. He has the bride, a bride fit for God's own dwelling place. If you do not know the personal love of Christ for His bride, you cannot invite Him to come.

God did not stop when He had taken the bone out of Adam, but He builded the woman; so He not only calls and saves poor prodigals, but builds them a bride for His Son. The welcomed prodigal found he had all sorts of good things in the Father's house, so the bride may have all sorts of

precious things, but she herself is for her Lord. Wonderful that Christ should have all glory, but the best part-a bride of poor prodigals, sanctified and cleansed at the cost of His own blood. What! I, a poor thing, a leaf in the wilderness, carried here and there, can I say, Come, Lord? If God has given me the Spirit and made me one with Christ, I can.

If He had shown me all the glory it would have had another effect on me altogether, but He brought the truth to bear on my heart. The Spirit of the living God brought, and is always bringing fresh tastes of the love of Christ to my heart. But, oh, how the Spirit is straightened in us, as He goes through the wilderness and finds so little answer in our hearts, and cannot get the waters to flow.

Do not speak of self, be it failure or circumstances. Satan would always try and put these between us and Christ. But do set everything in the light of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and if you were but one alone in the world, the Spirit is sufficient to enable you to say, "Come." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Not the bride only, nor the bride named first, but the Spirit, knowing all the affections in the heart of Christ, says, "Come." Oh, it is sweet to have Christ wanting you to say, "Come."

Have you known the sweetness, when in solitude, when none have been near, of the thought in your heart, hardly breathed in words, "Come, Lord, come." And shall the thought-I may be caught up now, at once, alarm? No. I am as sure of being His as Rebecca, led of Eliezer, was of being Isaac's. Yea, more sure, as led of the Spirit; and so are all believers who can say, Come. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come."

(To be continued.)

Christ and the Church

FRAGMENTS FROM NOTES.-(Continued.)

WE are in the wilderness now, and so we count by weeks and days, and the time seems long; but look up to the Lord Jesus and you can forget all this, for He, up there, looks upon you and says to you, "Surely I come quickly." To you, looking on things here, it may seem long, but to Him it is but a little while, and He can make it so to you. Reckon on His love. "Having loved His own, which were in the world, He loved them to the end." Is not this known to all who believe in Him, known from their own experience of that love? And, oh! how sweet is the experience of Christ's love in this cold world. When the heart is chilled, and yearns for a little warmth, to turn to the Lord Jesus to feel the warmth of His love! Looking up to Him my heart is always warmed. What an unfailing secret of purest happiness is this!

And what is it that feeds His love to His church? From what source flowed the springs of that love? In the Epistle to the Ephesians we get the setting forth of that which would feed the love of Christ in regard to His church. In the first chapter we have the scene laid before time was (ver. 4). I am here taught that when the Lord Jesus looks at me, He sees me as one who was chosen by the Father before time was, to show forth the glory of that grace that could accept me in the Beloved. He sees not only the poor lost sheep to bring home, the poor prodigal brought into the Father's house, but more, He sees, in me, one chosen of the Father, a secret purpose, He and the Father one in it. And can He have ought against me, or against you, poor saint, when He sat in council about us? And ought He not to have us seeing our association with these counsels of the Father in

Him, before the foundation of the world?

But, secondly, His love is fed by the association of the Church with Himself, not only as one with Him, but as having Himself left all for it (Ep. v. 28). In the devotedness of His heart, He gave Himself for the church. Having borne our sins in His body on the tree-God Himself laying on Him then your iniquity and mine-He places us now in His presence without any other thought than that of His love. And can we look upon Him up there, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and not feel the unspeakable grace, purest and richest towards us, that raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Him? When the Lord Jesus looks in the face of a poor sinner, thus saved by grace, does He not in effect say, "I do, and I must love you, but I love you for My Father's sake. I loved you because He chose you in Me before the foundation of the world, and I must love you to the end for His sake?"

As a child of God, wandering in the world's wilderness, it is very sweet to have comfort poured down to me in all my circumstances and my exercises, from Him who is unceasingly loving me; but even this is not so sweet as the thought that I can, by His grace, .

have fellowship with the heart of the Father, as to His thoughts about His only begotten Son, and His love towards Him. Oh, what can compare with this-to enter into the revelation of God the Father's affection towards the Son of His love

And this is where grace has placed us. "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." And, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Our hearts thus get rest, blessed rest, in sonship, simply by believing in Christ Jesus; and the Spirit of His Son in our hearts, enable their happy throbbings to find expression in this wondrous cry of "Abba, Father;" this new name, unknown to the Patriarchs or to the Jew. God has set us in His presence as sons, and life has flowed down to us, so that we can rise up and contemplate there the delight the Father has in His Son, and can have communion with the joy of the Father's heart in the Son. This it is that gives the church its highest point of glory.

Does the thought ever steal over your heart, Let things here be ever so clouded, there the Father's heart is fully satisfied, for there the Son is, and there, in infinite grace, my portion is, for I can say, my Father. In this sense alone the Lord calls us His brethren, thus alone can we be in association with Him who is on the throne of the Father, and it is thus the Spirit can feed us, administering all the thoughts of the Father and the Son to our hearts. Blessed truth! that Son, the Lord Jesus, having become a man, and wearing man's form up there, we as men are associated with Him forever. As man, that Son brought out the character of the Father, so that I, as a man, can understand it. Oh! how one ought to admire and adore the way Christ brought out the character of God on earth as love to the poor prodigal, and lost sheep. But He has given us to say, "His God is our God," and likewise, by His grace we can say, "His Father is our Father."

Thus we can look up and realize His present joy, even as He said, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." Does it ever come to you what happiness is there? How happy God must be with such a Son! How happy Christ must be!

No person save a child of God can be of the Bride, and it is the purpose of God that the Bride shall be shown out before the world, that the world may see the glory Christ has given her. The Father gave it to Him, but He cannot keep it for Himself. He must share it with those dear -CO Him (John

17:22, 23). The world will be forced to admire the Church in glory, and it ought to be admired as bought with His blood, for the Father's delight is in the Son, and there He is on the Father's throne, claiming all glory to give it to His bride.

But I do not find my deeper joy in this. I feel the Church's glory will be, the sense of being loved by the Father even as the Son is loved. This will surpass all else. That One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells, causing all the love of the Father, as He knows it, to flow forth to us, and making us capable of receiving and enjoying that love-this is the deeper glory, the joy that surpasses all understanding.

We knew "the Lamb," worthy of all glory, but we also know Him under another title

I can say, "I know Thee as the Son who has revealed Thy Father to me. All, all would be nothing to me did I not know Thee in the deeper glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." That name SON He ever bore. He bore it deep down here. He bears it high above in heaven. He is indeed the Son of Man, but this as having been made flesh. When He, as Son of Man, again enters this scene, why shall we fall down at His feet to worship? Because we know Him as the only begotten, Son, of God.

Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, before there was anything-there was the Son in the bosom of the Father. The Father's house, the Father's bosom must be the resting place of the church. Nothing can satisfy the Son but her being there, where He had rested from all eternity.

But we have this place of rest, by faith, even now. I shall never be more a son than I am now, else where were the force of that word, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God?" I have got the best part now. He has made me a son. He has given me to see and to enter into communion with the Father and with His Son (1 John 1:3). He makes me to enjoy the delight of the Father and of the Son as a fresh taste of heavenly joy in my soul day by day. If I am in trial down here, it is because this is no resting place for me. I know the Father is in perfect rest up there, and it is this that makes the heart happy, to have the same object and the same affections as He; for "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Very little is said about the Father's house in Scripture, except in John 14 One is never weary of these verses, because they tell of the personal love of the Lord Jesus. But locality is not defined, nor the thought of heaven introduced as meaning any particular locality. In John 17 Jesus lifts up His eyes to heaven. Many found their ideas of heaven on some early association in their mind of a place of glory beyond the clouds, and connect it, more or less, with what the Word of God has made familiar to them. But breaking down all this would leave the blessed thought of the Son now upon the Father's throne, and the Father setting them together in Him. Whenever my faith goes up there, what does it realize? The thought of One there who was once in all my circumstances of sorrow here, and the thought of home being up there with Him. Oh, what a warm, happy feeling the heart experiences at that thought. A man's heart is in his home, not because of the place, but because the object of his affections is there. The same in regard to heaven. I find uncommonly little of detail as to circumstances there, but I find unfading reality in one or two simple verses. For instance that one, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father." What a volume in that! The Lord Jesus Christ wanting us to enter into the joy of His heart at the thought of His being at home with His Father, saying, as it were, "I want to share the thought of my joy with

you. I want you to rejoice with me, that so soon I shall be with the Father, and. not only that, but you shall soon be with me too." I: we could see all the glory of heaven it would be pool in comparison of seeing Him, the only begotten Son on the throne of His Father. G. V. W.

(To be continued.)

Christ and the Church

FRAGMENTS FROM NOTES-(Continued).

IT is the heart God wants. He has done all that love could do, in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, to win the heart of poor sinners to Himself. He has, as it were, thrown the whole door open to receive us, and thus to draw us into joy and blessing. Oh, the rich unfoldings of grace in that fourteenth chapter of John; grace laying open the rich glories in the Father's house for those who were ready to forsake the Lord (John 16:32). What a contrast we are to Him, and yet He is ever occupied in caring for us, in preparing joy for us. His eye is ever following us, and He knows well every beat of the heart and every thought. And shall I dare to say that He is more sympathizing to-day than yesterday, because I appreciate it more. Are not the sympathies of Christ ever flowing, and is not our varied appreciation of them as if one lifted up a stone in the desert and the water is seen flowing, and again lifting up a stone and it is seen flowing still?

It would certainly be a much happier thing to be present with Him and absent from the poor body, but if it is the will of Him who loves me with a love that wills I should stay here, the sweetness of doing His will ought to be enough. Ought I to mind being here for a while, in the midst of all that tries me in every way, if I am to taste His love in it all? Then why stand still gazing up with tearful eyes, instead of pressing forward, full of joy? It is but "a little while."

There is no selfishness mixed with the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus;" but if He were to rise up and come tonight, would He find many waiting for Him? I believe He would, and bless God it is so. It is distinctly manifest that God is now working. He never came of old without giving a testimony beforehand....

"We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." God is dealing with us now, and He would have us go forward with Him. He sets value on these works because they are prepared by Himself. Is it nothing to have God working in us now, to will and to do of His good pleasure? Nothing that He should see in us the expression of the life of Christ? Think what it will be when we see the Lord Jesus, what it will be to have the life of Christ filling the body (Phil. 3:21), in a scene where all will harmonize. We begin in the wilderness to go on in the glory. The energy of God given to the soul, enables us now to walk in works which are the expression of that energy, and of our vital union with Christ. Is this only in the wilderness? No; it is to be carried on in glory, and forever.

There is a specialty, too, of providence in connection with every individual. God is great enough to count the hairs of our head. You and I are too little for this. God is so great that He can count up the cups of cold water (Matt. 10:30, 42). We are too little to do so; we can only lay hold of general traits, and things and services more marked. Who marked the path for a Daniel or for a Paul in their day, and the early Christians in theirs? Who fixed the time of your birth, all your path in life, your sicknesses, your bereavements?-God, the living God. God comes in everywhere, in every

thought, and step, and act of life, in every bit of testimony, to speak a right word to one in the street. These are works prepared of God that we should walk in them. - The thought of this will give importance to many a thing little in itself; it will give sweetness to many a bitter cup, and stop many an act where self-will would come in and take the rein. Doubtless as you look back you will see much failure, much going after your own will, but can you not see that God was there to turn the page over (Gen. 28:16; 32:24, 30), to mark out again your walk with Him in the path prepared for you? You may be stumbling through your duties and going wrong, the thoughts taken up with this care and that trouble, but having loved you, His love changes not because of what you are. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

Fragment

" The presence of God is a very real thing, even with two or three who are in the power of His name; and they get tokens of His presence. Such never could say, " We are His house, and His assembly " without arrogance and pride. If we assume it, we are Babel in spirit and mind.... If the form of two or three meeting occupy the mind, self and worldliness will be found in a new form, and that is all. But, if the purged people get together in the fear of the Lord, they will find the power of the Spirit, heaven and joy unspeakable." G. V. W.

The Work

But The Work still remains for either, the interesting thing; since it alone has lasting connection with our Lord, and it will follow us into heavenly courts in many blessed ways, if it has been carried out under the Lord, souls saved through it, and built up through it-itself the expression of our own walk with God. G. V. W.

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