

Precious Things From the Everlasting Hills

by James Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of truth and the blessed hope of the coming of Jesus, which brings great joy, freedom, and eternal happiness.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:30, Matthew 10:42, Acts 9:6, James 1:27

Topics: "Serving Jesus", "Holy Spirit"

Description

James Smith preaches about the importance of actively serving Jesus and doing everything for His glory. He emphasizes the need to surrender ourselves to Jesus, acknowledge His sacrifice, and be willing to work in His vineyard. Smith highlights the significance of being the epistle of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and a joint heir with Him of the eternal inheritance. He challenges believers to consider what they have done for Jesus, what they are willing to do, and how they can contribute to the advancement of God's kingdom.

Transcript

"Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth." John 17:17

All saving and sanctifying truth is from God. It was conceived in his heart, communicated by his Holy Spirit, and is to be found in his word. It is intended for our use, to enlighten the understanding, to quicken the affections, to regulate the will, to purify the conscience, to store the memory and to guide the life. It is as pure as the sunbeam, as pleasant as the fruits of Paradise, and as necessary as the atmosphere we breathe. To know the truth--is a great attainment. To enjoy the truth--is a high privilege. To spread the truth--is an imperative duty. God commands it, man requires it, and Christians should diligently attend to it. By the truth God works, the Christian conquers, and the sinner is turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. The truth of God is invaluable--yet every one ought, every one may, possess it. Preachers proclaim it, the press publishes it, and every believer should assist to spread it.

This small volume contains truth--God's truth. Truth in a variety of forms. Truth clothed in simple language. Truth illustrated by plain figures. Truth for the head, and truth for the heart. Truth that has been tasted, handled, and felt by the writer; and is now affectionately commended to the reader. Truth suited to health and to sickness; to bright days and to dreary seasons. Truth that a man may live by, and truth that will do to die by. Here is a candle for a dark room, a lantern for a dark road, and a lamp for a dark heart. Light to work by, light to walk by, and light to suffer by.

Reader, before you turn over the pages of this book, look up and ask God for a blessing. No book will yield you spiritual profit without it. Ask the Holy Spirit to accompany what you read with his own power, savor and unction; and if your prayer is answered, you will bless God that you ever saw it. Beseech the Lord, not only to bless it to you--but to render it useful to others: to multitudes of your fellow men. In vain we write, or read, without the power of the Holy Spirit; but if favored with that, the meanest instrument is efficient--and this little book will be successful. When you have read the book--then lend it! If you can afford it, purchase a few copies to distribute among your relatives, friends, acquaintances, or neighbors. Follow the gift of every copy with much prayer, and when you pray for the book, ask the Lord in mercy to bless the author.

James Smith

Expect Great Things Then!

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am!" John 14:2-3

The Lord Jesus has gone to receive a kingdom--and he intends to return. During his absence his people have to work in his vineyard, suffer in his cause, and watch for his appearing. Our work is often difficult, our sufferings severe, and watching so long becomes tedious. But as Jesus has promised to come--he assuredly will. As he has given us his word that he will not tarry--but come as soon as his work before the throne is done--we may depend upon his coming back as soon as possible.

As he is coming to bring us grace, in a degree which we have never enjoyed; and glory, such as we have no conception of--his coming should be the object of our hope, desire, and love. The thought of it should give us joy, the anticipation of it should fill us with delight. It did--to a poor, afflicted, suffering believer who, when asked why he looked forward to the coming of Jesus with so much joy, said, "I expect great things then!"

Beloved, we may not have much now. Our temporal supplies may be scant--and our outward comforts but few. Our sufferings may be great--and our trials painful. Without may be fightings--and within may be fears. But Jesus is coming--Jesus, who is our Brother, Husband and Friend! He is coming in all of his glory! He is coming to reign supreme. He is coming to render wondrous rewards to his servants. He is coming to fulfill all his promises, and accomplish the glorious predictions of his holy word.

His coming is the greatest event we can look forward to. It is the blessed hope of his church. It is the desire of all his saints. Our brightest prospects and sweetest anticipations depend on that. Our groaning world appears to long for it. The sorrowful church should daily pray for it. And every sigh that escapes from the tried believer's heart, rightly interpreted, cries, "Come, Lord Jesus come quickly!"

Well, cheer up, my poor tried brother and sister, for "He who is to come--will come, and will not tarry." He is now engaged for us. His loving heart now beats with tenderest affection towards us. He would have us with him, or he would come and be with us now--were it not that his Father's glory and our best interests require it to be otherwise. He said once, and he is in the same mind still, "Father, I will that those whom you have given me--be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory!" This is the very thing we desire--and it is the very thing we shall enjoy; for he will soon come "the second time without sin unto salvation!" We expect great things then!

WHAT do we expect then?

The sufferer expects to be free from disease and pain; for "there shall be no more pain" then. Every Christian will have a healthy body. The nerves, the muscles, the senses, will no more be the seats of disease, or the inlets of pain; but what was sown in corruption--will be raised imperishable! What was sown in dishonor--will be raised in glory; what was sown in weakness--will be raised in power; what was sown a natural body--will be raised a spiritual body.

The mourner expects to be freed from the principal cause of his mourning--even sin. He will then be delivered not only from its guilt--but from its very being; not only from its annoyance--but from its existence!

As the body will be free from pain--so the soul will be free from sin; and body and soul will exactly resemble the glorified humanity of the Lord Jesus.

"Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is!" 1 John 3:2. Every Christian expects to have a sight of Jesus--to see Him as He really is. He will gaze with rapture and delight on His glorified body, tracing the thorn-prints on His brow, and the nail-prints on His hands! He will realize with ecstatic delight that Jesus is his own Savior, his glorious Redeemer, his ever-living and ever-loving Lord. The sight of Christ will eclipse the glory of everything visible, and will leave impressions on the soul which will never be erased. It will exceed all that ever was seen, conceived, or anticipated. It will fire the soul with unutterable love, and fill it with inexpressible joy!

The believer will then receive a glorious crown, "a crown of glory which never fades away." "A diadem of beauty." "A crown of life." He will be clothed in white robes, and have the palm of victory put into his hand. A seat near to Jesus will be awarded to him. He will be introduced to the "city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." To the kingdom prepared for the saints "before the foundation of the world." To the "priceless inheritance--an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay!"

He will be elevated above his fears, exalted above his foes, and enjoy absolute security forever. Every desire will be gratified, and his soul will be perfectly and forever satisfied. Are not these great things? But these and many more, are the great things which the Christian may expect, for "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive--what God has prepared for those who love him!" Well may it be called the "blessed hope." Well may primitive saints be represented as "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Well may each believer "expect great things then!"

My Christian brother, is the coming of Jesus the object of your hope? Are you anxiously and prayerfully looking forward to that glorious event? Do you "expect great things then?" If so, you will not be so much affected as some professors are--by the vain things which perish with the using. You will live above the world. You will cast your cares upon your God. You will overlook many little annoyances and troubles. You will rejoice in hope--when all around you is cold and dreary. You will not avenge yourself--but leave many things to be adjusted when Jesus comes. You will act as one who "must appear before the judgment seat of Christ!" --as one who must "give an account of himself to God."

The coming of Jesus will stimulate you to all holy obedience--and will be a preventative to your settling down in the world, or indulging in sin. Expecting great things when Jesus comes--you will not be affected

by passing vanities of this fleeting world--but "in your patience you will possess your soul." Expecting great things when Jesus comes--you will quietly carry your cross, manfully face your foes, and diligently employ your talents in your Master's service. Expecting great things when Jesus comes--you will aim in all things to "walk worthy of the calling with which you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering," lovingly bearing with the imperfections of your brethren, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Expecting great things from Jesus when he comes--you will be desirous of doing great things for Jesus now that he is away; and will be willing to suffer great things for Jesus if he may but be glorified thereby.

Beloved, if you are indeed a Christian, you cannot expect too much when Jesus comes--but you may expect too little now. He has promised you many great and glorious things now; and he is quite willing to make good his largest and kindest promises. He waits to be gracious. He waits until you are in need, until you ask him, until you are earnest with him to bestow. The moment the fulfillment of the promise is necessary for you, and will bring glory to his holy and ever-blessed name--that moment will the promise be fulfilled.

Expect much from Jesus now. Ask much from Jesus now. But yet when clouds gather, when dangers press, when foes collect, when difficulties increase, when causes of sorrow arise--then look forward--anticipate the coming of your Redeemer, and rejoice. In all times of tribulation, in all seasons of conflict, and in all circumstances of discouragement, "gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the appearing of Jesus Christ!" For you may expect great things then!

He has told us of "earthly things" in his word, and they have been so great that we have scarcely believed him; how astonished, how delighted, how inexpressibly joyful shall we be when he brings us to see, to receive, and to enjoy "heavenly things!" Then we shall have great peace, great joy, great glory. Our wealth will be immense, our satisfaction perfect, and our inheritance eternal.

Happy believer! though your lot is now poor, your present resources small, your conflicts severe, your sufferings continued, and your temptations painful--Jesus is coming! "Behold, he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him," and you may expect great things then! Nor can your expectations possibly be cut short, "For the desires of the righteous shall be granted!"

Heaven upon Earth

"As the days of heaven upon the earth." Deuteronomy 40:21

Few things are more important than truth. Nothing is so important as the truth of God. It is our light, our map, and our food, through the whole journey. In the context, Moses is giving direction to the Israelites, as to how they were to treat God's word. He directs them to hide it in their hearts, as a treasure; to wear it on the forehead and on the hand, as a costly ornament; to teach it to all about them, as a most important lesson; and to write it upon the door posts and gates, as a badge of honorable distinction.

The argument he employs to induce them to do so, is long life and happiness in the promised land. "That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth." So that our subject embraces two points, perpetuity and pleasure. We shall dismiss the former, and confine our attention to the latter.

Real religion, as it appears in a practical conformity to God's will, secures to us the purest and sweetest enjoyment. Or, filial obedience to God is the way to realize the joys of heaven. True saints when entirely engaged in God's service, enjoy spiritual and solid happiness. They know experimentally what the Psalmist meant, when he said, speaking of the Lord's precepts, "In keeping of them--there is a great reward." True religion was not designed to diminish our enjoyments--but to purify and elevate them. Indeed, real Christians are the only happy people, and all true and consistent Christians are happy. Under all their trials, troubles, and sorrows, they have a source of comfort to which all are strangers but themselves. But they have some peculiarly pleasant seasons, some precious times, which they call the days of heaven upon earth. Let us inquire then,

First, What constitutes such days? The answer to this inquiry would include many things, we can only notice a few.

The sensible presence of God. When the Lord comes to visit them, and manifest himself unto them, as he does not unto the world; when his light beams upon the intellect, and his love flows into the heart--when he unfolds before them his perfections, and reveals his sublime and glorious attributes--then they feel the power of a present God--they are sensibly impressed with his glory, beauty, and love--they realize that in all his greatness and glory, he is their Father--that they have nothing to fear from his wrath--but everything to expect from his favor. It is, indeed, heaven upon earth to enjoy the presence of God--as our Father and everlasting Friend.

A perception of the glory of Jesus. There are seasons, when the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us, in all his grandeur, beauty and glory. We get a glimpse of his divinity shining through his humanity. We behold his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He appears to us then, as the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely one. No tongue can describe, no language can set forth, no artist's brush can portray--the beauties of the Son of God, as they appear to the enraptured believer at such times. He is, indeed, all over glorious; and the discovery is generally attended with a sense of saving interest in him, which causes the heart to melt and flow forth in love and gratitude unto him. Such a season is, indeed, one of the days of heaven upon the earth.

The witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart, to our adoption into the Lord's family, and acceptance at the Lord's throne. There are times when we have not only the conviction derived from past experience and the testimony of the divine word to our adoption--but the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God. He softens the heart, stamps the divine image there--and then throws light upon it, that we may see it. He opens the heart of God, shows us his infinite and unutterable love, whispering "You are savingly interested in it!" He brings home some precious portion of the word, accompanying it with such divine impressions as awaken sweet and indescribable sensations, so that doubts cannot live in the bosom at such a season. These are "days of heaven upon the earth," when the conscience is secretly and powerfully assured of its part in the Redeemer's blood, and the gracious Comforter bears his sweet witness with the heart, that we are indeed born of God.

Loving union with God's saints, in his church and service. It is one thing to meet where saints meet, join in the same pious exercises, have the name in the same church book; but it is another and a different thing to be lovingly united to them. Then we view them as one with Jesus, as the brothers and sisters of Jesus, as united together to promote the glory of Jesus. Our hearts are united to them; our sympathies are all with them. Then we look upon them as the excellent of the earth, and can say with David, "with whom is all my delight." Then to unite in prayer at our Father's throne, or in songs to the honor of our Redeemer's

name, or to speak with them and hear them tell of the work of the holy and ever blessed Spirit upon the heart--is like one of "the days of heaven upon the earth."

Spiritual and powerful worship. When God is viewed as a Father upon the throne, waiting to be gracious; when we see Jesus before the throne, as the one Mediator and Intercessor, waiting to present our praises and petitions; when we feel the Holy Spirit in our hearts, leading us to confess sin with sorrow, to ask for grace and mercy with confidence, and inspiring us with gratitude, so that praise flows freely and naturally--it is one of "the days of heaven upon earth." The holy believer worships God as a spirit, in spirit and in truth. The power of the Holy Spirit enables him to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, to draw near to God as upon a mercy seat, and with the sweetest joy and peace, have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. Worship, without spirituality and power, is a poor lifeless form--but when, generated by the Spirit in the heart, it ascends direct to God through the hands of our great High Priest, it is a sweet and pleasant service, a sacrifice acceptable unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prosperity in the Church. To see the Lord's people united together, loving one another, walking in order and holy fellowship, full of faith, fervor, and affection; to see sinners impressed under the preaching of the word, inquiring after the way of salvation, and seeking admission to the fold; to hear the recently decided tell, how they were wounded by the law--and healed by the gospel; that they had renounced the world--and embraced the Savior; that they had discovered the way into the kingdom, and requesting to be received into the fellowship--these things produce joy unspeakable and full of glory; they form a bright spot in the wilderness, a delightful page in our history; they make "days of heaven upon the earth." But,

Secondly, What is realized on such days? Here we need special help, for what is so difficult, as attempting to set forth the joys of the Lord as experienced by his saints? If you, reader, have never enjoyed them, we can convey no adequate idea of them to your mind. But if you have happily experienced them, our imperfect hints will be understood.

At such times we realize the pardon of all sin. We feel that our sins are forgiven us for Jesus' sake; that God has blotted out all our trespasses; that we are acquitted of all blame; that we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus; that God's heart glows with unutterable love to us; that his book contains no charge against us; this brings sweet peace with God. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; the peace of God rules in our hearts; all slavish fear of God is gone; the bosom is tranquil; the spirit is calm; the prospect is clear; hope is lively; then comes the joy of the Holy Spirit. Peace is quiet, calm, and settled. But this joy is full of life, vigor, and power; it makes the heart dance at the sound of the name of Jesus; it fires the soul with desire to ascend to God, to see him as he is, and be with him forever; it strips earth of its beauty, and wealth of its value, and transfers both to heaven! It is paradise restored, and the joys of Eden brought back again to man; it centers in God, and ascends to God; its language is, "I will go unto God, unto God my exceeding joy!" It fills the intellect with light, the heart with energy, and the mouth with praises, so that we can say with Peter, "We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!"

Now there is freedom from all cares. For what has the happy believer to be worried about? His sins are pardoned; his person is accepted; his mansion is being prepared; his peace is made; his portion is infinite; his needs have been considered, and his supplies are guaranteed; "All things are his," so far as he needs them. God watches over him, Jesus is with him, the Holy Spirit comforts him--and it must be well with him! He has God's ear--and there he lodges all his wishes, desires, and fears! He has God's heart--and from thence he expects "all things that pertain to life and godliness."

In addition to this, there is superiority to death. On these days of Jubilee, death has lost its terrors, for we see that it has lost its sting. Death is viewed, simply as a departure from this world, as going to the Father, as putting off the poor tabernacle, as ascending to be with Christ, which is far superior to remaining here.

In a word on these hallowed days: our wishes are granted, our desires are satisfied, our hearts are full, our praises are hearty, for our souls are thoroughly happy; and if they did but always continue, we should wish for little beyond them! Now, let us inquire,

Thirdly, What do such days teach us?

They teach us that true religion is a reality--a divine reality. Not merely a religious system, or a creed, or a course of formal observances; but a power, a life, a great and glorious fact. That it purifies, elevates, and imparts solid and substantial pleasures! That it is the great need of humanity, and the choicest gift of God.

They give us some faint idea of heavenly services. We read of the glorified ones, that they serve God day and night in his temple. They rest not--and yet all is rest. Their labors are finished--and yet they are always at work. The services of the upper world must be sweet, the pleasures of that country must be refined, the joy of that state must be glorious--if what is experienced below, which is as one drop from the ocean, one ray from the sun, or one grape from the vast vineyard--is so unspeakably precious and delightful.

They teach us the inferiority of temporal things. They are not to be compared for one moment, with the things that are spiritual and eternal. They are dross--these are pure gold. They are darkness--these are light. They are slavery--these are liberty. All that the world can furnish is poor, and vain, and worthless--when compared with the solid joys and substantial pleasures of true religion.

They teach us the power of divine truth over the mind. The effect of the truth of God, when accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit--is astonishing. It enlightens, enlivens, elevates, and purifies; it produces a new creation; it brings us into a new state, furnishes us with new motives, generates new tastes, forms new habits, making our wilderness like Eden, and our desert as the garden of the Lord!

They teach us the wonderful condescension of God. How surprising it is, that God should regard, respect, or pay attention to creatures so sinful, degraded, and vile! But how much more surprising, that he should visit US, take up his abode in our hearts, fill us with his own love, and let us drink of the cup of celestial joys! But so it is, for we speak what we know, and testify what we have tasted and felt.

Reader, heaven comes down to us--before we ascend to it. We have not only the title to heaven--but we have the first fruits. As Israel saw and tasted of the grapes of the promised land in the wilderness, before they passed over Jordan to possess it--so have we tasted of the peace, joy, and sublime pleasures freely and eternally enjoyed above.

This leads us to say of heaven, when our hearts are full of peace and joy, as the spies of old said of Canaan, "It is a good land, and this is the fruit of it." Experimental Christians have no doubt of the superiority of heaven--to earth; of spiritual things--to temporal things; and that not merely on the ground of what they have heard or read--but from what they have tasted and handled themselves. True religion is to them light, air, food, exercise; they cannot live without it; they are unhappy when they do not feel its power, taste its joys, and realize life in its services.

We may, then, have heavenly days in earth's dreary wilderness. Yes, there are Elims with their palm trees and fountains; there are streams which make glad the city of our God, there are spiritual blessings in

heavenly places to be enjoyed while here below. If we enjoy such pleasant days, such beautiful prospects, such sweet foretastes now--then ought we to doubt or fear? Or, rather ought we not to look forward with joyful hope, lively anticipation, and earnest longing, exclaiming, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is!"

But if we are strangers to these things--then we are strangers to some of the sweetest things in religion, to the very best things that can be enjoyed on earth.

Reader, is your religion a happy religion? Does it make you happy? Can you say with Paul, "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus, by whom we have now received the atonement." Beware of being satisfied with a religion without power--or without pleasure. If you are justified--you will have peace with God. If the Holy Spirit witness to your adoption--you will experience joy. Remember the kingdom of God is not foods and drinks--but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The true circumcision, or the spiritual Hebrew race, are those who "worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." A religion without peace, joy, and love, is, to say the least, suspicious; for wherever the gospel comes home in demonstration of the Spirit and power: there is always faith in Christ, love to God, and the joy of the Holy Spirit.

What Is Christ to You?

This is a very important and searching question, an answer to which will go far towards deciding what is our state before God. In times like these we ought to be decided, and to know how we stand in reference to eternity. We ought not to be satisfied with an uncertain hope, or an ill-founded confidence. Our calling and election should be sure. We should be able to say with the beloved apostle, "We know that we are of God." "We have passed from death unto life." "We are now the sons of God."

Our standing before God--depends on our connection with Christ; and the state of our heart depends upon our fellowship with Christ. Let us, then, briefly look at the question.

What is Christ to you? If I reply for myself, I say, He is the foundation of my hope; for I have no hope towards God but what is founded on his person, sacrifice and finished work. I hope for pardon, because he died for sin; I hope for justification, because he rose from the dead; I hope for eternal life, because he ever lives to make intercession for me. The depravity of my heart, the imperfection of all my services, and the unholiness of my life--forbid my hoping for acceptance with God, access to God, or the enjoyment of God--upon any other ground.

The Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, is my hope--He is also the object of my faith. As I believe in God, I believe also in him. I believe him to be what his word declares--I believe he has done what the gospel proclaims--I believe he will give what he has promised to those that seek him. I have no confidence but what is founded in Christ. Take away Jesus, and I despair. But while he occupies his proper place, I can believe that God will graciously pardon, fully justify, and faithfully keep my soul. My trust is in him, and in him alone. I rely on his obedience, blood shedding, and perfect work. I depend on his mediation, substitution, and atonement for eternal life; and feel persuaded that he will keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Jesus is the source of my supplies. I look to him for all I need for body and soul, for time and for eternity, for temporal and spiritual things. I believe that the wealth of God is stored up in him--that every blessing

promised is in him--that all the provisions of the everlasting covenant are entrusted to him--that he has heaven and earth at his command. I therefore ask of him, look to him, expect from him. To him I confess my poverty. With him I lodge my problems. To him I present my petitions. From him I expect my supplies. I believe the testimony that it has pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell. I have had a glimpse of his glory, and perceive that he is full of grace and truth. I have received with pleasure the information, that all things are delivered unto him by his Father. I therefore repair to him as the fountain of living waters. I trust in him as able to supply all my needs. I expect from him, because he has kindly and faithfully promised.

The Lord Jesus is the subject of my meditations. Not a day passes but my thoughts are occupied with Jesus. Forget whom I may, I never forget him. Nothing feeds, nothing refreshes, nothing delights my soul--like vigorous meditations on Jesus. I dwell at times on the glories of his person, the riches of his grace, the merit of his blood, the transcendent glory of his righteousness, the tenderness of his sympathy, the constancy of his love, the vastness of his resources, the greatness of his power, the variety of his characters, the glory of his offices, the prevalence of his intercession, and the grandeur of his second coming--until I am enamored with his beauty, and enraptured with his love. My meditation of Jesus is sweet, and it makes me glad in the Lord. My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth praises him with joyful lips, when I remember him upon my bed, and meditate on him in the night watches.

It is delightful to occupy our thinking powers on Jesus and his glorious salvation. May I meditate upon him daily and hourly; and may my last thought in the time of death be, a thought of Christ!

He is the theme of my song. No song pleases me--if the name of Jesus is not in it; and the more it has of Christ in it, the better it pleases me. It is sweet to think of Christ; but it is at times, a little heaven on earth to sing of Christ. Herein we resemble the inhabitants of the better world, for they are singing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Jesus is the solace and joy of my soul. In sorrow I repair to him for solace, and in sadness for the joys of his salvation. There are times when no one can make me happy but Jesus; but he always can--and blessed be his holy and adorable name, he sometimes does. When all is dark within me, when all is dreary around me, when all is discouraging before me--he fills me full of joy with his countenance. One look from his eye, one word from his lips, one breath breathed on my soul--relieves, restores, and makes me happy. He is the river of pleasure, in which I sometimes bathe; he is the Eden of delights in which I sometimes walk; in him are the wells of salvation, from which at times with joy I draw. Take away Jesus, and my soul droops, desponds, and dies; give me Jesus, and the enjoyment of his presence, and I can do without any other heaven. He is the glory of my brightest days, and my solace in my dreariest nights.

In a word: he is the Alpha and the Omega of my salvation. It begins, it proceeds, it is completed in him. He engaged in the everlasting covenant. He appeared in the fullness of time. He bore our sins and carried our sorrows. He put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself. He brought in the everlasting righteousness. He conquered death, hell, and the grave. He ascended up on high, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. He sent his gospel by his servants, and his Holy Spirit to apply it to the heart. He ever lives to intercede for us. His strength is perfected in our weakness. His grace is sufficient for us. Having obtained help from him, we continue to the present day. By his grace we are saved.

Such is the testimony of holy writ, and such are the views that revive my faith, refresh my soul, and endear my Redeemer to my heart. My experimental religion began with my feeling my need of him--it proceeded until I realized my saving interest in him--it stands now in my daily making use of him--and it will be perfected by my everlastingly enjoying him. Jesus is my all in all!

And now, reader, What is Christ to you? Have you been able to go with me in my statements? Is your heart as my heart is? Perhaps you say, "Yes; but the half has not been told!" The half! No---not the ten thousandth part! The glories of Jesus are infinitely beyond our comprehension! Now we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but that which is perfect will soon come, and then shall we know even as also we are known.

Is Jesus precious to your soul today? Is he the joy and rejoicing of your heart? Is he divinely glorious in your estimation? If so, you are the subject of the Spirit's work: for he it is who glorifies Christ before us, within us, and by us. He takes of the things of Jesus, and shows them unto us. Without the presence, power, and operation of the Holy Spirit, we would never trust in him, boast of him, look to him, or surrender ourselves into his hands to be saved by him. Every right view of Christ, every honorable thought of Christ, every sweet enjoyment of Christ, every effort to honor Christ, every attempt to imitate Christ--flows from the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. The more we experience of the Spirit's work, the more shall we love Jesus, exalt Jesus, extol Jesus, obey Jesus, and be conformed to the likeness of Jesus! Oh, that the Spirit of God, then, would work more powerfully in all our hearts!

But perhaps my reader has no sympathy with me--but looks upon what I have written as a mere rhapsody. Is it so? Then from my heart I pity you--from my heart I pray for you. You need just such a Savior as Jesus is. No one but Jesus can save you from hell, raise you to heaven, or give you solid happiness in the present world. But Jesus can. Oh, that you felt your need of him! Oh, that you would flee to him to be saved from the wrath to come! Oh, that you would cast yourself into the arms of his mercy, and enjoy a free, full, present, and everlasting salvation!

What is Christ to you now? Is he your precious Savior? Is he your daily food? Is he the joy and rejoicing of your soul? Is he the foundation of your hope, the object of your faith, the source of your supplies, the subject of your meditations, the theme of your song, the solace and joy of your soul. The Alpha and Omega of your salvation?

He will be your JUDGE by-and-bye. He will either condemn--or justify you. He will either invite you to inherit a kingdom prepared for you--or, command you to depart from him into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels. Which will it be? Which? Have you come to any conclusion on this point? Have you decided in your own mind--whether you shall go to hell or heaven? If so, to which are you going? If you have not--is it not time you had?

What Are You to Christ?

The love of Christ and his people is reciprocal, so also is their interest in each other. Christ is to his people--their portion, possession, and special treasure; they live upon him, rejoice in him, and look to him, under all circumstances, for all they need. This is truly wonderful; but not as wonderful as the consideration of what the Christian is to Christ--the least, the feeblest, the most imperfect Christian: for the connection and interest depend on the reality, not the degree, of saving faith.

The least member is part of the physical body, though most distant from the head, or generally concealed from view; just so, every Christian is one with Christ, beloved by Christ, and exceedingly dear and precious in the sight of Christ. As we have considered what Christ is to the Christian, let us, then, for a few moments, look at what the Christian is to Christ.

Believer, have you considered what you are to Jesus? If so, you will be prepared to answer the question; and though you may be obliged to think before you know where to begin, as also where you are to stop--yet you will be at no loss to answer as to some points. You will be prepared to say,

"I am the purchase of his blood!" He had set his heart upon me. He was determined to possess me. But as he would do nothing dishonorable, and as divine justice had arrested me, he determined to purchase me. The price demanded was great beyond calculation. The whole universe, apart from himself, was insufficient. Nothing would meet the demand but his own blood, his own life, himself! Having made up his mind, nothing could change his purpose, or alter his determination. He said, "They shall be mine!" And, therefore, "he gave himself for us." He redeemed us with his own "precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." We, therefore, "are not our own, being bought with a price." We are the purchase of his blood, who "is Lord of all."

He never forgets the price he paid for us, or the value he set upon us; nor let us ever forget that we are his property--but let us endeavor, always and everywhere, to glorify him in our bodies and spirits, which are his.

"I am the object of his care!" He cares for us. His care is constant, tender, and extends to our most minute affairs. "The very hairs of our head are all numbered" by him. He cares for our persons, comforts, and all our concerns. He, therefore, directs us to lay low at his feet, and confide in his care, saying, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him--for he cares for you." He exhorts us to be prayerful and thankful--but neither anxious nor worried, saying, "The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God: and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Jesus cares for his people always and everywhere: at home, abroad, in sickness, in health, in prosperity, in adversity, in life, in death. He never withdraws not his eyes from them--but ever cares for them, watching over them to do them good. He is the kind and careful Shepherd, that cares for every lamb in his flock, for every sheep committed to his trust.

"I am the child of his wise providence!" Brought by it upon the stage of time. Placed by it in my present circumstances. Dependant upon it for all my various supplies. On the bosom of his providence, I lean. In the hand of his providence, I trust. To the resources of his providence, I look. His providence is my sustainer. It provides for me. It daily supplies me. It has anticipated my necessities. It demands my confidence. It tries my faith. But it always supplies my real needs.

Providence is Jesus in action to do his people good. He hides himself often behind his instruments, or what we call second causes; but he is ever present, providing for and supplying the needs of all who place confidence in his word. His promise tells me what he will do--and his providence just does what he has told me. I cannot, then, be either friendless or fatherless, for the providence of Jesus acts toward me a father's part.

"I am the subject of his intercession." He ever lives to make intercession for me! He never forgets or loses sight of me. My name is on his priestly breastplate--my concerns are all under his eye. His blood speaks for me. His influence is exerted for me. He lives in heaven for my good. He is my Counselor--I am his client. He is my Advocate--I am his brother for whom he pleads. His intercession brought me up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock. His intercession supports my faith, and frustrates the malicious designs of Satan. His intercession brings down ten thousand blessings--and prevents innumerable evils!

Sweet thought this--Jesus intercedes with his Father for me! Yes, in all times of darkness and distress--in all seasons of danger and depression-- when my heart is cold and prayerless--when my faith is weak and wavering--when my hope is feeble and faltering--when my love is reduced to a spark, or appears extinguished--then, yes, then, Jesus intercedes for me!

When Satan tempts me on earth, or accuses me in heaven--when all within and without is dreary and distressing--then, yes, then, Jesus intercedes for me. This moment, and every moment, Jesus makes me the subject of his powerful and prevailing intercession!

"I am the temple of his Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit has taken possession of me in his name. He dwells in me. My very body is declared to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. He came to me as the Spirit of Christ. He claimed me as the Spirit of Christ. He entered my heart as the Spirit of Christ. By his work he proves himself the Spirit of Christ. He daily keeps me sensible of my need of Christ. He shows me the exact suitability of Christ. He leads me out of self--to Christ. He teaches me to renounce every other name but the name of Christ; so that I build on him, and on him alone, for pardon, peace, and final acceptance with God.

The Spirit of Christ dwells in me--this is my evidence that I am Christ's. How wonderful, that a nature so depraved, that a creature so insignificant, that a sinner so vile--should be constituted, consecrated, and acknowledged to be the temple of the Spirit of Christ! Yet so it is!

"I am the epistle of his love." Manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ. His truth is written on my heart by the finger of his own Spirit, and I am sent into the world to bear witness of his love. He sends by me to sinners. He speaks by me to sinners. He opens by me his loving heart to the guilty sons of men. He says, "Go publish in every direction, in characters and terms that all can read and understand, that I am Jesus--that I save the vilest--that I save freely--that I save all who come unto me--that I delight to save any, even the foulest transgressors--that I not only save--but raise those whom I save to the highest dignities, and confer on them the greatest honors. Proclaim abroad, that my heart is love, that my blood has made an infinite atonement for all sin--that I am exalted to give repentance and pardon--that I have made peace between God and all who come unto him through me."

Oh, wondrous mercy, to constitute me his epistle of love! But if I am really a Christian, I am a living, authentic, and useful epistle of Christ!

"I am a joint heir with him of the eternal inheritance!" Jesus is appointed heir of all things. All things are committed unto him by his Father. He has all power and authority in heaven and in earth. He claims the universe as his own. "Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ! Romans 8:17. When he said this, the apostle had special reference to our priceless eternal inheritance--an inheritance that is reserved in heaven for each of God's children, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay! But what tongue can tell, what heart conceive, what is included in

being a joint heir with Christ? The blessing seems to be as vast as God's loving heart, and as boundless as God's own eternity!

Well may it be said, "What we will be--has not yet been revealed." Nothing could please us better than to add, "But when he shall appear--we shall be like him." Like him! this is just what we desire. Like him! this is the sum of all our prayers. Like him! this stretches to the utmost bounds of all real excellency. Like him! This is doing for us exceeding and abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Like him! this is conferring on us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Oh, believer, what privileges are yours! What dignities are conferred on you! How favored, how honored, how glorious are you!

How much Jesus makes of you! Can he possibly make more of you than he does? He calls you his love, his dove, his undefiled one. He considers you as of more value than his own comfort, or even his own blood. He was willing to labor and suffer for thirty-three years, and then to die the most painful, shameful, and ignominious death for you.

And he has never ceased to think of you or taken his eye off you for one moment, since he brought you on the stage of time--but especially since he called you by his grace. You are the purchase of his blood--the object of his care--the child of his providence--the subject of his intercession--the temple of his Spirit--the epistle of his love--and a joint heir with him of the eternal inheritance. What more can you be--or desire? Can he esteem you more highly? Can he love you more heartily? Can he display his grace in you more fully?

But unbelieving SINNER--what are you to Jesus? You are his enemy! You are opposed to him. You love him not. Should he deal with you according to your sins, or reward you according to your iniquities--how fearful would be the consequences, how dreadful the result! Can you read of the believer's privileges without wishing to enjoy them? Can you hear of the Christian's honors without desiring to share them? Is the love of Jesus nothing to you? Is the blood of Jesus treated as a common or worthless thing by you?

"Behold, now is the accepted time! Behold, now is the day of salvation!" The way of escape is cast up before you; the entrance is close by you--strive, then, to enter in at the strait gate; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads unto life, and few there be who find it. Will you be among that few? Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, many there be that go in thereat. Will you be among the many?

What Shall I Do for Jesus?

"Lord, what will You have me to do?" Acts 9:6

We live in stirring times: almost everything is in motion. Mind is especially active, either for good or evil. We have many active in the Church--but all are not active. We have many in our congregations who throw their energies into the Lord's cause--but there are many who do little or nothing. They have no idea what they could do. They never suspect how useful they may be. They have settled down with the opinion, that the cause of God will go on very well without them. Some of these excite our concern, some grieve us, and some get in our way and hinder us! Here is a question for every one such especially --a question for us all: What shall I do for Jesus?

Reader! did you ever put this question to your conscience? Are you willing to do so now? It can do you no harm; it may do you good. But first ask,

Did I ever do anything for Jesus? There are many things done in the Church, and by Christian professors--which are not done for Jesus. There is some other object in view. The eye is not single. The heart is not true. The motive is not pure.

Did you ever give yourself to the Lord? This is the first thing to be done. Jesus will not accept anything from you until you have given him yourself. His first request is, "My son--give me your heart!" Withhold from him the heart, and you withhold from him all. He will approve of nothing that you do. He will receive nothing from your hands. You are his enemy! You are in rebellion against him! You refuse to acknowledge his claims. You withhold his just rights. You grieve his loving heart.

If you have not, let me beseech you to go to his throne, present yourself before him in the attitude of a suppliant, offer him your heart just as it is, saying,

"Take my poor heart, just as it is,

Set up therein your throne;

So shall I love you above all,

And live to you alone!"

Having given him yourself, you may ask with Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what will You have me to do?" And be sure that he has something for you to do, and something that no one will do so well as you--something that no one ought to do, but you. He will say, "Son, go work today in my vineyard."

What can you do? This you can never tell--until you try.

What are you willing to do? This you may soon ascertain.

There is the Sunday school. Can you do anything for Jesus there? Can you take a class? If not, can you go around the neighborhood, and collect the children who are still untaught, that others may teach them?

There is the house of prayer. Can you do anything there? Is it full? If so, cannot you look out for young people who attend, unnoticed by any in the congregation, and notice them, trying to get from them whether they feel the power of the word, and try and follow up the preacher's appeals by a word in private? An immense amount of good may be done in this way, if Christians were only alive to its importance, and would do it for Jesus.

Is the congregation thin? Cannot you increase it? Did you ever set about trying in good earnest? Is there no one that you could influence to attend? What! not one? If you could influence one, that one may influence another; and in this way our chapels would soon be filled.

There is the minister. Can you do nothing for him? Do you regularly contribute for his support, according to your means, not making the subscription of anyone else your rule--but giving just as God has prospered you--doing it for Jesus?

Do you set apart a certain portion of time every week, that you may pray for him? Are you regular in your attendance on his ministry, and always early, that you may pray for him as you see him ascend his pulpit? Do you take inquirers to him, encouraging them to go and open their hearts to him when concerned for the salvation of their souls?

There are the sick. Do you ever visit them? Jesus takes the visits paid to his sick saints--as paid to himself. He says, "I was sick--and you visited me." "Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these my brethren--you did it unto me." How often do the Lord's sick, long to see a fellow-worshiper or a fellow-member come in, to read a portion of God's Holy Word, to offer up the prayer of faith, or speak a word to them of Jesus! How many fears may be banished, how many temptations may be removed, how many sufferers may be cheered, how many sorrowful believers may be comforted--if their fellow-believers, instead of indulging SELF, would visit them for Jesus, and speak to them of Jesus?

There are the poor. Will you relieve them--the poor saints more especially? Jesus takes what is given to them as given to himself, and promises a reward. Hear his words, believe them, try to realize the truth and importance of them, that you may be influenced by them: "Whoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, truly I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward," Matthew 10:42. You see, if you relieve the least saint, with the smallest gratuity, not being able to do more, and do it for Jesus--he pledges his word that you shall on no account lose your reward.

And how striking is the language of the Holy Spirit by the Apostle James! "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this--to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world," James 1:27. Tried by this standard how much pure religion have you? Some professors, and some church-members, have very little. When did you dry the widow's tears, and satisfy the orphan's needs--going to them, and not waiting for them to come to you? Will you do this for Jesus?

There are the enemies of Christ, as all careless sinners are. You may speak to them, offer special prayer for them, and try to win them over to his cause. "He who wins souls is wise." Proverbs 11:27. But if we would win--we must be winning. Love is the key of the human heart. Once get it in, and you may soon open the door. Love will use gold, silver, kind words, and winning deeds, and thus get access to the heart which was locked against truth and against God. Did you ever attempt to do this for Jesus?

Once more, there is the heathen world. Men and money are needed; you may help to provide them. The power of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary; you may help to bring down that.

There is plenty to do--and no time to be lost; for while we trifle or delay, Satan is working, time is flying, souls are perishing, saints are suffering, the cause of God is languishing, infidelity is spreading, Popery is gaining ground--and we are missing the mark. Let every Christian man, let every Christian woman, then, put the question to the heart, What can I do for Jesus? What more can I do--than I have done? What more can I give--than I have given?

Consider . . .

what Jesus has done for you,

what he is now doing for you,

what he has already given you,

what he has promised you,
what he deserves from you,
what he expects at your hands,
the honor he has put upon you,
the trust he has committed to you,
the charge he has given you,
the account he will demand of you,
the rule by which he will reward you;
and then ask, What can I do for Jesus?

And if there is any saving faith, if there is any sincere love to him, if there is any reverence for his authority, if there is any concern for his cause, if there is any zeal for his glory, if there is any pity for lost sinners, if there is any regard for his word, ask--then be honest in asking, What can I do for Jesus? Reader! there is much needs doing, there is much that you may do, and if you stand idle now, you must regret it by-and-bye; rouse up, therefore, and work!

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