

2 Peter - Commentaries by Clifford Henry Brown

Christian Truth: Volume 19, Abundant Entrance, An (1:2-11)

Address to Young People at Chicago in 1927

2 Pet. 1:2-11

It is not my thought to comment on all of this passage, but to consider how we have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I suppose none of us here have any ambition to come dragging into heaven—satisfied with just squeezing in. That is not characteristic of Christianity. I believe that there are cases like that though—people who do not want to go to hell—but that is not indicative of divine love being there; it is rather a fear of judgment. And it does not speak of the operations of the divine nature referred to here, which is rather the desire to have the association and companionship of the One who has bought us. He has equipped us with a nature which can only be satisfied with divine glory.

Being made "partakers of the divine nature" is not so much here the new birth but, rather, the practical result of it. How am I going to have the evidence of it in a practical way? We get it in the first part of the fourth verse. That is, if the soul lays hold on these promises which belong to it, living in the enjoyment of them, the result will be the manifestation of the divine nature. Of course, that could not be unless we had the divine nature.

As we were saying, none of us here would be satisfied just to get to heaven, but there is the desire to have an "abundant entrance." It is not a very good way for a ship to have to be dragged into port by a tug, but it is better than to go down at sea. How much more dignified for the old ship to come in under full colors. How proud the sailors are, and the captain, and with what joy they pull in after a long toilsome voyage! If we are Christians, we are going to make port. We are going to get there all right. But what kind of an entrance are we going to have?

The 11th verse says, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." I am sure that you would like to have that kind of an entrance. Here are the directions—the recipe for it—right here! I apprehend that the abundant entrance is not the swinging open of the doors at the end, but it is ministered all along the way.

I rather think that when one comes down to the time of facing the change from this world; that is, if he is permitted to face it consciously—if he is permitted to know that he is just about to go into the presence of the Lord—the kind of an entrance he is going to have at the end will largely depend upon the kind of an entrance he had the last year—the Christian life and experience he had been enjoying. You do not expect a Christian who has been living at a distance from the Lord—a sort of halfhearted life—you do not expect him to have an ecstasy as would the one who has lived and walked with God. The way to look forward with confidence to that change is to have operative in the soul these virtues that are spoken of in the intervening verses of our chapter.

Now the third verse: "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Young Christian, I wonder if you excuse yourself for your shallowness on the ground that the circumstances in which you find yourself are not advantageous to the kind of a life that you would like to live. You have reasoned it out and you think that it would be different if you were living in a different position. Our verse here says, "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." There is not one thing lacking! We have a complete equipment. God is not going to put us into a position where we cannot live for Him and yet ask us to live for Him. No! He has given us all things necessary; right in your present position God has given you the fullest resources to live for Him. We do not have to wait until we are older, or know our Bibles better, before we begin to live for Him.

How do these "exceeding great and precious promises" make us "partakers of the divine nature"? I believe in this way: It is the entering into and enjoying these exceeding great and precious promises (what God has done, is doing, and is going to do) as realities. The result is that I am so attracted and under the power of them that other things lose their charm. So we become more "imitators of God"; being occupied with the Object that is His; that is, that which occupies the heart of God. When we really lay hold on the promises that are ours, that hope works out in the life in a practical way, and we are seen to be "partakers of the divine nature."

The latter part of that verse says, "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." I often look over a company of our young people associated in the outside path, and think, "What a fortunate group they are! What a wonderful place they are in!" "Escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." We cannot value it too highly, dear young people. If that were true in the days of Peter, how doubly true today. "Corruption... in the world through lust"! What is lust? It is unsatisfied desires. This world is one constant succession of new desires—ever new desires.

How different with those who know the Lord Jesus Christ. How He satisfies! Divine realities give peace and quiet to the soul. What a blessed thing to be preserved from this ungodly scene. One grieves to see the pace of the young in this world—the shamelessness of the age—no restraint of any kind—turned loose to glut themselves with what this world has to offer—"wild-and-crazy age" some have said. Surely those words are not too strong! We have been graciously taken out of it. Such a worthy Object as we have found—the Christ of God! That cannot help but have a tremendous effect upon our lives. The most worthy Object of the universe—the Christ of God! To have Him brought before us again and again; His glory brought before us; to have His death brought before us on Lord's day morning; His worth repeated in our ears again and again; all that has its transforming power on our souls. What a blessed thing to escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust." How we ought to prize and value the blessed place in which we find ourselves. Could we think of a more blessed place than to be

gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, having the association of those who love Him in sincerity and truth; and where the Person, the work, and the word of Christ are, by the grace of God, jealously guarded and enjoyed by His people? It is a wonderful privilege.

In verses 5-7 we are told: "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." None of us want to get the reputation of being lazy in material things. There is much in Scripture about being diligent in divine things. In Romans 12:11, it should read, "As to diligent zealotry, not slothful." It has nothing to do with business at all. If you see a Christian especially devoted, especially godly, you can put it down that he did not get to be that way by going on in an indifferent way. He was not indolent. So this verse says, "giving all diligence," etc. There must be purpose of heart. That is true with anything in this world wherein people succeed. People do not stumble into success. It is a matter of hard work, of having a purpose and letting that purpose form and control the soul.

There is a word in the 27th Psalm along the same line—the fourth verse: "One thing have I desired of the LORD." So far so good! It is a good thing to have right desires, but that is not all of it. "That will I seek after." That is a very needful part. You say, "I would just love to be a real devoted child of God; I do not want to live a shallow Christian life." Well, then, the last part of the verse: "That will I seek after," "Giving all diligence...."

Now verse 8: "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." I know the Lord does not occupy us with the fruitfulness or unfruitfulness of our lives, but none of us want to be unfruitful. "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful." Here is the way to bear fruit, to be a fruitful branch for the Lord Jesus. He loves to feed among the lilies. The Lord finds His delight there. He gets fruit for His own soul.

Suppose we lack these things? "He that lacketh these things is, blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." v. 9. There is a kind of government of God operative among His people. One part of this government of God is that if a Christian becomes indifferent and worldly minded, lets slip divine things, and becomes taken up with this poor world, just in a corresponding measure he loses the consciousness of the blessedness there is in Christ. He does not lose the blessedness, but the consciousness of it. It is possible for a Christian to forget that he was purged. He does not even know whether or not he is a child of God. Things just become a blank to him, and he goes on, either in utter indifference or in despair. He has forgotten he was purged. That is the government of God among His people. We want to escape that, do we not? We want to have the constant assurance in the soul that we are headed for glory. Here is the way we get it—"If these things be in you, and abound, they shall make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." v. 10. God knows that we are going to be there, but this is the way to have constantly fresh in our souls the assurance of it—to make it sure to ourselves. Just as surely as we are careless and find ourselves involved in this world, we lose that assurance and perhaps even get into a state where we forget that we were purged from our sins. We do not have to fall. It does not bring any glory to the Lord Jesus for us to fall. It brings dishonor on Him, and on the truth, and on the Church of God.

"For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Is not that a glorious entrance? That is the privilege of every Christian. It is not a question of endowment, gift, or ability, but it is a question of the heart being occupied with the Christ of God—living in the enjoyment of what we have as God's people, bought with the precious blood of Christ. I believe each one of us here is privileged to have an abundant entrance. It is put into our own hands. We all know that the ability must come from Him. We know it is a matter of grace from first to last, and none of us are going to take any credit in the matter; but may we not rather trust ourselves unreservedly to Him and claim the grace He so gladly gives that we may have the joy of an abundant entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Christian Truth: Volume 36, Partakers of the Divine Nature (1:2-12)

Partakers of the Divine Nature (Notes from an address by C.H. Brown)

2 Pet. 1:2-12

Being made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4) is not so much the result of new birth, as it is the practical result being experienced in the Christian life. How are we going to prove this in a practical way? The answer is found in the first part of the verse, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers," etc. That is, if the soul lays hold on these promises, living in the enjoyment of them, the result will be the manifestation of the divine nature. Of course this word is addressed to those who do have the divine nature.

I suppose none of us Christians would be satisfied just to get into heaven; we do have the desire to have an "abundant entrance." It is not very good for a ship to have to be dragged into port by a tugboat, but it is better than going down at sea. How much more dignified for the ship to come in under full colors. How proud the sailors and the captain are, and with what joy they pull in after a long toilsome voyage! If we are Christians, we are definitely going to make port. We'll get there all right. The question is, what kind of entrance are we going to have?

Verse 11 says, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." I am sure you would like to have that kind of entrance. The directions—the precepts for it—are right here. I apprehend that the abundant entrance is not the swinging open of the doors at the end, but rather that which is ministered all along the way.

I rather think that when one comes down to the time of facing departure from this world (that is, if he is permitted to face it consciously), to go into the presence of the Lord, it will be found that the kind of an entrance he proved the last year-the Christian life and experience he had been enjoying -will mark the degree of "abundance" he will know right there at the end.

We do not expect a Christian who has been living a half-hearted life at a distance from the Lord to have an ecstasy at that moment, in the same degree as the one who has lived and walked with God. The way to look forward with confidence to that change is to have these virtues, spoken of in the intervening verses of our chapter, operative in the soul.

The third verse states: "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Young Christian, I wonder if you excuse your shallowness on the ground that the circumstances in which you find yourself are not advantageous to the kind of life you would like to live. Have you reasoned it out and thought that it would be better if you were living in a different position? If your circumstances were altered, do you think you would be able to live the kind of Christian life you would like to live? Our verse says, "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." There is not one thing lacking. We have complete equipment. God is not going to put us into a position where we cannot live for Him, and then ask us to live for Him. No; He has given us all things necessary. Right in your present position God has given you the fullest possible equipment to live for Him. It is not necessary for one to have to wait until he is older, or knows his Bible better, before he can begin to live for Him.

How do these "exceeding great and precious promises" make us partakers of the divine nature? I believe in this way: It is the entering into and enjoying them (what God has done, is doing, and is yet going to do) as realities. The result is we are so attracted and under the power of them, that other things lose their attractiveness and we become mere "imitators of God," being occupied with that which gives concern to Him and which occupies His heart. When we really lay hold on the promises that are ours, that hope works out in the life in a practical way, and we are truly in the enjoyment of being "partakers of the divine nature."

How different from the world is the newborn appetite of those who know the Lord Jesus Christ. The satisfaction of such a one with divine realities gives peace and quiet to the soul. What a blessed thing to be preserved from this ungodly scene. Do we not grieve to see the pace of many of those about us today?-the shamelessness of their walk -lacking restraint of any kind-turned loose to glut themselves with what this world has to offer. "A wild and crazy age," some have said, and surely the expression is not too strong.

We who have Christ have been graciously taken out of such an atmosphere. In its place we have found such a worthy Object-the Christ of God. This cannot help but have a tremendous affect upon our lives if we are in the good of it. We have the Christ of God, the most worthy Object of the universe, and His glory brought before us again and again in a special way when we partake of the memorials He has left us. To have His worth repeated in our ears again and again produces a transforming power in our souls.

What a blessed thing it is to escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust." There is no more blessed place than to be gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to have the association of those who love Him in sincerity and in truth. Where the Person, work, and word of Christ are (by the grace of God) jealously guarded and enjoyed by His people is indeed a wonderful place. We cannot value it too highly, dear young people. If escaping the world's lusts caused thankfulness in the days of Peter, how doubly true today.

In verses 5, 6 and 7 we are told: "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." None of us wants to get a reputation of being lazy in material things. There is a lot in Scripture about being diligent in divine things, as well. When you see a Christian especially devoted, especially godly, you may be sure he didn't get that character by going on in an indifferent way. He wasn't indolent. Yes, there must be purpose of heart, as the Scripture says, "giving all diligence," etc. That is true with anything in this world wherein people succeed. They do not stumble into success. It is a matter of hard work, of having a purpose and of letting that purpose form and control their actions. Be diligent in spiritual things, dear Christian friend.

There is a word in the 27th Psalm along the same line. Verse 4: "One thing have I desired of the Lord." So far so good. It is a good thing to have right desires, but that isn't all of it. The needful part follows: "That will I seek after." Perhaps you have said, I would just love to be a real devoted child of God; I don't want to live a shallow Christian life. Well then, heed the last part of the verse, "That will I seek after." Be diligent and there will be rewarding fruit from earnestly seeking.

Now let us look at 2 Pet. 1:8: "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." I know the Lord does not want us occupied with the fruitfulness or unfruitfulness of our lives, but none of us wants to be unfruitful. If the things put before us in these verses abound in us, then we will know what it is to be a fruitful branch for the Lord Jesus.

But suppose we lack these things. How sad are the expressions of verse 9: "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." There is a kind of government of God operative among His people. One part of this is that if a Christian becomes indifferent and worldly-minded, and lets divine things slip, to be taken up with this poor world, then, in a corresponding measure, he loses the consciousness of the blessedness there is in Christ. He doesn't lose the blessedness; he loses the consciousness of it. It is even possible for a Christian to forget that he was purged. He can get so far away that he doesn't even know whether or not he is a child of God. He just goes on in this condition, either in utter indifference or in despair. He has forgotten he has been purged. Such is the government of God among His people.

We surely want to escape such a sad condition, do we not? We want the constant assurance in our soul that we are headed for glory. We can keep that assurance, and at the same time be neither barren nor unfruitful, if these things be in us and abound. Verse 10 reassures us: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." God knows that we are going to be there, but this is the way to have constantly fresh in our souls the assurance of it to make it practically good to ourselves.

Finally, verse 11 gives further promise to the believer: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Isn't that a glorious entrance? That is the privilege of every Christian. It is not a question of endowment, gift or ability, but of the heart's being occupied with the Christ of God, living in the enjoyment of what we have as God's people, bought with the precious blood of Christ. Each one of us here who is Christ's is privileged to have an abundant entrance. It is put into our own hands, although we all know that the ability must come from Him. It is a matter of grace from first to last, and none of us is going to take any credit, but may we not cast ourselves unreservedly upon Him and claim that grace He so gladly gives? It is in doing so, and with diligence, that we can have the joy of an abundant entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

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