Genesis - Commentaries by Walter Thomas Prideaux Wolston

Forty Days of Scripture, Joseph's Forty Days: The Effect of Death; or, Conscience and Its Workings

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(Genesis 49:33; Genesis 50:1-21)

The forty days of Joseph are very interesting, because they make manifest the state of the souls of his brethren. The effect of those forty days upon his brethren was very far-reaching, I am persuaded. You see Joseph's brethren had sinned grievously against him, just as you and I have sinned against God, and although there may be a certain acknowledgment, that we are sinners, in everybody's history, there is never settled solid peace with God until a clean breast is made of the sin and the evil.

The reason why so many people today — while admitting the truth of Scripture and believing the gospel — are not in the enjoyed possession of forgiveness, salvation, and happy confidence in Christ, is this, that they have never had their guilty history really out with God. The last chapter of Genesis illustrates this very fully. A remembrance of everything, and confession of everything, then took place in the souls of Joseph's brethren. I have no doubt that it was the contemplation of the dead body of their old father for these forty days which brought it about. Death is a great reality. Men do not like death. They may tell me they do not fear it, and the scripture says truly, speaking of the wicked, "For there are no bands in their death" (Psa. 73:4); but after all death is a terrible calamity to man generally. I have seen men die carelessly and quite unconcerned, for Satan has got them in his grip, but the people that stand round about do not enjoy it. Oh, the thrill that goes through a man's soul when he first sees death! And it is quite right. The fear of death, of which Scripture speaks, is a right fear in the heart and history of a sinner. If you are kept face to face with death for forty days, as were Joseph's brethren, God will give you time to review your history as they did theirs, and if you are a wise person you will do it. But now I want you to see what led up to this.

Joseph is a very striking type of the Lord Jesus Christ; but the Lord Jesus Christ dead and risen. I do not talk to you of a Christ living on the earth, nor of a Christ dead in the grave, but I have to tell you tonight of a risen triumphant, victorious Man, whom God has made Lord of all. Observe that Joseph is a type of the Lord Jesus in this character. How he reached that position we will see, and to this end I am going to ask you to turn over the leaves of your Bible. We will go back, therefore, at once to the opening chapter of Joseph's history, and that you will find in Genesis 37. Joseph is introduced to us in verse 2 as a lad of seventeen. I call attention to the age, because what came out at the close was this, his brethren had been partaking of the bounty of his hands for seventeen long years, but did not know his heart. Ah! There is many a person who has a sense of the bounty of Christ, but who does not know His heart. Well, we find Joseph was loved by his father. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (John 3:35). Joseph has a couple of dreams. First of all, there is the one in which he sees the sheaves in the field bowing down to his sheaf. And then he gets another dream, where the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to him. When he told his dreams his father rebuked him, and his brethren envied him.

This is just the history of Christ. He came into this world, which He had made as well as everything in it, but what took place? He was hated. He was not wanted. So Joseph's brethren hated him. His brothers saw him coming one day, and they said: "Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him" (Gen. 37:19-20). Similarly, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world, and when He came into the world the men thereof said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours" (Mark 12:7). Joseph's brethren say, "Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams" (Gen. 37:20). That is to say, they propose to murder him, and then to back up their murder by deceit and lies. That was the proposition, but it was not carried out because Reuben intervened, and Joseph was cast into the pit. But the murder took place with the Lord Jesus Christ. Men did kill Him.

Next we find that Joseph was taken out of the pit, sold for twenty pieces of silver, and became a slave.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver, "a goodly price," says the prophet (Zech. 11:13). Judas sold his Master and his own soul in one moment. Many a man in this world thinks only of money. But stop, think of eternity, when all the money has gone, and when death has got his cold grip upon you, what then? Oh, my friend, you think of it now.

Joseph is sold to Ishmaelites, and they drag him down to Egypt. His coat of many colors is taken of and dipped in the blood of a goat, and with it his brethren deceive their father. They say to him, "This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no" (Gen. 37:32). They deceived their father. Ah, you say, "bad men." Have you never deceived your father? You are going to get time to think about it one day. Oh, but this is a very glaring case. I do not deny it, but sin is sin, my friend, and depend upon it, the day is coming when you will have to face it up. You may try and forget your sins, but stop a bit, God has a great memory and a long look-out Many, many years roll by, in fact they let about forty years roll by before it all came out. But mark, it must come out. "Be sure your sin will find you out," is a God-given word. Now, my friend, I do not know what your sin has been, but it will find you out. Their sin found them out, though the old man, Jacob, was deceived.

We will now pass over the next two chapters, where you have, upon the one hand, the looseness of man in the history of Judah, and, on the other, the wonderful way in which a God-fearing young man is preserved. That is Joseph.

Then we come to the story of the prison-house, where Joseph is trusted by his master and by the keeper. Everything goes on well in his hand, and you have the story of the baker and the butler, and this is how Joseph is brought to the throne. The butler and the baker had dreams, and he is able to tell them their dreams, for God was with him. He says to the butler: "Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house" (chap. 40:13-14). That is he says, When it is well with thee, think on me. That is like a very touching word of the Lord's. Just before He went into death, He said, "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19). Christ has been cast out by the world, and He expects His friends

will make mention of Him. I like to make mention of my best Friend.

That butler owed an immense deal to Joseph. But we read, “Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him” (Gen. 40:23). The next chapter, however, introduces him to Pharaoh. We read that Pharaoh had a dream. He first of all saw seven fat kine, and then seven lean kine, and the lean ones ate up the fat ones. And then he saw seven good ears of corn and seven thin ears, and the thin devoured the full ears of corn, and Pharaoh could not understand what it meant. At this juncture the butler remembered Joseph, and he is brought out of the prison-house. He had gone into death in figure. But what Joseph did not go into really, Jesus went into. Scripture says He went down into death, that by His dying and rising again He might bring salvation to you and me. The interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream is very simple. Seven years of plenty, and seven years of famine, and so great should be the famine that all that was brought forth in the seven good years should be eaten up during the seven years of famine.

Joseph then gives beautiful counsel to Pharaoh. His counsel is this. “Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine” (Gen. 41:33-36). The point was this, the future was to be provided for. Now there is a great principle there. Whatever you do not have, as regards this life, make sure for eternity. Look ahead. The future is there. Well, when Pharaoh hears this wise counsel, he says to Joseph, “Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art; thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou” (Gen. 41:39-40).

Thus we find Joseph delivered from the pit and the prison-house. Pharaoh exalts Joseph. What a simple figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where is He now? Exalted to God’s right hand. The Man who humbled Himself, and went down into death for the glory of God and the salvation of men, because there was no way of escape for them except through His death and resurrection, Him God has put at His own right hand. “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (Psa. 110). And again we read: “And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven [angels], and things in earth [men], and things under the earth [the damned]” (Phil. 2:8-10). Without exception all must bow to Him. You say, “When?” That is not the point. Thank God, I have bowed now. Have you? Well, you say, “I have never found the devil bow to Him, or confess Him as Lord.” Ah, that is a bitter piece of work the devil has got to do yet. It is joyous work to me, I love to own Him. I have got into the dying thief’s company. And what is that? “Lord, remember me.” He owns Him as Lord. That is the moment of blessing you will always find in the soul’s history.

Pharaoh says, “Only in the throne will I be greater than thou” (Gen. 41:40). Now, the Lord Jesus is in His own Person God. In the second chapter of Philippians it is exceedingly beautiful to see that what is due to God is going to be rendered to a Man. We read in the Old Testament: “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Isa. 45:23). Oh, but you say, that is God speaking, and He has a divine right to claim this subjection. Quite true, and He will have it. But notice, it is all going to be rendered to a Man, and that Man, the Man of sorrows, the lowly Nazarene. What He can claim as God, He is worthy of as Man, and God is going to make every created intelligence in the universe of God bow to Him, and own Him as Lord. Now, my friend, do not you miss the present moment to own Him.

Next Pharaoh says to Joseph, “See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt” (Gen. 41:41). What a change, from the prison to the palace, and by the side of the king, and he rules over the whole land. Do you know what the Lord Jesus said just as He was leaving this earth? “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). I believe it. My Master and my blessed Saviour, all power is given unto Him. I glory in being in His company. I glory in His service. I glory that I belong to Him. And if you never belonged to Christ before, make up your mind for Him tonight.

What do we read now? “And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck: and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt” (Gen. 41:42-43). I do not doubt that when the cry went out, “Bow the knee,” they said, To whom? To Joseph? That slave, that man who was in prison? Never! Methinks I hear many a proud Egyptian prince saying, “Never will I bow.” Perhaps you have said, “I will never bow to Christ.” Ah, wait a bit. Pride never filled your stomach. It may have filled your bosom. What will bring you down? A day of famine.

Observe what follows in our chapter. Joseph was now thirty years of age. Thirteen years had rolled by since he had been sold by his brothers. And now there come the seven plenteous years. And then the seven years of dearth set in. “And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread.” Now they were in for a famine, but Joseph’s brethren could hang out for two years. And perhaps, my dear friends, you have hung out against the famine. Do you know what brought the prodigal to his father in Luke 15? There was a famine. Do you know what brought me to Christ forty-three years ago? Famine in my heart. Oh, you have heard the gospel dozens of times. You say, “I am not going to have Christ just now.” But already you have begun to find that the world does not satisfy you. Yes, you have an empty heart.

Notice, please, Pharaoh’s injunction when the people were crying for bread: “And Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; and what he saith to you, do” (Gen. 41:55). God’s injunction is similar. Have you got your soul saved yet? No. You must go to Jesus. You would not bow before, but now you are hungry, you are anxious to be saved. Oh, you say, “I will go direct to God.” People do not want this blessed Man. They will not have Jesus. But stop, if you are going to have salvation you must get it through that Man, or you are never going to have it. Do you understand? Go to Jesus. Will not my works help me? No, and nothing else. You must have Jesus and Jesus only, or die in your sins.

There is only corn where Joseph is. Salvation, typically, was with Joseph, and no one else, and to him all had to go or starve to death. This was true not only of Joseph’s brethren, but the whole world.

Let us now come to Joseph’s brethren to see how they get on, and what exercise of conscience they go through before they get their need met. Pharaoh says, “What he saith to you, do.” Joseph opens the storehouses. When you come to Christ you will find an open storehouse. Jesus is an open-hearted Saviour who will save you on the spot. You must come to Him. Where is He tonight? At God’s right hand. Think not of

your works, but come to Jesus, and you will find all that you need.

Genesis 42 shows us Joseph's brethren a second time. After Joseph was governor over the land, and when the famine came where they lived, at length Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt. He says, I hear there is salvation to be had in Egypt, you had better away and get it. Well, away they go. And now they come to buy corn. But you will find that Joseph's brethren did not get it by buying. The money was returned in their sacks. We read, "And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth" (Gen. 42:6). They, who had opposed him so many years before, what is the first thing they do? They bow down. The moment of real blessing in your soul is when you first bow down to Christ. I do not mean externally, but when, in your soul, there is a bowing to the blessed Lord. But observe what Joseph does. "And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them" (Gen. 42:7). Joseph knew his brethren. Stop, God knows all about your history, young man. And I tell you what it is, God's ways with our souls are always to bring us into real blessing. But we must get it in God's way. Did they get the corn immediately? No, he spake a little roughly to them. He knew them. You remember that Pharaoh had called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah, which had a double meaning. It signified "A revealer of secrets " in the Coptic, and by collation with the Egyptian language is supposed to mean " Saviour of the age."

Now our blessed Lord Jesus Christ is the true Zaphnath-paaneah. He is the Revealer of Secrets, and the Saviour of the world. Will you turn to the fourth chapter of John, where a poor woman, who is living in open sin, meets the blessed Lord by the well. He says to her: "Go, call thy husband, and come hither. And the woman answered and said. I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly." What did she say? "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet" (John 4:16-19). He was the Revealer of Secrets. But what is the next thing? She does not run away. She says: "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He" (John 4:25-26). He reveals Himself. Because, mark, to a convicted sinner you will always find a Saviour revealed. So it was then. And she went and said to her neighbors, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29). The Samaritans came to Jesus, and thereafter said to the woman, "We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42).

Joseph knew the secrets of their hearts. He knew them, but they knew him not. And then it says, "And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come" (Gen. 42:9). What did they say? "Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies" (Gen. 42:10-11). Listen. "We are true men." "Well," you say, "if that is not a lie." Ay. Oh, my friend, you can put on what face you like with me or your neighbor, but you cannot put on a face with God. He knows you. "True men," forsooth! That is their verdict about themselves. What do you think of their hatred and hypocrisy? True men they were not, and they had to learn it. You too will have to face up about your sin before God, my friend.

What is the next thing? "And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not" (Gen. 42:13). Murder will out. "And one is not." That is their way of talking of their getting rid of their brother. They stood in his presence and did not know it. And now we read, "And he put them all together into ward three days" (Gen. 42:17). They got three days in prison, had time to think, and came to this right conclusion: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (Gen. 42:21). On the third day Joseph said, Go home, and bring your youngest brother unto me.

As they go back to fetch this younger brother, one of them opens his sack and finds his money in the mouth of it. And we read, "And their heart failed them, and they were afraid" (Gen. 42:28). A bad conscience is an awful companion. But it is a great thing, if you have a bad conscience, to heed it. Ah, how it pulls one up. And they begin to think about their sins. They say, "What is this that God hath done unto us?" (Gen. 42:28). Ah, God knows all about you, my friend. It is like a woman that walked some miles to see a minister one Monday morning. He had been preaching the night before, some miles off, on that text, "Be sure your sin will find you out," and on her entering his study he inquired what he could do for her. "Oh, it's all about that ere book, sir," she replied. "I never spoke about a book," he said. "Oh, yes, it's that ere book, sir." " But I never mentioned a book." Then it came out. Twenty years before she had stolen a book from a friend's house, which she had seen and liked, and now the text had woke her up. "Be sure your sin will find you out." It woke her up. God be thanked if you are waked up.

Joseph's brethren were getting waked up; as they say, "What is this that God hath done unto us? " God was putting His finger upon their consciences. When they get back to their father, they say, "The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country" (Gen. 42:30). My friend, if you could interpret God's ways you would find them to be all love. You think He is rough.

No, no, He loves you with all His heart, and He has given His Son for sinners like you and me.

But their sacks of corn are soon emptied, and the famine was very sore. And their father said: "Go again, buy us a little food. And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother. And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words" (Gen. 43:3-7). My friend, God means you to have everything out sooner or later. If you put it off, it will be an awful thing to have it out with the Lord Jesus Christ at the judgment-seat. Condemnation can be the only issue then.

Joseph's brethren put off going down; but hunger is a cruel taskmaster, so, willing or not, they feel they must go down. "And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this: take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds" (Gen. 43:11). Oh, how many people think they must bring God a present. You say that it is very foolish. Yes, but you think you can propitiate God by what you bring — and a way out of the difficulty is suggested. Take Him a present. You are too late. All His claims have been met in the death of His Son, and His heart is free to come out now with the fullest blessing.

Well, down they go again. “And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home” (Gen. 43:16). See, what does God want? He warns you brought home. “Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon.” And now we read, “And the men were afraid” (Gen. 43:18). Ah! it is wonderful how fear begins to work on the conscience when a sinner feels he is not right with God. They were afraid because the money had been returned. But then Joseph’s steward says, “Peace be to you, fear not” (Gen. 43:23). If you are in real exercise of soul, you will sooner or later find somebody with a bit of gospel for you.

Presently we read that Joseph came in, and once more they bow down, and then they ate. And now see what hearts were theirs (and what hearts are ours). “And they drank, and were merry with him” (vs. 34). Think of it. He put them very much at their ease, you say. Yes, but their sin had not yet come out. They did not know at this moment who he was. Young man, how can you eat and be merry when you know your soul is unsaved, and, if you die in your sins, that you are going to everlasting perdition? But such is the heart of man.

But the next chapter takes us a step further. “And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph’s house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground” (Gen. 44:14). They had gone away and were on their way home, but Joseph’s silver cup was in one of their sacks, so they had to come back. And Joseph was still waiting there. He was waiting for them, and Judah had a sort of feeling that they were discovered. Joseph says, “What deed is this that ye have done?” (Gen. 44:15); and Judah says, “How shall we clear ourselves?” Friend, are you anxious to clear yourself? Listen to me. Confess your sins. That is the necessity. To that point were Joseph’s brethren brought, as they say, “God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord’s servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found” (Gen. 44:16). Tell me, what iniquity was there in relation to the cup? None; but it served to rouse conscience. It brought up the twenty pieces of silver, and the wickedness of their history in days gone by. Well said the poet, “Conscience makes cowards of us all,” and miserable was their state as they say to Joseph, “And let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh” (vs. 18). But the truth must come out. And it is a great thing when the conscience is thus divinely reached.

I pass on to chapter 45, and there I find they are in Joseph’s house, and Joseph is with them once more. I do not doubt he felt that the work was done in the conscience. You will find there is a deep sense in their souls of how terrible their guilt was. It is like the third chapter of Romans: “That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19). I cannot justify myself. I do not want to. Because when my mouth is stopped with the sense of my guilt that is the moment God’s mouth is opened in grace, and when I cannot justify myself that is the moment when God will justify me in grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

At this point Joseph says: “Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph” (Gen. 45:1). What a revelation! “Doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you.” My friend, does not this bring out the heart of Christ? You know what the Lord said to Saul of Tarsus, who had been bitterly opposing Him. Saul said: “Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” (Acts 9:5). What did these men hear? “I am Joseph.” What did that convicted man hear? “I am Jesus.” Oh, come near unto Him. Friend, if you have been afraid of Him, be afraid no more. Let all that fear and dread of bygone days be a thing of the past, and where you are just now say, “Blessed Lord, just as I am, I come.”

“And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life” (Gen. 45:4-5). You see it is the same as you have in the Acts of the Apostles, where the Apostle Peter tells the convicted people in chapter 2 that their action in slaying Christ had really been the carrying out of the fore-ordained purpose of God. The guilt of man was none the less of course. “God did send me before you to preserve life.” Jesus says, I know you have sinned against Me, and you have not loved Me, but see what God sent Me before you to do. To save your lives by a great deliverance. Blessed Saviour He has come and given Himself for our sins, and now He invites the confidence of every heart that is here. And tell me, will you not trust Him? Is Jesus not worthy of the confidence of your heart? So was Joseph, and I find they did to a certain measure trust him, but not fully, as the sequel shows.

Now let us pass on to chapter 1. Seventeen years have rolled by. Jacob was one hundred and thirty years old when he went down to Egypt, and he died at one hundred and forty-seven. Joseph’s brethren lived in Goshen, and he had lavished his love upon them, but after all they did not know his heart. It is very like what one often meets nowadays. People have believed the gospel in a certain way, but they have not had it all out between God and themselves, and therefore they do not know His heart. It was similar in the case of Joseph’s brethren. There had not been any real confession on their side. Little wonder they were not perfectly at ease. They thought it was all right so long as their father lived, but when he passed away matters had to be settled. Joseph at length has to lay his father at rest, and Scripture gives us this simple but striking account of what took place. There was this mourning for forty days.

Let us go into the chamber of death. It will do you no harm. It was not for one day, but for “forty days.” Every one of those ten men then said to himself, It has come, the old man is gone, and what will happen now? Again conscience woke up. As they look at the corpse of their father, their conscience works. You face death for forty days, and I tell you what you will do. You will say to yourself, I should like to be right with God; I should like to be right in view of death myself. So, evidently, death told on these men tremendously. Look at the effect on them. The funeral was over. “And when Joseph’s brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him” (Gen. 50:15). So, sometimes, speaks an undelivered soul of the Lord. Christ hate you? My friend, He loves you deeply, tenderly, truly. Oh, there is no love like the love of Jesus.

Notice the next thing which Joseph’s brethren do. They send a messenger. They would have been far happier if they had gone themselves individually. “And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin.” I have a very grave doubt whether the old man did say this, but they knew the time had now come when they had to get thoroughly right with Joseph, and this could only be effected by an honest acknowledgment of the past. So with you, my friend, and God. If you do not confess downright you will never get peace. Hear David’s statement regarding this: “When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer” (Psa. 32:3-4). This misery was his while he cloaked up his sin. Now note the contrast, and how he illustrates the New Testament statement: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). He evidently made a clean breast of all his sin in regard to Bathsheba, as detailed in Psalm 51 Observe the result. “I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin” (Psa. 32:5). So say Joseph’s brethren. “For they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee,

forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him" (Gen. 50:17). What is the meaning of that? Their distrust pained him. Beloved friend, if you want to chill and pain the heart of Christ, distrust His love. Nothing touches our hearts like being distrusted. He loves to be fully trusted.

"And his brethren also went and fell down before his face," when they found what was in his heart —tenderness, nothing but love. They are at his feet most truly, and most real in their confession. "And they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God. But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:19-20). He does not minimize their guilt, but pardons it in grace.

The curtain falls on this instructive history with words which surely made their hearts profoundly happy. And if you have had a doubt about the goodness of God, hug that doubt no more. "Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones." He cares for them. Yes, "And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them" (Gen. 50:21). It is the ministry of love. Friend, trust the Lord Jesus. If you have never yet been able to say, I really can believe my Saviour, will you not say it today? Lord Jesus, I bow, and I come to Thee. I own my Saviour. Have it all out with Him. And what will you find? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Should this be the case, I think you will be thankful for Joseph's forty days. If where you are just now you turn to Him, with "Lord, I believe," you will find He will fill your soul with peace, and joy, and gladness just where you are. Now, friend, do be simple, and trust Him now.

The Call of the Bride, Bride's Decision, The

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them, And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (Gen. 24:53-67).

We have, in previous pages, been looking at this chapter, and seeing how simply and sweetly the gospel is therein foreshadowed and illustrated; and now, in referring to it once more, I avow, most distinctly, my object is not to unfold the gospel in its doctrinal view, but to get your soul. my reader, if possible, brought to a distinct point before Christ.

The Lord help me to pen, and you to peruse, this paper as if indeed it were the last occasion on which I could appeal to you, or you have the opportunity of receiving Christ.

I find, then, here one question: the person most interested gets one simple question put to her, to which she must make, on her own responsibility, one answer — Yes or No.

The narrative is very simple, the type equally beautiful, the application heart-winning. The Father of the Lord Jesus Christ offers to give you eternal glory in association with His Son. Consequent upon the death, resurrection and ascension of His Son — which are the proofs of God's love on the one hand, in giving that Son to die, and His righteousness on the other, in raising and glorifying Him as man, in token of His delight and satisfaction in the work He has accomplished for sinners — there has come from heaven a divine messenger, the herald of a divine message, and it falls now on your ear. It is this: God wants to have you for His Son, He does not come and press upon you that you want His Son; that possibly may not be the case consciously, for many do not care to have Christ, as they are not aware of their lost and needy condition as sinners. When people really want anything they cast about till they get it, but if they are indifferent they are passive.

It is perfectly true you want a Savior; but salvation is not the thought here. God here proposes to you to share the glories of His beloved Son. Do you not see to what glories and dignities you are invited? Instead of being left to die in your sins, and then pass unpardoned and unblessed into outer darkness, to be the miserable companion of the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41), God wants you to enter into relationship with Christ now, by faith in His name, and then be the sharer of His joys through the endless cycles of eternity's blissful day.

This is the message Eliezer brings. He comes from Canaan, where Isaac abides. The father sends his servant to the far-off land to get one, if he could, to cross the desert to be the Bride to the unseen and unknown Bridegroom. Three things are necessary if you are going to be a sharer of the glory of Christ — redemption, righteousness, and raiment; but "jewels of silver," "jewels of gold," and "raiment," the very articles which typify these three things, the servant brings out and offers to Rebekah. Silver is the type of redemption: the only way the soul can draw near to God is on the ground of redemption. I need righteousness, and gold is the symbol of Divine righteousness. "Raiment" speaks for itself, and these three things I must have.

Christ is your raiment, if you will have Him as such, and all else.

I address you as a messenger from God. "Bold ground," you say. Yes, but no more bold than blessed. In the name of my Master I come, and want to win you for Christ. I want to win you for Christ as you read this paper. O unsaved man, unsaved woman! my message is this — I want you, I want you for Christ. God wants you for Christ.

“Oh, but I am such a sinner!” True, that is quite true. “I cannot, as I am, draw near to God.” False. The veil is rent, the blood is shed and sprinkled before God, the new and living way exists, and you are bidden to come to God just as you are.

Nevertheless, mark, Eliezer does not say, “Wilt thou go?” before he gives Rebekah the jewels and the raiment. If it be the question of what will fit me for the Father’s house, could anything be better than what He sends? The gospel tells you that Christ came into the world, and it tells you, too, what He has done. The law tells me what I ought to do, and smites me because I have not done it. Law tells me of myself; the gospel tells — me what Christ is, and what He has done.

Are you going to have Christ? You have often heard about Jesus, but are you on your way to Him? I want this to be the moment of your betrothal.

What I want now is decision. Redemption is accomplished, the blood has been shed, and the claims of God have all been met by the cross. That which the sinner needs has been wrought out for him by Jesus; and now it is for you to accept the gospel message, for you in the truthful integrity of your soul to say, “Come what may, I am going to be Christ’s.” You may have some time to wait ere you see the Lord Jesus face to face; the desert may be long in crossing, but one sight of Him will more than make up for all the toil or trouble of the way.

Rebekah hears the message one day and starts the next. Many have put off coming to Christ for ten days and have spent them in hell. I beseech you to come now to Jesus.

Notice here how that arch-enemy of present blessing — procrastination — appears.

The servant “rose” and said, “Send me away unto my master.” Her relations reply, “Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.” They want the moment of decision deferred, and you want that too, don’t you? “Some day,” you say, “but not just now.” You want to defer it. This is the plausible voice of the devil. If you are not turned to the Lord, your back is towards Him; you are still in your sins, and they will bring you to judgment. Ten days are most insidious. Felix was a man of ten days. “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” Ah, poor Felix, when will his convenient season come? He never had a more convenient season. Oh, turn now to Jesus! Oh, ye halters, who are not yet decided for Christ, take Felix as a warning!

Perhaps you think you will turn to the Lord when you reach your deathbed. Delusive hope, for you may never have one. I heard lately of a procrastinator whose constant reply to earnest Christian friends, when they spoke to him of his soul’s salvation, and urged him to come to Christ, “I am sure that God is so merciful, that if I turn to Him, even on a deathbed, He will hear my prayer and save me, so I shall wait till then.” Though repeatedly warned, this was his refuge, and so on he went, till he came, not to his deathbed, but, as was his wont, into the hunting-field. While the hounds were in full cry after the quarry, his horse leaped a hedge, on the further side of which were lying some sheep. Disturbed and frightened by the sudden apparition of the horse, the timid creatures fled in all directions. Their scampering off alarmed the usually sure-footed steed, who fell, flinging his rider. Three words burst from the lips of the falling man — not “God have mercy!” but, addressing the sheep, “Devil take ye!” They were his last words, for he broke his neck and died on the spot. Reader, be sure of it, procrastination is the thief of souls, as well as of time, and I quite agree with Rowland Hill, who termed it “The recruiting-officer of hell.”

God may never give you the opportunity of repentance on a deathbed. Now is the only time you can be sure of finding Christ.

Sinner, I warn you, these are facts, stern facts, “But what do you want me to do?” you may reply. I want you to yield yourself to Christ just now. I want you to make sure of eternity, and not put off, even until tomorrow (which never comes), the momentous matter of getting really hold of the salvation of God.

Ye young ones, I appeal to you. It is vain to say “Let me die the death of the righteous.” If you are going to die the death of the righteous you must live the life of the righteous. It is vain to suppose you can get Christ when you like: you must get Him when you may, and that is just now.

And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go” (ver. 55). Such was the procrastinating speech of that day, and how solemnly is it echoed by many a soul nowadays — Do you say, “I will decide for Christ in a few days at the least: at most, ten? Ten days hence! Oh, no! It must be now if you want to be with Christ in glory; if you want to be with that rapturous throng around the Savior; if you want to join the chorus, “Worthy is the Lamb.”

What does God say? now. Jesus will have you now. I earnestly implore you not to delay. I lay no claim to being a prophet when I say you may never have another gospel message and another day of grace in which to be saved. Really, my dear reader, you can have no idea of the joy of being Christ’s or you would not delay a single hour in turning to Him, receiving the pardon of your sins, the salvation of your soul, and the sweet heart-thrilling assurance that He is yours and you are His. Do you know that Jesus loves you and wants you, wants to claim you as His? “Jesus... having loved his own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” Oh, to be His own loved one — His very own! Nothing changes that love of His. Jesus wants to have you numbered among His own, His very own.

Will you yield? Let not Satan deceive you with a few days hence, ten days. Now is the time.

Well, what is the servant’s answer to be — “Send me away, for I have failed?” Oh, say, must I go and tell my Lord I have failed — failed to win your heart for Him? Shall it be so? Oh no, no; give me the joy of saying to my Lord, “This heart is Thine.”

What was Rebekah’s answer when her relations said to her, “Wilt thou go with this man?” She said, “I will go.” No one else can decide for you. You have a soul, its eternal welfare depends on your answer. You have a soul to be saved or lost. Oh, will you let any one, anything, come in between the Lord and your soul? Decide, decide now.

Jesus wants you, Jesus is waiting for you. Oh, let nothing hinder you from coming to Him. “We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth,” was the word then; it is you that are concerned now. Wilt thou go? dear soul, wilt thou go? Oh, say, “I will go!” Yes, have Christ, be Christ’s! Shall He be thine? What say you? “Wilt thou go?” The Holy Ghost puts the question to you, it is not my question. God’s question is, “Wilt thou go?” Wilt thou go to meet Christ and be His? Give me thine answer; oh, let there be no more delays. How can you tell you will have time to decide tomorrow? Tomorrow is God’s, not yours. “Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Let there be no more procrastination. God lingers over you; again and again He lets you hear these words, “Wilt thou go?” “Wilt thou go?” “I will go,” says faith, “I

will go,” says the decided heart, “I will go,” says the earnest one.

“I will go;” this is the calm, quiet resolution of the soul that wakes up to see the glory that is offered, and the grace that offers it.

What is the absolute alternative if Christ is not received? The dreary darkness of an eternal night, in which the only light is that shed by the lurid flame that is never quenched, the only companions sinners and devils as wretched as yourself, and the only occupation vain regrets over the folly and unbelief that have landed you in a spot beyond the reach of the hand of God Himself.

All depends on yielding yourself, or not, to Jesus, If the language of your soul is “I will go,” you will thank God for all eternity.

Would you like all to be saved but yourself? Would you like all to be included and you excluded from that blessed number who surround the Lord Jesus in unfading glory? Surely not. Then halt no longer, but give a decided answer to the query which again I put — nay, which God in His sovereign grace once more puts to thee.

Soul, “wilt thou go?” Thou canst hardly say no, when to remain is to be eternally lost. What is thine answer? “Ten days hence.” Beware, the clemency of God will not last forever. Ten days hence and the door of heaven may he closed forever against thee, and in vain shall thy piteous cry be, “Open unto me.” But, thank God, there is yet another answer thou canst give, “I will go.” Let it be thine.

Rebekah had never seen Isaac when she decided to go to him, but she believed the report that Eliezer gave. And think you not that as they journeyed across the desert many a question was asked concerning the one to whom she was going? And would not her heart grow warmer and warmer towards him as she heard his praise? And shall it not be so with you? The Holy Ghost, we are told, “Will take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto you.” Oh, listen to Him, let no trumpet-sound of earth deaden His voice. He would tell you of God’s well-beloved Son. Oh, learn of Him, of all His gentleness, love, and grace, and of His glory, too; and as each beauty bursts upon your admiring gaze know that He may be thine, and if thine, then shall the jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and the raiment become more precious to thee because they are His gifts.

Did Rebekah stop the camels to pick up the agates of the desert? I trow not; and wilt thou linger by the way to gather the withering pleasures of a death-doomed world?

Oh, no! Haste thee on to the joy, the satisfying and endless joy that is to be possessed only at thine Isaac’s side. Be unfettered, be but a sojourner and pilgrim here; heaven is thy home, speed thee on to it. And what shall the meeting be when thou shalt see Him face to face? Wonderful as was the story you listened to by the way, yet your astonished soul in wonder shall exclaim, “The half had not been told.”

There are three things the Lord has done for us. He loved us, He gave Himself for us, and He has washed us from our sins. Why has He done these? “That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” What a glorious Bride shall the Church be in that day when “the marriage of the Lamb has come!”

Rebekah goes, she commits herself to the guardianship of Eliezer, and at eventide she sees Isaac coming; and what is that but a simple type of the meeting with our Lord? Isaac was comforted when he received his Bride; and have we not read of Jesus, “Who for the joy... set before him endured the cross, despising the shame”? His joy will be full when He has His Bride in glory with Him. And is that blessed hour near? The last step of the journey may be indeed most near; this night it may be that “He that shall come will come.” He is coming. Three times in Revelation 22 He says, “I come quickly.” Are you ready? “Wilt thou go?” “I will go,” is the only answer suited to such a call of grace. And now, in conclusion, I would say, Let all know you are Christ’s. Confess Christ. Own Him.

“The Father, from eternity,Chose us, O Jesus Christ, in Thee,In Thee, His well-beloved;And we, as given to Thee — Thy Bride — In Thee, Lord Jesus, do confide:Thy love remains unmoved.From Thee dailyStrength receiving — to Thee cleaving,Blessed Jesus!May we all show forth Thy praises.“Before the world we’d make our boast,That Thou, in whom is all our trust,Art Lord of life and glory:And soon Thou’lt bring us to that placeWhere we shall see Thee face to face,And, glorified, adore Thee.Amen! — Be thenPraise and blessing, never ceasing,To Thee given,Here, and when we come to heaven.”

The Call of the Bride, Bride's Raiment, The

“And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah” (Gen. 24:53).

We have looked at the “jewels of silver” and “jewels of gold”; now, I would desire to direct your attention to the “raiment.” But let me first say it is of no use hearing the gospel unless it produces an effect upon you, unless it shows you what you are, and what God is, and what He has done for you. Unless it turns you to the Lord for salvation, the effect of your hearing the gospel is but to add the weight of heavy responsibility to your already sin-burdened soul.

God is calling you in this hour of His grace to association with Christ in glory: He is offering you a place with Christ. Christ could not have a place down here because of the sin and wickedness of man, so God gives us a place with Christ in glory. He offers you a part or portion with Christ. Eliezer traveled from Canaan to Padan-Aram for a bride for Isaac: Christ is in glory, and the Holy Ghost came down from heaven at Pentecost, and from that time till now His constant effort has been, and is, to lead souls to yield themselves to Christ. There ever have been, and will be, hindrances and difficulties in the way; for Satan is ever busy in trying to keep you out of the blessings God has for you — the great blessing of being “one with Christ.” But what breaks down all opposition of Satan and the human heart is that God wants to bless you, Do you believe that God really wants, and is waiting to bless you?

Reader, do you possess that which fits you and gives you a true title to be in the presence of God? Have you the bright hope before you of this glory with Christ? Before you can stand in His presence you must have on suited raiment; the courtly Robe of Heaven must be yours — and that is Christ. God has provided it for you, and I, as the ambassador of God, now offer you in His Name, CHRIST, THE RAIMENT.

Oh, sinners, and all ye workers for salvation, better far barter your own self-made clothing, which is useless before God, and accept what He in His grace and mercy has provided for you; provided for you without money and without price. Your own raiment — in the way, I mean, of good works, almsgiving, or morality — may do well enough to clothe you in the sight of your fellow-sinners; but they are no covering in the sight of a God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and, sinner, you must be clad suitably for God or be eternally lost.

There is a great difference between working for salvation and working from salvation; the first is your own futile attempts to clothe yourself; the latter is working because God has already clothed you and made you fit for His service.

The first covering or raiment we read of in Scripture is the fig-leaf “aprons” of Adam and Eve; and what avail were they when the guilty ones heard the voice of God, saying, “Where art thou?” They knew they were naked, and they tried to hide themselves from God. The miserable knowledge obtained by their sin had but taught them they were now unfit for the presence of God. You, whose life has been one long pathway of sin — sins of so deep a dye that you blush at their remembrance — mark, it was one sin only that made Adam unfit to stand before God. One sin drove the guilty ones from the Garden of Eden; one sin brought death into the world: what then about your numberless sins?

Can you brave the presence of a sin-hating God in nothing but your nakedness and burden of guilt? Adam and Eve hid themselves, for they could not stand in His presence in their nakedness. But oh, the love of God’s heart! No sooner was clothing needed than He in mercy and love provided it. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21). How different is their clothing now! Instead of an “apron” in which God has not put one stitch — the whole thing being paltry human effort — each is arrayed in a “coat” in which man has not put one stitch, for the Lord God made and conferred the suited garment. What grace! and what a lesson to workers for salvation now! And, sinner, Adam’s need was not greater then, than yours is at this present moment; and God is as willing now to clothe you as He was to clothe Adam and Eve.

But do you know your need? Oh, what can cover the nakedness of your guilty sin-stained soul? I do not address you as a poor sinner, but as a guilty sinner in need of clothing in order to fit you to stand before a sin-hating God. Doing your best will not do: it but discloses the sense of your guilt and need by arraying yourself in what you think will suit God; but it will not do. Your own clothing is filthy rags in the sight of God: you are but trying to hide behind your works, as Adam tried to hide himself from God behind the trees of the garden. But you, like he, shall be drawn from your hiding-place and obliged to own yourself to be naked and undone before God; obliged to own your own clothing to be valueless.

The Apostle Paul’s wonderful comment on this is found in 2 Corinthians 5:1-3: “For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven (if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked). This last clause is very solemn. The apostle had fears that some in Corinth might be found like Adam — naked — when they were clothed, that is, when in resurrection. Though resurrection should bring soul and body together again, so that he called the person clothed, nevertheless he fears they may be found naked — in other words, Christless — not having that covering for the whole man which fits it for the presence of God. How awful to be a mere professor of Christ here — to have on a lovely garb of morality, so-called good works, and religiousness, so as to pass current as one of Christ’s people; to die, that is to be unclothed; to rise again, alas, not in the first but the second resurrection, that is, to be clothed, and then find yourself in the holy blaze of the great white throne a naked sinner, never having been washed from your sins in the blood of Christ, nor had Him as your clothing before God!

Are you clothed? have you Christ as your raiment? or do you think you will be accepted as you are?

Look at Matthew 22:11: “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. And he saith unto him, Friend, how earnest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” We have here a warning, as well as the truth of the end of this dispensation, for it is the guests here, not the bride; but the warning is for all who have not on raiment. “How earnest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?” The King gave him an opportunity of telling the reason why he had no wedding garment on; but what is the result? What was the consequence of this meeting between the King and his guest? The man was speechless. How earnest thou in thus? Was there no provision made for the guests? Was there no raiment for thee? Yes, there was the robing-chamber, and there were garments provided, as is the custom in the East, but the man neglected the provision made, and the result was the command, “Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness.” Oh, soul, will you be warned ere it be too late? God would fit you for His presence; Christ is the garment, the royal raiment He has provided for you; therefore, “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The man here described did not want a robe; he may have been one of the “good” mentioned in verse 10; his life may have been a blameless one; he may have been a dutiful son, or a kind husband and father, a useful member of society, one of whom his country was proud; then what need had he of a robe? The King would surely acknowledge him as he was; his deeds were sufficient to recommend him to his Sovereign, and so he passes in; but what is it to find? Ah, what indeed? His unworthiness; and that there is nothing left to be done but to bind him and cast him forth.

Professor of Christianity, have you been converted? Have you on the garment that fits you to stand before God? If you were to die this night, would you be naked in the presence of God? I beseech you to ask yourself the solemn question, and to rest not till you have truthfully answered it: Have I been born again? have I fled to Jesus? have I found Him? have I Him as my covering, my raiment? Can you say, Yes? If not, oh, precious soul, beware; be warned: thou halt detailed before thee in these verses an event in thine own history, the moment when before God thou must stand, and find the clothing of morality to be of no avail. You find you are not in Christ, therefore you are still in your sins; you hear the question asked you, “Friend, how earnest thou in hither?” and thou, thou shalt be speechless. Oh, what a moment when thou discoverest the true state of thy precious but eternally lost soul. No excuse hast thou to offer; thou shalt be speechless. No extenuation can be offered by thee. It is too late; thou standest before the King, then forced to be a Judge, and the awful silence is broken by the command, “Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Oh, be warned! What is God’s command now? It is “Clothe him;” clothe him with the raiment I have provided for his need; but if you reject His provision, then it will be “Bind him.” What a contrast! Clothe him with Christ, put upon him the “best robe;” and “Bind him” with the cords of his sin, and “cast him into outer darkness.”

Oh, ye unsaved souls, wake up to the reality of your perilous position! Why does the Spirit so often warn you? Why does He so often bring your own case, as it were, before you? Why? why? Is it not because God always warns before He judges? Is it not that He gives the unsaved soul often the opportunity of escape, though, alas, he heeds it not? Yes, He is a God of mercy Now, though one day He will be a God of judgment to those who scorn and reject His proffered mercy. God warns, but man goes on, and on, and heeds it not. We have but to look around us in order to see the truth of this.

What are those agonized accents from yonder bed of death? It is an unsaved soul finding out with his latest breath that he has scorned the offer of salvation, that he has left unheeded all the warnings of a gracious God, till it is too late!

Oh, what must it be to be swept into eternity without one ray of hope! Care ye to die thus?

Come to Jesus. “Come, for all things are now ready.” The silver is for thee, the gold for thee, the raiment for thee. “Put ye on Christ.” Eliezer brought raiment to Rebekah and she received the gift — I bring you Christ, will you receive Him?

In Luke 15 we again find mention of raiment: “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him.” Had it been left to man to choose the raiment, he might have been content to robe himself with the garments that holy angels wear; but God gives more befitting raiment to the Bride of the spotless Lamb of God. She shall be arrayed in the best — the glorious robe of the “King of kings.”

You know the beautiful story of the prodigal son here given; but have you observed, it was not till “he began to be in want,” that he thought of his father’s home, and the joy and abundance there. Want is the discovery the soul makes when in the far country, away from the Father’s house. But the last thing man does is to turn to God for help; he will try all other expedients first, ere he goes to the only Source of help and succor.

The prodigal, like too many in the present day, goes and joins himself to a citizen of that country. And who is that citizen? Satan! And oh how successful he is in providing for the wants, the lusts, of sinners! He does his utmost to keep you away from the Father’s house of plenty; and how often he is successful, tool he gilds over the husks to make them fair to the eye; but when the sinner eats of them he finds out they are bitter to the taste, they are unsatisfying, they are but husks; and yet such is the morbidness of his appetite, he fain would fill his belly with them.

The prodigal is brought to a sense of his need before he says, “I will arise and go to my father.” Ah, he has found out that he is helpless and in need of food and raiment, and he comes just as he is; in his rags and poverty he comes, and is he refused? Na! He is first welcomed, and then clad.

Many try to clothe themselves before they go to God; they have found out their need of God, but they think that before going to Him they must better themselves; but man must come just as he is, and be beholden to God for all. Come as you are; it is thus God delights to receive you.

“I have sinned,” said the prodigal. Have you known the moment when you found that you have sinned, found that you were undone, and lost, and naked; when you have gone down before God with the words, “Father, I have sinned”? I call this the grandest moment of a sinner’s experience on earth, when he gets before God, and finds out — what? That the One whom he has offended and sinned against, and whom he thought was against him, is for him, is waiting in grace to receive him, is on his side.

“I have sinned.” It must be individual confession; it will not do to rest satisfied with, “We have sinned.” No; you must get alone with God, and forgetting all else in the deep penitence of your soul, own to Him, “I have sinned.” Sooner or later the awakened soul passes through this searching conscience-work, this conviction of sin, ere it is clothed and is at peace. This precedes the clothing in the case of the prodigal before us.

“I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” Ah, this is the man God clothes. I urge you to consider your own individual case; it is of paramount importance, this humbling yourself before God. The plowshare of conviction must go deep down in the soil — the deeper the furrow the surer is the seed to be safe, and the brighter the prospect of a harvest of golden grain. What is the result of the prodigal’s confession? It is the command to “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him.” Oh, what love! “Bring forth the best robe.” Prodigal, will you have Christ? He is the Best Robe. “Put it on him.” He was not even asked to put it on himself, it was put on him; all was done for him, he did nothing but receive his father’s gift of love. And your case is the same: God has done all; He provides the raiment, and, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” The first Adam, who was unfit for the presence of God, has ended his history in the death of Christ, and in the second Adam the believer is gloriously complete.

The claims of God have all been met, and after the darkness of Calvary, the bright rainbow of God’s acceptance shines forth to man; the Corn of Wheat fell into the ground so that in resurrection He might be enabled to say, “I go to My Father, and to your Father.” What blessedness it is to be “found in Christ!” “accepted in the Beloved!” Again, I say unto you, “Put ye on Christ;” stand in that which God gives you, and have peace; throw away the fig-leaves, and God will clothe you with Christ. Precious raiment! Sinner, come to God as thou art, and hear Him say to thee, “Take away the filthy garments from him... Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment” (Zech. 3:4),

It has been said there are two steps to be taken, “Out of self into Christ, and out of Christ into glory;” but it seems to me there is but one step needed. Will you take it? It is, “Out of self into Christ,” to abide there forever in all the fullness of His perfection.

What a place! To stand before God “accepted in the Beloved,” the One who is the joy of God’s heart! What have you done to merit this? Nothing; but Christ has done all. “That ye have put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts... and that ye have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness’. (Eph. 4:22-24), is the truth of the new position in Christ. “Put off” and “Put on.” It is the blessed substitution of Christ for self, the result of that work when “He who knew no sin was made sin for us.”

If you are wise you will not slight, but gladly receive, the instruction of the Lord Jesus, who says, “I counsel thee to buy of me ... white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear” (Rev. 3:18).

See how He wants to clothe you with that which alone can make you suitable to God. “White raiment!” How different from the repulsive “filthy rags” of “our righteousnesses.” You would not admit one clothed in “filthy rags” to your house and table, and will God? No. Then away with all that springs from or savors of self, and array yourself in all the perfection of Christ, and His work for sinners.

The Raiment, then, that is offered to you, is Christ, and having Him you have redemption, and righteousness, and peace. Christ is all, and I have that which fits me to be His Bride when I possess the jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and the raiment. It is Christ, Christ, Christ — all Christ; Christ from first to last, Christ for time, and Christ for eternity; “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

Once again I ask, “Wilt thou go?” — go across the desert to Him? Oh, the joy of knowing that God has forgotten my sins, and given me liberty to forget myself, and let my thoughts be all given to my glorious Bridegroom! “Wilt thou go?” Would that I could hear you say, “I will go.” God can hear you say it wherever you are. Oh give Him the joy of listening to thy whispered “I will go.”

Decide for Christ; you have heard all about Him who is the silver, and the gold, and the raiment. He has been offered to you freely, and shown to be the only way you can be acceptable to God, and fitted to be the Bride of Jesus. Will you accept the gifts? Will you have Christ?

“Wilt thou go?” is God’s challenge to your heart. Can you refuse? Will you not come to Jesus?

God presents Christ to you now as an object of faith. Rebekah did not see Isaac until the journey across the desert was accomplished, but he came to meet her when the desert sand was left behind; he came to meet her when she had reached the green fields of Canaan.

“I shall see Him in His beauty,He Himself His Bride will meet;I shall be with Him forever,In companionship complete.”

Oh, Christless soul, can you risk spending a joyless, hopeless, loveless eternity, without Jesus? I charge you by the joys of heaven, to which God invites you, and by the horrors of hell, of which He warns you, “Be ye reconciled to God” — “Put on Christ.”

You have but to decide, and honestly say from your heart, “I will go,” and He will receive you and welcome you and fill your heart with joy and love. Oh, come to Jesus! Accept the gifts offered to you in God’s well-beloved Son; accept the silver, the gold, and the raiment, and know that thou art fit to be the Bride’ of that Son, “to whom the Father hath given all things.” Let yours be the joyful words: “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Isa. 61:10).

The Call of the Bride, Bride's Jewels of Gold, The

“And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and Jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah” (Gen. 24:53).

When the servant comes to call Rebekah, he brings out the things that fit her for the sphere to which she is called. We have seen the value of the “jewels of silver,” namely, redemption; now let us look at the “jewels of gold.”

Gold, in Scripture, is used as a symbol of Divine righteousness. As such, it occurs in many of the types of the Old Testament, specially in the articles in the Tabernacle and Temple, which are symbolic of God’s righteousness in government and judgment.

Take, for example, the Ark of the Covenant. “And they shall make an ark of shittim wood; two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold; within and with out shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.... And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee” (Ex. 25:10-11,16).

Now the Ark of the Covenant was the throne where God manifested Himself in righteousness, if any could, in righteousness, draw near to Him. God, who was to be approached, is holy — infinitely so; and holiness is a nature which delights in purity and repels evil; hence He sits on a throne, which judges in righteousness and with authority the evil that holiness abhors. Further, the law — the testimony of what God required of man — was in the ark, but thank God it was covered by the mercy — seat. Another has well said, “Suppose an ark with no mercy-seat. The law would then be uncovered; there would be nothing to hush its thunderings, nothing to arrest the execution of its righteous sentence. Could a nation of transgressors stand before it? Could a holy and righteous God meet sinners there? Could mercy reign, or grace shine forth from such an ark? Impossible! An uncovered ark might furnish a throne of judgment, but not a seat of mercy.”

But God knew this better than we, and hence we read: “And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end; even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof, and the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee” (Ex. 25:17-22).

With the cherubim looking down on it, the mercy-seat thus formed the basis of the throne of God. Both were of gold — pure gold. Thus in the ark and its covering we seem to have a marvelous connection of human and Divine righteousness in the Lord Jesus. He was perfect in human obedience and love to His Father, and lived perfectly up to the responsibility of man according to God. But He also glorified God. All that God is was glorified by the Son of Man, and not only does the Son of Man go righteously into the glory of God, but by His going to the Father righteousness is proved; and we can go where He is, in virtue of Him and His work for us.

The shittim wood and the tables of the law are in the ark, but all is clothed with the gold — God’s own righteousness.

The cherubim, who always in Scripture are connected with the judicial power of God, or are the executors of the will of that power, are of gold also, and the direction of their faces is important. Inwards towards the mercy-seat. Why? Because they could thus see that which the moral nature of God demanded should be on the mercy seat, if man, a sinner, is to draw near to a holy God who hates and must judge sin. But what

do they see on the mercy-seat? Blood. Yes, blood must be put upon the mercy-seat, as the witness of the work of atonement done for those who had failed in responsibility before God. The claims of His throne must and can only be met by blood — the sign of death having been undergone — and when the blood is sprinkled, the cherubim gaze upon it as expressive of the satisfaction of God in that which enables Him to permit the sinner to approach to Himself.

What a comfort to see thus that God's claims in righteousness are met by the blood of atone, merit, and we draw nigh to a mercy seat sure of acceptance in righteousness!

We have the same truth taught by the use of gold in the New Testament. For example, turn to the hook of judgment, which the Revelation most emphatically is. There the Apostle John says: "I saw... in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a GOLDEN GIRDLE." John had often seen Jesus, had often enjoyed sweet companionship with Him, had heard His life and peace-giving words, had lain his head on His loving bosom, knew Him well; but now when he sees Christ, he sees Him with a garment down to His feet, and he recognizes Him not. The garment down to the feet shows priestly discriminating judgment, the golden girdle Divine righteousness as displayed in Christ where He now is.

He threatens with judgment those who have departed from Him. Priestly discrimination and judgment are here brought out. It is no longer grace meeting man's need, but judgment meeting him as he is.

That the "golden girdle" signifies Divine righteousness is clear from Isaiah 11:5, where the Spirit of God, speaking of the judicial dealings of Christ in righteousness with the earth, which usher in the millennium, says, "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins."

Again, the Lord says to the Church of Laodicea, "Because thou sayest, I am rich ... and knowest not that thou art... poor... I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich" (Rev. 3:17-18). What a solemn call! And who is it to? To the professing Church, accounting itself rich without having Christ as the righteousness of the soul by faith.

Reader, are you a mere professor? or do you really possess Christ as your righteousness before God? If the former, you had better heed the call of Christ in glory to possess yourself of true and approved righteousness by buying it of Him. You must have to do with Him in order to get it.

Now in order to stand before God, man must have a righteousness suited to God. Do you think man has any righteousness? No; yet he must be righteous to stand before a righteous God. Man may say, "I will work it out, I will fit myself for the presence of God," but when he stands before God he finds he has no righteousness: "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). Ah, why does man not take God's word for truth, and seeing that he can have no righteousness of his own, accept what God has provided and so freely gives?

"There is none righteous, no, not one," is written against man once, yea, thrice, by God (Psa. 14; Psa. 53; Rom. 3). Spite of this, many serious souls drop into the snare laid by Satan, and, "being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). Dear reader, are you one of this class? If so, may God use this paper to show you the utter folly of your course.

Now the essence of the gospel is this — that when man is utterly helpless and guilty, and can furnish no righteousness suited to God, so as to he able to stand before Him, then God comes out, and by the work of the Cross — the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus — confers on everyone who believes in Jesus divine righteousness, which enables the soul to stand before God in unclouded peace. When man has no righteousness for God, then God has righteousness for man.

This is the burden of Romans 3, to which I would direct my reader. Should you think that in order to stand before God there must be works on your part, how does verse 20 dispel such an illusion: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin — not the blotting of it out. The law can recognize, detect and measure the sin, and then can only condemn the sinner; so that it is clear the law can afford no help, and confer no righteousness. Whence, then, is it found, if not in man's own efforts to keep the law? The answer is plain. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:21-23). All have sinned, and come short of yielding what was due to God, and then, all being manifestly without righteousness, God manifests His righteousness to all, and confers it upon all that believe (not who work).

The aspect of this manifested righteousness is unto all, that is, it is universal; its application is to all that believe. Here is a limit: "All them that believe." But why this limitation? Because "righteousness" is not by "works" now, but by faith on our side, even as it is of grace on God's part, as it is written: "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (or mercy-seat) through faith in His blood, to declare at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:24-26). The righteousness of God is declared to be this, that He is just in justifying the one who believes in Jesus. This is no new doctrine, for "Abraham believed God, and it (his faith) was counted to him for righteousness"; and at a later day, David also (Psa. 32) "describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness with, out works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:3,6-7).

Now the point of all this is, that it is God's grace and not man's good behavior which secures these blessings to the poor guilty one. Did you e'er ponder these words of the Spirit of God, dear self-righteousness worker? "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:4, 5). If I work for you at £1 per week, it is only right and fair you should pay when the work is done; this is debt; but if, when the work I should have done I fail to do, and then you come and give me £5, that would be grace. Just so does God act. Unable ourselves to do anything but sin, Christ has come in grace, and on the cross borne sins, and been made sin. The judgment due by God to sin has been sustained by Jesus, and He has glorified God about sin.

The proof of this is clear, for God "raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:24-25). Then what now is this justifying righteousness of God? Simply, WHAT IS DUE TO CHRIST. Our due, and the due of

sin, Christ took and sustained on the cross. The judgment that was due to us fell on Him. The moment He bare “the sins of many” (Heb. 9:28), God in righteousness forsook Him; hence His cry, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” What is the answer to this cry? God raises Him from the dead, and then in righteousness accepts and connects with Christ every one who has faith in Him.

To make it plain. Christ took my place in death and judgment on the cross, and now I get Christ’s place before God, by faith in His blood. Is this right? Clearly so; it is due to Christ that if He took my portion to extricate me from it, I should share His portion, if, in grace, He be willing to share it with me. God, therefore, against whom I have sinned, is “just” in now justifying me, because Jesus has been delivered and condemned for my sin, and then raised by God in proof of His satisfaction and delight in Him and His work of redemption for me. I might go further, and say He would be unjust to Christ to condemn me for those very sins for which He condemned His Son. Nay, He is righteous, “faithful and just,” as John puts it, and shows His righteousness by justifying every soul that clings in faith to His beloved Son. He judges sin, and justifies the sinner who believes in Jesus. Thus is God’s righteousness declared.

How beautifully harmonious is every part of this wondrous way of possessing a righteousness suited to God, needed by man, provided by God, and possessed by the believer!

A threefold cord of righteousness now binds the believer to God, and the Scripture says, “A threefold cord is not quickly broken.” The various strands of this golden cord of righteousness are: (1) Grace; (2) Blood; (3) Faith.

1. God’s GRACE is the SOURCE of justification.

“Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

2. Christ’s BLOOD is the MEANS of justification.

“Much more then, being now (not hoping to be by-and-by) justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Rom. 5:9).

3. The soul’s FAITH is the PRINCIPLE of justification.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

Now if these be the true sayings of God, where have you room for “works”? Nowhere, at least in Romans. Someone will say, What about James? Does he not say, “Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only”? Yes, he says this, and it is most needed. But do not for a moment think that Paul and James clash. The truth is this. In Romans you are justified before God BY FAITH. and that only in James you are justified before men BY WORKS. God can see faith, men cannot, but they can see works. God must see both, and surely will see works when faith exists.

But there is more than this. Not only is the believer justified from all offenses by faith in the Lord Jesus, but “they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:17). The “gift of righteousness” is to be “received,” you notice — not earned, as many suppose. When received by faith, the possessor is assured he shall “reign in life.” This sweetly accords with the expression, “justification of life,” which flings a flood of light upon the present standing of the believer. “So then as it was by one offense toward all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness toward all men for justification of life. For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners; so also by the obedience of the one many will be constituted righteous” (Rom. 5:18-19 JND). In verse 18 we have the aspect of Adam’s path and Christ’s, given us in contrast. Adam’s involves “condemnation,” Christ’s “justification of life.” In verse 19 you have the effects. Adam’s disobedience constituted all his family “sinners.” Christ’s obedience unto death constitutes all who are His (and we are His by faith in His blood) righteous.

Then the moment I am linked with Christ by faith I see (1) that I am through His work justified from all the offenses and sins of my old life as a child of Adam, and (2) that I am the possessor of a new life, called in Romans 6:23, “eternal life,” and that I have “justification of life,” and hence shall “reign in life,” being constituted “righteous” by God Himself, in virtue of my association with Him who died and rose again, and is now at God’s right hand in glory.

We also read in 2 Corinthians 5, “He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

The truth therefore is, that Christ is the believer’s righteousness before God: and the believer is also made the witness as well as the subject of God’s righteousness, inasmuch as he is brought into the same place of nearness to God, in life and glory, as Christ Himself (viewed of course as the Man who died and rose again). The believer and Christ are viewed as one, and as Christ is the righteous One, all His are viewed as possessors of a righteousness in Him, which is suited to the glory of God where Christ now is. On the cross Christ identified Himself with us in our sin, shame, guilt, and death. By His atoning death all we had done and been was forever swept away from before God. Rising from the dead, the head of a new family, He associates with Himself in life, standing, and place Wore God in glory, all who trust Him, and whom therefore He calls His “brethren.”

In conclusion, I would only now ask you, beloved reader, have you yet accepted the “jewels of gold” the gospel messenger brings to you? Have you yet received the “gift of righteousness”? If not, I would urge you to delay taking so important a gift no longer. Come to Jesus as you are. Receive Him, and in receiving Him you will receive all and far more than I have written of, for all that God can give you in blessing is wrapped up in the Person of Christ, and once you receive Him you receive all. May you be able to see what another saw and wrote, namely:

“The risen Christ had endedRighteousness of law:God’s righteousness was somethingQuite distinct. I saw.That MAN above — whose dyingClosed the things of old — WAS HEAD OF GOD’S CREATION,Channel of the gold.“That MAN was in the glory,I in Him up there;Before His God and Father;I was thus brought near.The Place I found was opened,Where was wealth untold — The MAN beginning all things,In Himself the gold.“I once was lost, a sinnerUnder Satan sold,And now I’m lost in glory,In the source of gold.‘Tis when God’s Christ in gloryWe at last behold,We learn, as with Rebekah,He begins with GOLD.”

The Call of the Bride, Bridegroom, The

“And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men’s feet that were with him. And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not cat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. And he said, I am Abraham’s servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master’s wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my father’s house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto any son” (Gen. 24:32-38).

The twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis gives a most beautiful illustration of the gospel of God, now presented by the Holy Ghost to the guilty children of Adam. It is a pictorial representation of the time in which we live. In the bygone ages, Abraham desired for his son Isaac that which would be a joy and comfort to him; and at this present time, God does the same for His Son. He is seeking that which shall be the source of endless joy to His only, His well beloved, Son, Jesus. And what is that? A bride.

The Son’s Bride, with her jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, is what I desire to call your attention to; and, beloved reader, rest assured this has not been left on record merely as a family transaction in the history of Abraham’s descendants, but because it is fraught with the deepest interest to us now, and is full of instruction and beautiful simile.

In the beginning of this chapter we see Abraham giving directions to Eliezer, his servant, to go to his country, and to his kindred, and take a wife from thence unto his son Isaac.

In Eliezer we have not only a ready and faithful, but also a prayerful, messenger; and need we wonder then that his mission from Hebron to the distant city of Nahor in Mesopotamia was so prosperous? No; we can but share, as it were, in the faithful messenger’s joy, as he recrosses the desert, taking with him to his master’s son the one who shall be so dear to his heart. And in these days there is One who has come from heaven’s far-off land on a similar errand — the Holy Ghost. He has come down to us. Angels have been passed by, and to man, fallen man, has been delivered the gospel message of peace; and from the family of Adam the Holy Ghost is gathering out those who shall form the Bride, and He is leading across the pathless desert of the world this Bride for the Son, to whom the Father has given “all things.” Safely is He leading her onward to that happy moment when she shall be presented — radiant with the jewels that have been given her by her long-expected Bridegroom, the Lord of all.

Have you ever thought that there is a living Man, seated on the throne of heaven, waiting and longing for the time when the Church, His Bride, shall be associated with Himself in glory, and when He shall share all the honor and dignity of that throne with the one for whom He died? So it is. “Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it,” and of Him individually the believer can say, “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” How happy and blessed are they who form an integral part of the Church! Reader, can you look forward with joy to the meeting of the Bride and Bridegroom? Can you picture the scene, and share by anticipation in the joy, when all heaven shall be in ecstasy, because “the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready”?

Twice in Scripture do we read of ecstatic joy amongst the heavenly hosts. First, at the birth of the Lord, we are told: “And suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:13-14). And again at the marriage of the Lamb: “And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:5-8).

Do you wish to form part of the Bride here described? I do not now ask, Do you want salvation? or, Do you want to escape from hell? No; I ask now, Do you want what God calls you to? Do you desire to possess the honor He here offers you? Will you have the dignity and glory He puts at your disposal? Will you accept it, or refuse it? Which? Can you for a moment hesitate? Oh, better far spend eternity as the happy Bride of the Son of God, in the brightness of heaven’s glory, than spend it in the darkness of hell! Better far be bound to Jesus with the cords of love, than be bound in hell with the cords of your own sins! — for in one state or other must eternity be spent.

But let us return and look in detail at what is here written. The scene represented is in the distant country of Mesopotamia, and the servant is there telling a tale that will allure one to leave all that is dear to her in her native land, and go to be the bride of him whom she has never seen, but of whom she hears such wondrous tidings.

Eliezer’s mission is very simply and clearly told. He is a true and faithful servant; his sole desire is to serve his master. He says, “O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold. I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher. I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master” (Gen. 24:12-14).

What a beautiful example this is to each servant of God! Would that we all were more prayerful, more dependent on God for the success of all we undertake in His service, then might we look for an equally blessed result. He prayed, nor had he long to wait for an answer; for we are told, “And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her; and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher and came up.” Mark here the eagerness of the servant in his master’s work: “And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking” (Gen. 24:15-19).

Rebekah, type of the sinner, meets the messenger thus at the well. And does not God delight to meet you, dear soul? Yes. You think you have something to do, that you must get into a certain condition, before you can get into the presence of God; but you are mistaken. Rebekah, going just as she was to draw water, is met by Eliezer; and so, too, the sinner, just as he is, has presented to him, and must receive from God, His testimony to the Person of the Lord Jesus.

What does drawing water signify? It is the action of an unsatisfied soul, an expression of thirst. We have in the New Testament an account of one who came to draw water at Samaria's well, and to whom the Lord said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The truth taught figuratively here is the necessity for you to have Christ now as your own, and to be satisfied with Him, for it is He alone who can satisfy the cravings of the needy soul. As Eliezer met Rebekah, so would the Lord meet you. "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher" is the first address of the seeker to the sought one.

So, in the John 4, when the blessed Lord would win the confidence of Samaria's erring daughter, "Give me to drink" is the gracious word that began an interview which did not end till, convicted of her sin, and commanded by His grace, that revealed heaven's best gift (Christ) to earth's worst sinner (herself), she left His side only to bring others back with her to that sacred place of blessing, by the words, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Such, my reader, is the lovely way Divine Grace stoops to win man's heart. It has won mine. Shall it not win yours also?

Having secured her attention, got into her company, and gone with her to her mother's house, Eliezer begins to unfold his mission; and see his earnestness: "I will not eat till I have told mine errand." And what doth he tell? "And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah, my master's wife, bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying ... Thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son" (Gen. 24:34-38).

His first care, you see, is to unfold the tidings about this only-begotten son, that is, he presents distinctly, a PERSON enriched with all that the father's love could give, and concerning whom he had purposes which deeply concerned one of those who, for the first time, heard of this would-be bridegroom, Isaac.

What a type of Christ! We must not forget, too, that in Genesis 22 we have in a wondrous figure the death and resurrection of Jesus, as of that scene it is written, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten son,... accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. 11:17-19).

Thus it is not till Christ has died, risen again, and ascended into heavenly glory, that the Holy Ghost comes to seek the heart of the Bride for the absent one.

Before Isaac gets his possessions or his Bride, he is the risen heir; and thus is he a type of our Lord, who had first to die for His Church before He could have her with Him in glory. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). How far the antitype exceeds the type I need not say. How wonderful it all is! and how blessedly true! What the restraining arm of God saved Isaac from, His own beloved Son had to endure. He hung on the cross, He died a shameful death, He descended into the grave, as the Church's Representative; and, blessed be God, He rose again entitled to claim "His own" in virtue of His atoning death and blood-shedding.

What does the Holy Ghost reveal of that only-begotten Son of God? All that the Father hath is His: "Unto Him hath He given all that He hath." The Man in the glory is the One to whom the Father has given everything. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (John 3:35). He "also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Scripture abounds with testimony that all has been given to Jesus; but there was one thing yet in the mind of God, of deeper and greater value than all that had been given, a priceless gift in the sight of Jesus, and that was a "Bride" to be His helpmeet. How wonderful is the thought that the Son of God so loved that Bride as to come down to earth and give up His life in order to possess her! He loves the Church — loves her with so great a love that we are told He "for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" — for her He left His Father's home on high; for her He became a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" was mocked and scourged, and at last crucified between two malefactors. But the fruit of all His sufferings is that He shall have a spotless Bride forever seated by His side in glory. All has been done to win her, and she shall be His. That was what sustained His heart while here on earth; that was what He looked onward to in the midst of all His untold, His unutterable agony. He was doing His Father's will, was paying the costly price demanded by a righteous God to redeem those who are to form His Bride. Costly, indeed, was the ransom! Great, indeed, was His love. But it is joy to know He shall have full recompense for all His labor, all His sufferings; that His heart shall be fully gladdened, when He shall have the Church, His Bride, with Himself in glory.

"He and I in that bright gloryOne deep joy shall share;Mine, to be forever with Him,His, that I am there."

Oh, beloved reader, will you be there? God wants you to share this joy and love, and to rank with Him to whom He has given all things. But you say, "Can this be for me? Does God mean this for me?" My answer to this question is very simple. How did Rebekah know she was the one Eliezer wanted for Isaac? She could have no doubt on that point, for she stood by as the servant (see Gen. 24:42-52) detailed to Laban how he had prayed to the Lord that he might meet the "appointed" one at the well, and recognize her by this sign, that when he should ask water for himself alone, she should not only yield this request but volunteer water for the camels also. Now Rebekah knew that she had exactly corresponded to this wanted personage, having said and done thus to the letter, and therefore must be the one the servant was in quest of.

If you have any doubt whether you are the one Jesus wants, just tell me — Are you a sinner? “Yes.” Then listen: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15).

“Yes, but I do not know whether I am ‘appointed’ to be saved, or, in other words, if I am among the elect.” Very likely, and I did not know that the night I came to the Lord, but I knew something far more to the point, namely., that I was “lost.” Do you know and acknowledge that? “Yes, indeed I do,” you may reply. Very well, hear the Savior’s words, “The Son of man is come to seek, and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Now what do you think? Are you the wanted one? You own you are a “sinner,” and further, a “lost” one, and God says it was for such Jesus came. How can you escape the conclusion that He wants you? It is impossible to do so. Whether you want Him and are willing to accept God’s wondrous salvation is the only open question. He offers it now to you, and it only remains with you to accept or reject His offered gift.

The exalted Son of God is patiently waiting till the last heart shall be won for Him. Say, shall your heart be won for Jesus? Shall the strong chains that bind you to the world and the slavery of Satan be broken even now by the tender accents of the Bridegroom’s loving voice, saying unto you, “Come unto me”? Can you look back on the dark scenes of Golgotha, and see all that He suffered there to win you to Himself, and yet refuse to give Him your heart’s affections? Surely not.

I ask you in God’s name, and as a herald from heaven’s far-off land, Will you come to Jesus? I take up the words of Rebekah’s friends, and say to you, “Wilt thou go?” Let yours be the heart that joyfully responds, “I will go.” Look at His beauty, He who is “the chief among ten thousand” and “altogether lovely,” and rejoice in the truth that you may be His. He lingers over you with deepest patience and strongest love; He is knocking at the door of your heart; oh, soul, open unto Him. He lures you with all the deep affection of His true heart of love; He would draw you to Himself. Again His accents fall upon your ear, calling you this day, and saying, “Come unto Me.”

Let your response be that of Rebekah’s when she unhesitatingly said, “I will go.” What decision there is expressed in these three words, “I will go!” and will you be less decided than she? Her vista was one of earthly joy, tarnished with earthly sorrows, and ending with death; but that which is now offered to you is perfect, unending, unclouded joy, and glory with Jesus in heaven. God, in grace and mercy, proposes to lift you from your present state of degradation, in which your sins have placed you, and deliver you from the eternal future of misery which awaits every unsaved soul. He invites you to association in all the love and glory of heaven, as the Bride of the Lord of all.

This, then, is the call which now by the gospel falls on every sinner’s ear. That which fits the sinner for the presence of God is provided also through the finished work of Jesus, and doubt, less typified by the “jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment,” which Eliezer gave Rebekah, and of which I shall treat, with the Lord’s help, in future chapters.

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