

The Promises of God to the ELECT

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We have all had earthly fathers. According to the flesh we were begotten of an earthly father, and we were born of a fleshly mother. But we have been begotten again, and now we have a HEAVENLY Father; and we are being nourished in the womb of the Grace Covenant. What a thought this is that we have been begotten again! Yes, through the Word of Truth we are begotten and are New Creatures. This new Father we have has precious promises to nourish us--promises that pertain to the present life, and promises that pertain to our future state, after we are born of the spirit and have the new, developed minds, in appropriate spiritual bodies.

The new life we have been begotten to has many aspects, and to make them understandable to us, many figures of speech are used. Let us take a few verses from the 45th Psalm, verses 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." "The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace."

The thought here is very sweet and intimately precious. We are addressed by the Heavenly Father as "daughter" and we are exhorted to "hearken, to consider and incline our ears" to something supremely grand and exalted. We are exhorted to forget, to set aside our human, natural life: to come into a relationship that is above our first father's house; and to become the Bride of the illustrious Son of our Heavenly Father.

To make all this possible to us, arrangements were made to redeem us from condemnation that we inherited from our first father Adam, who disobeyed and came under the sentence of death. At great cost the Heavenly Father sent His Beloved Son to earth; and at great cost to the Beloved Son, we were redeemed from death by the shedding of the blood of the Beloved Son on the cruel cross. All this was done for us, and the message of reconciliation was sent to us through the precious truth. We have been washed by the water of Truth and given the Holy Spirit and now we are being trained and schooled and tested and refined that the Son may present his bride "to himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5:27.

What a thought is here presented to us by the Apostle and by the Psalmist: "so shall the king (king Jesus) greatly desire thy beauty (the beauty of character, of holiness); for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." Yes indeed he is our King, so far above us, and we should worship him in awe and thankfulness of heart.

"The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee." She is to be glorious within, in character, in heart. She is to be clothed with the gold of the divine nature; and her raiment will show the great labor she has expended in the fine needlework of heart development in the various graces of the Spirit.

We have had, and still have relationships according to the flesh, but they are as nothing compared with the new relationships we have been brought into by being begotten again and have a new Father.

Now for a moment let us dwell upon a promise that pertains to the present life. It is quite possible this precious promise has been quoted by the Lord's people more than any other text in the Bible. This is Rom. 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." And who are those who are properly spoken of as loving God? John gives us an answer to this question: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3) So if we are obedient to the commandments of God and do not regard them as burdensome to us, not weighing us down, then we have the spirit of sonship—we "love to do God's will" as something desirable and readily acceptable. God has a purpose in calling us, to be in training for good works now, and especially for the good works of the Kingdom in blessing mankind as the promises seed of Abraham, Head and body. All things work together for our good. Knowing the purpose of God's calling us, we can perceive the good that is meant—our good as new creatures, our characters, our eternal interests. The flesh is not given first consideration, the new creature is given first priority. And all things work "together" for our good.

This idea of "working together" is interesting to reason on. For instance a hard trial may come into our lives. Someone may say something ugly to us, that cuts us deeply; or someone may be very inconsiderate of our rights or conveniences. Having the spirit of sonship, we know we must react as God would want us to react, and so our minds are automatically instructed by the scriptures that apply to the particular experience and we think about the example of Jesus. One scripture that will come to mind is "return not evil for evil." And our Lord's example automatically comes to mind: "when he was reviled, he reviled not in return." Another scripture will come to mind: "vengeance is mine, I will

repay saith the Lord." And then an important fact of truth will come to mind, that men are under the fall, and we must not expect man to always do what is just; we must not expect to be justly treated at all times. And we will also think about another facet of Truth, that we are in training to be future judges and we must have experience in self-control and merciful judgment toward our fellow man. So the effect of all this "working together" is that we experience a growth in character, and we have a fellow-feeling with Christ and the Apostles. We come into greater fellowship with our Heavenly Father and have a greater sense of his approval, and we endeavor to maintain a merciful attitude toward those who malign us or mistreat us.

Now let us take another precious promise that applies to the future. We quote now from Paul--Gal. 3:29: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." What a thrilling and delightful thought is here. The seed of Abraham is Christ, Head and body. The work of this seed is in behalf of all mankind and appeals to our longing for the betterment of mankind, living and dead. What a work to look forward to in raising the dead and bringing all to a knowledge of the Truth and then to gradually lead and uplift all the willing to the level of perfect manhood--perfect in character and all filled with the spirit of reverence and thankfulness to God and with the spirit of loving service to all their fellows on earth. The exaltation and authority of the seed of Abraham defies description, as it is beyond the scope of our human reasoning, including, as it does, a change of nature from human to divine. We accept what is told to us and are thankful of the prospect of this elevation and glory; but we think we should be primarily concerned with our preparation for this work, for if we are primarily thrilled with the prospect of exaltation, we will not be in a proper heart condition to cooperate with God and Christ in the necessary character preparation. In fact the character preparation is so exacting, that if we are not filled with the spirit of sympathy for mankind, and with the same spirit that Christ had of love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, we will never submit to the training and will be sifted out. We may be sure that Jesus was filled with the desire to do good to mankind, and it was only a secondary object with him to experience great exaltation for his faithfulness.

We will consider now another precious promise that pertains to our present life in the Narrow Way. Our new Father, our Heavenly Father makes special use of angels to watch out for our interests as New Creatures. There are two texts from which we gain this information--one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament: Psalm 34:7, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, (that reverence him) and delivereth them"; and Heb. 1:14, "Are they (i.e. the angels) not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Our lives are supervised and well protected. We need all this superior power and wisdom, because we are imperfect and do not always know what is best for us. And still more important, we are opposed by spiritual forces

that are superior to us in wisdom and power, and we are in great need of protection. We note what the Apostle tells us in Eph. 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We are in great danger if we get to thinking that we are able to take care of ourselves against these spiritual enemies. Then the Apostle admonishes us to "take unto ourselves the whole armour of God" that we will be able to withstand in the evil day. If we depend on the armor, and thus do our part, we can be sure that unseen powers sent of our Heavenly Father will do their part to supervise our lives and protect us as New Creatures and we will come through without harm, and will not even have the smell of smoke on our garments.

It is a bit of a problem to know what promises to select in a brief symposium of this kind. There is a cluster of seven precious promises that are found addressed to the overcomers of the seven churches. These are in the second and third chapters of Revelation. To Ephesus it was said: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." To Smyrna it was said: "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." To Pergamos it was promised: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." To Thyatira it was promised: "he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star." To Sardis it was said: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." To the Philadelphia church it was promised: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." And finally, to the Laodicean church it was promised: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." These promises are overwhelming in their meaning and a brother could spend much time in going over them and we would be greatly profited by the careful consideration of these promises. In fact we should meditate on these promises that their inspiring power may affect our lives every day.

Going over the message to the church of the Laodicean period, we note something that is very striking: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." This

reminds us of the words found in the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins-- "BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM." Yes, he is now here and the promised feasting has been experienced. We have opened the door and he has come in, and now we are feasting together and our Lord is feasting with us: feasting on the Truth in the Harvest Message. And what a soul-satisfying feast this is--to our minds and to our hearts. This is the strongest evidence possible to prove that our Lord is present--this feast of Truth. It instructs us, it buoys us up, it fills us with hope, it inspires us to zeal.

This reminds us of another promise expressed by our Lord just before His crucifixion. It is found in John 16:13: "When the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: . and will show you things to come." This was true after Pentecost, but is especially true of our day. We have been "guided into all truth" concerning the Divine Plan of the Ages. We have an understanding of the doctrines and hold in our possession a harmonized Bible. And added to all this rich inheritance, we have been shown "things to come." We have a grasp of the Kingdom unparalleled in past ages, and we not only see it with our eyes of understanding in all its minutiae, but we are aware of the signs of the times, that the Kingdom is actually being established in the earth. We have witnessed the end of the Times of the Gentiles; we have witnessed the regathering of the natural people of God in Palestine; we are witnessing the forces of revolution worldwide; and we are witnessing the spirit of anarchy stalking over the whole earth. We feel confident that we are in the very final stages of the overthrow of Satan's empire and the final phases of Armageddon.

There is another promise that gives us rest of heart concerning our temporal affairs. It is found in Matt. 6:32, 33, "For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you." And a companion text is comforting--Matt. 10:30: "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Our Heavenly Father wants us to know that he is fully aware of our needs according to the flesh, and if we do our part in "seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," then the necessary things for our temporal welfare will be sure to us. We will not need to expend anxious care, but do our part in making the effort to provide things that are necessary and our Heavenly Father will supervise so that we will not be in want. We will not necessarily be in luxury, but our needs will be provided for in one way or another.

There is another promise that pertains to a possession that is extremely important; in fact so important that if we do not have that possession in proper measure, we could not expect to enjoy our Heavenly Father's smile of approval and would find ourselves in great difficulty from the Father himself, giving us necessary chastisements. "If ye then, being evil,, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." (Luke 11:13) This disposition that we are to possess is the disposition of Christ, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of the truth, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of justice and love. How precious is

this disposition and we should pray for it more and more and respond to the Heavenly Father's guiding hands shaping us through the power of the Truth and His providences. Our Head had this in full measure; and we have it according to our spirit of humility, and zeal for the Lord's will.