

COME UP HITHER.

"Come up hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." – Rev. 21:9-11.

All along through the Gospel age the saints have realized the blessedness of walking with God and the sweetness of fellowship with Christ in enduring hardness as good soldiers for his dear sake. With many obstacles to surmount in the way of perils to faith, a few walked humbly and lovingly apart from the world, guided by the great Shepherd of the sheep, feeding upon his precious promises, comforted in the darkest hours by his loving voice, and cheered and made glad by his approval. In hearkening to and obeying his voice, they felt that there was not only present but also future reward, though they little realized to what heights of glory they were called. Having walked with God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and having kept their garments unspotted from the world to the end of their pilgrimage, they sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. Ever precious in the sight of the Lord has been the death of his saints; and such at his coming are raised in his likeness. – Psa. 116:15; 1 Thes. 4:14,15.

Some such, of hallowed memory, do the saints of the present time remember, whose words and acts were blessed testimonies to the efficacy of divine grace, and loving exhortations to others to be faithful unto death. And yet those dear ones did not enjoy the glorious outlook which is now our privilege. Ours is a time of special favor, as well as special trial. The church being now so near the consummation of its glorious hope, she is permitted an inspiring view of her future glory, such as has never before been enjoyed.

Like Moses, before we drop this earthen vessel, we are summoned to Pisgah's height to view the promised inheritance. We are carried hither "in spirit" (mentally) and showed (mentally, by faith in God's Word) the bride of Christ in her future glory.

Let us for a moment take as wide a view as is possible to human vision, aided by the divine telescope, the Word of God. By faith we see the bride of Christ "having the glory of God" – the divine nature, of which she was promised to be made partaker with her Lord. (Rev. 21:11; 2 Pet. 1:4.) We see her "made like him," "the express image of the Father's person." (1 John 3:2; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4; Heb. 1:3.) We see her shining forth as the sun in the Father's kingdom. (Matt. 13:43.) She is caught up to heaven and actually seated with Christ in the heavenly place – at the Father's right hand. (Eph. 2:6; Heb. 1:3.) She beholds her Father face to face, and sees her Lord "as he is." (1 John 3:2.) She is endued with power and covered with glory. She is exalted far above angels. And as she followed the Lamb whithersoever he went when here, so she accompanies him whithersoever he goeth there: Is he seated at the Father's right hand – in the highest position of his favor? so is she; is he at home in all the vast realm of the universe, which in ages past he was privileged of the Father to create (John 1:10,3)? so is she.

While perfect human minds with telescope and scientific investigation will delight **[R1210 : page 8]** light to trace the wonderful works of God, his bride shall be conducted hither and thither through the boundless realms of space in company with her Lord. And as she views his works of ancient time, she glories in the privilege of henceforth being an efficient co-worker together with him in all that the Father's plans mark out for the ages to come.

Is he commissioned to reign on earth a thousand years, and during that time to bring all things in heaven and in earth into

perfect harmony with the will of God, judging both angels and men? she **[R1211 : page 8]** also shall reign with him. (2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Cor. 6:2,3.) And when that blessed, benevolent enterprise is accomplished, and the restored sons of God are presented to the Father without spot, or blemish, she still accompanies her Lord in the yet unrevealed enterprises for the blessing of all his creatures in the ages of glory to follow. And together they receive the love and praise and adoration of all creatures in heaven and in earth, who with united hearts ascribe glory and honor and blessing unto him who sitteth upon the throne (Jehovah), and to the Lamb, forever and ever. – Rev. 19:6,7; 5:12,13.

Eternal life, immortal vigor, perennial bloom of youth, unfading glory, perpetual peace, cloudless joy, – all these are elements in her cup of rejoicing.

And truly she is a glorious bride – "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. 5:27.) Once she was a sinner under condemnation of death, but she was justified, washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb – redeemed by her beloved Lord and sanctified by his truth. And this fact that she was so loved and sought for at such cost, while a sinner, fills her heart with a love that shall never grow cold while the years of eternity roll. And the faithfulness of her Lord in waiting for her two thousand years, while the painful, tedious process of making her ready progressed; and his preferment of her in passing by angels, of nobler birth and higher standing, and condescending to her low estate, that in her might be shown forth the exceeding riches of divine grace, while it clothes her with humility, inspires her with a loving zeal to reverence him, and to find her chief delight in doing his will.

Such is the view of the Bride of Christ as seen from Pisgah's mountain. Thus "in spirit" (mentally) we may by faith behold her glory; but let us not forget that we have not yet fully proved our worthiness. "Faithful is he that has called us" (1 Thes. 5:24; 1 Cor.

1:9; 10:13.), but faithfulness on our part is also required. If our Lord could wait two thousand years for his bride, we must show our appreciation of his love by faithfulness during our brief three-score and ten, or during the briefer period since brought to the knowledge of the call.

If neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, can separate us from the love of Christ, shall we let any earthly thing come between our hearts and him? or shall any earthly love, or any tie of nature, however strong, separate us from this marvelous love of Christ? This love of Christ rightfully expects love in return; and he therefore says, "If any man love father, or mother, or wife, or children, or houses, or lands, or anything more than me, he is not worthy of me." Love – pure, holy, unwavering and true – is the one requirement of the bride of Christ. If the love of God dwells richly in our hearts we shall be approved. Love fulfills the law.

Some of the saints, particularly young mothers, who have not sufficiently contemplated the love of Christ to realize it clearly, find it difficult to prefer Christ before the tender tie of motherhood. And when they realize that their children will be on the human plane of existence while they may be on the spiritual, such a separation looks like a great obstacle. But why should it? Take a little wider range of vision, and you will see that time will bring changes anyhow. This strong, parental love was given you by the same loving God who calls you to set your supreme affections on something still higher. Your patient care and service for the little ones around your feet you feel is amply compensated for by their winning, endearing ways and your natural love for them. For this you should thank God, who so ordained it for your comfort and their good. But observe that years will bring a change in the character of your love. Though it will be no less strong, it will be less parental. You will not feel that care over them, nor they that

dependence upon you. You will be willing and glad to see them in happy homes of their own, and with other partners in life. You cannot and would not keep them together always under your roof and serve them always; and the now winning, childish ways, if never outgrown, would become actually painful to you.

Thus you see what years will do even in the present life. Now carry the thought further; remember that we are to live eternally, and you will see that our sphere must be greatly enlarged. As the race matures – for it is now only in its infancy – and as it reaches perfection, love will be based more upon character than blood-relationship; and the loves thus based on a surer and firmer foundation will never be disappointed or grow cold, but will intensify as the ages pass.

We should therefore remember that we are planning and building for eternity – for a life that is to outgrow the fitful feelings produced by present circumstances. And therefore we should enlarge our range of thought; we should contemplate the wonderful length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God, and endeavor to view things from the standpoint to which we are called.

From the standpoint of the divine nature, know that parental affection will have its widest scope, as well as its greatest power to bless. The affection that now goes out so strongly to the one or two or half-dozen that nestle around you, will then go out with greater intensity to all your children; for know you not that the Christ (head and body) is to be the "Everlasting Father?" With your present capacity you may think this impossible, but we cannot compare the capacity of the divine nature with the human. Think of God's love for us, not only as a race, but also as individuals – "Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I." (Isa. 49:15.) And he so loved us, even while yet sinners, as to give his only begotten Son to redeem us.

What we need, then, is to contemplate the character and plan of God more constantly; let it be our meditation as continually as possible. Let us endeavor to take God's standpoint of observation, to think as he thinks, and to act as he acts, remembering that our life is not spanned by the brief space of three-score years and ten, but that it stretches on into eternity. Let the strongest earthly ties augment the heavenly, but in no case let them triumph over it.

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