

## The Fullness of Christ

### Christ's Presentation of His Church to God, or, "Joseph's Introduction of His Brethren to Pharaoh"

By Octavius Winslow

So Joseph went to see Pharaoh and said, "My father and my brothers are here from Canaan. They came with all their flocks and herds and possessions, and they are now in the land of Goshen." *Joseph took five of his brothers with him and presented them to Pharaoh.* Pharaoh asked them, "What is your occupation?" And they replied, "We are shepherds like our ancestors. We have come to live here in Egypt, for there is no pasture for our flocks in Canaan. The famine is very severe there. We request permission to live in the land of Goshen." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Now that your family has joined you here, choose any place you like for them to live. Give them *the best land of Egypt*—the land of Goshen will be fine. And if any of them have special skills, put them in charge of my livestock, too." Genesis 47:1-6

We reach, in the course of this interesting narrative, so replete with shadowings of Christ and His brethren, a new phase in Joseph's history. Hitherto a veil of comparative secrecy appears to have concealed both his personal and domestic history from the knowledge of Pharaoh. A new era commences with the introduction of his father and his brethren, little knowing what might be the nature of the reception on the part of the king of Egypt. We thus reach a most interesting and striking illustration of Christ and His people- *the future withdrawal of the veil of secrecy which had hitherto concealed His Church, and her visible appearance and final presentation to the Father.*

The Church in her present state is not a *visible* Church, as Romanism teaches. She is an *invisible* body; her visibility yet awaits revealment, and the time is coming when the Lord Jesus Christ will gather together His scattered and hidden people from the four winds of heaven into one united, undivided body, and will present them to His Father, and then shall her visibility and glory be revealed. This is the truth which we propose in the present chapter to illustrate. The three points contained in the narrative are, the PRESENTATION; the DWELLING-PLACE; and the EMPLOYMENT.

First, we have the PRESENTATION by Joseph of his brethren to Pharaoh. In no previous incident of his history does he assume an attitude so commanding, so noble, so truly great, as when he stands before the king of Egypt, encircled by his brethren, and presents them as his father's house to the king. Does this picture of

filial and fraternal affection move you to sensibility and admiration, my reader? Is there something touching, something grand, in the spectacle of this man, once a despised, injured, long-lost brother, but now elevated to such a position of dignity and power as to present his household with honor and favor to Pharaoh?

Transfer your thoughts for a moment to another and yet more glorious spectacle, which will be exhibited when the Lord Jesus Christ shall gather together His elect from the four winds of heaven, and shall present them unto God. Methinks He will then appear before celestial intelligences, yes, before the eyes of the universe, in an attitude of dignity, power, and glory such as He never before occupied. Look at this truth in two or three points of light, for it is an inconceivably precious and glorious prospect to the believer- the day when the veil of secrecy will be withdrawn, and the Church, no longer hidden and despised, but emerging from her obscurity and humiliation, shall be presented a glorious Church before the Father.

There are two presentations of the Church by Christ. There is a present presentation of the Church by Christ to God. Christ is in heaven the Representative of His people. He has entered heaven; has passed within the veil as the Forerunner of His Church; He is now there presenting us every moment to God. He presents our *persons* with acceptance in His righteousness; He presents our *petitions, praises, and offerings* with acceptance through His merits. There is not a moment that you are not represented and presented in heaven. Christ represents your *persons*, and thus there is not a moment in which you do not stand complete and accepted before God. Christ presents your *sacrifices*, and thus there breathes not from your lips an utterance of prayer or an ascription of praise that ascends not to God with acceptance, presented by the Great High Priest and Intercessor within the veil. Oh, do not lose sight of this precious truth, so replete with present comfort and encouragement!

Doubtless you are often led to inquire with yourself, "Is it possible that I, who see so much defilement and imperfection within, so much infirmity and frailty in all I do for God, can be an object of His delight? Can this stammering prayer, this imperfect ascription of praise; possibly find acceptance with the Holy One?" Beloved, there is not a moment in which Christ is not representing you in heaven, presenting your *person* with acceptance in His righteousness, and your lowliest, feeblest offerings with fragrance, loveliness, and acceptance to God.

But there is another presentation by Christ- a future- and a more complete, visible, and glorious one. It is that blessed presentation which the apostle in various passages speaks of: "And you, who were once alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, [unblamed,] and unproveable, [unreproved,] in His sight." Again: "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church." Once

more: "Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

We need not multiply these proofs, for it is quite clear from God's Word that there is to be a future presentation of the whole Church by Christ Jesus unto the Father. *And on what grounds will Christ thus present us to God?* In the first place, He will present His Church to God as His own chosen and loved people. He will present them to the Father as His own peculiar treasure. The Church of God was given to Christ to be redeemed. When Christ will present His Church to the Father, He will be able to say, "Here are those whom You have given me; not one of them is lost. Here is Your cabinet of precious jewels for whose recovery I went down into that world; I have brought them home to You." Oh, what a presentation will that be, when the elect of God, eternally loved by the Father, shall by the Son be brought home and presented to Him- a glorious Church!

He will also present them as the fruit, the precious fruit, of His obedience and death; as those on whose behalf He obeyed the law, for whose sins He suffered, bled, and died upon the cross. He shall present them as the "travail of His soul," as the reward of His sufferings, as the glorious harvest of that seed of blood which He sowed. What an appropriate crown and consummation will this be of His mediatorial work! Not one for whom He died will then be missing.

There will also remarkably appear in this perfect presentation the power of Christ in preserving His Church. Oh, what a crown of glory will Christ have in that day when He presents His people, whom He not only *redeemed* and bought with His precious blood, but *kept* by His power! We need as much the power of Christ to *keep* us, and finally to preserve us to eternal life, as we need the atonement of Christ to *save* us. What a glory will there be in this presentation in that day when His power shall appear conspicuous in having kept His Church, preserved His people, and upheld them through all their sufferings, temptations, and backslidings!

With the combined power of Satan, of sin, and of the world to thwart Him, yet He brought them through, and shall present them, a perfect and complete Church, to God. He will be able to say, "Here am I, and the Church You gave me: Satan strove hard to pluck them from my hand; the world sought hard to engulf them in its vortex; their indwelling sin sought hard to consume them; but here they are! I have kept them by my omnipotence, I have watched them with my sleepless eye of love, I have guarded them moment by moment, and not one of them is lost." Let this truth comfort you who are oftentimes led to fear lest, after all, you should fail to arrive at heaven. Forget not that He who had the power to *redeem* has also the power to *keep* you; and He will keep unto the end all those for whom He travailed in His agony and death upon the cross.

View this presentation of His Church to God in the light of a recompense and reward. The crown of Jesus, for all He has done, will be the Church He has

redeemed by His blood. He is to wear many crowns on that day, but the brightest and the choicest will be the diadem of His Church- and a glorious diadem will that Church be. What a reward for all He has endured will it be to present His ransomed to God, all washed from every stain; not a spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing marring their perfect and peerless beauty. "You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God." May we, my reader, be jewels in that crown. Oh! the joy that Christ will feel at that moment! This will be the highest elevation of the joy that was set before Him- the joy, first of *ransoming*, and then the joy of *presenting His ransomed to His Father!* May we form a part of that assembly, and participate in that joy!

Observe, too, there was not only the presentation with acceptance to Pharaoh, but there was also his appointing to them a PLACE or ABODE in the best portion of the land: "And Pharaoh spoke unto Joseph, . . . In the BEST of the land make your father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell." Beloved, what is heaven? what is the final glory of the saints? Is it not the best place, the richest inheritance provided by the Father for the people ransomed and brought home to glory by His Son. Our Lord reminded His disciples of this. When the two brethren sought a place, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left, in His kingdom, He thus met their blindly-offered petition: "To sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." It is our Father in heaven who appoints the place where the Church shall finally repose. Heaven is a place designated by God, chosen and consecrated by Him for the Church redeemed by the precious blood of His dear Son.

And when we enter there, it will not be as intruders in an unknown and unvisited place, but we shall enter as children welcomed to a Father's home. It will be the best that God can give us! He has ever bestowed upon us, who deserved the least, the best in His power to bestow- the best Savior, the best robe, the best banquet, the best inheritance. In the new heaven and the new earth there will be nothing more to taint, nothing more to sully, nothing more to embitter, nothing more to wound; no serpent to beguile, no Eve to ensnare, no spoiler to destroy, no sin to defile, no adversity to sadden, no misunderstanding to alienate, no tongue to defame, no suspicion to chill, no tear, nor sickness, nor death, nor parting. It will be the best part of the pure, radiant, glorified universe which God will assign to His people.

But Joseph's brethren were not to dwell in Egypt in *inglorious indolence*. "And if any of them have special skills, put them in charge of my livestock, too." Thus spoke Pharaoh. Beloved, *heaven is not a place or scene of inactivity*. God never made man to be idle. Even in his paradisaical state, He sent him into the garden to keep it. So that labor is coequal with man's state of innocence. And will heaven be a place of inglorious repose? Never! One of the most inviting anticipations to a renewed mind is, that it will be *a place of enlarged faculties, of perfected powers*. But will these perfected faculties and powers find in that sphere of perfection an

appropriate range of employment? Oh yes! In heaven there is full and incessant employment for all the glorified. They serve God day and night in His temple. We know not exactly what that employment is; we know that they are constantly praising God, beholding Christ, contemplating the Divine glory, and studying the mysteries of God's government.

For anything that we know, they may be messengers of God to distant spheres; for anything that we know, they may be permitted, invisibly to us, to revisit our world on some High behest of Jehovah. Be this as it may, we believe that when we shall enter on our glorified state, and *our mental faculties and spiritual powers are fully developed and perfected*, we shall be fully and eternally employed in a service that will be for the honor and glory of God.

And now, my reader, what will be your presentation in that solemn day? Have you a well-grounded hope that you will form part of that blessed throng whom Christ will present to His Father, all washed in His blood, and clothed with His righteousness? Have you the witness of the Spirit that you are accepted in the Beloved- that you have already been presented in a justified state to God? Have you truly repented of sin, and do you sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? If not, what will be your true and solemn position in that day? It will be banishment, eternal banishment from God, from Christ, and from heaven. If you are not found among the blessed ones of whom Christ will say, "Here am I and the children, the ransomed ones, whom You have given Me," you must be found among those to whom He will say, "Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire!"

Saints of the Most High! let the prospect cheer, sanctify, and comfort you, that it will not be long that you are to labor and battle here on earth. It is but a little while that you are to occupy your present sphere of conflict, of trial, and of sorrow. The time is coming; oh, how fast it speeds! When the Lord Jesus Christ will bring you home to heaven, and will present you a part of His glorious Church to His Father! Oh, then, then, will come the reward of grace which Christ will give to all those who have confessed Him here on earth- who have witnessed for His truth, endured suffering on His behalf, and have proved faithful unto death. The Lord grant that in that day we may be found among the presented ones, to whom He will say, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"

"He will present our souls,  
Unblemished and complete,  
Before the glory of His face,  
With joy divinely great."

"Then all the chosen seed  
Shall meet around the throne,  
Shall bless the conduct of His grace,  
And make His wonders known."

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