

## The Fullness of Christ

### "Christ Revealing Himself to His People," or "Joseph Making Himself Known to His Brethren"

By [Octavius Winslow](#)

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. Genesis 45:1-2

We have now reached the denouement of this interesting and persuasive story. The veil is uplifted, the disguise is removed, and Joseph stands before his brethren manifested and made known. The whole scene is inimitably beautiful and richly instructive, such as neither the pen of the poet, the pencil of the painter, nor the tongue of the orator can adequately depict. Talk of human fiction! Scripture history is infinitely more fascinating and marvellous; added to which is the irresistible power and charm of revealed and confirmed truth. Reserving for the next chapter of our work the relation in which Joseph manifested himself, in the present we have to do only with the manifestation. This one particular is sufficiently suggestive of most precious truth, touching Christ and His brethren, to engage our study. Upon JESUS, the central object of our story, we must keep the eye undividedly and intently fixed; for, wonderful and exciting as the story itself is, its charm and its teaching were as nothing if we see not JESUS in it. The most suggestive points for our meditation are- THE PRIVACY- THE MANIFESTATION- THE EMOTION.

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The occasion was eventful and solemn; there were entwined with it memories too sacred, feelings and emotions too tender, for any other to share with themselves. He resolved, therefore, that it should be veiled with the profoundest secrecy. There was, too, remarkable delicacy of feeling on the part of Joseph in this arrangement. He considered his brethren- the thoughts and feelings that would overwhelm them at the astounding discovery that he was their very brother whom they had injured. The memory of their sin and wrong rushing back upon their minds with overpowering force, might so fill them with shame and confusion of face as to expose them to the rude stare and reproach of the Egyptians. From this humiliation, the kind and considerate brother would sincerely screen them.

Added to this, Joseph was now about to divest himself of his official dignity, and to exchange the distant, stern address of the governor of Egypt for the unreserved, familiar, and affectionate communion of the brother, and no eye shall gaze upon the spectacle except their own. "And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren."

It was an occasion and a joy with which a stranger should not intermeddle, and with which another could not sympathize. We pass to its spiritual and gospel teaching. Do you see in this, my reader, a remarkable page of your own spiritual history? Are not your thoughts at once thrown back upon some of the most sacred and solemn periods of your experience, when, separated and alone, not a human eye seeing, not a human ear hearing, there has been a gracious manifestation to you of God in Christ, the most personal, touching, and overwhelming?

The Church of God is hidden and invisible. Her divine life, her spiritual conflicts, her joys and sorrows, are, for the most part, concealed from the rude gaze of an ungodly world; and that which transpires between the child of God and his Father in heaven, between Jesus and His brethren, is cognizant only to Him whose most confiding, solemn, and gracious interviews are reserved for hours and places of the profoundest privacy.

Let us advert to two or three periods of our spiritual history illustrating this. There is, in the first place, God's separation of His people from all others in election. God's people are a "remnant according to the election of grace." His Church is truly and emphatically an elected body. They are a people taken out of the world according to His eternal purpose and everlasting covenant, designated and set apart as His especial and peculiar people. This truth flashes from the page of God's Word as with electric light. Thus we read, "God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." "He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." "All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me." "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." What need we of further testimony?

Here is the first and most ancient separation of God's people, invisible and unknown; no angel, no creature present when that choice was made, when that covenant was entered into, when that Church was chosen. It was a secret eternally, solemnly veiled in the infinite depths of Jehovah's mind. He alone was cognizant of it who dwelt in the bosom of the Father. "Secret things belong to God." How worthy of Him this eternal act of sovereign grace and love, "who works all things after the counsel of His own will," and "who gives no account of any of His matters!"

In nothing does He appear more like Himself- more completely and gloriously the

eternal, independent, holy, sovereign Lord God. Receive in faith this truth, because it is revealed- adore it; because it is living- love it; because it entwines the holiness and comfort of the saints with the glory and praise of God.

Then, there is the separation of God's people in their spiritual and effectual calling by the Holy Spirit. Real conversion is a secret and separating work. It separates a man from himself, from the covenant of works, from the world, and often from his family. It touches and dissolves the ties which in unregeneracy so closely and so fondly bound him to earth's sinful associations. Where divine and sovereign grace thus enters the heart, oh what a division, what a separation transpires, in the experience of that individual, from all the antecedents which at one period of his history formed the charm, the sweetness, the very sun of human existence!

Who can describe the awful privacy of that transaction, when the worshiped idol 'self', the cherished righteousness, the adored object of creature-affection was laid at Jesus' feet, and Jesus and the soul were left alone in the discovery of a relation, and in the manifestation of a love such as heaven must have looked down to see! My dear reader, has your professed religion thus separated you? Has the great divorce taken place? Have you been separated from the self-righteous world? from the gay world? from the ungodly world? from the intellectual world? disenthralled from that form of worldly fascination and power by whose spell you were held a willing captive? If so, then the snare is broken and you are escaped. Divine and sovereign grace has exerted upon you its mightiest power, and conferred upon you its richest boon!

This is true conversion- a separation from self-righteousness; from the dominion of sin; from the captivity of Satan and all other that is false. O solemn stillness, O holy privacy of that moment when this great change takes place- this grand secret is disclosed- this wondrous discovery is made! Truly does our true Joseph cause every man, every object, and every feeling to retire from the scene, when, by the Spirit's quickening and His converting grace, He draws the soul in love to Himself, and reveals the secret of the covenant. It is an occasion too holy, too sacred and solemn, for any other to be present save Christ and the Soul.

The providential, not less than the gracious, dealings of God often bring us into this experience of isolation. When the Lord intends to reveal His ways, and to make us better acquainted with Himself and with our own selves in these ways, there is that in His dealings which seems to sequester us from all but Himself. He removes us from the crowd- from the busy hum of men- from the whirl and excitement of daily life; and, bidding all retire, there is no creature present while He talks with us.

Ah! there is a silence in that bereavement, a solitude in that sickness, a secret in that adversity, a mystery in that event, known only to Christ and the soul. There is heart-searching, and conscience-probing, and sin-revealing, and divine

discoveries, veiled from every intelligence but the believer and God. And when the hand of our Father is thus laid upon us, the stricken deer seeks not more instinctively the lonely glen to nurse its wound in solitude, than does our heart prompt us to retreat from our fellows and seek the cloister of a sacred privacy, to think and feel and act alone with God.

And what an unfolding is there here of the tender, delicate consideration of Jesus! With His solemn rebukes, His deep heart-searchings, His gracious discoveries, no one shall be cognizant except Himself. Our secret sins, which He places in the light of His own countenance, He kindly veils from every other. What deep instruction may we receive from this! How considerate we should be of the case, how careful of the feelings, and how jealous of the reputation of the Lord's brethren and ours! Our Joseph will never needlessly and unfeelingly expose us to the rude gaze, the changed affection, the lessened esteem and confidence of others; but, veiling our infirmities, failures, and sins from the world and the saints, will deal with them in the solemn privacy of our own souls. So let us deal with our brethren!

But it is in the act of private communion with God that the believer and Christ are the most truly and solemnly alone. Then, if ever, every being and object retires, and Jesus draws near and holds the soul in the spell of a fellowship and joy with which the stranger intermeddles not. Such was the communion of the patriarch at Peniel. He was alone. The curtain of night draped the scene from every eye; all sound was hushed into silence but the voice of prayer. Jacob and the Angel of the Covenant were the sole actors in that scene. Then it was Christ made Himself known, conferred a spiritual knighthood upon the holy auditor, and retiring, left him a conqueror and blest.

Beloved, our greatest strength in prayer is, when we wrestle alone with the Strong One. Our thoughts, and feelings, and sympathies, are shared by others when with others we draw near to God. But do you, O son of Jacob, aspire to his dignity and blessing? Then cause every one to go out when you would hold your most sacred season with Christ. O blessed hour, when Christ and the heart meet in holy, confiding, loving fellowship! There dwells not in that bosom a sin, in its depths of sensibility a sorrow, in its clinging affections a rival, in its intense yearnings a desire, in its fervent breathings a petition, in its bright sunshine a cloud, which may not at that moment find pardon, sympathy, and repose in converse with Jesus.

Oh, cultivate these seasons of privacy, these moments of separation for communion with God! Christ Himself needed and sought them. How frequently did He leave the busy world, and the thronging multitude, and the presence of His disciples, to meditate in pensive loneliness on the sea-shore, or to pour forth His midnight supplications amid the mountain's solitude! If He, the Strong One, the Sinless One, felt the need of retirement for thought, and prayer, and self-communion, how much deeper our need, whose nature is so fallen, whose heart

is so sinful, whose path is so thickly paved with temptations to evil, and so deeply shaded with the storm-clouds of sorrow!

Oh, see that your hours of converse with Jesus are not rudely invaded! Go at morning's dawn, at mid-day's turmoil, at evening's shade, yes, in the still hour of night, when sad thoughts encircle, and tears bedew your pillow, and, dismissing the world and the creature, draw near to the Mighty One, the Compassionate One, the All-seeing One, and tell the Savior all! Oh, cultivate sacred retirement! It is as essential to the nourishment of your piety, the increase of your spirituality, the comfort of your soul as the morning's sunbeam and the evening's dew to earth's fertility.

The richest fruit and flower of truth grow beneath the cross, the purest springs of grace flow in the hidden, shaded walk with God. There you can confess sin, and unveil grief, and breathe needs, and make known trials, seek and obtain renewed supplies of pardon and strength, peace and comfort, as nowhere else. And realize how beautifully and wisely God has harmonized the time and place of separation from all others, with the especial season of communion with Himself.

"The calm retreat, the silent shade,  
With prayer and praise agree,  
And seem by Your sweet bounty made  
For those who follow Thee."

"Then, if Your Spirit touch the soul,  
And grace her mean abode,  
Oh, with what peace, and joy, and love,  
She communes with her God!"

"There, like the nightingale, she pours  
Her solitary lays;  
Nor asks a witness to her song,  
Nor sighs for human praise."

Joseph, having commanded every man to retire, then makes himself known. This conducts us to THE MANIFESTATION of Joseph to his brethren. "Joseph made himself known unto his brethren." What must have been the varied thoughts, the conflicting emotions of Joseph's brethren, and of Joseph himself, when they found themselves face to face alone! In the minds of the conscious brethren what solemn awe, what memories of sin, what forebodings of evil, what strange reflections and fears now crowd! In Joseph's heart, what concealed emotion, what smothered feelings, what loving, tender thoughts and purposes were revolving! Is there nothing corresponding with this in the divine and gracious manifestations of Christ to the believing soul?

How impressive the thoughts and feelings of the believer when he finds himself

alone in the Divine presence! What sad memories of sinful departure, of wilful backsliding, of unfaithfulness and unkindness to Christ, crowd the mind! What trembling, and fears, and self-abasement fill the heart! The remembrance at that moment of wrong, and injury, and unkindness to a Being so good, to a Savior so gracious, to a Friend so loving, to a Father so tender and faithful, overwhelm the soul with awe, humiliation, and dread.

But oh, what a contrast does the Lord himself present! In the heart of Jesus, what love, what compassion, what yearning tenderness, and in the mind of God, what thoughts and purposes of peace dwell, panting, as it were, for the expression and the outflow!

But let our thoughts for a moment dwell more exclusively upon this single element of experimental religion- the Divine manifestation to the believing soul. It is the very essence of a holy, happy religion. A Christianity without it is but the name, the profession, the resemblance. A man of God is a living soul; a believer in Christ is in vital union with his Head; he is a temple of the Holy Spirit. All this involves close dealing and communion with the Divine. With such an individual, thus quickened with divine and spiritual life, there must of necessity be much transaction with God, with the spiritual and invisible.

Water ascends not more naturally to its level, than does the grace of God, welled within a gracious soul, rise in communion and aspiration and praise to Him from whom it came. It is no hallucination, nothing visionary and ideal, that a child of God may so walk with God, a believer in Christ so commune with Christ, as to realize on earth a converse with the divine, and the invisible, and the spiritual, but one remove from the pure and perfected fellowship of heaven itself. The man of God is as conscious of having God's ear open to him, God's countenance beaming upon him, God's heart responding to him, as a loving child is who stands in the parental presence, and wakes from a father's lips words of response and love. I cannot illustrate a feature of real vital religion of greater moment than this.

And I am all the more earnest in enforcing it, seeing there are so many religionists who are satisfied with their round of religious duties, unaccompanied and unsanctified with a moment's consciousness of the Lord's manifestation to their souls. Ask them if they know from personal experience the import of these gracious words of Christ, "We will come and manifest ourselves to you," and how unmeaning and blank their look!

Let me remark that the first and most memorable discovery of Christ to the soul is in its earliest stage of grace. What pen can portray, or tongue describe, the experience of that moment when Jesus first stands revealed to the believing Soul; when words of pardon are first spoken, and a sense of acceptance is first realized, and the love of God is first felt! If the reader can recall that hour when Jesus stood before him, the veil uplifted, the disguise removed, all manifested

and revealed in surpassing loveliness and love, your Savior, your Lord and Sovereign, then, methinks, he can recall a period in his existence upon which memory will feast with delight, lasting as the duration of eternity. Oh, heaven alone can supply a joy comparable with the joy of that hour!

Does this page meet the eye of a Christ-seeking, Christ-longing soul? My beloved reader, the Lord Jesus waits to be gracious to you. He is prepared to throw off the disguise, to rend in twain the wail, to lay aside the appearance which may have filled your mind with awe and your heart with fear, and to reveal Himself as bearing your sin, as exhausting your curse, as delivering you from condemnation, and as reconciling you to God by His blood. Oh, He is ready to burst through the dark clouds with which your sin and guilt and unbelief have invested Him, and to stand before your trembling spirit in His true relation, full of grace, overflowing with love, uttering assurances of a forgiveness that will leave not the shadow of a sin uneffaced, of a righteousness that places you in a present acceptance, and insures you a future glory.

Only believe! give full credence to the assurances of His gospel. That gospel tells you that He came into the world to save sinners; that He came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance; that He died for the ungodly; that He casts out none who come to God by Him; that He saves to the uttermost; that pardon and justification, adoption and salvation, are the gifts of His grace. Only believe these simple yet wondrous statements, and the result will be a true and settled joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Oh, what a blessed realization of Jesus to your soul will there be the moment doubt yields to confidence, fear gives place to love, despair merges into hope, and guilt and condemnation are supplanted by pardon, peace, and assurance forever! All these precious streams will flow like gentle wavelets into your soul the moment you embrace in childlike faith the Savior.

Then there is the Divine manifestation to the believing soul, after a season of spiritual gloom, depression, and despondency. It pleases God to discipline and instruct the believer by darkness as by light. Indeed, the one is as essential to the progress of our Christianity as the other. Astronomical science achieves its most glorious discoveries when earth's beauties, clad in evening's shadows, fade upon the view. Infinitely greater and more glorious are the spiritual discoveries of God, of Christ, of truth, and his own heart, made by the child of light when walking in darkness. He learns in the shade what he did not in the sunshine.

The storm has tested the strength of his barque; the lee-shore has proved the firmness of his anchor; the darkness of a starless night has increased his confidence in the correctness of his compass. In this season of spiritual gloom, of severe soul-exercise, what lessons the believer learns of God's love, power, and faithfulness; how confirmed is his faith in the truth of God's Word; what experimental discoveries he makes of the love, the fulness, the sympathy of

Jesus; and how more thoroughly schooled does he become in, perhaps, the most difficult, as the most humiliating, of all knowledge- the knowledge of himself! "Such honor have all the saints."

O beloved, there is no event or circumstance of your life, however simple or inexplicable, profound in its gloom or dazzling in its brightness, pleasing or painful, by which God does not intend to instruct and bless you. He taught David as much in the cave of Adullam as He ever did upon the throne of Israel. He taught Joseph as a prisoner in his dungeon what he ever learned as the governor of all Egypt. Deem not, then, days and nights of spiritual adversity, trial, and storm, through which you course your way, blank and unfruitful periods in your history. Oh, no! Christ is in all, and by all He is but deepening His work of grace in your heart, promoting the divine life in your soul, and training you for heaven.

But these seasons of spiritual depression and gloom in the believer's experience are but temporary. There follows the season of Divine manifestation, when Christ, the Sun, breaks through the dark clouds, and all is light and joy again. "He restores my soul." "The Lord will command His loving-kindness in the day, and in the night His song shall be with me." Our Joseph removes the momentary obscuration, the cloud-veil that He wore, and stands before us our Joseph still. Oh, can you not testify to such blessed seasons in your experience, when the Lord has, after a night of weeping, caused the morning of joy to dawn; when, after a long and dreary road, you have emerged into a large and wealthy place, bathed with the sunshine of His love?

These are blessed manifestations of Jesus. And but for the hidings, the withdrawals, the suspensions of His sensible presence and love, how little should we know of the sustaining power of faith in darkness, and of the enhanced sweetness and pleasantness of the light when the darkness is past! All this is to endear Jesus to our soul, to make us better acquainted with our true Joseph. We learn as much what He is by His disguises as by His manifestations, by His hidings as His revealings. In both He is our immutable Christ.

If it is now a time of darkness with your soul, hope in God, for you shall yet praise Him. Jesus will not always speak to you in a reserved and rough tone, to test your faith and prove your love and make the manifestation all the sweeter. Wait but the Lord's time, and though for a little moment He has hid His face from you, yet with great mercies He will appear again.

"Encompassed with clouds of distress,  
Just ready all hope to resign,  
I pant for the light of Your face,  
And fear it will never be mine."

"Disheartened with waiting so long,  
I sink at Your feet with my load;



All plaintive I pour out my song,  
And stretch forth my hands unto God."

"Shine; Lord! and my terror shall cease;  
The blood of atonement apply;  
And lead me to Jesus for peace  
The Rock that is higher than I"

"Almighty to rescue You are;  
Your grace is my shield and my tower;  
Come, succor and gladden my heart  
Let this be the day of Your power."

Nor must we fail to quote afflictive seasons in the believer's history, as occasions of especial manifestation of Jesus to the soul. Affliction is a separating process. The Lord, by these dispensations of trial and sorrow, draws us aside into solitary places, and there converses with us. And when dark adversity or sore affliction has thus withdrawn us from man, or, perhaps, has impelled man from us, and we are left alone, we are surprised to find how near we are to Christ, or, rather, how near Christ has brought Himself to us.

It is only in the sorrows and trials of human life that real friendship is fully tested. A friend who loves us, clings to us, acknowledges and aids us at all times, is a friend indeed. That Friend of friends is JESUS. We have but to be in trial, in sorrow, in need, to realize that Christ is standing at our door asking admittance to our grief. The storm has borne Him on its wing, the clouds have provided Him a chariot, death has brought Him in its wake. Where a suffering, sorrowing, needy servant of God is, there is Jesus.

The season of sickness is a touching illustration of the especial manifestation of Christ to His people. I cite this instance, as it is one, more or less, the experience of many of God's people; and sooner or later will be the experience of all. A sick-room is often the audience-chamber of Christ- the King's private room where He meets His saints alone. Thus sequestered from all- the world excluded, the creature shut out, business suspended- lo! Christ has entered; and, oh, what solemn transactions, what gracious communion, what Divine manifestations, what interchanged affections, then transpire between Christ and the soul.

The sick-room was necessary for the separation, the separation was needed for the manifestation, and the manifestation for the health and comfort of the soul.

And thus a dispensation which the man of God thought a calamity so adverse and a cloud so threatening, has but developed God's purpose of mercy, wisdom, and love, in the closer communion into which it has brought the heart with Christ. So that the season of sickness and suffering- a sleepless pillow and a couch of weakness- has been irradiated and soothed with gleams of heaven, with the

presence of Jesus and the smiles of God.

Exiled from the privileges of the public worship of God, severed from those means of grace and useful employments in which your soul has been wont to delight, deem not yourself, sick one! the inhabitant of a dry land, or as an exile whom no one loves, for whom no one cares. Oh, no! Your sick and suffering couch God may place near by the vestibule of heaven, yes, within the very precincts of the coming glory- such may be the divine manifestations to your soul. Angels sent from above minister to you, happy spirits encircle you, the odors of paradise float around you, the breezes of heaven fan you, the eye of God watches over you, and the manifested presence of Jesus strengthens you to bear the exile with cheerfulness, the languor with patience, and the suffering with a heart that meekly exclaims, "As my Father wills."

Thus, beloved, adversity, whatever its form- be it the loss of property, the decay of health, the bereavement of friends- has been the door through which Christ has entered, bent on a loving, gracious discovery of Himself to your soul. He has constructed the furnace, kindled the fire, controls the heat only to melt and then to mold, to purge and then to purify and refine your soul, that you may have less of sin and more of holiness, less of the creature and more of Christ, less of self and more of God, less of earth and more of Heaven.

"Pain's furnace-heat within me quivers,  
God's breath upon the flame does blow:  
And all my heart in anguish shivers  
And trembles at the fiery glow  
And yet I whisper: As God will!  
And in His hottest fire hold still."

"He comes, and lays my heart, all heated,  
On the hard anvil, minded so,  
Into His own fair shape to beat it  
With His great hammer, blow on blow:  
And yet I whisper: As God will!  
And at His heaviest blows hold still."

"He takes my softened heart and beats it;  
The sparks fly off at every blow;  
He turns it over and over and heats it,  
And lets it cool, and makes it glow  
And yet I whisper: As God will!  
And in His mighty hand hold still."

"Why should I murmur? for the sorrow  
Thus only longer-lived would be;  
Its end may come, and will tomorrow,

When God has done His work in me,  
So I say trusting: As God will!  
And, trusting to the end, hold still."

"He kindles, for my profit purely,  
Affliction's glowing, fiery brand;  
And all His heaviest blows are surely  
Inflicted by a Master hand  
So I say praising: As God will!  
And hope in Him, and suffer still." (Julius Sturm)

Nor must we overlook the gracious manifestations of Christ's restoring grace and changeless love after seasons of spiritual and penitential backsliding. Such was the look of Jesus to the fallen Peter. Such the language of God to His repentant Ephraim: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.... Therefore my affections are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, says the Lord."

Oh, what a mercy that the Lord curbs our waywardness, checks our wanderings, restores and heals our backslidings; and when in contrition we lie at His feet bemoaning our departures, confessing our sins, covered with shame and confusion at our base, unkind, ungrateful requital of love so deep, mercy so great, grace so free, how blessed then the manifestations of His restoring mercy, His healing grace, His unchanged and forgiving affection! We marvel not that the gentle word, the expressive look of Christ, breaks the heart with contrition, and dissolves it into love.

But the most gracious, manifest, and sustaining revealings of Christ to His brethren are reserved for the lone, shaded valley of death. What can meet that solemn period but faith in Christ? Who can so tread it with us as that its loneliness shall create no depression, its gloom no obscurity, its appearance no terror, its dart no sting, its remote consequences no fear- but Jesus?

When death confronts a believer, he confronts Christ in that believer, and meets his Spoiler and his Foe. And so near is Jesus, so absorbingly conscious is the departing soul of His presence, it sees not death, but Him only who is the Conqueror of death, the Resurrection and the Life, and so it fears no evil, and passes over to the other side, its song of victory, in dying cadence, fading in the distance.

Fear not, then, the coming hour! You shall not be deserted nor desolate; separated from others, you will be all the more engaged with Christ. That solemn crisis will find Him at your side; and although sad recollections of chilled affections, of unfaithful services, of an uneven walk, it may be, a wound inflicted upon the bosom that now pillows your languid head; may crowd upon the memory, yet, oblivious of it all, and forgiving it all, Christ is there to give you dying, God-glorifying grace for the hour and article of death.

Dismissing the revelation of Joseph to his brethren, we next approach THE SENSIBILITY he displayed on the occasion: "And he wept aloud." The long pent-up feelings of his heart now found vent in that intense audible mode peculiar to oriental grief. Emotions he had struggled to conceal now threw off their guise, and he wept. These were marvellous tears of Joseph! Who gave him that sensibility? who kindled these feelings? who unsealed these tears?- He of whom it is written, "Jesus wept."

Ah, beloved, if such was the sensibility of Joseph, a man of like infirmities, selfishness, and sin, with ourselves- what must be the sensibility, what the sympathy, and what the tears of Christ? The love, the tenderness, the sympathy, those tears thus expressed in the presence of his brethren, were welled there by his glorious, gracious Antitype- they were but distillings from the nature and spirit of Christ. It is a beautiful shadowing forth this of the hidden love and sympathy of the Savior- hidden and unknown until our circumstances elicit and reveal it.

Did the heart of Joseph overflow? Did the sight, the need, and the affliction of his brethren unseal the fountain of sensibility? Do you think that when you stand in the presence of Christ He will feel and exhibit less kindness, sympathy, and love? Oh, no! His nature is so identical with your own, there is not a shade of sorrow, nor a form of temptation, nor a peculiarity of need to which the sensibility and sympathy of His heart is not toned.

A weeping Joseph! it is a touching spectacle, and I envy not the feelings of the individual who can read the story without emotion. A weeping Savior! it is a sublime study, and I envy the pencil that can livingly portray, and the loftiness and delicacy of that perception that can vividly realize its image, its tenderness, and its grandeur. Yet more deeply do I covet the feelings of that saint who, with a heart of leaden grief, with mental beclouding and depression, its stricken and bleeding affections wandering through the vacant and desolate cloisters of the soul whose beloved occupants death has removed, can believingly, calmly, silently sink into the depths of this boundless sea of Christ's human sensibility, and realize the all-sufficiency of His sustaining grace, and the exquisite soothing of His sympathizing love. "Jesus wept "-words we can never weary of repeating, and which will continue to fall sweet as heaven's music on the ear until He wipes the last tear away.

But if of human sorrow there is one with which the sensibility of our true Joseph is the most closely and tenderly entwined, it is the sorrow which the inroads of death produce- the grief which the departure into eternity of loved ones leaves in its long, lingering shadow, and anguish in the heart. This is a loss which we feel only One can meet; it were irreparable but for Christ. We may part with health, but by skill, kindness, and care, win back again the boon. We may part with wealth, but by patient and self-denying industry retrieve our loss. We may part with endeared and sacred places, but by new friendships, scenes, and

associations, experience a sweet and soothing mitigation of the sorrow.

But no skill of science, no efforts of kindness, no voice of love can redeem from the grave, or win back from eternity, the beloved spirits that have left us. They are gone beyond our recall. The treasure of our heart- the light of our home- the companion of our pilgrimage- the charm and sweetness of life has departed, leaving a grief Christ only can soothe, a shadow He only can illumine, a vacancy He only can fill. There is but one Being in the wide, wide world, but one in the boundless universe, who can occupy that lone and desolate niche.

Our dearest Lord was disciplined by this very sorrow of parting, that He might be able to succor and soothe this grief of ours. Oh, sweet sorrow, which none but Christ can soothe! Oh, sacred loss, which none but Christ can supply! It needs be often that the tenderest fibre of our affections should be severed, the most sacred cloister of our hearts should be emptied, the fondest idol of our souls displaced, that we might learn the reality and power of Christ's sympathy in parting.

Who can supply a parent's care, fill a child's place, be more than husband, brother, friend, minister, but Jesus? Then let the swelling billow of your bereavement but cast you more completely upon Him- the Rock that is higher than you. If this be the fruit, a rich and golden harvest will your faith have sickled from this sowing of tears. Weep on! and weep not only at the feet, but on the very bosom of Christ, that your sorrow may all the more partake His sympathy. Wish not to recall the absent one- that were selfish sorrow- rather seek greater nearness to the Lord, a deeper sanctification of the heart, a more full, unreserved surrender to God. Let Christ be more precious to you now than ever; and all the future of your path be cheered by His presence, and all the future of your pilgrimage be consecrated to His glory.

"Oh! weep, sad heart!  
The loved, the lovely, from this earth have flown;  
The beautiful have left you all alone  
Autumn its dead leaves over their graves has strown."

"Oh! weep, sad heart!  
The Savior wept for you, and bore the smart  
Of your deep grief in His own bleeding heart  
You may not sit alone, and mourn apart."

"Then weep a while;  
You'll miss the cheerful voices in their mirth,  
That brightened many a lonely path on earth.  
Ah! gentle ones, you have a heavenly birth."

"Weep not for these,

They've passed from this tempestuous land of ours  
Into a clime of endless love and flowers,  
Crowned with immortal bliss in heavenly bowers"

"Then dry your tears!  
Sheltered so kindly in the Savior's breast  
You would not call your loved ones from that breast.  
Oh! with the angels leave them, pure and blest  
Weep not, sad heart."

In conclusion, allow me to exhort you to cultivate seasons of holy privacy. Beware of losing yourself in a crowd of religious purposes, and in the turmoil of religious doings. You may be "religious overmuch!" Allowing things and engagements professedly religious, and for a religious purpose, to become too encroaching and absorbing, you may leave no time for private prayer, for closet transactions, for personal heart converse with God. Many an individual has lost his Christian evidences, his spiritual joy, his assured hope, in the pious activities, the religious excitement, the mere outworkings and paraphernalia of Christianity.

But receive this truth in the love that offers it- Your soul cannot advance in the Divine life, you cannot be a lively, joyful, happy Christian, you cannot learn to look at death with calmness and at eternity with confidence, unless you cultivate those seasons which find you closeted with Christ. These seasons form the most powerful aids to religious progress. It is then we understand more of the mind and insinuate more deeply into the heart of our Lord.

We read that when Jesus took His disciples apart from all others into a desert place, He then explained to them the parables which, amid the din and excitement of the populace, they could but imperfectly understand. Ah, beloved, Christ our Teacher explains and expounds many an obscure saying in His Word, many an abstruse parable in His providence, and many a profound problem in our history, upon a couch of suffering, upon a sleepless pillow, in the house of adversity, in the season of bereavement, and even on a bed of death. The shadows reveal marvels and beauties of a landscape which the dazzling rays of the sun darken with their excessive brightness.

The sequestered walks of life, shaded and retired, impart an air of reality and solemnity to life, which the sunshine of prosperity, bathing the scene is bright effulgence, veils from view. Oh, what rapid scholars we become in the school of adversity! How we dive into the mind, and nestle in the heart of Jesus then! What a new revelation does the ancient Book of God become to us! How much of our own mysterious being is unveiled, and of our past inexplicable history is explained, when the heart, isolated from the world, withdrawn from the creature, at rest from itself, is in repose with God. And as we emerge from the sacred cloister which has been to us a Bethel and a Peniel, we exclaim, "Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, and teach out of Your love. O Lord, by these

things men live, and in all these things is the life of the spirit."

Be watchful, then, lest the attractions of the world, the anxieties of life, even the exacting and absorbing influence of religious external engagements invade the sanctity, encroach upon the solitude of your hidden walk with God. Be jealous of every object and of every being that would give Christ one pulse less of your heart, one thought less of your mind, one moment less of your life. In all things give Him the pre-eminence. Bind the first and last sheaf of the harvest upon His altar- lay the first-fruits, and the gleanings of the vintage at His feet- give Him the earliest and the latest- and entwine Him with your first and last thoughts of love.

He who has declared, "I am the First and the Last," demands and deserves the first and the last of the life purchased by His blood: youth in its bloom, age in its golden fruit; yes, life in each stage of its onward and endless being.

"My God, I would not coldly offer Thee  
The withered hue of feeling's flower,  
The fragment of a passing hour,  
Gifts which have nothing cost to me.  
But, looking down into my heart,  
Whatever treasure it has hidden deep,  
Whatever talent it would strive to keep,  
With these, to You, O God, I part.  
I should not dare to bring affections blighted  
By the rude blasts of worldliness and pride,  
Nor lay a worn-out heart the earth bad slighted  
Upon the altar of the Crucified.  
But in Life's dewy hours, when hope is on the wing,  
My love, myself, my all, to You I bring."

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