

The Fullness of Christ

"Christ Our Brother," or "Joseph Making Himself Known to His Brethren as Their Brother, and Comforting Them"

By [Octavius Winslow](#)

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. Genesis 45:3-5

A more full and perfect discovery of Joseph yet awaited his brethren- a discovery of the name and relation which he bore to the men now awestruck and discomforted by his presence. It was not enough that he should reveal himself as no stranger. He would do more than this. He would give an emphasis to his name, and an unmistakable affirmation of his relation: "I am JOSEPH- your BROTHER." No announcement less distinct, emphatic, and thrilling than this would have disarmed their fears, inspired their confidence, and revived their love. In one moment they were placed in an attitude of the most perfect repose.

Beloved, partial views of Christ but partially meet the spiritual requirements of the believer. The moral feelings, as the spiritual necessities, of the soul are many, varied, and complicated. There is but one Being possessing the skill, the delicacy, the resources, or the power to meet them. The inventor of a curious and complicated mechanism alone can understand its working, feed and control its movements. No one knows, no one understands, and no one can keep in motion the wondrous mechanism of the believing soul but Him who created it. We must have then a full Christ, and must know Him fully- know Him in His Divinity and humanity- know Him in His atoning sacrifice- know Him in His finished work- know Him in the infinite sufficiency of His grace- and know Him in all the relations He sustains to us in the covenant of redemption, if would we stand in the Divine presence with the filial confidence, the perfect peace, the assured hope, inspired by a spiritual and experimental knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

The subject of the present chapter presents the Lord Jesus in two delightful

aspects- the NAME He bears, and the RELATION He sustains to His people. These are suggested by the words- "I am JOSEPH, your BROTHER." The reader will mark that Joseph drops his Egyptian and assumes his Hebrew name. He does not say, "I am Zaphnath-paaneah," the name by which he was distinguished in Egypt; but, "I am Joseph," the name by which he was known in Canaan. Beloved, what is the name by which our spiritual Joseph the most delights to reveal Himself to, and to be recognized by, His brethren? Is it not JESUS? His birth and His mission were both announced by the celestial visitant in mysterious relation to this expressive and precious name, "You shall call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins."

Here allow me to pause and remark that you will often obtain a clue to a more perfect understanding of the Scriptures of truth by studying the significance of the proper names of Scripture. The names conferred by Divine authority are always intended either to commemorate a historical event, to illustrate a Scripture fact, or to express a revealed truth. Two instances from the Old and the New Testaments are in point. The Angel of the Covenant, after the long night of wrestling and before the day began to dawn, thus spoke to the holy wrestler: "What is your name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, [that is, a prince of God.] for as a prince have you power with God and with men, and have prevailed." How significant and sacred this new name of the patriarch!

Turning to the New Testament, we read that, after Peter had made his noble confession of the Godhead of Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Jesus answered and said unto him, "You are Peter, [a stone,] and upon this rock [His own Divine person] I will build my church." The significance of the apostle's name illustrated the nature of His confession, and the confession embodied the Foundation of Christ's Church. Now, if this be the case with regard to His disciples, how much more true and impressive as it regards the Lord himself! Thus, "You shall call His name Jesus,"- the Hebrew signification of which is, THE SAVIOR, JESUS, and then it is added, as an explication of the title, "for He shall save His people from their sins." It will at once appear that the name of JESUS was intended by the Holy Spirit to be profoundly and impressively significant. The whole of salvation, the entire gospel, is contained in this one Name.

An individual may know intellectually but little of the Bible- he may be unable to decipher its symbols, scarcely able to read its syllables. He may but imperfectly have studied systematic theology, or not have studied it at all; he may be unlearned in the geography, the chronology, the geology, the philosophy, and the poetry of the Bible, and yet, if the Holy Spirit has revealed to his soul the Name of Jesus, and he has been enabled to study the deep significance, to feel the marvellous power, and to taste the unutterable sweetness of that "Name which is above every name," he has penetrated into the essence of revealed truth, he has found the marrow of the gospel, he understands the way of salvation better, and

knows more of God, and of Christ, and of the Bible, and of spiritual peace and Christian hope, than many a man who has studied the Bible intellectually, theoretically, and speculatively, but has never broken that box of precious ointment- the name of JESUS.

The Bible reader will recall to mind that notable instance in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus of our Lord's manifestation of His name : to the question of the amazed persecutor, "Who are you, Lord?" the answer was- "I am Jesus." What must have been the electric power with which that word fell upon the ear of Saul! Dwell for a moment, my reader, upon the precious significance of this Name. What a body of divinity, what a mine of truth does it contain! It designates the office and work of Christ as the Savior of His brethren. Joseph was a temporal savior. He was the instrument, in the hands of God, of rescuing his father's house from the terrible calamity of death by starvation. The office of our spiritual Joseph, though in a higher sense, is the same. This is signified by His title: "He shall be called JESUS, because He shall SAVE His people from their sins."

This is just the office and the mission which our condition demanded, and in the execution of which He becomes so endeared to those who are saved. We are lost, self-destroyed, destitute, originally and practically, of every particle of holiness and righteousness, without strength, utterly impotent to save ourselves. Under the sentence of eternal death, shut up to the condemnation of the law, the carnal mind at enmity, and the will armed in rebellion against God, the heart hating holiness and loving sin, inclined and powerful to all that is evil, disinclined and impotent to all that is good. With a hopeless deathbed, and an eternal hell confronting us, truly we needed a Savior!

And just such a Savior is Jesus. How precious, then, the declaration, "He shall SAVE His people from their sins!" This was the high mission on which He was sent from the court of heaven- a mission of benevolence worthy of Him who is essential and infinite Love. For this He made His advent to our world, lived a life of poverty and toil, and endured a death of humiliation and suffering, all to save its poor lost sinners. What wondrous words are these we have already quoted, and which are worthy of endless reiteration: "He shall save His people from their sins." This is just what we needed- to be saved from our sins, from their guilt, their power, their condemnation. This Jesus does.

It may be instructive to the mind and establishing to the faith of the reader to trace the mode by which Jesus accomplishes this marvellous and blessed work. The views of salvation, as held by many, are sadly crude and obscure, and in many cases scripturally and essentially wrong. Seeing it is a matter of vital and momentous interest, the most important and solemn study that can engage human thought, and that an fundamental error here is fatal to the eternal safety of the soul, let us approach its study with all seriousness of mind, and expound it with simplicity and godly sincerity.

How, then, does Jesus save us from our sins? He saves us, first, meritoriously by His obedience. The obedience of Christ to the precepts of the law repaired, honored, and magnified it; and that sinless, perfect obedience to its every precept is, and becomes when imputed to those who believe, our righteousness or justification before God. And thus the glorious title well befits Him- "This is the name by which He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." "As by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Thus Christ's merits become, by imputation, our merits. By a perfect obedience to the law, He merited our justification; and having no merits of our own, His merit is made over to us, and God justifies, or acquits, or counts us worthy in and through the infinite and imputed merits of Jesus. This, in a few words, explains the doctrine of our justification.

Hold fast, my reader, the doctrine of imputed righteousness received by faith. Truly the Church stands or falls, and the sinner is saved or lost by it. If saved, how truly blessed and secure is the state into which our justification places us! The believing soul is clothed with Christ's righteousness- yes, is made "the righteousness of God in Him;" consequently, there rests not on the justified soul, as such, the shadow of condemnation, or spot or wrinkle of sin or unrighteousness. Believe this to be the state into which your justification by faith places you, and sweet will be the peace, deep the joy, and bright the hope you will experience. More than this: it will inspire and intensify your longings and endeavors after holiness. You will desire and aim after deeper sanctification, and your highest, noblest ambition will be to please God in all things, to walk worthy of your high calling, daily to wear Christ's yoke, to bear His burden, "having your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Jesus also saves us from our sins virtually by His atoning sacrifice and death. As the obedience of Christ honored the Divine law, so equally did the death of Christ satisfy Divine justice. The one is our righteousness, the other is our pardon. The vicarious sacrifice of the Messiah was the full belief of the Old Testament saints; hence the Levitical sacrifices, all shadowing forth the Great Sacrifice to be offered by the "Seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head." Hence, too, the concurrent prophetic testimony of Scripture. Isaiah prophesied of Jesus as "wounded for our transgressions, as bruised for our iniquities." Daniel foretold of Jesus as "cut off, but not for Himself." And this agrees with the uniform testimony of apostles- "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him;" "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." "Christ died for us."

What a broad foundation has Jesus thus laid for the salvation of sinners in His atonement! By it all the Divine attributes are harmonized, and the moral government of God is glorified, and thus it becomes Him who is infinitely righteous as He is essentially love, to people and adorn heaven with the vilest sinners, redeemed from earth. On this basis, the sacrifice of Jesus, God and the sinner stand side by side- God pardoning, the sinner pardoned; and this the

divine act of His most free and sovereign grace.

And when we remember from what Jesus saves us, oh, how glorious and gracious does this salvation appear! It is from our sins- saved from which, we are saved from the parent, and the greatest, of all evil. By bearing sin- its load, its curse, its penalty, He saves from sin. His obedience saves us from the condemnation of sin, His blood saves us from the guilt of sin, His grace saves us from the power of sin, His intercession saves us from the temptations and assaults of sin. This is just the salvation we needed, and anything less than this would have left us still shut up to a just and endless condemnation.

We do not pray- it would neither be wise nor holy in us so to do- to be saved from discipline, from the hallowed results of sanctified trial, from the winnowing process of temptation, from the daily cross which, in pain and weariness, we bear after Jesus. But we do ask Jesus to save us from the dominion, the power, and the guilt of sin. Oh, when we ask this, we ask for that which is not only in accordance with His will to grant, but which was the great end of His death to accomplish, and of His intercession to secure.

And if the Lord seals this on your conscience by the application of the blood, you may calmly and safely leave all the rest in His hands. He will save you from as much adversity as will be for your good, and will not allow a stroke to settle upon you, or an element to mingle with life's cup of sweet, more bitter than is essential to your well-being. But from all your sins- sins past, present, and to come- His most precious blood will cleanse you, His finished salvation will save you.

Do not allow the fact of indwelling sin, or the conviction of its daily outbreak to veil this truth from your eye, or to rob you of its precious comfort. The full, free, and entire forgiveness of our sins does not insure the utter extermination of sin, although it does constrain us, by the most persuasive, holy, and powerful of all motives, to seek its mortification and death. Still, its existence and struggle will remain until the Christian warrior shall fight his last battle and achieve his last victory, and exchange his sword for a palm, and his cross for a crown.

Jesus also saves us from our sins vitally by His Spirit. The office of the Spirit, as a Quickener of spiritual life, is an essential and precious provision in the economy of redemption. Apart from an arrangement which should secure the spiritual renewal and renovation of the soul, and give a vital and virtual application of the work of Christ to the heart, we do not hesitate to say that the Atonement of Calvary, with all its costliness and glory, would have availed us nothing! Added to our guilt, which needed pardon, and to our condemnation, which demanded justification, both of which the blood and righteousness of Christ supply, we possess a soul so entirely inoperative and dead to all spiritual life and holiness, so insensible to all that is heavenly, so impotent to all that is good, so totally "dead in trespasses and sins," as to demand a Divine power to renew its nature, regenerate its faculties, and quicken it with a new and spiritual

life.

Oh, how utterly fallen, how totally depraved, how entirely void of spiritual holiness, strength, and love are we! Talk of our nature being in a salvable state- preposterous idea! "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "There dwells in our flesh no good thing." "There is none righteous, no, not one." If there is any, the least, moral power, or inclination, or light innate in the soul, by which we can assist the work of our recovery, then Christ becomes a 'helper' only, and not a Savior, and the Holy Spirit is simply a secondary and subordinate Agent, aiding a mind already spiritually enlightened, a will already rightly disposed, a heart already pulsating with love, and yearning with desire toward God! See to what a 'reduction to absurdity' the theory of innate moral ability in the natural and unrenewed man conducts the reasoner.

But the case is fully met by the office and work of the holy Spirit. Oh, it is a wonderful and glorious provision this of our salvation! "It is the SPIRIT who quickens; the flesh profits nothing." It is the Spirit who enlightens: "The things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God." It is the Spirit who convinces of sin, "He shall convince the world of sin." It is the Spirit who reveals Jesus: "He [the Spirit of truth] shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." It is the Spirit who sanctifies: "Being sanctified by the Holy Spirit." It is the Spirit who authenticates our new nature, and witnesses our adoption: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." It is the Spirit who comforts us: "I will ask, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth." Thus might we traverse the entire circle of the holy Spirit's operations, describing an indispensable part of our salvation, and exhibiting the divinity and personality, the love and power of the Holy Spirit in our recovery equally with the Father and the Son.

Jesus saves us from our sins fully by His power. Never was power exerted in a way so glorious as this- power to save. God has power to destroy, and will fearfully exhibit that power in the great day of His wrath, in the everlasting punishment of the ungodly. But Christ came into the world, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. His power, the power of Deity, is exerted in salvation. No power short of this could possibly save us from our sins. The power of sin over the soul could only be met and vanquished by the superior power of Christ over sin. He alone had strength to bear sin by imputation, to efface sin by His blood, to pardon sin by His grace, and to convince of sin by His Spirit. "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."

What a warrant and encouragement is this for you to come penitentially to Christ with all your sins- the greatest, most aggravated, and innumerable- sins original, sins actual- sins against light, knowledge, and conviction- sins wilful, sins ignorant- sins before, and sins after conversion. Jesus is able to save you from them all! "Yes," you reply, "I doubt not His ability, seeing He who created all things must be divine and illimitable in power. But is He as willing to save me as

He is able." Question it not! Listen to the confirmation of this precious fact: "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. Jesus said unto him, I WILL, be clean." Here is a proof that Christ's willingness to save is as equal and as prompt as His power to save. Yes! His will is in harmony with His power, and goes every step with it in the salvation of a poor sinner from his sins. He is willing, He is able! Doubt no more.

Jesus saves us from our sins freely by His grace. Were this not so, were our salvation uttered with conditions and contingencies, were the efficient cause our willingness, or our faith, or our worthiness- were there anything in us required to supply the turning-point, then salvation would never be given, and heaven would never be our home. But, bankrupt of all worthiness, having nothing to pay, cast wholly upon the mercy of God in Christ, to save or to condemn us as He willed, lo! Jesus undertakes to save us from our sins by an act of His most free grace, cancels our great debt, supplying our merit, imparting His worthiness, and, without money or price, fee or reward, receiving, and accepting, and saving us just as we are. 'Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.'" "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both."

Hesitate not, then, to approach the Savior. What though you are bankrupt and beggared of all goodness, what though you have not a holy thought, or a spiritual impulse, or a gracious desire, or a solitary good action with which to conciliate Divine justice, or claim Divine mercy. Yet, seeing God asks no merit, requires no worthiness other than what Jesus supplies, seeing that He is well-pleased in Him, and is prepared to pardon, and justify, and adopt, and accept you in and through Christ, demur not to believe, hesitate not to come, and be fully and freely saved from all your sins. "By grace are you saved."

Beloved, His name is JESUS; and this blessed name is the pledge that He will save you. Are you burdened, crushed beneath the weight of your transgressions? Are you debating, questioning, doubting, whether Jesus will save such a sinner as you? Oh, take hold of His name in simple faith, and you shall be saved! He saves meritoriously, He saves vitally, He saves powerfully, He saves willingly, He saves gratuitously, He saves to the uttermost, and will reject none that come to Him. His arm is as strong as His heart is loving. And if you will approach Him as a poor, burdened, worthless sinner, and cast yourself at His feet; oh, not so brightly beamed the eye of Joseph upon his brethren whom he was about to redeem from famine, not so tenderly did his affections yearn over them as, trembling and astonished, they stood in his presence, than will the Lord Jesus delight in and rejoice over you while He reveals to your soul His precious name: "I am JESUS, your Savior, your Redeemer, your Lord."

"Precious Jesus! Your name is to my soul as ointment poured forth; therefore do I love You. In adversity, it is my sheltering tower of strength into which I run, and am safe. In moments of conscious guilt, I fly to it, and it removes my fears, and

gives me peace. In the hour of temptation, I breathe it, and the foe retires, and I leave the fight victorious. I breathe it in prayer, and my petition prevails. In sorrow, when my heart is overwhelmed within me, it distills inexpressible soothing, and I am comforted. The power of Your name is mighty. It illumines my darkest, and cheers my loneliest hours. It subdues my rebellious will, silences my murmuring heart, and wins all my soul to love. It strengthens me in service, animates me in duty, stimulates me to obedience, and raises my affections to God and to heaven. In life, in death, in eternity, I will wear Your name on my heart, chant it in my song, and prolong its endless praise!"

The deathless, magic power of Jesus' name, when all other names on earth have lost their charm, or have faded from memory, has often been illustrated. The touching instance of the pious Bishop Berridge may be familiar to the reader. When on his death-bed, he did not know any of his friends or relatives. A minister, with whom he had been well acquainted, visited him, and when conducted into his room, he said, "Bishop Berridge, do you know me?" "Who are you," said the Bishop. Being told who the minister was, he said that he did not know him. Another friend came, who had been equally well known, and questioned him in a similar manner- "Do you know me, Bishop Berridge?" "Who are you?" said he. Being told it was one of his intimate friends, he said he did not know him. His wife then came to his bedside, and asked him if he knew her. "Who are you?" said he. Being told she was his wife, he said he did not know her. "Well," said one of them, " Bishop Berridge, do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Jesus Christ!" said he, reviving as if the name had produced on him the influence of a charm; "oh yes! I have known Him these forty years. Precious Savior, he is my only hope!"

"There is a name I love to hear,
I love to speak its worth;
It sounds like music in my ear,
The sweetest name on earth."

"It tells me of a Savior's love,
Who died to set me free;
It tells me of His precious blood,
The sinner's perfect plea."

"It tells me of a Father's smile
Beaming upon His child;
It cheers me through this 'little while,'
Through desert, waste, and wild."

"It tells of One whose loving heart
Can feel my deepest woe;
Who in my sorrow bears a part
That none can bear below."

"It bids my trembling soul rejoice;
It dries each rising tear;
It tells me, in a still small voice,
To trust and never fear."

"Jesus! the name I love so well,
The name I love to hear!
No saint on earth its worth can tell,
No heart conceive how dear!"

"This name shall shed its fragrance still
along this thorny road,
Shall sweetly smooth the rugged hill
That leads me up to God."

"And there, with all the blood-bought throng,
From sin and sorrow free,
I'll sing the new eternal song;
Of Jesus love to me."

From the name of Jesus, let us pass to consider the relation which He sustains to us as our BROTHER. "I am Joseph your brother." With what astounding, yet subduing power must this announcement have fallen upon their ears? "What! is this great man, this mighty man, Joseph? Is this governor of all Egypt our brother? Can it be?" Incredulity must have been the first feeling of their mind, this ripening into confidence, and confidence deepening into love.

Beloved reader, not less surprising nor less true and touching is the announcement of the gospel, that the Son of God, the Lord of heaven and earth, sustains to His Church the close and tender relation of a BROTHER. In His address to His disciples when on earth, He recognized this fraternal bond- "Go, tell my brethren;" "Behold my brethren!" "My brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it." "Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these my brethren." Such is the relation Jesus would have us recognize. It is a more close, sympathizing, and holy relation than earth's dearest and tenderest. Look at His dignity as such.

He is the Elder Brother of His Church, "The first-born among many brethren." The law of primogeniture (birthright) was especially instituted by God in the time of the Jewish Church, and its wisdom and equity in all future ages has ever been acknowledged. Modern jurisprudence has never been able to improve upon it; and our own English law has, with certain modifications adapted to the age of the world and the changed face of society, engrafted it upon its code as one of the profoundest and healthiest enactments. Not only did this law of primogeniture entitle the elder brother to a double portion of the paternal estate and a large

degree of power, it also invested him with the office of domestic priest of the family.

It was, doubtless, the remembrance of all this that added such keenness to the remorse, and such pungency to the sorrow of Esau, when he awoke to a conviction of his sin, infatuation, and loss, in bartering on terms so easy, and for a motive so frivolous, the sacred and precious inheritance of the birthright. "Afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." As our Elder Brother, Jesus possesses, in a higher, holier sense, all the privileges and power of the "first-born among many brethren." The paternal inheritance is His illimitable power is His- the priestly office is His- the Divine and heavenly birthright is His, in all its fulness of grace, and in all its perfection of glory- and in this His brethren share. He, retains all the privileges and power of the heavenly birthright, that He may lavish its blessings upon them.

Still closer has He brought Himself to us as our Brother by the assumption of our veritable nature. We could not claim as our brother an angel, or the inhabitant of any other world, if such there be. He who asks our relationship, bespeaks our confidence, and inspires our love, must be linked with our humanity, must wear our nature, must be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Such was Jesus. It was this fact which flashed upon the minds of the brethren of Joseph with such bewildering power: they were conscious they were in the presence of a brother who felt as they felt, wept as they wept, loved as they loved, and the first touch of nature made them feel they were kin. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be like His brethren."

How near to its does this cardinal truth of our holy religion bring the Son of God! How human is His love, His compassion, and sympathy! Is there a brother on earth to whom we can repair with the same assurance of a quick and a full response to the appeal of humanity, as to Jesus? That brother has infirmities and burdens, sorrows, anxieties, and needs of his own, so weighty, keen, and absorbing, that though there throbs within his bosom a brother's kindly heart, it is too much to ask him to make our necessities and our griefs all his own. But not so Jesus! We resort to Him in difficulty, we fly to Him in temptation, we repair to Him in sorrow, we betake ourselves to Him in need, and, lo! we find Him as accessible, as prompt, and as interested in our personal case, as though there poured into His ear no other appeal, or were laid on His heart no other grief, and upon His shoulder no other burden than our own!

"MY BROTHER!" -how sweet the relation! how thrilling the recognition! The moment faith realizes it, the heart, stunned with surprise, or wild with grief, or sorrowing with despair, is in perfect repose. Beloved, think that all the dignity, the power, the honor, the wealth of the Elder Brother of the Father's one family is centered in JESUS; and that the influence of this extends, in all its enriching,

ennobling, soothing power, to the youngest, the lowliest, the least of the Father's house- perchance to you!

The dignity conferred upon us by this fraternal relation of Jesus, and the nearness into which it brings our nature, laden and shaded with need and sadness, to God, is a marvellous and tender illustration of its preciousness. Is Jesus our Brother? Then God is our Father; for He is the Son of the Father, eternally and well-beloved. No angel in heaven is clad with such dignity, is invested with such glory, moves in an orbit so near the center as Christ's brethren now glorified, and as will be our privilege when our true Joseph sends for us to be with Him.

Amid the world's ignorance and unkindness, the scorn with which it derides our saintship, the malignity with which it plots our downfall, the fetters with which it would enslave, the dungeons in which it would immure, or the fires with which it would consume us, let this truth sustain and cheer us: the most glorious, and powerful, and loving Being in the universe stands to us in the relation of our BROTHER! What have we, then, to fear?

"Jesus, who passed the angels by,
Assumed our flesh to bleed and die;
And still He makes it His abode,
As man, He fills the throne of God."

"Our nearest Friend and BROTHER now
Is He to whom the angels bow;
They join with us to praise His name,
But we the nearest interest claim."

"Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a BROTHER'S eye;
Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame."

A striking and touching feature in this stage of the narrative arrests our attention, which will be found to illustrate a precious part of the believer's experience. Awed by the presence of Joseph, their minds oppressed with doubt and trembling, his brethren stood at a distance from his person. Their position betrayed fear and distrust, for they were terrified at his presence. Joseph, perceiving their position and their feelings, instantly and tenderly spoke to them in language winning and assuring: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I beg you. And they came near."

Beloved, it is the will of Jesus that His brethren, His saints, His beloved people, disarmed of all legal bondage and servile fear, should be very close to Him, sitting at His feet, sheltered at His side, leaning on His bosom. He will allow no

distance of place, no circumstance of trial, or of temptation, or of backsliding, to separate between Him and the brethren. The relationship is too close, the redemption is too great, the salvation is too precious to allow any degree of distrust, servility, or congealed affection on their part towards Him.

"We who were sometime afar off, are brought near by the blood of Christ." United to Him by the Spirit, engrafted upon Him by a reciprocated nature- on His part by the assumption of the human, on ours by the impartation of the Divine- what opposites could be more closely united, what extremes could more perfectly meet, what being could be more closely and indissolubly one than Christ and His brethren? Imagine, then, how keenly sensitive must He be to any show of distrust, shyness, or distance on the part of His brethren towards Him! He is jealous of our love, our confidence, and our companionship. And seeing that at an expenditure so costly, by a sacrifice so great, and by love so transcendent, He has bridged the gulf, annihilated the distance, and broken down every barrier between Himself and His Church, He would work in those who faith, and enkindle in those who affection, that shall draw them into the greatest nearness to Himself.

The language of Jesus to you is, "Come near to me, my disciple. Why this distance, these fears? Come near to me, shelter beneath my side, nestle in my heart, take hold of my strength, commune with me. I am Jesus your Brother." Oh, let nearness to Jesus be the distinctive feature of your religion! "He is always near to you- invisible, indeed, His person, and noiseless His tread- yet still, oh how near! "You are near, O Lord." And He would have you perfected in that love which reassures the timid mind, composes to rest the fluttering heart, disentralls the bondage spirit, and establishes the soul in the firm, unwavering conviction that the interests of His brethren are identical with His own- that the ephod is still upon His shoulder, and the breastplate is still upon his heart, the symbol and the pledge that His strength and sympathy are ours.

Seeing, then, that His blood is your plea, His invitation your warrant, and His love your attraction, draw near to Him by prayer in perplexity, and He will guide you; in assault, and He will shield you; in adversity, and He will shelter you; in necessity, and he will supply you; in conscious departure, and He will heal your backslidings, and restore to you the joy of His salvation. Oh, nothing dishonors Jesus more than our distrust of faith! Nothing wounds Him more than our fickleness of love. He cannot, He will not, allow distance to interpose between Him and His brethren- wronged Him though they may have clone to the utmost. They are too precious to Him to allow the slightest degree of confidence and love to be lost between their. He will not only- as we shall see in the process of this work- have them near to Him in heaven, but they shall cultivate the most loving intimacy, the most perfect confidence, the closest fellowship with Him on earth.

And, if need be- if His beauty will not attract them, if His glory will not charm them, if His love will not win them, if the prospect of being with Him forever will

not allure them, He commissions the loving correction, the gentle chastisement, to effect what milder and more persuasive means failed to accomplish- their greater nearness to Himself. Be jealous, watchful, and prayerful, then, lest the world in its fascination, the creature in its fondness, life's battle in its fierceness, means of grace neglected, affection allowed to congeal; should, separately or combined, create a distance between Christ and your soul.

Let every incident and circumstance in the daily walk of your life- be it exalting or depressing, a test of principle, a trial of faith, an appeal of love- but bring you nearer to the Lord; that, less like Peter, who "followed Jesus afar off," and more like Caleb, who followed the Lord fully," you may tread the dusty, lonely paths of your earthly pilgrimage your heart sequestered from earth, your spirit in close converse with Jesus in heaven.

But there was deep emotion on this occasion of Joseph's revelation of himself to his brethren, which he skillfully and tenderly met. They were evidently troubled and discomforted in their minds by the sad memories which the presence of Joseph awoke. Joseph's quick eye saw their mental conflict; he seemed to read every thought of their mind, and to touch every pulse of their heart. He threw himself, as it were, within their very bosoms. And if ever there were an illustration of the truth that "a brother is born for adversity," it was this. Mark how he sought to comfort them: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me here: for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years has the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall not be a harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance."

How delicately, tenderly, and effectually did Joseph now comfort his brethren! He sought first to disarm them of the weapons of self-accusation with which their hearts were so deeply wounded. "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves." Our blessed Lord alone can disarm us of our self-accusations. But for the words of comfort that He speaks, the faith that enables us to look from within ourselves and from all our wilful acts of sin, and the evils which our own doings have brought upon us, we should not only be grieved, and angry with ourselves, but, overwhelmed with self-abhorrence and abasement in the remembrance of our vileness, we should never more lift up our head.

Oh, there is no reproach so bitter, no accusation so keen, as that which our own conscience and heart inflict- none so true, or that lays us more deeply in the dust before God! Remorse for his sin, and despair of its forgiveness, would have led to self-destruction the Philippian jailor but for the words of Paul. Are you filled with remorse, self-reproach, and anger, at the remembrance of all the sin and neglect, rebellion and wrong Jesus has received at your hands? Hear Him say to you- "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourself; I can forgive all, cancel all, forget all. I do not condemn you; go, and sin no more."

Blessed are they who, in the spirit of self-abasement, abhor and condemn themselves; they shall never be abhorred and condemned of God. Christ will not trample upon a poor sinner who tramples upon himself, and will never accuse one who at His feet is filled with self-accusation. The Lord will never take part with His people against themselves. Oppressed with self-reproach, abhorring themselves in dust and in ashes, He will draw near to them with words of kindness, soothing, and love: "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourself; I have pardoned all, and will no more remember your sins." Oh, it is utterly impossible for Christ to speak harshly, unsympathizingly, or condemnatory to a humble, penitent, contrite soul, standing in His presence filled with trembling and self-condemnation.

But what is the great panacea of a wounded conscience, terrible and true in its self-impeachment, keen and galling in its self-reproach? The BLOOD of Jesus! Nothing short of the blood of sprinkling can reach the conscience. This alone cleanses, heals, comforts, pacifies. The sin-distressed, sin-accusing conscience, brought into believing contact with atoning blood, is in one moment at rest from sin, at rest from itself, at rest in Christ. The apostle's argument is, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience?"

And then, based upon this truth, he thus exhorts, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. Oh, we cannot press this truth- the blood of Jesus and the sinner's conscience- too earnestly! What thousands are wandering, Cain-like, over the earth, bemoaning their transgressions, burdened with a sin-distressed, sin-accusing conscience, filled with self-reproach and horror of the coming judgment, who see not that the only remedy is, the atoning blood of Jesus; one drop of which so divine and sovereign is its efficacy- will allay the storm, remove the guilt, and diffuse over it a heavenly serenity and a divine sunshine!

And mark how gracefully and skillfully Joseph leads them away from all second causes to the purpose and end of God in the marvellous events of his personal history- events in which they had acted so sad and signal a part. "GOD sent me before you to preserve life, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me here, but GOD." Such is the light in which we must study our redemption by Christ. Looking beyond the disciple who betrayed Him, the judge who convicted Him, the Jews who slew Him, we must trace up all to the eternal purpose and sovereign will of Jehovah.

Thus Peter reasoned, while charging home upon the murderers the crime of His death: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Thus, too, must we, in all the afflictive, trying, and mysterious events of life, rise above

immediate and second causes, and trace them up to Him who "works all things after the counsel of His own will." There is no anchorage for the tempest-tossed soul but here. The anchor must be cast within the veil. Combating with second causes, looking only at the natural antecedents of an event, calamitous and overwhelming, striving to understand its rationale by a scrutiny of human and proximate reasons, we shall but render more dark the event we seek to elucidate, and more entangled and perplexed the mystery we endeavor to unravel.

Beloved and afflicted child of God, cease from reflecting upon yourself for a calamity you could not prevent, from indulging in vain regrets at an event you could not control. It was not you who commanded, nor you who could have prevented it; it was GOD. Be still, and know that He is God. Oh, the moment that your faith can rest in Him, referring to His eternal decree and good pleasure, His righteous and wise government the event enshrouded in such gloom, and entailing such anguish, you cease from a battle in which no victory is won, no laurels gained, and your heart is at rest in God! "God Himself has done it;" and, "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

It is thus Jesus would comfort His brethren in all their self-reproaches, in the multitude of their thoughts within them, in the tremblings and forebodings which conscious sin produces. Truly is He the "Brother born for adversity" -His brethren's adversities, the sad; conflicting thoughts of whose mind He alone can read, the deeply-seated sorrow of whose heart He alone can reach. If such the skill and tenderness of Joseph to his brethren, Oh, what must Christ's be to His brethren?

How spiritually instructive, too, the fact that Joseph was raised up of God for the especial salvation of his family. How clearly he states this- "God sent me before you to preserve your posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." What were all the families of Egypt compared with this one? For them Joseph was preserved alive- for them he was exalted in the land- for them all the corn in Egypt was placed in his hands- and for their sakes, indirectly, all the families of Egypt were blest.

The first truth illustrated is, that Christ was raised up by God for the especial salvation of His Church, to save it by a great deliverance. That the Atonement of the Son of God is an indirect blessing to the world admits not of a doubt. In this view its benevolent and beneficial influence is universal; for, but for the death and sacrifice of the Son of God, the world would not stand, nor human society exist as it does for a moment. In this sense we are to interpret the words of the apostle, "Who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe."

But, for the Church of God alone, the chosen of God, the gift to Christ of the Father, His especial treasure, everlastingly loved and eternally elected, did the Son of God die upon the cross. On their behalf obedience was given to the law,

satisfaction was offered to justice, the righteousness of God's government was upheld- its honor and dignity vindicated and maintained- "the Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood." Is God unrighteous in this? Who are you that replies against Him?- a worm- a moth- a vapor- sinful dust and ashes daring to impugn the holiness, the equity, the wisdom, the goodness of Jehovah! Believer in Christ! for you our true Joseph was raised up- for you the food in Egypt was provided to keep your soul alive in famine, and to save it everlastingly- by a great and glorious deliverance.

Make your calling sure, and you can safely leave your election in His hands to whom alone secret things belong. Election is not the truth which you are either to settle or to sound. Jehovah has already settled it, and there are depths in it you cannot fathom. But you can and may understand what it is to be called by grace, to feel yourself a poor, lost sinner, to trample your own righteousness beneath your feet, and to come believingly to the blood and righteousness of Jesus, and accept it as all your desire, all your salvation, and all your hope. Taking hold of this the lowest link in the chain of God's salvation- your calling by grace- you will by and by rise to the highest- your election of God; and when your faith grasps this- your election of God- your soul will be filled with adoration, wonder, love, and praise.

Let us close with the glorious declaration, " Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Come to Jesus and He will not cast you out. Come just as you are- come without demur- come today- come now!

"With all your sins against your God,
All your sins against His laws;
All your sins against His blood,
All your sins against His cause
Sins as boundless as the sea!
And hide them in Gethsemane!"

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never drive away." John 6:37

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