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## **CREATION'S EARNEST EXPECTATION**

*"We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.....for the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Romans 8:22, 19.*

*"I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." Haggai 2:7.*

Thus the apostle and the prophet refer to the 1 woes of earth and the great remedy which God has provided, and which is soon to be applied. None experienced in life or acquainted with history will dispute the correctness of the apostle's statement. The declaration of the prophet that God will eventually establish a reign of righteousness in the earth which, when realised, will indeed fulfil all the earnest expectation, the eager longing, of all mankind, is borne out by the testimony of every prophet and apostle (Acts 3:19-21), and cannot, therefore, be disputed by any who acknowledge the inspiration of the Bible.

The cause of all creation's groaning and pain is sin; for all the moral as well as the physical degradation which directly or indirectly causes the pain and groaning of humanity is part of the wages of sin. Humanity is thus under a blight, and suffers both individually and as a whole. Its own imperfect and often unjust governments, as well as its aches and pains of body and mind, are the natural consequences of its blemished, fallen condition. Although mankind can do something toward general improvement, their efforts are at best but feeble and spasmodic; they are utterly incapable of releasing themselves from their difficulties. Their varying successes - but on the whole futile efforts -for the past six thousand years prove this conclusively.

They have never yet, in all the centuries they have had for experiment, succeeded in establishing a perfect government; nor have they silenced the groans and wiped away the tears of the race, nor lifted it up, physically or mentally, or morally, to the image of God, in which they were created, as represented in Adam. Diseases of every description still prey upon them physically. There are still burning fevers, wasting ulcers, frightful cancers, loathsome skin and poisonous blood diseases; and there are sightless eyes, deaf ears, dumb tongues, broken backs and limbs, and other physical diseases and deformities. Mentally, their condition is often worse: some are crazed; others are partially so; and in all the race not one is perfectly balanced. Morally their condition is no less deplorable; selfishness, and greed, and pride, and love of display, and hatred and malice, and evil speaking, and deceit, and envy, and contention, and war, and bloodshed, wring agonising groans from the lips of millions; and desolate widows and helpless orphans and broken-hearted mothers and grief-stricken fathers, and disappointed friends, still weep over the graves of buried hopes and fond ambitions.

### **A RAY OF HOPE**

Truly, it is a groaning creation still; and yet, as the apostle suggests, it is not hopeless; it is waiting for something, it knows not exactly what- a panacea for sickness, and pain, and sorrow, and death, and a just and righteous government, which will lift up the poorest and meanest from the mire of ignorance and squalor, to comfort and happiness and a share of life's luxuries. It is looking forward to 'a good time coming,' 'a golden age,' of which even heathen poets and philosophers have dreamed and sung in glowing terms. Some, catching a strain from the divine inspiration, though unconscious of how it will be brought about, sing of the blessed Millennium-

*"When, man to man united,  
And every wrong thing righted,  
The whole world shall be lighted  
As Eden was of old."*

But what heathen poets and philosophers, and all mankind have longed and vaguely hoped for -but have proved themselves utterly incapable of bringing about, with all their statecraft, and priest-craft, and multiplied religious ceremonies, and forms of godliness without the power - God, through His prophets, has clearly and definitely foretold will come. Further, He has shown exactly how it is to be brought about - that it is to come to pass through the agency of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messenger of Jehovah, who over nineteen centuries ago redeemed the world, giving His life as the ransom price for the life of the world; and who will shortly set up His Millennial Kingdom and establish His authority over the redeemed world. He will not oppress the people to exalt Himself, as human rulers have done; but will bless "all the families of the earth" through a wise and righteous administration.-Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:8, 16; Psa. 9:8; Isa. 32:1.

Our Lord Jesus, by the grace of God, "tasted death for every man," and thus secured the right to give lasting life to all who shall prove themselves worthy of it. The object of His Millennial reign will be to so instruct, train, and discipline men as to enable them to become worthy of lasting life, on the original conditions - perfection and obedience. To this end He will first "rule with a rod of iron" (Psa. 2:9) - with power and force, causing in the overthrow of present imperfect, selfish, proud, and unjust systems, "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation" (Dan. 12:1). Then He will "fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. 2:14.) He will restrain and humble the wicked and the selfish, and bless and lift up the meek and those seeking righteousness (Zeph. 2:3; Matt. 5:5) ; finally making an end of sin and all its train of evils, by destroying (completely and forever) all who then, with full knowledge and appreciation, still love sin; and by bestowing upon all who shall then love righteousness "the gift of God," everlasting life. - Rom. 6:23.

### **WHY THE DELAY?**

All this would seem reasonable to thinking people but for two conditions. One is, that another and an unscriptural view has for centuries predominated, and the people have been instructed from infancy in that direction. The second condition is, that so long a period has elapsed before the establishment of His Kingdom as the remedy for sin and its disorders. Yet so convinced are people of the propriety of such a divine rulership that, regardless of facts and scripture, some claim that Christ is now reigning over and ruling the world. Yet if informed in the world's history, and candid, all must admit that earth's government has not been, nor is it yet, a rule of righteousness such as the prophets predicted of the reign of Christ (Isa. 32:1) On the contrary, it is manifest that the kingdoms of this world are all under the power, and subject to the manipulations of the invisible "prince of this world," Satan, who takes advantage of the darkness of human ignorance, superstition and depravity to rule men through their passions and prejudices.

Humanity has indeed made some noble efforts at self government, but the unseen and unrecognised powers of darkness have been more than a match for its efforts, and have succeeded in keeping in power a majority who are not lovers of righteousness. Nor can we hope for better than present results so long as selfishness is the rule of action.

People naturally wonder that God has not long since exerted His great power ( His Kingdom power and authority) to suppress sin and to lift mankind out of its present state of ignorance, superstition, grovelling depravity, disease and death. But they reason that God's future dealings should be judged by the past, and since six thousand years have passed without such an interposition, they think we cannot expect such a rule or Kingdom in the future, believing that all things must continue as they now are, and have been from the foundation of the world.-2 Pet. 3:4.

But what reply can be made to this objection? To answer: It can be show that the Scriptures teach that God has not only promised such a Kingdom for the purpose of blessing the world, but that He also foretold the long period intervening, in which evil has been permitted. They also show good and sufficient reasons for the six thousand years' delay. This, clearly seen, should remove every obstacle to belief in the promised Millennial Kingdom. Yet, in examining the reasons for the delay of the reign of righteousness, let us not forget that it is only as measured by the shortness of the present life that six thousand years seem long. With God, "A thousand years are but as yesterday."-Psa. 90:4.

### **THE CALL OF THE CHURCH**

The long delay and its purposes are clearly marked in the Scriptures. Over four thousand years after the first promise of deliverance, the redemption was accomplished. Some two thousand more fill the measure of the Gospel age, for the selection and development of the Gospel church. The whole long six thousand years were designed to give the race a necessary experience with the dreadful effects of sin, its exceeding sinfulness, and the firmness of that justice which will by no means clear the guilty violators of God's just and holy law - an experience which will be of inestimable value to all; and to all eternity. By contrast, it will lead to such an appreciation of righteousness, during Christ's Millennial reign, as to make it, when realised, what the prophet predicted - "The desire of all nations."

The delay, from the time of the Calvary-redemption, to the Millennial age, while it served this purpose to the world, served also and particularly a further purpose - the development of the Church, a "little flock" of believers in and followers of Christ, sharers of His reproach in the present time, and thereby chosen and counted worthy to share His spiritual kingdom and glory and His Millennial work - to reign with Him as joint-heirs of the promised kingdom of God for the blessing of all the families of the earth.-Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:16, 29.

The selection of this company, as individuals, has been in process during the entire Gospel age now closing, though, as a class, they were foreknown from the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:4) That is, God predetermined to exalt to this kingdom honour and restitution work a certain class, each of whom should meet predetermined conditions; and the Gospel age of some two thousand years was appointed as the time for developing, testing and selecting the individuals who should make up that class. The election of these individuals is not arbitrary, but according to fitness; the qualifications being, first, justification by faith in Christ; then meekness and devotedness to God's service, at the cost of self-sacrifice, even unto death. Many (justified believers) were "called" or invited to share these kingdom honours, but only those, a faithful few, will be selected or chosen. These are they who "are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14)

During the Millennial age, Christ's power will be exercised to prevent deceptions, to clear away ignorance, to strengthen the weak and to lead and restore to sight those now blinded by the god of this world. (2 Cor. 4:4) A thousand enticements to sin which appeal specially to the depraved appetites of the fallen race now, will not be tolerated when the new, heavenly rule is established. But the Gospel church - the kingdom class - is called and tested during this age, while evil is permitted to hold sway, in order that their testing may be like that of gold tried in the fire. This company will be complete when the present age ends, and the control of earth will then be entrusted to them, under and in co-operation with the Lord Jesus, then the King of Kings.-1 Cor. 6:2.

### **LOOKING FOR THE KINGDOM**

No student of the Bible can have overlooked the fact that the constant theme of our Lord and His apostles was the coming kingdom of God. The Jewish people, as a nation, had for centuries expected Messiah's coming to be the ruler of the world; and they naturally expected that as He was to come of their nation they would be His soldiers, co-workers, and joint-heirs in that kingdom. They knew themselves to be the natural seed of Abraham, and inferred that they were indispensable to God's plan. They saw not that spiritual children of God, of the faith and loyalty of Abraham were meant.

The real greatness of the promised kingdom and its work of blessing was not appreciated by Israel; they expected a kingdom similar to the kingdoms of this world; that Messiah, as a fleshly being of the seed of Abraham, would establish His Kingdom at Jerusalem, and that his glory would be the earthly glory of purple, and fine linen, and gold, and silver, and the usual accompaniments of earthly royalty. Their pride and ambition longed for the time when this promised King should exalt Himself above the Caesars, and exalt them above all the nations of the earth. Hence their rejection of Him who came humbly, born in a manger, with no assumption of titles, or earthly honours, or influence, or even friends; and yet came proclaiming the kingdom of heaven at hand and Himself the promised King.

So thoroughly impressed upon the Jewish mind was the thought that Messiah's coming meant the establishment of a kingdom of righteousness, that several times the "common people" would have taken Christ by force to make Him king; but He withdrew that their ardour might cool, knowing that all those who shouted "Hosanna to the Son (and heir) of David" were not of those whom the Father designed should be the joint-heirs with Him of that kingdom. He knew, too, that the Father's time for His exaltation to power had not yet come, and that first He must die to purchase those whom He was afterward to reign over - to whom he might therefore restore the original blessings and favours lost to all through Adam's failure.-Rom. 5:12-19.

Like others, the twelve apostles held this hope of the kingdom and believed Christ to be the promised Messiah, the King of kings. Our Lord Jesus, so far from ever contradicting their ideas, always encouraged them, and told them that they should yet sit with Him in His throne. But He explained that first He must suffer many things and be rejected of that generation (people), even as it had been written in the prophets, "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead;" Also he said to them: O, slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; was it not needful for Messiah to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?- Luke 24:25,26.

### **THE NOBLEMAN'S RETURN**

One of our Lord's parables, given just before His crucifixion, was for the very purpose of teaching His apostles that the expected kingdom would be deferred until His second coming. It is introduced thus: "And He spoke this parable unto them because they thought that the Kingdom of God would be manifested immediately." (Luke 19:11,27.) That parable represents the Gospel age as the period in which Christ, "the Nobleman," went "into a far country" (heaven) to receive for Himself a kingdom and to be invested with

authority. The parable also shows that during the absence of the Nobleman, the opponents of His rule are in the majority and hold sway; they even declare that they do not desire Him to come and establish His kingdom, preferring to be let alone as they are- “They sent an embassy after him, saying, We do not desire this man’s rule.”

The parable shows too, the proper attitude of those who love the Nobleman. To His servants He entrusted certain talents - here represented as ten pounds, all of which could, during His absence, be utilised in His service - saying to them, “Trade herewith till I come.” (R.V.) Obedient to this command, they are to use their various talents to forward the interests of His coming kingdom. And finally, the parable shows that the Nobleman will surely return with full power, and that He will use it to reward, with a share in the kingdom, those faithful to Him, and to destroy all opposed to His rule of righteousness. Thank God, there is good reason to believe that many now enemies to the King of kings will not remain such when present misconceptions are cured by the increased knowledge of the King’s character, plan and kingdom, then to be afforded to all, for which we pray, “Thy kingdom come!”

### **THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS**

When Christ’s Kingdom has come, it will indeed be “the desire of all nations.” It will be just what all men need. At first it will rule with a rod of iron, dashing the now tottering kingdoms of this world in pieces like a potter’s vessel (Psa. 2:9), breaking up civil, social and religious systems of tyranny and oppression, putting down all authority and power opposed to it, humbling the proud and high-minded, and finally teaching all the world to be still and know that the Lord’s Anointed has taken the dominion. (Psa. 46:10.) Then the blessing of His peaceful reign will begin to be experienced. Truth and equity will be established on a sure and permanent footing; “justice will be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet (Isa. 28:17); and the great restitution work will progress grandly to its glorious consummation. There will be sweeping moral reforms, great educational and philanthropic enterprises, wonderful cures from every disease and deformity, mental and physical. There will be awakenings also from death, and a grand reorganisation of society under the new order of the Kingdom of God. All the world’s bitter experience during the 6000 years past will prove valuable lessons on the exceeding sinfulness of sin; helping mankind to appreciate the new rule of righteousness, and to live in everlasting conformity to the perfect will of God, and thus to accept God’s gift of everlasting life, designed for all who will receive it on His conditions of love and loyalty and obedience to Him. Then, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”-Rev. 22:17.

Such being the grand object of our Lord’s return and the establishment of His Kingdom, we believe with the prophet, that it will be “The desire of all nations;” and with the apostle that the earnest expectation of the creature longs, though ignorantly, for the coming revelation of the sons of God -the overcoming Church exalted with her Lord.

### **THE CHURCH’S HOPE**

A clearer knowledge of the world’s hope should and does increase the Church’s appreciation of God’s loving arrangement for His creatures. It adds new lustre to the Church’s hope when we realise that the glorious object of the call and discipline of the Church in this Gospel age is for the development of characters which, being proved loyal to God and to righteousness and truth, will be associated with Christ, in the Messianic age now dawning, in the great and grand work of uplifting whosoever will of mankind from ignorance and sin and degradation to God’s likeness and favour and love. The apostle declares “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself.” (1 John 3:3.) It is a hope that helps onward to God and holiness.

### ***“Think it Not Strange”***

Think it not strange, beloved,  
When fiercely burns the fiery flame!  
Think it not strange, but praise His name,  
Who counts you worthy to partake  
Of painful sufferings for His sake.  
Nor think it strange  
When loved ones scornful from you turn,  
The truth reject, the message spurn;  
Consider Him who thus endured,  
And immortality secured!  
Think it not strange, beloved,

If sometimes every door seems closed,  
And all your efforts be opposed,  
But calmly wait in patience till  
The Master shall reveal His will.

Nor think it strange  
When darker grows the "narrow way",  
Press on, your Master soon shall say,  
Enough, My child, you have well done,  
Come, enter in, the prize is won!

## **FAITHFUL BRANCHES OF THE TRUE VINE**

*"I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."*  
John 15:5.

Beautiful indeed are the diversified illustrations of Christian life and experience made use of by our Lord in His wonderful words of life. To Him many things in nature were fitting symbols of God's designs in the higher realms of His purposes - the natural law finding a larger expression in the spiritual world. The things not seen were thus brought within the scope of our comprehension by the things which are seen. Hence "the Kingdom of heaven" in some of its many aspects, is likened unto a net, a field, a lost treasure, a wandering sheep. Each illustration employed contains its own particular lesson, and all combined furnish us with a diverse picture of the works of God. What a wide field for study is thus opened up to us, in which the man of God may find "doctrine," "reproof," "correction," and "instruction in righteousness."

The grapevine, as used in the chapter from which our text is taken, is full of significance. Here, we have the real facts of Christian experience clearly set forth. What better illustration could be used to teach so many of these important facts than the vine and its branches. The need of a complete unity with the only possible source of life and fruitfulness is clearly portrayed. The vine is ever saying to its numerous branches, "Without me ye can do nothing." Its very nature and characteristics proclaim its very special need of the care of a husbandman, without whom its ultimate end must be destruction as a useless cumberer of the ground.

In its creation the vine and branches were designed to attain marvellous ends, producing, it is claimed, one of the most perfect fruits found in the earth, containing an unusually large amount of the important elements needed in the human body. But to attain this great end the most drastic treatment in the way of pruning and training was foreordained to be its salvation. These are some of the lessons Jesus would teach us by this illustration. The ultimate objective is "much fruit," if we are branches in Him as the Vine, and separation from Him will eventually mean fruitlessness. This abundant fruitage He assures us is within the bounds of possibility for all who truly abide in Him.

It is not difficult to understand that a branch must derive its life from the vine upon which and out of which it grows. The life-giving juices which the vine draws from the earth giving it life and leaves, must run out into the branches also. A branch can not bear even leaves unless its unity with the vine is real, "no more can ye," says Jesus, unless "Ye abide in me." Until there is on the part of the Christian a real union of heart and life with Christ the Vine, there can be nothing, no true faith, no real joy or experience in spiritual things, no true delight in the Word of God, and no intimate communion with God; therefore nothing of the evidences of eternal life will be found. This law in nature and in grace is immutable; hence the importance of the lesson before us.

### **PARTAKERS OF THE VINE**

But if the illustration emphasises the fact that "much fruit" must be found on each branch as evidence of its continued place in the vine, there is nevertheless abundant assurance given that no impossibility is demanded. The Husbandman is One thoroughly competent to produce such an abundant fruitage, for He can never fail in His undertakings, and the Vine is a source of inexhaustible supply, never diminished however much the branches may draw the vitality needed to produce "much fruit." The giving out of this vitality does not impoverish Him, nor withholding make Him richer.

The branches can never overdraw the strength of the One who has said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." On the contrary, He so desires us to be strong, vigorous, fruitful branches that He urges us to partake freely of the life He so delights to impart. As God in ancient days has said to his people, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," so Jesus is ever saying to His followers, "Open thy heart and life wide to me, and I will fill it with "much fruit" whereby God will be glorified." He is able "to make all grace abound toward you," says the Apostle, "that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work." (2 Cor. 9:8.) Truly, then, if we would bear much fruit to His praise,

“what more can he say than to us he has said” to assure us that in us and for us “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”-Eph. 3:20.

Our Lord’s illustration teaches most certainly that the branch partakes very definitely of the vine on which and out of which it grows. Its origin is in the vine, and it conforms strictly to God’s law of creation - every “fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind.” The vine feeds the branch with the same nourishment with which it is itself sustained. Thus the branch bears an identical likeness to its parent vine. Is there on the vine a peculiar kind of bark and form of leaf, so is there on the branch. There is the same kind of wood fibre, the same colour and texture, the same juices flowing through all. The vine imparts life to the branch and is at the same time reproducing itself in that branch, thus emphatically making it a partaker of its own nature. It is the simple principle of like producing like.

### **CHRIST, THE TRUE VINE**

Christ is indeed the true vine, and his members unquestionably should partake of His nature. When He imparts to us a new spiritual life, does He not promise to thereby give us of His own characteristics? Christ’s people, members of His body should be Christlike, for “if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his.” And what are some of these outstanding characteristics, which if manifested in us give evidence of our being in the relation of branches to the vine? For answer, the Apostle would say, “We have the mind of Christ,” and again, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” (1 Cor.2:16, Phil. 2:5)

To have the mind of Christ would surely, be to have the spirit or disposition of Christ. It would therefore mean Christ living in us, controlling our lives, possessing our hearts, and reproducing His likeness, His nature in us. Thus the promises embraced in Peter’s statement would include promises pertaining to this life in its daily round of work and warfare, as well as such promises which in their very nature cannot be fulfilled until after the second veil is passed. Meeting the conditions underlying all those promises will little by little result to us in increasing measures of the spirit or disposition of Christ.

### **NEW LIFE**

Possessing the life of Christ in our hearts will reveal that new springs of action are operating in us. New tastes and desires are kindled in our hearts and we become more and more copies of God’s dear Son. Is there in Christ a delight in holiness? So is there in the true Christian a consuming desire to be holy as God is holy. Is there in Christ a spirit of love? So is there in the Christian; his life will reflect that love in word and deed if he be really in Christ. Is there in Christ a spirit of meekness? So will there be in His disciple the adorning of a meek and quiet spirit. Is there in Christ a great desire for the salvation and blessing of others? So there will be in the disciple; for contact with Jesus must bring us into perfect accord with His spirit of love and consideration for others. Is there in Christ a desire for intimate communion with God? So is there in the true disciple; for such true union with Christ begets an ever increasing longing for close communion with the Father. Is there in Christ a definite hatred of sin? So is there in the Christian united to Him; for it is impossible to be in union with Christ and at the same time in connivance with sin.

Thus the new life which the Vine imparts to us and which constitutes one a Christian, is a life begotten of God, and therefore must of necessity bear the nature of Christ. God begets children in his own likeness. No amount of grace would make a Christian omnipotent or omniscient; yet grace will nevertheless make us like Christ. The Christian who really abides in Christ, and draws his life from Christ, as a branch from the vine, may surely expect to have a Christlike love, a Christlike patience, a Christlike meekness, a Christlike compassion, and a Christlike delight in all the will of God. As a branch of the true vine, he will assuredly resemble Christ.

### **FEEDING ON THE VINE**

The more we feed on Christ the more of His character we possess. The branch feeds upon the vine always. In a sense, and an important sense, we must likewise feed on Christ, for so He has said, “I am the living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” And again, “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.”-John 6:51, 57.

Surely the branch no more feeds upon the vine, than does the believer on Christ. And how may we feed upon Christ? We feed upon him in our faith appropriation of His redemptive work on our behalf. “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,” and we feast upon him as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. The great doctrines of the cross of Christ are food to the Christian alive to spiritual things. In the cross of Christ he glories. To the cross he clings, and to its foot he yearns to bring all who need its saving power. We feed upon Christ as we ponder over and personally assimilate His words of life. And in this we may properly include all Scripture.

The doctrines and the promises alike of God’s word cheer and strengthen the Christian’s heart. Did David

not have this in his mind when he said, "O how I love thy law: it is my meditation all the day." And had not the poet been feeding on Christ in this way when he wrote for saints to sing:

How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said?  
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled.

Have not saints throughout the Age, when their faith needed to be nourished and strengthened, turned away from men, and found cheer and comfort, and faith to endure, in the Saviour's own words. Over and over again no voice but His could comfort, none other could say, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." And as the Spirit has brought to remembrance whatsoever things he hath spoken, the green pastures and quiet waters have brought peace and joy.

We feed upon Christ at the throne of heavenly grace. Through Him alone we have access to God, therefore in our prayer life we are but appropriating the things freely given us by God through Christ. And what a feast this is! When we come thus, ransomed by his precious blood, we come into communion with God our Father, and with Jesus our beloved Head, and there we rise above the world into the realm of that which is pure and holy, and there hold converse with Father and Son in intimate fellowship. In this way we draw from the true Vine spiritual food for our spiritual life. And what blessings attend the faithful use of this means of approaching strength from the vine.

When we take into our hands the emblems of a suffering Saviour, Gethsemane and Calvary are brought again to view. The compassion of our dying Lord is then well calculated to excite our love and gratitude, and to awaken in our hearts resolutions to live a life wholly dedicated to Him who loved us so. That scene of agony which bought us from death, and opened up to us such inestimable privileges as our "great salvation" makes possible to us in this day of exceptional grace, surely must bestir us to an overwhelming gratitude, and cause us to cry out, "I will take the cup of salvation" and henceforth live wholly for Him who loved me so. Let Him impart to me His "life more abundant."

Surely in all these things we feed upon Christ. And as we thus feed upon Him, we partake more and more of His image, and thus manifest to others more and more of His likeness.

### **BRINGING FORTH FRUIT**

How important, then, is the question, How much of the character of Christ do we really possess? - especially if we have enjoyed years of this close relationship to Christ, having, as we have surely had, this privilege of drawing life and vitality from the inexhaustible Vine. How very much of likeness we ought now to bear to the Vine of which we have been the branches these many years. Certainly we ought to possess unmistakable likeness to Christ now, if the relationship has been all that it should have been.

If some one should give us a branch taken from a grapevine and ask us from what it had been taken, we would have no difficulty in deciding whence it came. There would be the leaves, the wood and the fruit, all of which would remind us at once of the vine on which it grew. So the life and character of the Christian should remind others of Christ. If we desire to draw others to Him, we must show them the attractions of Christ. As His followers we should become more and more partakers of His nature or character and thus show that we have been with Him and learned of Him. Our own sinful nature must be repressed, and the character of Christ increasingly exhibited in our lives. Being the professed people of God, we can in this way show to others something of the love and beauty of our adorable Redeemer.

By abiding in Christ, and drawing from Him large supplies of spiritual life, we, will increase in those graces of which He is the source, increase in our resemblance of Him, will exhibit more of His character, and thus verify His own precious words of promise. "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

(“The Herald”)

### **O, Soul of Mine**

O, soul of mine, be calm, be still,  
Submit thyself to God;  
In all thy ways yield to His will,  
Nor faint beneath the rod.  
O, soul of mine, like potter's clay  
Within the Master's hand,  
O let Him mould thee day by day,

Till faultless thou shalt stand.  
O, soul of mine, have faith, believe,  
Nor count the cost of strife,  
Fight on, faint not, thou shalt receive  
At last the Crown of Life.

(Alice M Ripper)

## HE GIVETH QUIETNESS

When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" Who but He, the 'God of all comfort,' can give quietness in the midst of tumults which rise upon the soul like sudden storms upon the sea? Like ocean mariners in peril, we cry unto Him, and He bringeth us to the desired haven - blessed haven - of quietness and peace in God.

What is the cry which brings this answer of peace? It is not a prayer that all occasion for disturbance shall be removed, for it is not always the divine will to bring peace to the human spirit in that way; it is not always the best way. But there is a cry which never fails to bring the quietness in which none can 'make trouble.' It is a prayer for sweet, trustful, loving acquiescence in the will of God.

'May thy will, not mine, be done;  
May thy will and mine be one;  
Peace I ask - but peace must be;  
Lord, in being one with Thee.'

What is it which disturbs my spirit? Is it anxiety about my work, my finances, my reputation, my friends? Suppose my Father in heaven should hear my prayer and remove every apparent cause for unrest in regard to one or all of these matters to-day. That would not give settled peace, for in a life so full of uncertainties as this, new occasions of anxiety would probably arise tomorrow.

But if I say, 'Lord, let each one of these matters which concern my peace of mind so closely be under Thy control; order all entirely according to Thy will, for Thou art my Father and my Friend; Thy will is that Thy children should have the very best in all things; and Thou knowest what is best for me,' what a place of rest is that! How the sense of too heavy responsibility rolls off; how the distracting care is shifted from the heart too weak to bear it to the strong shoulder upon which the government of all things rightfully and easily rests.

If this experience of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price, is not realised at once, we must not be discouraged. It is not only of a great price as to value, but it often costs a great price to gain it.

It follows successive battles, often repeated self surrender, and multiplied trials in which the unfailing care and love of God have been clearly manifested. We were watching the sea waters under the north-east wind; how disturbed and dark they were! Suddenly, with a fierceness that seemed cruel, the rain fell in torrents, and the unresisting waters grew perfectly calm as under an overwhelming surprise. When the storm had passed, the setting sun shone gloriously, and the quiet waters were beautiful in the colours of rose and gold.

Nature has its spiritual correspondences. Surprise comes upon surprise, sudden, overwhelming. The spirit which once tossed restlessly in chafing winds of lesser trials sinks in sweet submission under heavier griefs. We learn that even in the storm God was there, and at last His conscious love, His abiding presence, His unvarying peace - the beauty of Godlikeness - glorify the character and life. - Selected.