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The Christian's Royal Inheritance.

BY REV. GEORGE J. DOWELL.

Text—"Therefore let no man glory in men: for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3: 21-23.

How great is this word *all*! It is as high as heaven, as deep as hell, as broad as the universe of God.

When God said to Abraham, "Lift up thine eyes and look northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever," that was a great grant. When he said to him further, "I will make thy descendants to multiply as the stars as heaven for multitude," the promise was greatly magnified. When Zaccheus stood before the blessed Saviour, and said, "Behold, Lord, I give half of my goods to feed the poor, and if I have wronged any man, I restore unto him fourfold," that was a noble resolution. When Herod promised the dancing damsel that he would give her anything she might ask of him, even to the half of his kingdom, it was a great promise, because he was rich. But all these promises sink into the utmost insignificance when we compare them with the inheritance contained in the text—"All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

1st. It becomes us to consider for awhile some of the things which belong to the christian:

Abraham, with his great faith; Moses, with his meekness; Job, with his patience; David, with his sweet songs of Zion; Solomon, with his proverbs of wisdom; Paul, with his deep learning, indefatigable labors, toils and sufferings; Apollos, with his burning eloquence; Peter, with his sternness, inflexibility and fixedness of purpose; and John, the beloved disciple, leaning upon the breast of Jesus, whose character, life, influence, death and resurrection, all are written for our instruction, encouragement and guidance in holy and divine things and to make us better, wiser and happier here and hereafter. Let us study these characters, improve our minds and hearts by profiting where they excelled in excellence and virtue, and thus grow to higher attainments and perfection in christian life.

2d. The world belongs to the christian. This world upon which we live; which Satan claimed as his, when the old deceiver did not own a single foot of it. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." This world then, humble follower of the Lord Jesus, belongs to you. It is yours to enjoy, to improve, to beautify, to adorn. Your Father has given it to you—with all its majestic forests, its boundless plains, its fertile fields, its silvery lakes, its babbling brooks, its meandering streams, its beautiful rivers, its grand old oceans, its rugged hills, its towering mountains, grand and sublime as they are, lift up their hoary heads and bathe them in the azure sky.

Use this world, but do not abuse it. Cut down these forests if you will, and with the timbers you take therefrom, build your ships with which to sail the briny deep and transport the goods from one country to another, and thus carry on the commerce of the world. Plow the land and till the soil, until its surface, tickled by implements of husbandry, shall laugh into a harvest that shall feed all flesh. Dig down the hills, throw up high places in the valleys, throw bridges across the rivers, bore holes through the mountains, and thread the country like network from town to town, and city to city, till iron bands of steel and ropes of wire shall unite the world and bring distant lands together. Sink shafts into the bowels of the earth, extract her ores of iron, silver, gold and valuable metals. Go down into the deep, and there fill your commissaries with the flesh and oil of the inhabitants which dwell beneath the white-capped waves of old ocean, and get all the good out of earth you can, and if you use this world as not abusing it, God don't care, for the world is yours.

3d. The Bible is yours. What would we

do without this blessed book! It is to us poor mortal souls as a book of directions. When a manufacturer constructs a machine, he also constructs and publishes a book which tells how to run and manage it. We are as machines wound up by God the great Manufacturer, which are self-propelling; and God puts into our hands the blessed Bible, which tells us to preserve self government and how to do it. As a chart to the navigator, as a compass to the sailor who travels unknown seas, as a lamp to the feet of him who travels in the dark, so the Bible is to us. Says one: "Some are always looking for the hard and mysterious things in the Bible, but I am not like they. I read the precious word like I eat fish. I eat the flesh and lay the bones aside. Some are always trying to eat the bones and never seem to relish the meat. I have the powers of digestion only to enjoy the meat. I shall in the future have the ability to digest the bones, till then I'll be content." "I love the Bible," said an old lady, "because it is God's holy word. It is the book that condemned me, and the book that acquitted me, the book that showed me I was a sinner, and the book that led me to the Saviour."

I love the Bible as a book of biography. It deals with the ideas and the conduct of men. And it is true biography. It does not show the true and leave out the false. It shows the good and the bad side of men. It shows them all around from every phase and every standpoint. All biographies, more or less, flatter—not so this. I take up this Bible and I read of Abraham, the man of great faith, the father of the faithful. Well, I say, "What wonderful faith this man had!" I think of it, I admire it. I then think of how little faith I possess, and then I say, "Can I ever attain to such wonderful faith?" My heart sinks as I remember how weak I am, how many times I am brought to doubt and to fear lest I be deceived. I read on, and I find where even Abraham dissembled, where even he hesitated and faltered, and tried to deceive—and then I am encouraged—not because I am glad that Abraham sinned, but that human nature is the same to-day it was in the days of Abraham.

I read of the patience of Job. Well I say, "I never can attain to such a degree of patience." I read on, and I remember my impatience, and how easily I sometimes lose my self-control. Well, I say, "I never can govern my temper, and control my feelings as he." Ah! as I discover that this patient man grew impatient, lost his temper and his patience, cursed the day that he was born, the mother who brought him into the world, the sun which gave light upon that occasion, I am encouraged. Not, that I am glad that Job sinned, but that human nature has always been the same, and he who was forgiven gives me encouragement that if I go to God as he did, I may be forgiven too.

As I read of David, the man after God's own heart, I say, "I never can attain to such goodness." But as I read of the wickedness he committed in taking Uriah's wife, and having her husband put to death, I say, "Well, God will forgive me if I only put my trust in him." And so I read of imperfection in Paul, Apollos and Cephas, and though the people were divided in their estimation of them—some saying, "I am for Paul," others "I am for Apollos," and others "I am for Cephas"—Paul asks the question, "Is Christ divided?" and then I seem to hear the Apostle say to them, "No, no, but all things are yours," &c.

4th. Life is yours. You see I have put the Bible before life, because life without the Bible would be a complete failure. Go back to the days of ancient Greece or Rome, and as you behold the gross ignorance, the beastly sensuality, the licentiousness and murders that existed everywhere, as victims reeking in their own blood stained the altars of their bloody gods; as I behold the purity and virtue of vigorous men and beautiful women trodden under the heel of public opinion as an unholy thing; when I see lewdness and debauchery sold at a premium, I feel that human life without the Bible were a ten thousand fold greater curse than blessing.

It is a great responsibility to live. To be in this world and required to keep the moral law. To possess life with all its possibilities and all its responsibilities. To be the children and wards of God, and yet the custodians of our own bodies. To be the architects of our own success or failure. The creators of our own happiness or misery. Life does not consist in mere existence, the accumulation of wealth, the gratification of inordinate desires, or the acquisition of public esteem; but in the establishing of character, the exercise of faith, the performance of good works, and development in spiritual growth—expansion in divine life. My brother, see that you live right. Make Christ your model. A good name is better than precious ointment, more fragrant and more diffusive, better than great riches, more desirable and more enduring.

5th. The church is yours—with all her deeds of glory, her sufferings, her trials, her triumphs or defeat. Whatever of good she has done in the past, or may do in the future, her toils, her sacrifices, her prayers, her tears, her blood, her consecrated talents of head, heart and wealth, all belong to the christian as a part of his inheritance.

What are you doing for your church? Are you helping it or are you hindering it? Are you helping it to be better, or are you helping it to be worse than its average sister? Are you helping to purge it of drones, hyp-

ocrites and wrong doers? Are you cultivating and fostering in it a spirit of charity, gentleness and love? Are you stirring its heart with the spirit of missions, the wail of the orphan, and the cry of the needy? Do you recognize the church as the body of Christ, and do you see that none of the members suffer? Do you remember he died for his church, the bride, the Lamb's wife? God grant you may love the church as Christ loved it. Let every christian learn the song and sing it out of a full heart:

"I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode;
The church our blessed Redeemer saved,
With his own precious blood."

And let him remember her at a throne of grace.

"For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my toils and cares be given,
Till toils and cares shall end."

Glorious old church, fight on, struggle on, till the last son of Adam shall be redeemed; till Zion shall resound with the loud hosannas of those who shall sing the praises of their Lord, as they shall come up from the east and the west, the north and the south, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

6th. Afflictions are yours. Shall the christian pass through the world and have no sympathy with its sufferers? No. God intends they, too, who love him may be made perfect through suffering. Abraham, Job, Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, Peter, and Christ tasted, yea, drank of the cup, and we are no better than they. Affliction is God's refining pot, and it is meet that we should pass through it, that the dross may be consumed and the pure gold may be all the more precious and brighter by the fierce contact.

Two painters were frescoing a wall. One stepped back from the wall to the edge of the scaffold to view his work. He was so intent with what he had succeeded in accomplishing that he was just ready to step off backward. His fellow-workman, seeing his immediate danger, seized his brush and daubed the paint upon his work, while thus he was engaged in admiring it. Filled with anger, he rushed forward and cried out with flushed cheek and blood in his eye, "Why did you spoil my work?" "To save your life," was the reply, and then the man was satisfied. Ofttimes, as we are viewing the work of our own hands, does our Heavenly Father see we are so much engaged in it that we neglect the proper observance of those laws which are necessary for the preservation of our own spiritual lives, and as we thus idolize self, he comes and with the brush of affliction dashes destruction over our premeditated follies, and we may cry out with bitter disappointment until we realize that he did so to save our lives, and then we rejoice that our lives have been most mercifully preserved even if our work has been lost.

As the shepherd in Switzerland when his flocks have eaten the grass in the valleys so low that there is no longer good grazing, tries by various means to get them up the mountain side; when he can not toll them by calling or feeding, sets his dogs upon them to frighten them up, but to no avail; then, as a last resort, takes a little lamb in his arms and climbing over the rough and rugged places to a certain distance desired, holds out the lamb while it bleats, and thus attracts the attention of the mother sheep, which begins the ascent, followed by another and another, until the whole flock has left the closely-nipped grass, and now wades among that which has heretofore been uncropped, and which is sweet and luxuriant, and now the whole flock is in greener pastures, and are all again united and together; so God sometimes by affliction takes the little lamb, the infant babe, from its mother's breast and transplants it into the green pastures of heaven, where the mother looks by faith, and then the father is drawn, and another and another, until all the family are saved, one by one, never more to return to these low grounds of sorrow, but to enjoy the green pastures and to lie down by the still waters of heaven forever.

"Afflictions, though they seem severe,
Are oft in mercy sent."

7th. Death is yours—with all its destructive tendencies. It tears down this house which God has built and lays its different members low in the dust. It makes the body, once so young and spry and beautiful, lie in the dark and narrow tomb. It stops the plow in its unfinished furrow. It stops the workman and leaves the house to decay ere it is completed. It scatters household joys and frustrates our hopes and plans and purposes. It regards not our bitter sighs, heeds not our groans, and cares not for our crying. And yet death is given us of the Lord. He has changed death so that it is not now what it used to be. Once it was our enemy, but now it is our friend. Once he was to be greatly dreaded, but now he is to the christian a welcome messenger. He is a ferryman who comes to take us across the river. He is a servant sent to tell us the Master hath invited us to dine with the King. It is the voice of God saying to us,

"Servant of God, well done,
Rest from thy fond employ;
The battle's fought, the victory's won,
Enter the Master's joy."

Jesus ran his arm down Death's throat and jerked out his sting. So it does not have the same power over the body now that it used to have. Jesus laid down in the grave, and when he left it sup-

plied as a dormitory, so that the christian may lie there and remain.

"Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep,
From which none ever wakes to weep;
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes."

8th. The resurrection is yours. The christian need not fear the grave, now since Jesus has risen from it. For awhile he may lie there, but he need not be afraid, for Jesus hath promised to be with him. He may take the sheet left there by Christ and lie down in it. We may take the napkin left there by the Saviour and wipe every tear from his eyes. The resurrection is a part of the christian's inheritance. "Because I live," says Christ, "ye shall live also." The seed may be planted, but a new body shall be given it in the resurrection. The body may die, but like the grass, it shall spring up again into newness of life and beauty. As the worm seems to die and then lives in the butterfly, so our bodies shall fade and die apparently, but in us are the elements of life which cannot decay, but which shall take on different forms of existence in the resurrection state.

The body, sown in weakness, shall be raised in power; sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body; sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, it shall be raised in glory. The battle-scarred and dusty soiled veteran shall be newly uniformed and promoted by the resurrection. The scattered family shall there be reunited. We shall know each other. We shall forever dwell together without the thought of parting.

"There shall we see and bear and know,
All we desired or wished below;
And every power find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy."

9th. Heaven is yours. The land that is fairer than day, where the sun never sets, the moon never wanes, where the inhabitants know nothing of sickness, sorrow nor death. Where every employment is a blessing; every word a benediction; every movement promoting that growth which rejuvenates and makes and perpetuates our youth; a state of felicity; a place of happiness; a land of plenty and a home of peace and rest. We may speak of its pearly gates, its golden streets, its river of life clear as crystal proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. But no conception can approach it, for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of the glorious things which God has in reservation for his children. Like Sheba's queen when she had come from the remotest parts of the earth to see and hear Solomon, we will when we see the beauties and glories of heaven, exclaim, "The half has never been told." This is in part the christian's royal possession.

Now in conclusion:

10th. Upon what condition are all things yours? If ye are Christ's. Having Christ, we possess everything. Without Christ, we are nothing. With Christ, we are rich; without Christ, we are poor, very poor. Are you Christ's? If so, I congratulate you—because you are his; because you have turned your back upon sin and sinful things; like Moses, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the children of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, you have like him chosen the wealth of heaven in preference to those of earth; the service of God rather than the service of the wicked one; and upon this condition I congratulate you. "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ's is God's."

The Conversion of Zaccheus

It is useless to talk about loving Jesus Christ and trusting him, and having the sweet assurance of forgiveness, and a glorious hope of heaven, unless these have made you break off your bad habits of whatsoever sort they may be, and cast them behind your backs. Strong emotion, sweet deep feeling, assured confidence in the sense of forgiveness and the hope of heaven, are all very well. Let us see your faith by your works; and of these works the chief is—behold the evil that I did I do it no more; "Behold! Lord! the half of my goods I give to the poor." There was a young ruler who could not make up his mind to part with wealth to follow Christ. Zaccheus has so completely made up his mind to follow Christ that he does not need to be bidden to give up his worldly goods. The half given to the poor, and four-fold restoration to those whom he had wronged, would not leave much. How astonished Zaccheus would have been if anybody had said to him that morning, "Zaccheus! before this night falls you will be next door to a pauper; and you will be a happier man than you are now."

So, dear friends, like him, all of us may, if we will and if we need, make a sudden right-about-face that shall alter the complexion of our whole future. People tell us that sudden conversions are suspicious. So they may be in certain cases. But the moment when a man makes up his mind to change the direction in which his face is set will always be a moment, however long may be the hesitation, and the meditation, and the preparation that led up to it.—Rev. Alexander Macaren, D. D.

You are needed at church the most when you know there will be the fewest there.

"Things not in Hell."

We use this mode of argument to describe the severity of the punishment of the lost. The negative side shown will give us a clear notion of the affirmative. All places and things may be known by the qualities they have or those that they do not have.

Things not in hell are indeed very numerous, and so are those that are in that place equally many. Thousands of people think only of gay and pleasant society, where the splendor of fashion allures and youthful beauty charms, where all the talk is on themes of love, expressed in language of finest romance style, and their lives are dreamed to be like the grandest victors in novel fiction. Some delight in that company where only the chaste are found, and where all that tends to riotousness is excluded. Others strive for those who are conversant on high lines of knowledge, and nothing amuses them but this sort of things, mixed up glowing colors. But these are things not in hell. There will be no gaiety, no pleasure, no moral, and no beauty in that empire of misery. Here, we may find sympathizing friends when the hand of sickness comes, or when we are bowed down in common sorrow. Should we be swept into the vortex of poverty, or the strong arm of the law, hurry us away to the gloomy walls. Then, so soon as the calamity comes, some kind friend lends a helping hand or speaks a word of comfort. And the angel of hope never forsakes us, no matter how heavy the shower of tears, or how dark the prison walls. Some ray of grace divine shines away the mist of trouble. These are things not in hell, for there will be no friends, no comforters, no hope or mercy there. Truth or veracity, the foundation of confidence—as treacherous as the world is, there can be found in church, state and trade, a current of truth. There are men in every trade who will comply with their word and stick to their contracts. Some statesmen may safely be confided with the rights of the people. Some churchmen would go to the stake rather than deny the faith they profess. These are things not to be found in the world of woe; for there the father of lies will abide, and penal vengeance be evermore poured out on the faults. Love, the golden chain that binds mankind in common interests, or the silver cord which ties hearts together at the hyemal altar. Love entwines its silken threads about all our hearts and harmonizes a thousand would be discords. It keeps subdued untold powers of hate and revenge; it makes labor sweet, and is a strong opiate against pain. It has reared hospitals in the land of war, houses for the sick and homeless, and clothed the poor and fed the hungry. It is a boundless source of good. But love is a thing that will not be in the land of eternal woe. There will not be one cord of love in all that populous place, nor one spark of kindness left in one soul. Hope, the time antidote against despair, a sort of perpetual stimulant to our being. No matter how often our hopes are blighted, we hope on; it rises "Phoenix like." The day may be ever so stormy and the night dark and dreary, yet we hope for the light of morning and the calm, cloudless day. Let the long train of adversity come sweeping over us in its most devastating form, taking liberties, friends and relatives; yet hope will mount above its wake and look for a better day. Some one has said,

"Anxious hope! in thy sweet gardens grow
Wreaths for each toil, a charm for every woe."

But there will be no hope in hell. Peace is the good news from heaven, whose echo has never ceased and whose harmony was set by the minstrel angels. Peace hushed the long cries of Punic wars and dried a thousand tearful eyes. It stopped the flow of arterial blood and diminished the dying groans. In every age it has scattered the red clouds of national revenge and quieted the cannon thunders. Its balmy wing has stilled ecclesiastical rage and quashed the most exalting factions of church. The hearts that have been made glad, and the souls that have been rejoiced by peace, are past all human computation. Sad to say, there is no peace in the long home of the lost; no cessation of mourning or mitigation of pain. All people are striving for happiness, and the wise and good Father has provided it for us if we would but take it on the terms offered. He has given us the diversified landscapes variegated by every color pleasing to the eye. Rich vegetation, ranging from the magnificent historic oaks to the small polyanthus; flowers from the blooming trees down to the tiny daffodill; small rosaries of the mountains on to the blossoming plains of cactus, all designed for happiness. The air is often loaded with rich fragrance from the meadow; the music of the delicate feathery people pour forth in gladdening strains; even the marshes and quagmires at times put forward flora's nicest colors and anthers of charming melody to rejoice us here. But these are things not in the land of the banished, for there will be no objects giving pleasure to that abandoned multitude.

"In hell there'll be no beauty in design,
No splendors of grace divine;
There can no rest be found,
For all the time that eternity is bound."

H. C. STANBROOK.

Some people are always finding fault with nature for putting thorns on roses, always thank her for putting roses on thorns.