

Printed Pamphlets

“Conscience in the Light”

Luke 5:1-11

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together -- attracted, drawn by a common object, abundantly able now to win and claim and satisfy these worthless hearts of ours, even as He Himself is the perfect delight of His Father's heart.

There are two things *in connection* with being caught up -- we shall see Him, and we shall be like Him. Wonderful realities! What a consideration for us all; and yet how few of us that have our hearts thus under the power of these divine realities -- "We shall see Him as He is"! We are predestinated to this. (See Rom. 8:29.) Blessed invigorating hope to cheer the heart amid the trials and sorrows that intervene. Oh, when we look into that blessed face, how will not the heart find its abundant compensation for all its waiting and watching for Him!

"For ever to behold Him shine,
For evermore to call Him mine,
And see Him still before me;
For ever on His face to gaze,
And meet the full assembled rays,
While all His beauty He displays
To all the saints in glory."

But it is also said "we shall be like Him." This, too, is wonderful; we, so little like Him now, then to be perfectly like Him, and as we have borne the image of the earthy, to bear the image of the heavenly. How blessed to think that God has before Himself, in the One who adorns His throne in the heavens, the type, the pattern, the sample of what the fruit of the death of Jesus is to be. When Israel entered the land of promise, and reaped the harvest of Canaan, they were directed by Jehovah to bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of their harvest to the priest,

and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath" (*i.e.*, on the first day of the week) "the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day, when ye wave the sheaf, an he lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt-offering unto the Lord. And the meat-offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savor: and the drink-offering thereof shall be of wine, fourth part of an hin. And, ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self-same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, in all your dwellings. And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves, of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the first-fruits unto the Lord. And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish, the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt-offering unto the Lord, with their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savor unto the Lord. Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace-offerings. And the priest shall wave them with

the bread of the first-fruits, for a wave-offering before the Lord, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the Lord for the priest" (Lev. 23:11-20).

Now Christ risen from the dead on the morrow after the Sabbath, that is, on the first day of the week, is the great antitype of the sheaf of first-fruits; and the same relation which existed between *that* sheaf and the harvest of Canaan, exists likewise through grace between Christ and His own. Is it not blessed to think of this? His saints, His own, are the antitype of the new meat-offering. Observe how leaven was allowed in this. Because it was intended to represent the saints of God, they are the *fruit* of His death; as He said Himself, "If it die, it bringeth forth *much fruit*" (John 12:24).

When the blessed Lord walked as a man on earth, wonderful and beautiful as was His path, He walked therein absolutely alone. He was solitary in life, solitary in death. Truly we may say, "Of the people there were none with Him." His life of perfect obedience, precious as it was under the eye of God, never brought one soul to stand with Him where He Himself stood; but His death produced fruit. "If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." And in that bright day which is approaching, His saints, the fruit of His death, shall be perfectly like Himself. The attractive power of Christ at His coming is what we look for; we expect to be caught away, snatched away, as it were. How little, alas! are our souls under the formative power of such a hope.

It is interesting to observe the different ways in which the coming of the Lord is treated in Philippians and Thessalonians. In the former it is brought in at chapter 3, and is to the soul what home, suddenly breaking on the vision, is to the jaded, foot-sore traveler. He had pressed on amid heat, and dust, and fog, and suddenly, as it were, home greets him, and the satisfaction of the heart is expressed at meeting Christ Himself. But in Thessalonians there is energy and power of the Lord, suited to the weakness of His own, well as the finishing touch, so to speak, put upon the revelation of the truth through Paul. If this be reality, as assuredly it is, what kind of people ought we to be who profess to hold it as the hope of our hearts? The Lord grant, in His rich mercy that our conversation may be in heaven, from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Conscience in the Light"

(Luke 5:1-11)

I read those verses simply to suggest a subject for consideration, if the Lord should put it into the hearts of others to take it up; and that subject is, How the Conscience is really brought into the light of God's presence.

I suppose there are none of us who would question the importance of such a truth as the conscience in the light of the presence of God; because it makes little matter how extensive our knowledge of the things of God may be if the conscience is not right. Let me note one thing before I enter a little more into it, and I throw it out simply in the way of anxiety as to the subject, and that is the tendency of all our hearts to judge

of things from what is outside. I believe that herein consists a great deal of the deficiency of spiritual discrimination or judgment with respect to ourselves, or with respect to anything else whereon we may be called upon to discriminate or judge. When we look at things in the fruits, rather than the root, from which these fruits come, we are almost certain to err. It is only, I believe in my soul before God, as anything is seen in the light with God, where God is, in all the manifested light which His presence sheds upon it, that we have a proper and correct judgment, and understanding either of ourselves, as to motives or springs of action, or anything else of that character.

Let me illustrate it for a moment. Occupation of the heart with self, although there may be the greatest diligence in that respect, never gives the soul a sense of what it is. You see people occupied with wrong in themselves; but there is never a divine judgment as far as I see with respect to what is truly of God, through mere occupation of heart with evil. Take any person who goes through that process of constant occupation with the evil they find in themselves; they never have a correct judgment or divine intelligence, as to the nature of that evil, by simply looking at it. I do not question for a moment that the knowledge of oneself is acquired, if I may use the expression, through a process which entails a most painful exercise of that order; but I am not speaking exactly of that, I am speaking of the divine judgment we arrive at with reference to what is within, not by looking at the fruits that it produces outside. All outside may be commendable and unquestionable; but the entire root and spring of our whole moral well-being can alone be exposed in the light of God's presence, while perhaps there is no action at all that would lead you to form an unfavorable judgment concerning it. There was no action on the part of Peter, as narrated in the fifth chapter of Luke, which any one could reason from, as to the fact which God forced home upon his conscience in the light of His presence, that he was a sinful man. There was no outward blot; on the contrary, everything was externally favorable at the time to Peter. These outward actions were correct so far; but when he was brought into the very light of God's presence, because Jesus was God -- and that is exactly the point as it seems to me in the fifth chapter of Luke -- his conscience is divinely illuminated as to all that he was in himself; and he gives the verdict which that light created in his heart, "I am a sinful man."

I feel there is an amount of solemnity connected with all this, and an importance due to this subject, and I only touch upon it because of the necessity at the present moment pressed upon my own heart, by reason of the increase of intelligence and understanding all around, as well as amongst ourselves, that the conscience should be in a condition in which Satan could not get the advantage of us.

There is nothing so terrible as to see a conscience that is not in the light of the presence of God handling the things of God. Do you not feel it in your own heart? Do you not shrink from it? The whole edge, and force, and power of divine truth are taken away, no matter how intelligently you receive it outwardly into the understanding, if the conscience is not in

the light of the presence of God. And when I say, "is not in the light of the presence of God," I do not mean to say that there is not a particular moment -- such as we find in the fifth chapter of Luke -- in a person's history, when they enter that presence, so to speak, for the first time; but I maintain that the moral judgment which is produced at that moment is kept up in the soul. It is not that a person gets into the thing once and for all, and there it is left. I quite own there is a moment when we reach the sanctuary, that is, the presence of God, the place where we must see things as God sees them, in the divine light of His presence; and unless that is kept up in the soul, Satan has a loophole through which he gets advantage over us with respect to conscience, and that is the first step down with every one.

It is a wonderfully solemn thing for the conscience to be in the light of the presence of God. I ask myself, and humbly and affectionately you, the question, Do you know what it is to walk with your conscience in the light of God's presence? Do you feel the light of God penetrating down to the very deepest depths of your whole moral being, reflecting God's judgment as to all that is within, exposing and detecting everything in a way you could never know by simply looking at the results and fruits of things outside? There is another remark I would make, and that is, that I believe nothing tends to break the confidence, the natural confidence, of our hearts in ourselves like this, the habitual maintenance of conscience in the light of God's presence. Peter was a man into whose heart the truth had reached, I apprehend, a long time before the incident narrated in the fifth chapter of Luke; that is to say, that was not the occasion of Peter's conversion, but there was at that time this further action on Peter, that he learned not merely the springs that were in himself -- and that is the point that was on my mind -- but the natural confidence of his heart, *in measure* at least, was broken. Because the moment this light reaches him, the moment his conscience is introduced into this penetrating light, he was obliged to give a verdict of all he felt himself to be as under it. Then it was that Peter learned to confide in the One that convicted him; and faith knows very well how to put these two things together, that you never really confide in Christ or in God -- you never have real genuine confidence in Christ and in God -- until Christ has taken the confidence in self from you. And how does He do that? By showing you what you are in the light of God's presence. Because the very blessed word that comes immediately afterwards comes from the same place as this convicting power -- "Fear not."

Where did that come from? It came from His lips who caused a little ray of the glory that belonged to Him to shine around Peter's heart when He commanded the treasure of the deep into Peter's net. He commanded, as the mighty God, the treasure of the deep into Peter's net, and He commanded the light of His presence to shine into Peter's heart; and when He gives Peter the sense of it, He breaks in that way in measure the confidence Peter had in himself, then He ministers this blessed comfort to him, "Fear not." I do not believe there can be any real devotedness to Christ, after the order and pattern and fashion that God looks for, until the confidence of the