

# **GLEANINGS IN THE GODHEAD**

**Part 2: Excellencies Which  
Pertain to God the Son as Christ**

**Section Five**

**The  
Rest and the  
Yoke of Christ.**

**A. W. Pink**

**Gleanings in the Godhead**  
**Part 2: Excellencies Which**  
**Pertain to God the Son as Christ**

**Section Five**

**The Rest and the**  
**Yoke of Christ.**

**A. W. Pink**

**The Rest of Christ**

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). In a message on these words John Newton pointed out:

“The dispensation of the Gospel may be compared to the cities of refuge in Israel. It was a privilege and honour to the nation in general that they had such sanctuaries of Divine appointment, but the real value of them was known and felt by only a few. Those alone who found themselves in that case for which they were provided could rightly prize them. Thus it is with the Gospel of Christ: it is the highest privilege and honour of which a professing nation can boast, but it can be truly understood and esteemed by none except weary and heavy laden souls, who have felt their misery by nature, are tired of the drudgery of sin, and have seen the broken Law pursuing them like the avenger of blood of old. This is the only consideration which keeps them from sinking into abject despair, in that God has graciously provided a remedy by the Gospel and that Christ bids them ‘Come unto Me, and I will give you rest’.”

If awakened, convicted, and distressed souls would but appropriate the full comfort of that blessed invitation and obey its terms, their complaints would end; but remaining ignorance, the workings of unbelief, and the opposition of Satan combine to keep them back. Some will say, “I am not qualified to come to Christ: my heart is so hard, my conscience so insensible, that I do not feel the burden of my sins as I ought, nor my need of Christ’s rest as I

should.” Others will say, “I fear that I do not come aright. I see from the Scriptures and hear from the pulpit that repentance is required from me and that faith is an absolute essential if I am to be saved; but I am concerned to know whether my repentance is sincere and deep enough and if my faith is anything better than an historical one—the assent of the mind to the facts in the Gospel.”

We may discover from those who sought healing from Him what is meant by the invitation Christ makes to those who have sought the approval of God and met His requirements in the Law. First, they were persuaded of His power and willingness and of their own deep need of His help. So it is in the matter of salvation. The sinner must be convinced that Christ is “mighty to save,” that He is ready to receive all who are sick of sin and want to be healed. Second, they made an application to Him. They were not content to hear of His fame, but wanted proof of His wonderworking power. So too the sinner must not only credit the message of the Gospel, but also he must seek Him and trust Him.

Those who sought Christ as a Physician of souls continued with Him and became His followers. They received Him as their Lord and Master, renounced what was inconsistent with His will (Luke 9:23, 60), professed an obedience to His precepts, and accepted a share in His reproach. Some had a more definite call to Him, such as Matthew, who was sitting at the receipt of custom, indifferent to the claims of Christ until He said, “Follow me” (Matthew 9:9). That word was accompanied with power and won his heart, separating him from worldly pursuits in an instant. Others were drawn to Him more secretly by His Spirit, such as Nathanael (John 1:46), and the weeping penitent (Luke 7:38). The ruler came to the Lord with no other intention than to obtain the life of his son (John 4:53), but he secured much more than he expected, and he believed, with all his house.

These things are recorded for our encouragement. The Lord Jesus is not on earth in visible form, but He promised His spiritual presence to abide with His Word, His ministers, and His people to the end. Weary sinners do not have to take a hard journey to find the Saviour, for He is always near (Acts 17:27) wherever His Gospel is preached. “But the righteousness which is of faith

speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above.) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach” (Rom. 10:6-8). If you cannot come to Christ *with* a tender heart and burdened conscience, then come to Him *for* them.

“Is it a sense of your load which makes you say you are not able? Then consider that this is not a work, but a rest. Would a man plead I am so heavy laden that I cannot consent to part with my burden; so weary that I am not able either to stand still or to lie down, but must force myself farther? The greatness of your burden, so far from being an objection, is the very reason why you should instantly come to Christ, for He alone is able to release you. But perhaps you think you do not come aright. I ask, how would you come? If you come as a helpless unworthy sinner, without righteousness, without any hope but what arises from the worth, work, and Word of Christ, this is to come aright. There is no other way of being accepted. Would you refresh and strengthen yourself, wash away your own sins, free yourself from your burden, and then come to Him to do these things for you? May the Lord help you to see the folly and unreasonableness of your unbelief” (John Newton).

There is no promise in Scripture that God will reward the careless, half-hearted, indolent seeker; but He has declared, “Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:13) He has a fixed time for everyone whom He receives. He knew how long the poor man had waited at the pool (John 5:6), and when His hour came He healed him. So endeavour to be found in the way: where His Word is preached, and diligently search His Word in the privacy of your room. Be much in prayer. Converse with His people, and He may join you unexpectedly, as He did the two disciples walking to Emmaus.

“I will give you rest.” What a claim! No mere man, no matter how godly and spiritual, could promise this. Abraham, Moses, or David could not bid the weary and heavy laden to come unto him with the assurance that *he* would give them rest. To impart rest of

soul to another is beyond the power of the most exalted creature. Even the holy angels are incapable of bestowing rest upon others, for they are dependent on the grace of God for their own rest. Thus this promise of Christ manifested His uniqueness. Neither Confucius, Buddha, nor Mohammed ever made such a claim. It was no mere Man who uttered these words, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He was the Son of God. He made man, and therefore He could restore him. He was the Prince of peace, thus capable of giving rest.

As Christ is the only One who can bestow rest of soul, so there is no true rest apart from Him. The creature cannot impart it. The world cannot communicate it. We cannot manufacture it. One of the most pathetic things in the world is to see the unregenerate vainly seek happiness and contentment in the material things. At last they discover these are all broken cisterns which hold no water. Observe them turning to priests or preachers, penance or fastings, reading and praying, only to find, as the prodigal son did when he "began to be in want," that "no man gave unto him" (Luke 15); or see the poor woman who had "suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse" (Mark 5:26). All the unregenerate, illiterate or learned, find "the way of peace have they not known" (Rom. 3:17).

It is much to be thankful for when we realize experimentally that none but Christ can do helpless sinners any good. This is a hard lesson for man, and we are slow to learn it. The fact is not involved in itself, but the devilish pride of our hearts makes us self-sufficient until divine grace humbles us. It is part of the gracious work of the Holy Spirit to bring us off our creature dependence, to knock the props from under us, to make us see that Jesus Christ is our only hope. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Strikingly this was illustrated by the dove sent forth by Noah. "But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark" (Gen. 8:9).

Significantly, the very name “Noah” meant “rest” (Gen. 5:29, margin); and it was only as the dove was “caused to come unto him” that she obtained rest. So it is with the sinner.

What is the nature of this rest Christ gives to all who come to Him?

“The Greek word expresses something more than rest, or a mere relaxation from toil; it denotes refreshment likewise. A person weary with long bearing a heavy burden will need not only to have it removed, but likewise he wants food and refreshment to restore his spirits and to repair his wasted strength. Such is the rest of the Gospel. It not only puts a period to our fruitless labour, but it affords a sweet reviving cordial. There is not only peace, but joy in believing” (John Newton).

Thus it is a spiritual rest, a satisfying rest, “rest for the soul” as the Saviour declares in this passage. It is such a rest the world can neither give nor take away.

In particularizing upon the nature of this rest we may distinguish between its present and future forms. Concerning the former, First, it is a deliverance from that vain and wearisome quest which absorbs the sinner before the Spirit opens his eyes to see his folly and moves him to seek true riches. Piteous it is to behold those who are made for eternity wasting their energies in wandering from object to object, searching for what will not satisfy, only to be mortified by repeated disappointments. It is so with all until they come to Christ, for He has written about all the pleasures of this world, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again” (John 4:13). For example, Solomon, who had everything the heart could desire and gratified his lusts to the full, found that, “behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit” (Eccl. 1:14). From this vexation of spirit Christ delivers His people, for He declares, “whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst” (John 4:14).

Second, it is the easing and tranquilizing of a burdened conscience. Only one who has been convicted by the Holy Spirit appreciates what this means. When one has to cry out, “The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against

me” (Job 6:4); when the curse of God’s broken Law thunders in our ears; when we have an inward sense of divine wrath and the terrors of a future judgment fall upon the soul, then there is indescribable anguish of mind. When a true work is wrought in the heart by the Spirit we exclaim, “Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin” (Psa. 38:2-3). When we first see the wondrous love of God for us, and how vilely we have repaid Him, then we are cut to the quick. When by faith we come to Christ all this is altered. As we see Him dying in our stead and that there is now no condemnation for us, the intolerable load falls from our conscience—and a peace which passeth all understanding is ours.

Third, it is a rest from the dominion and power of sin. Here again only those who are the subjects of His grace can enter into what is meant. The unawakened are unconcerned about the glory of God, indifferent as to whether their conduct pleases Him. They have no concept of the sinfulness of sin and no realization of how completely sin dominates them. Only when the Spirit of God illumines their minds and convicts their consciences do they see the awfulness of their state; and only then, as they try to reform their ways, are they conscious of the might of their inward foe and of their inability to cope with him. In vain deliverance is sought in resolutions and endeavours in our own strength. Even after we are quickened and begin to understand the Gospel, for a season (often a lengthy one) it is rather a fight than a rest. But as we grow more out of ourselves and are taught to live in Christ and draw our strength from Him by faith, we obtain a rest in this respect also.

Fourth, there is a rest from our own works. As the believer realizes more clearly the sufficiency of the finished work of Christ he is delivered experimentally from the Law and sees that he no longer owes it service. His obedience is no longer legal but evangelical, no longer out of fear, but out of gratitude. His service to the Lord is not in a servile, but in a gracious spirit. What was formerly a burden is now a delight. He no longer seeks to earn God’s favour, but acts in the realization that the smile of God is upon him. Far from rendering him careless, this will spur him on to

strive to glorify the One who gave His own Son as a sacrifice. Thus, bondage gives place to liberty, slavery to sonship, toil to rest. And the soul reposes on the unchangeable Word of Christ and follows Him steadily through light and darkness.

There is also a future rest beyond any that can be experienced here, although our best conceptions of the glory awaiting the people of God are inadequate. First, in heaven there will be a perfect resting from all sin, for nothing shall enter there which could defile or disturb our peace. What it will mean to be delivered from indwelling corruptions no tongue can tell. The closer a believer walks with the Lord, and the more intimate his communion with Him is, the more bitterly he hates that within him which ever fights against his desire for holiness. Therefore the apostle cried, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). But we will not carry this burden beyond the grave.

Second, we shall be delivered from beholding the sins of others. No more will our hearts be pained by the evils which flood the earth. Like Lot in Sodom, we are grieved with the conversation of the godless. "Who that has any love to the Lord Jesus, any spark of true holiness, any sense of the worth of souls in his heart, can see what passes amongst us without trembling? How openly, daringly, almost universally, are the commandments of God broken, His Gospel despised, His patience abused, and His power defied" (John Newton). If that were the state of affairs 200 years ago what would this writer say were he on earth today to witness not only the wickedness of a profane world, but also the hypocrisy of Christendom? As the believer sees how the Lord is dishonoured in the house of those who pose as His friends, how often he thinks, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest" (Psa. 55:6).

Third, there will be perpetual rest from all outward afflictions; for in heaven none will harass the people of God. No more will the saint live in the midst of an ungodly generation, which may not actively persecute him, yet they only reluctantly tolerate his presence. Though afflictions are needful, and when sanctified to us are also profitable, nevertheless they are grievous to bear. But a

day is coming when these tribulations will no longer be necessary, for the fine gold will have been purged from the dross. The storms of life will be behind, and an unbroken calm will be the believer's lot forever. Where there will be no more sin, there will be no more sorrow. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

Fourth, it will be a rest from Satan's temptations. How often he disturbs the present rest of believers! How often they have cause to say with the apostle, "Satan hath hindered me." He seeks in various ways to hinder them from attending the public means of grace; to hinder them when they try to meditate on the Word or pray. The devil cannot bear to see one of Christ's people happy, so he tries constantly to disturb their joy. One reason why God permits this is that they may be conformed to their Head. When He was here on earth the devil continually hounded Him. Even when believers come to the hour of departure from this world, their great enemy seeks to rob them of assurance, but he can pursue them no further. Absent from the body, they are present with the Lord, forever out of the reach of their adversary.

Finally, they rest from unsatisfied desires. When one has really been born of the Spirit, he wants to be done with sin forever. He longs for perfect conformity to the image of Christ, and for unbroken fellowship with Him. But such longings are not realized in this life. Instead, the old nature within the believer ever opposes the new, bringing him into captivity to the law of sin (Rom. 7:23). But death affords final relief from indwelling corruptions, and he is made "a pillar in the temple of his God, and he shall go out no more" (Rev. 3:12). On the morning of the resurrection the believer's body shall be "fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil. 3:21), and his soul's every longing shall then be fully realized. The change from grace to glory will be as radical as the change from nature to grace.

### **The Yoke of Christ**

"Come Unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I

will give you rest.” This is not a broadcast invitation, addressed indefinitely to the careless, giddy masses; rather is it a gracious call to those who seriously seek peace of heart, yet are still bowed down with a load of guilt. It is addressed to those who long for rest of soul, but who know not how it is to be obtained, nor where it is to be found. To such Christ says, “Come unto me, and I will give you rest.” But He does not leave it there. He goes on to explain. Our Lord makes the bare affirmation that He is the giver of rest (Matthew 11:28). In what follows He specifies the terms on which He dispenses it, conditions which we must meet if we are to obtain it. The rest is freely “given,” but only to those who comply with the revealed requirements of its Bestower.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:29). In those words Christ voiced the conditions which men must meet if they are to obtain rest of soul. We are required to take His yoke upon us. The yoke is a figure of subjection. The force of this figure may be understood if we contrast oxen running wild in the field with oxen harnessed to a plough, where their owner directs their energies. Hence we read, “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth” (Lam. 3:27). That means unless youths are disciplined, brought under subjection and taught to obey their superiors, they are likely to develop into sons of Belial, intractable rebels against God and man. When the Lord took Ephraim in hand and chastised him, he bemoaned that he was like “a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke” (Jer. 31:18).

The natural man is born “like a wild ass’s colt” (Job 11:12)—completely unmanageable, self-willed, determined to have his own way at all costs. Having lost his anchor by the fall, man is like a ship entirely at the mercy of winds and waves. His heart is unmoored and he runs wild to his own destruction. Thus he has a need for the yoke of Christ if he is to obtain rest for his soul. In its larger sense, the yoke of Christ signifies complete dependence, unqualified obedience, unreserved submission to Him. The believer owes this to Christ both as his rightful Lord and his gracious Redeemer. Christ has a double claim upon him: he is the

creature of His hands, and gave him being, with all his capacities and faculties. He has redeemed him and acquired an additional claim on him. The saints are the purchased property of another; therefore the Holy Spirit says, “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

“Take my yoke upon you,” by which Christ meant: surrender yourself to My Lordship, submit to My rule, let My will be yours. As Matthew Henry pointed out:

“We are here invited to Christ as Prophet, Priest and King, to be saved, and *in order to this*, to be ruled and taught by Him. As the oxen are yoked in order to submit to their owner’s will and to work under his control, so those who would receive rest of soul from Christ are here called upon to yield to Him as their King. He died for His people that they should not henceforth live unto themselves, “but *unto him* which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:15). Our holy Lord requires absolute submission and obedience in all things both in the inward life and the outward, even to “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). Alas that this is so little insisted upon in a day when the high claims of the Saviour are whittled down in an attempt to render His Gospel more acceptable to the unregenerate.”

It was different in the past, when those in the pulpit kept back nothing profitable for their hearers. God honoured such faithful preaching by granting the anointing of His Spirit, so that the Word was applied in power. Take this sample:

“No heart can truly open to Christ that is not made willing, upon due deliberation, to receive Him with His cross of sufferings and His yoke of obedience: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me . . . Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me” (Matthew 16:24; 11:29). Any exception against either of these is an effectual barrier to union with Christ. He looks upon that soul as not worthy of Him that puts in such an exception: “he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:38). If thou judgeth not Christ to be worthy all sufferings, all losses, all reproaches, He judges thee unworthy to bear the name of His disciple. So, for the

duties of obedience—called His “yoke”—he that will not receive Christ’s yoke can neither receive His pardon nor any benefit by His blood” (John Flavel, 1689).

“Take my yoke upon you.” Note carefully that the yoke is not laid upon us by another, but one which we place upon ourselves. It is a definite act on the part of one who seeks rest from Christ, and without which His rest cannot be obtained. It is a specific act of mind, an act of conscious surrender to His authority, to be ruled only by Him. Saul took this yoke upon him when, convicted of his rebellion and conquered by a sense of the Saviour’s compassion, he said, “Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?” To take Christ’s yoke upon us signifies setting aside of our wills and completely submitting to His sovereignty, acknowledging His Lordship in a practical way. Christ demands something more than lip service from His followers, even a loving obedience to all His commands, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven . . . whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Matthew 7:21, 24).

“Take my yoke upon you.” Our coming to Christ necessarily implies turning of our backs upon all that is opposed to Him. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him” (Isa. 55:7). So taking His yoke presupposes our throwing off the yoke we had worn before, the yoke of sin and Satan, of self-will and self-pleasing. “O LORD our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us” confessed Israel of old (Isa. 26:13). Then they added, “but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.” Thus taking Christ’s yoke upon us denotes a change of master, a conscious, cheerful change on our part. “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin . . . Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness” (Rom. 6:13, 16).

“Take my yoke upon you.” It may sound much like a paradox—to bid those who labour and are heavy laden, who come to Christ

for “rest,” to take a “yoke” upon them. Yet, in reality it is far from the case. Instead of the yoke of Christ bringing its wearer into bondage, it introduces a real liberty, the only genuine liberty there is. The Lord Jesus said to those who believed in Him, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). There must first be a “continuing in His Word,” a constant walking in it. As we do this He makes good His promise, “and ye shall know the Truth:” know it in an experimental way, know its power, and its blessedness. The consequence is, “the Truth shall make you free”—free from prejudice, from ignorance, from folly, from self-will, from the grievous bondage of Satan and the power of sin. Then the obedient disciple discovers that divine commandments are “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25). David said, “I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts” (Psa. 119:45).

By the yoke, two oxen were united together in the plough. The yoke then is a figure of practical union. This is clear from, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14). The Lord’s people are forbidden to enter into any intimate relationships with unbelievers, prohibited from marrying, forming business partnerships, or having any religious union with them. This yoke speaks of a union which results in a close communion. Christ invites those who come to Him for rest to enter into a practical union with Him so that they may enjoy fellowship together. So it was with Enoch, who “walked with God” (Gen. 5:24). But “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). They cannot. They must be joined together in aim and unity of purpose, to glorify God.

“Take my yoke upon you.” He does not ask us to wear something *He* has not worn. O the wonder of this! “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:5-8). The One who was equal

with God “made himself of no reputation.” He, the Lord of glory, took upon Him “the form of a servant.” The very Son of God was “made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4). “Even Christ pleased not himself” (Rom. 15:3); “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38). This was the yoke to which He gladly submitted, complete subjection to the Father’s will, loving obedience to His commands. And here He says, “Take my yoke upon you.” Do as I did, making God’s will yours. John Newton pointed out this is three-fold:

First, *the yoke of His profession*, putting on of the Christian uniform and owning the banner of our Commander. This is no irksome duty, rather is it a delight. Those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious are far from being ashamed of Him and of His Gospel. They want to tell all who will hear what God has done for their souls. It was true of Andrew and Philip (John 1:41, 43), and with the woman of Samaria (John 4:28-29). As someone has said, “Many young converts in the first warmth of their affection have more need of a bridle than of a spur in this concern.” No Christian should ever be afraid to show his colours; nevertheless he should not flaunt them before those who detest them. We will not go far wrong if we heed, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). It is only when, like Peter, we follow Christ “afar off,” that we are in danger of denying our discipleship.

Second, *the yoke of His precepts*.

“These the gracious soul approves and delights in: but still we are renewed but in part. And when the commands of Christ stand in direct opposition to the will of man, or call upon us to sacrifice a right hand or a right eye; though the Lord will surely make those who depend upon Him victorious at the last, yet it will cost them a struggle; so that, when they are sensible how much they owe to His power working in them, and enabling them to overcome, they will, at the same time, have a lively conviction of their own weakness. Abraham believed in God, and delighted to obey, yet when he was commanded to sacrifice his only son, this was no easy trial of his sincerity and obedience; and all who are partakers of his faith are

exposed to meet, sooner or later, with some call of duty little less contrary to the dictates of flesh and blood” (John Newton).

Third, *the yoke of His dispensations*, His dealings with us in Providence. If we enjoy the favour of the Lord, it is certain that we will be out of favour with those who hate Him. He has plainly warned, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19). It is useless to suppose that, by acting prudently and circumspectly, we can avoid this. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). It is only by unfaithfulness, by hiding our light under a bushel, by compromising the Truth, by attempting to serve two masters, that we can escape “the reproach of Christ.” He was hated by the world and has called us to fellowship with His sufferings. This is part of the yoke He requires His disciples to bear. Moreover, “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” It is hard to bear the opposition of the world, but it is harder still to endure the rod of the Lord. The flesh is still in us and resists vigorously when our wills are crossed; nevertheless we are gradually taught to say with Christ, “the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11).

“And learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart.” Once again we call attention to the deep importance of observing our Lord’s order here. Just as there can be no taking of His yoke upon us until we “come” to Him, so there is no learning of Him (in the sense meant) until we have taken His yoke upon us—until we have surrendered our wills to His and submitted to His authority. This is far more than an intellectual learning of Christ, it is an experimental, effectual, transforming learning. By painstaking effort any man may acquire a theological knowledge of the person and doctrine of Christ. He may even obtain a clear concept of His meekness and lowliness; but that is vastly different from learning of Him in so as to be “changed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18). To “learn” of Him we must be completely subject to Him and in close communion with Him.

What is it that we most need to be taught of Him? How to do what will make us objects of admiration in the religious world? Or

how to obtain such wisdom that we will be able to solve all mysteries? How to accomplish such great things that we will be given the preeminence among our brethren? No indeed, nothing resembling these, for “that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15). What, then, Lord? This: “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” These are the graces we most need to cultivate, the fruits which the Husbandman most highly values. Of the former grace it is said, “even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price” (1 Pet. 3:4); of the latter the Lord declared, “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isa. 57:15). Do we really believe these Scriptures?

“For I am meek.” What is meekness? We may best discover the answer by observing the word in other verses. For example, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3). This refers to the gentleness of Moses’ spirit under unjust opposition. Instead of returning evil, he prayed for the healing of Miriam. So far from being weakness (as the world supposes), meekness is the strength of the man who can rule his own spirit under provocation, subduing his resentment of wrong, and refusing to retaliate. The “meek and quiet spirit” also has to do with the subjection of a wife to her husband (1 Pet. 3:1-6); her chaste conversation (or behaviour) which is to be “coupled with fear” (verse 2); even as Sarah “obeyed Abraham, calling him lord” (verse 6). It is inseparably associated with gentleness: “the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1); “gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men” (Titus 3:2). The “spirit of meekness” is in sharp contrast from the apostle using “the rod” (1 Cor. 4:21).

Thus we may say that “meekness” is the opposite of self-will. It is pliability, yieldedness, offering no resistance, as clay in the Potter’s hands. When the Maker of heaven and earth exclaimed, “I am a worm, and no man” (Psa. 22:6), He referred not only to the unparalleled depths of shame into which He descended for our sakes, but also to His lowliness and submission to the Father’s will. A worm has no power of resistance, not even when it is

stepped on. So there was nothing in the perfect Servant which opposed the will of God. Behold in Him the majesty of meekness, when He stood like a lamb before her shearers, committing Himself to the righteous Judge. Contrast Satan, who is represented as “the great red dragon;” while the Lamb stands as the symbol of the meekest and gentlest.

The meekness of Christ appeared in His readiness to become the covenant head of His people, and to assume our nature; in being subject to His parents during the days of His childhood; in submitting to the ordinance of baptism; in His entire subjection to the Father’s will. He made no retaliation; He counted not His life dear unto Himself, but freely laid it down for others. We most need to learn of Him not how to become great or self-important, but how to deny self, to become tractable and gentle, to be servants—not only His servants, but also the servants of our brethren.

“For I am meek and lowly in heart.” As meekness is the opposite of self-will, so lowliness is the reverse of self-esteem and self-righteousness. Lowliness is self-abasement, yes, self-effacement. It is more than a refusing to stand up for our own rights. Though He was so great a Person, this grace was pre-eminently displayed by Christ. “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Matthew 20:28); “I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:27). Behold Him as he performed the menial duties of washing the feet of His disciples. He was the only one born into this world who could choose the home and the circumstances of His birth. What a rebuke to our foolish pride His choice was! My reader, we must indeed learn of Him if this choice flower of paradise is to bloom in the garden of our souls.

The fifth of seven booklets.

