

The Glory of Redemption

Revelation 1: 5, 6; 4, 5.

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Part Fourth. LATER MINISTRY.

I have read these scriptures as presenting to us the glory of redemption, and judgment as beginning directly the servant of God has got into it. (Rev. 1: 5, 6.) In addition, a thought closely connected with it; and that is, the thought of the grace learnt down here in the wilderness. The two clauses found at the end of verse 5, and filling up verse 6, present the grace which John saw at the time when it burst forth from his lips, through realizing what the wilderness was through which he had to go, and what the grace which his own soul had been made to taste through the Christ then and there revealed to him. (vv. 5, 6, etc.)

"Unto Him that loved us," etc. I want to open up that a little, first of all as connected with the saint in a very remarkable and blessed way; and then as being the song that the men of this world, never having known Christ, are entirely ignorant of. When the Lord removes those who have learnt in the wilderness how to glory in the fulness found in Him, they will go to glory, and see the redemption, sphere of glory as their place, and the very Lord they had learnt down here as Heir to all this glory, opening the seals of judgment on the wicked, those who had despised His grace and His beauty. People very often evade their own position in the world. Do you do that? I speak specially to the children of the saints. Your conduct may be lovely and amiable, nothing much to object to, brought up by godly parents — how shall I reach you? However much those who have brought you up may comfort themselves by your orderly walk, if you have not tasted what John did, have you tasted that love in Christ, or have you not tasted it? If you have not individually, for your own self, tasted what Christ does for the people of His love, as one of those of whom John could speak as *us*, you have neither part nor lot in the matter. If you have not tasted His love as associating you with His people down here, if Christ took you up into the glory, there would be nothing in the scene in which you could find your delight, nothing for you to find your home in — real scenes of beauty and glory to those who are His.

Now I turn to the song of John. Here I would only remark in every way it was a wilderness song. When John looked about him, and weighed the character of that scene, the effect of the light was that he felt he really was in the wilderness. He had laboured to build up the saints, to feed them, and a rude hand had shut him up in Patmos. That too made him feel it. There was everything to bring it home to his heart that he was not *at home*, but a pilgrim and stranger.

Verse 5. All the titles connected with divine glory are everyone of them distinct from the revelation of the truth which formed the Church of which the apostle John was a member. There was everything to the heart of John as a servant to make him feel he was a stranger; but directly he sees the Lamb, the blessed Lord, the stream of His love filling his heart, he turns back in praise. He saw the Lord, and his heart responded in worship and adoration — "Unto Him that loved *us*." John right well knew what had been the experience of this company, and every saint to the end of time can say, "Loved *us*." He puts the Lord there in the first place as the One who had bestowed such unspeakable blessing upon him that he can say, "Unto *Him*," etc. That thought about the Lord Jesus Christ, would it waken up in the hearts of unbelievers such songs as these? When the thought of God comes up before the soul

that has not learnt His grace in the wilderness, they say, "Do I love Him? Can I appear before Him?" — like Jacob searching among the stuff for the false gods before he goes up to worship. That would never have done for John, such questioning of his love to the Lord. He saw the Lord in a vision, and that was the Person who had loved him, and his heart was full of love. "I am going to do all these things, and shall not I tell John? Shall not I let My love come out in confidence to My people, and tell them what I am going to do?" He loved the Church.

I will just remark in this song of praise that the beloved of the Christ of God are marked. What did Christ see when He looked on me? when He applied His blood? Sin, and nothing but sin. The first thought of Christ when He looked on Saul of Tarsus was, "I see something there to shut out that person for ever from God's presence. The only thing that characterizes him is sin. If I do not apply the blood he never will have boldness to look God in the face." I ask, Are those your thoughts when looking upon Christ — nothing but sin? A doctor of this world does not want people who are well. When Christ sees sin in a sinner, does He say, "I must pass that one by, and look out for those who think they are good"? It was not like Him to pass by those who thought themselves sinners. He loved them, and He washed them. Christ knew all about the blood; knew where the blood came from. He gave that blood. There was atonement and there was cleansing, and He applied it to every one that entered into that little word "*us*," and applies it in the wilderness, and it begins with His loving us.

Granted that every child of God knows that he has the value of the blood applied to him, and sees the heavenly side of it, and that he says, "Oh, yes, I have forgiveness of sins!" But have you got it mingled with all your thoughts down here? Or do you say, "I have not got at what Paul's thought was about that blood?" It is not a question of our learning, but a question of Christ's washing. Christ saw sin on our consciences, and Christ knew how to apply the blood. I defy the judge who sits in judgment on Christ's work; it is as perfect as He who has created and who governs the world could make it. He has done it for my poor little self as a member of this little company, as one whom He loved. Christ applied the blood without any leave given Him by Paul. It is not one corner washed, and it is not the whole body washed badly, but all washed perfectly from all sin. All He sees now is the blood; and we are washed completely — whiter than any fuller can whiten. We can draw near with this crown, with redemption applied to our souls, and we can draw near with perfect boldness before the throne of God. Then what have we got of our own? Nothing. That which justifies God justifies us. It was not His mind only to remove a part of our sin: the whole judgment was borne by Him, and the value of this is brought to bear on the soul of every saint. We know His intervention for us in our misery, and He has cleansed us from all our sins. As a child by adoption, all the glory of sonship is communicated to me. There were certain parts of the glory He could not impart to us, though we get the benefit of it. All the love that the Father has caused to rest upon Him, and the glory too, He means to rest upon us — to share them with His people.

John had nothing of his own. Well, what are you? I am of the royal priesthood. — *You* a priest! You do not look much like it. No; but it is mine, given me by Christ I am a king and a priest, and praise flows forth. There are two things in that song. The first is, if I had been there and heard John saying that, I might have said, Do you really mean, John, that you wished that?" *Indeed I do.* To find the One I delighted in, in power before God, I have sympathy in His exaltation." John's delight in this, "To Him be glory," was no mere piety, but the Spirit of God guided him, when in his pilgrim state he ascribed dominion and glory "to the One God had just appointed for it. Put Him out, and somebody else in, and all my hopes are touched. I want to praise Him. Does the heart brought up nicely in educational religion see its felt need is to put in something about *Himself*? When I get near to Christ, in the sense of all my need being met, all His fulness as far as it could be put on me, I want to ascribe praise to Him. It is the

felt want of the heart to put in something about Himself, *some praise*. Do you say, I cannot praise? Can you not? No praise could be sweeter than "Unto Him that loved us." Simple praise is a description of what Christ has done for you. You do not need to bring in all the high sounding words and nicely rounded periods in connection with praise. The heart that has learnt its lesson in the wilderness, says, "The Lord Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father; He is the One who is the Head of the Church; He is the One who has given the Holy Ghost; the One who has shed His blood, and carried us in there that the Father might let His love flow out. Besides all this, when He comes to me individually, He washed me and made me a king and a priest to His God." And that was learned by John in the wilderness — the sweetness of having this Christ as the delight of his heart down here.

Well, but about the glory? Rev. 4 and Rev. 5 John was caught up into heaven to behold these magnificent scenes of glory, but where is there one single thing in that 4 and 5 chapters, of which a graceless sinner, if caught up, could say, "I feel at home there?" No, he could not say that; it would be terrible to him to be in that light. It is the secret of being associated with Christ; the delight of finding your home in that scene — of being at home. There I want to open all that is my own before Him. The question is, Are you at home, a saved sinner that has tasted grace? Have you such sympathy with Christ, that if He is exalted you are perfectly happy? What are they all about? The glory of God and the Lamb, what do you know about Him? Nothing there for you; what comfort would you find in it? None. What joy is it to you to see the glory of the Lord God Almighty? None whatever. John is up there, and sees everything bringing out that beautiful scene just fitted for one who has learned grace in the wilderness — a glory formed by God for the express purpose of setting forth all the divine glory that belonged to the Lamb. This is the power that ministers to the saint that has learnt grace in the wilderness.

Rev. 4: 10. "Their crowns." What were they? A rightful privilege given to be worn before everyone's eyes as a witness to their right to be kings and priests. The thought of a crown can meet the mind of man in nature; but "casting them down" seems a strange thing — to throw off the emblem of association with the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is not strange to the heart that knows the Lord Jesus, that knows God. When He brings us into the glory, will it be a word of command to cast our crowns before Him? Will it not be in perfect harmony with the wilderness lesson taught here? It will be a word springing from the very depths of the heart. All secure for Him, all secure for us, because He has undertaken our cause. He made us rich; He made us clean; we have got home out of the wilderness. In chapter 4, it is all the glory of Jehovah-el-Shaddai, not the Lamb upon the throne, because He wanted it to be seen that all His acts and counsels were executed by the Lamb.

Rev. 5: 3, 4, 7. What does the Lamb do? He goes, and takes "the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." That Person is the Lamb, and has a right to be crowned as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Why did He go and take the book? Because He wanted to communicate to His servant John, and His servants down here, what would take place after the rapture of the saints — the destinies of the earth down to the end. Oh, how blessed for John and us — His servants. "I want to show to My servants, those practically in the world, those who serve Me, all the reserved secrets of God." What honestly, in truthfulness, could any person say about himself if he has not tasted Christ's love in washing him from his sins? He would say about Christ, "I am sure He does not want to show these secrets to me. if that is true of John's company, I am not of that company." And why are you not of the company? Have you got anything but sin? God says, "I have a fountain open; My Son is a Saviour, and He needs sinners to show forth His love in grace." When Christ comes, having loved His own unto the end, He finds His people in mortal bodies, and many of them wanting resurrection. If I appear there on the ground that Christ has not forgotten His promises, I shall not be ashamed. I shall

appear before Him in a glorified body like His own. That blood has made good all claims in heaven above, and I shall not be ashamed. I can never be ashamed to go into His presence by faith.

Rev. 5: 9, 10. Now remark one thing. It is a very different song which burst forth from the elders from that which came from John in the first chapter. This explains the worthiness of the One who could take the book. In Rev. 1, it is John in the wilderness, in Patmos. If a man has learnt in the wilderness what Christ has done, when he gets into the glory he will find he can sing. I shall exalt Him in every possible way. Who could go and take the book of God's revealed secrets? *The Lamb*. Who can rejoice in redemption? No person can enter into the mercy displayed in redemption but the person who is redeemed. The servants could not enter into the joy of the prodigal. It is a question of the compassions of God pouring down upon the heart of one who is fitted for grace. I have got a Father, such a Father; He knows how to break me down with His goodness. The Father and he understood it in a way the elder brother, and others could not, the joy that comes with redemption. God looks at souls in pure compassion on their estrangement from Him. The elder brother had set his heart on his father's *things*. "I had marked that calf for myself, sir and you gave it to celebrate the return of my prodigal brother." That is his estimate of his father, and that is what man's thought is of God. Our first thought is, What can I get for myself? Ah! but when grace comes in, God has a right to say, "I can get glory in a poor sinner." There is something very humbling to a soul, beloved friends, in that word *redeemed* (redemption here is the word for purchase). Do you know you are bought with a price? What does a Christian say? "Ah! I am bought with a price, a goodly price. I do not belong to myself, and I own it." If I look at Christ, I can enter into the thought of redemption, I enter into it with joy; I own that He has bought me with a price, that is a very humbling thing to human nature. You must be satisfied to be as clay taken up by the potter; but He only can form it for Himself. What an evidence of the truth of Christianity. It puts God up there in glory, and it puts a sinner down lower than the human mind can imagine, and yet he has boldness in the day of judgment, and in Christ he has the measure of what his completeness is in the presence of God. I defy any Christian to say that he has measured the wrath due to his sin in the sight of God. Has he measured the blood of Christ? You cannot measure it. You can say, "God knows it, knows the worth of it; but if my measure of my unworthiness is my measure of the blood of Christ, I must give it up." You never can measure it so as to comprehend what it was. Man has got his pleasure, and is not God to have His pleasure? He has His thoughts and counsels about the Church. They began before man was, before the foundation of the world, and many of us are witnesses that God has been and is working — we have the witness in our own souls when we are brought into the Father's house. Redemption is His work, the salvation in which it will issue when the sons of God are brought into the new Jerusalem — that is *pleasure to Him*.