

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness.—Is. 40:3

VOL. XXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., AUG. 31, 1932

NO. 26

THE GLORIOUS CHURCH

Text—"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" Eph. 5:25-27).

Church in the text includes all redeemed souls in world history. It has engaged divine interest from the tragic fall in the Garden. In the deathly stillness following that fall is the whispered promise of a Redeemer—"the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." In the dense darkness flashes the sacrificial flame on Abel's altar; later, on Noah's; and still later and more brightly on Abraham's. These are the foregleams of the coming Messiah. Moses foretold His advent, speaking of a "Prophet like unto me." The Psalmist sings of "his anointed one." Isaiah, seeing His crown, sried, "Wonderful." Jeremiah, weeping over the sins of his people, called Him, "The Lord, our righteousness." Daniel heard His stately step, while Zechariah saw in vision "a fountain opened * * * for sin and uncleanness." Malachi, last of the prophets, approaching the great event, declared, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple." Turn over four hundred pages of silent history and there appear the Star in the East, the angel song, the Babe in the manger—Christ, the Redeemer, is here. Follow Him through His childhood, behold His baptism, temptation, public teaching, miracles, Gethsemane, the cross, the tomb, resurrection, ascension. What was it all for? My text answers: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it * * * that he might present it to himself a glorious church." He purposes to make the church glorious in character, in conduct, and in destiny.

I. *In Character*—"That he might sanctify it." Sanctify is from two Latin words, meaning to make holy. It has two definitions: 1. To set apart for holy or religious uses; 2. To cleanse from moral corruption. The first indicates man's part in becoming holy. "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy," that is, set yourselves apart for His service, even as the vessels of the temple were set apart for sacred uses. It was a great sacrilege to use those vessels for common purposes after such a dedication. So we must dedicate the entire being to His service forever. The second definition indicates God's part: "I am the Lord which sanctify you" (Lev. 20:7). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The plan is to remove all sin, the work of the flesh, and to implant instead all holy tempers, the fruit of the Spirit. "We shall be like him," says the Apostle, "for we shall see him as he is." Again, "As he is so are we in this world" (1 John 3:2;4:17). Thus the church is to be glorious in character. It is also to be glorious.

II. *In Conduct*—"Not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be

holy and without blemish." Here is a purity that naturally results in an upright walk, a separation from the ungodly world in spirit and in practice. There can be no sympathy with the King's enemies, no flourishing of rebel flags, as displaying gaudy apparel to attract the admiration of men and feed an unholy pride; no union with rebels in fraternal compacts—secret societies, some of which constitute rival religions; no imitation of the language of the King's foes, as irreverent references to the deity or His word, or slandering His loyal subjects. On the other hand, there must be a holy love for all His people, a sublime self-forgetfulness in efforts to rescue the perishing sons of men and advance the interests of the kingdom. "The zeal (fiery interest) of thine house hath eaten me up." Ease, social comfort, money are all forgotten in the intense effort to save the lost.

It is said the man who gave us our glazed pottery spent a number of years gathering materials for the experiment. He placed the vessels in the kiln and lit the fire. To his surprise, his fuel gave out before the result was obtained. Again he spent some years in a more extensive preparation only to be disappointed as before. After a third term of years I see him watching intensely the approaching success, when lo, his fuel is exhausted. Like one bereft of reason he rushes into the house, breaks up all his furniture, thrusts it in the kiln, and—succeeds. So the church of which we speak spends the last item of resources to achieve her God-given mission. As noble men enlist in the army to defend their country and stand by their guns till shot dead, so the church is glorious—worthy to receive honor—in her heaven-inspired, self-forgetful effort to defend and extend the kingdom. Again, the church is to be glorious.

III. *In Destiny*—"That he might present it to himself a glorious church." In Revelation 19:7 we read, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." The wife or bride here is the church. Now she has the place of honor. In this world she was despised; there she will be the center of interest to the assembled hosts of those bright intelligences who never tasted sin, but on that occasion constitute the wedding guests. Heaven, with its prepared mansions, fitted with every appointment conceivable to infinite love and wisdom to minister lasting joy to a redeemed soul, will be the new home of the bride, the church. Here with her Lord—the ever young and vigorous bridegroom—she may live in happy fellowship through all the bright morning hours of that glorious day whose noon and lengthening shadows never come. In his vivid description of heaven, John, the Revelator, short of words, uses superlative figures—pearls, precious stones, transparent gold, sea of glass, crystal water, tree of life, no death, no sorrow, no tears, joy, gladness, songs, shouts, thrones, crowns, palms, victory, power, eternal life. Is this the plan? Will He thus purify, uphold, and glorify His church? Let us see.

1. In Ephesians 1:18 we read of "the riches of his inheritance in the saints." What does it mean? The saints are His *patrimony or legacy, His peculiar treasure*. To Israel He said, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me" (Ex. 19:5). Moses sang, "For the Lord's portion is his people" (Deut. 32:9). Solomon at the temple dedication said, "For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance" (1 Kings 8:53). Peter speaks of "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people." Evidently the church is of value to Christ.

2. In Philippians 2:6 we read, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery (a prize, new version) to be equal with God." Evidently He esteemed the glory He had with the Father as of no value compared with the treasure He would find in His redeemed people. What an estimate of values is this!

3. In Colossians 1:16-18 we read, "All things were created by him and for him, * * * and he is the head of the body, the church." What? All creation designed for the church? So it seems. What belongs to the head belongs to the body. Ephesians 1:22 speaks of Christ as "the head over all things to (or for) the church." What does it all mean? That Christ sustains the same relation to the church as the husband to the wife. Hence, all the creation belongs to the church just as all that a man owns belongs to his wife; that is, she has the full benefit of it.

Again, what about His *love* for the church? "Who being in the form of God, thought it not a prize to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation," etc. As a young man will gladly forego all other pleasures to obtain the affection and possession of the object of his choice, so Christ laid aside the glories of heaven to obtain the object of His choice, the church. All His creative and redemptive work has been performed on her behalf. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, * * * that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." He is fitting the bride to be presented at the great wedding. The Revelator, catching a glimpse of the marked event, says of the bride, "and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." "Without spot," cleansed from all defilement. "Or wrinkle," ironed out smooth, polished, complete, ready for the presentation. Yes, this is His plan. His love assures it.

How disappointing it would be to a young man whose heart is fixed upon the object of his love if he should find her affection turning to another. May it never be so with our love to Christ. God grant that we may "be sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word," that we may be "presented unto him a glorious church"—glorious in character, glorious in conduct, glorious in destiny—"without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." May it be said unto us, "Blessed are ye which are called unto

(Continued on Page Four)