

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

We need ever to feel that communion with Christ is the first and chief thing in Christianity. It gives life to all the rest. Let it be there, and every Christian grace and virtue will regularly and naturally follow. It is the vital force, the great moving power of all truly religious actions.

It is like the main-spring of a watch, which, though boxed around, and covered up from sight, moves all the wheels by its concealed, but steady and drawing power. Without it, the mechanism might seem perfect, the wheels all adjusted, but they could never move. Thus it is with man. His intellect may be clear, his knowledge complete, his morals excellent, he may have the Bible in his hand; but without the love of God in his heart, without communion with Christ, what is he? He knows not how to make the first right movement in anything religious.

Much more evidently is it thus in a church. If it hold not the Head,—if its members have not communion, daily personal spiritual communion with Christ, what is that church? A watch, without a main-spring. It may have hundreds of members, great intelligence, regularity, and ability; all the wheels and mechanism of Christian membership may be there; yet what is it after all, but a cold, dead, motionless uniformity, with the regularity of order, but the rigidity of death. Such a body is a mere formality. Church fellowship is a lifeless and powerless thing, unless fellowship with Christ be its basis. But let that be there as the moving principle, and it will make all the routine of church duties, order, and discipline, work easily and frictionless. The more earnest and powerful the communion with Christ, the more easily will all other duties be performed. If we wish to make all the machinery of a large factory perform with most perfect regularity and ease, and if there are a hundred complicated wheels and joints, all rusty and stiff, how shall we hope to effect our purpose? By turning around each little wheel by hand, retailing thus our strength by dribbets? No, but by concentrating force in the engine, by kindling a flame, and piling up fuel, and generating the steam, and when the main-shaft moves with a powerful stroke it will carry everything around, large and small. From the great driving wheel to the most remote spindle, all then will work harmoniously and well. Just thus is it in the Church of Christ; one half of the wheels turn not at all in ordinary times; and when they do, they speak with creaking, rusty eloquence, of the disorder that corrodes each part, and disturbs the motion of the whole.

Where is the remedy? More communion with Christ. That secured, all duties and discipline of the church, with its glorious and goodly fellowship, will work smoothly and sweetly, without harshness or formality, without strife or jarring. This is the true and only remedy.—*Curtis on Communion.*

Communion with Saints.

In studying the holy deeds and writings of prophets, apostles, martyrs, and reformers of all ages, we enjoy a true spiritual fellowship with them. While we meditate upon the history of the people of God, the struggles and piety of men of former ages, we imbibe their spirit, and become wiser and holier by their examples. And in proportion as we do this, do we enjoy the true communion with saints. Even when, from time to time, we bend weeping over the remains of those whose virtues we have known, and bedew their coffins with our tears, and resolve to follow their faith, to imitate their example, and to worship as they also worshipped, we enjoy this fellowship and communion. Who has not felt the influence of a pious mother or father, a sister or wife, animating their devotions, long years after their departure to the skies? Robert Hall lost his theoretical materialism in praying by the grave of his father. How often are the saints of Christ cheered by the hope, that their eyes will one day gaze upon their departed friends, upon apostles and prophets, whose example they have followed, and whose deeds have encouraged them here; Paul the logician,—Peter the zealous,—John the beloved,—Moses and Elias,—Samuel and David,—Daniel and Isaiah,—the glorious company of the Apostles,—the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, and the noble army of Martyrs! And those hopes shall not be disappointed. Our eyes shall gaze upon them. Even now are they worshipping as we worship, all forming part of that "general assembly" to which we also belong. With all, from the saint most

newly arrived in the kingdom of bliss, whose life and sufferings we have witnessed, to the holy Apostle who leaned on the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper, we have fellowship—a true and living communion even now: it is our privilege as saints, our birthright as Christians.

But how little of this do we realize! How far below it do we live! The tendency of the age draws men to live only in the present, and to forget the past. This infects even the temper of our piety. There is too often a forgetfulness of the maxims and experience of those of our Christian brethren and friends who have fallen asleep before our very eyes. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart." The saints of Christ die, and their memory seems lost, almost before their bodies are cold. They fall asleep in Jesus, their spirits fly to the throne of God, but what eye of faith follows them? They are put into the cold, damp earth, and then, oh! how soon are their labors and piety forgotten.—*Curtis on Communion.*

"Lord Jesus."

Lord Jesus! The words express the happiest fact in the history of our race. A glorious, a solemn fact too. There are "lords many" on the earth, to some of whom we may be in lawful subjection. But to Jesus, once the "man of sorrows," and the "servant of servants," God hath given real and universal lordship. "He is Lord of all," "Lord of the living and the dead." To Him "every knee shall bow." It is at present, indeed, an invisible dominion, but not always to be so. It is a mysterious dominion, permitting such long ages to roll by since his ascension, and before his coming,—permitting such seeming triumphs of evil over good, of his enemies over his servants,—scoffers even raising again the old enquiry, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Yes, it is a lordship very differently employed to what we should have supposed. But still for this He has prepared and warned us in his word, and "He told us before it came to pass, that when it did come to pass, we might believe that he is the Lord of all."

Now, are we living in the belief that Jesus is Lord. We own that his government is a rightful one, a happy one, one to which it is no unmanliness to bow, everywhere and in every thing,—one which we cannot obey without profit here and hereafter, nor resist or neglect without ingratitude and ruin. Do we, then, ever bethink ourselves whether we make Jesus our Lord? He will not force himself on us. He persuades and teaches only. He tells you that He has bought you with his blood,—that no man could show you greater love than He has done, in laying down his life for you. He asks your faith, because He has deserved it. He asks your love, because He has first loved you. He asks your obedience, because his yoke is easy and his burden light. He asks your imitation of Him, because his example is the perfection of man. What a Lord! How worthy of every heart to choose! How ungrateful, how foolish if we do not!—Let my next thoughts, and words, and deeds,—let all that will follow them, be, for life and for eternity, under thy rule, O Lord Jesus!

Once more: the day, the inevitable day, is coming, is numbering its approach,—it may be by days, it may be by months, it may be by years, it may be by tens of years, but still surely coming, when nothing whatever will be so sweet to us as to be able to use these words with truth and with faith. *We must die.* We must pass from this part of the lordship of Jesus into another part. "He is Lord of the dead." Oh, to feel, while passing from his dominion here to his dominion there, that He is truly my Lord, my chosen, trusted, beloved Lord, who cannot permit the solemn, untried change to harm me; but who has promised that where He is, there shall his servant be! "Absent from the body, and present with the Lord,"—"Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better,"—such were the words of one who, through a long life of persecutions, had faith and patience to say from the bottom of his heart, "*Lord Jesus.*" Reader, may we so live as to be able to say truthfully, living or dying,

"Jesus, my Lord, I know his name,
His name is all my trust;
He will not put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost."

[The Appeal.

"Beginning at Jerusalem."

Singular words—strange command! God's ways are not as our ways, neither His thoughts as our thoughts. For as the heavens are

higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts! Was it not at Jerusalem that Jesus was sold for thirty pieces of silver—basely betrayed by one of his own professed friends? Was it not at Jerusalem that he was apprehended as a common felon, and tried as a thief or a murderer? Was it not at Jerusalem that they bore false witness against him that they smote him with a reed—that they clothed him in mock royalty—that they lacerated his back with stripes—and that they plotted a crown of thorns and put on his head? Was it not at Jerusalem that they cried, away with him—away with him—crucify him; his blood be upon us and our children?" Was it not there that they compelled him to bear his cross? Was it not there that they found the nail, the hammer, and the spear, that pierced his hands, his feet, and his side? And was it not there that they wagged the head, exclaiming, "He saved others, himself he cannot save?" Ah! the heart of Jesus!—How strong his affection—how unsearchable his love! Where is the heart that can conceive it—where the tongue that can express it? "BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM," may well be the watch-word of the minister—the pole-word of the christian—and the cheer-word of the sinner. *Jerusalem sinners are the GREATEST of ALL sinners.* But to them the Gospel was preached as well as to us.—Many of them were saved. Sinner, so may you.

Moral Power of Baptism.

The annexed passage from the Memoir of Andrew Fuller, illustrates the power exerted by the primitive mode of Christian baptism, on the beholder. Mr. Fuller here relates his own experience and impressions on first observing the ordinance.

In March, 1770, I witnessed the baptizing of two young persons (having never seen that ordinance administered before,) and was considerably affected by what I saw and heard. The solemn immersion of a person, on a profession of faith in Christ, carried such conviction with it, that I wept like a child on the occasion. The words of the Psalmist, in Psalm cxi. 10, "A good understanding have all they that do his commandments," left a deep and abiding impression on my mind. I was fully persuaded, that this was the primitive way of baptizing, and that every Christian was bound to attend to this institution. About a month after this, I was baptized myself, and joined the church at Soham, being then turned of sixteen years of age.

Within a day or two after I had been baptized, as I was riding through the fields, I met a company of young men. One of them, especially on my having passed them, called after me, in very abusive language, and cursed me for having been "dipped." My heart instantly rose in a way of resentment; but, though the fire burned, I held my peace; for, before I uttered a word, I was checked with this passage, which occurred to my mind:—"In the world ye shall have tribulation." I wept, and entreated the Lord to pardon me; feeling quite willing to bear the ridicule of the wicked, and to go even through great tribulation, if at last I might but enter the kingdom. In this tender frame of mind I rode some miles, thinking of the temptations I might have to encounter. Amongst others, I was aware of the danger of being drawn into any acquaintance with the other sex, which might prove injurious to my spiritual welfare. While poring over these things, and fearful of falling into the snares of youth, I was led to think of that passage, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." This made me weep for joy; and, for forty-five years, I have scarcely entered on any serious engagement without thinking of these words, and entreating divine direction.

Religious Culture.

Our senses are educated by use. The experienced sailor will not only see a ship in the haze of the distant horizon where the landsman recognizes nothing, but he will tell to what class of ships it belongs. The intellect is educated by use, and the experienced thinker will recognize relations and analogies where to the uneducated mind there is nothing but confusion. Our moral perceptions are educated by use. He whose moral nature is kept alive by looking always to moral relations and by fidelity to his moral convictions, recognizes, as by instinct, a decided right or wrong in actions which to others seem wholly indifferent, and through this moral intuition he is

fitted to pass judgment on the final result of such actions. So our religious nature is educated by use. Habits of prayer, of devout meditation, of referring all things in our devotions to the will of God, habits of communion with Christ till his words have become spirit and life to us, and our thoughts move in unison with his, must quicken our spiritual perceptions, deepen our religious consciousness, and give to us the power of recognizing as realities spiritual objects and relations of which others are, and from their own want of religious culture must be, entirely ignorant. Through this Christian culture, the education of our highest faculties by intercourse with the highest subjects which they can act upon, are we to enter into our highest life, and experience the purest joy that the soul can know. We cannot open our hearts in prayer with intense yearning for intercourse with God without some accession of spiritual life and peace; and we cannot through the day carry out the experience of that moment without having it in some measure confirmed and established within us as a permanent part of our religious being. So should we go on, growing always in our spiritual gifts and perceptions, till our highest experience on earth is a foretaste of heaven.—*Register.*

Let your Sympathies Get Out.

Who that has experienced the joys of friendship, and knows the worth of sympathy and affection, would not rather lose all that is beautiful in nature's scenery, than be robbed of the hidden treasures of his heart? Who would not bury his wife rather than bury his love for her. Who would not rather follow his child to the grave than entomb his parental affection? Yes! God has a heart—and he loves, tenderly loves his children. Jesus Christ has a heart, so warm and fervent that he could die on the cross to save the unworthy, whom he loved.

Love is heaven's element, and the joys of affection—of congenial spirits—are the joys which animate the songs and inspire the harps of that world. Whatever else man may be robbed of, oh, leave him his heart. Without this he is a human hyena, unfit for earth or heaven.

Cherish then your heart's best affections. Indulge in the warm and gushing emotions of filial, parental, fraternal love. Think it not a weakness. God has the largest and warmest heart in the universe. He is all heart.—*God is love.* Fear not then to enlarge your heart's capacities, to give vigour to its exercises. Love as extensively, and as intensely, as you can. Love God. Love everybody and everything that is lovely. Teach your children to love; to love the rose, to love the robin, to love their parents, to love their God. Let it be the studied object of your domestic culture, to give them warm hearts, ardent affections. Bind your whole family together by these strong cords, you cannot make them too strong. Religion is love—love to God—love to man.—*Abbott.*

How to Judge of the Industry of Ministers.

A farmer is apt to suppose, if he does not see his minister at work in the field every day, he must be idle, or lazy. A mechanic wants to see him in the shop. The merchant, in the store. The professional man thinks he might be attending to some profession. So many persons judge of his industry by the amount of labor he performs in the field, the store, the shop, or in pursuing some profession.—But none of these are his appropriate work. Judge him on the Sabbath. If he comes with his mind well stored with Divine truth, and is prepared to present to the people well arranged, well digested sermons, from Sabbath to Sabbath—sermons that are calculated to interest and edify the church and the congregation; don't charge that man with being idle or lazy; he is at his work when you are asleep.—*Journal and Messenger.*

Two Errors.

I hardly know which is the greater error in a husbandman, that of expecting a harvest without industry, or that of repining after being industrious, at the harvest God is pleased to send. I hope you, my readers, are avoiding these two errors. To plough and harrow, and sow the seed diligently, and to be thankful whether the produce be five, ten, fifty or an hundred fold, is what we should all seek after. Most of us like to be figures, and not ciphers; but our heavenly Father can make a cipher in the sum total of his merciful dealings with mankind of very great importance. When I