

Ecclesiastes 9:8 (T) 70712

Bible Treasury: Volume N4, Garments White and Head Anointed (9:8)

We take these words spiritually, as an exhortation to personal holiness, and to personal joy. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness (1 Thess. 4:7). Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). They are not for such as are yet in their sins of scarlet and crimson (Isa. 1:18), but for those who, once in that guilty condition, have accepted the invitation there given, and are now white as snow. They have heard the Savior's voice (Matt. 11:28), and have laid their heavy burden down, "down at Jesus' feet," and now rest in Him by faith through His all-atonning work. "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). For both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. 2:11).

The great apostle says, For to me to live is Christ (Phil. 1:21). Alas! the inconsistency of many professing Christians has been since his day a cause of scorn and stumbling. Those outside read our daily lives, and are influenced more thereby than by what we say. The apostle could always point to himself: take an example among others from Phil. 4:9, Those things, which ye hath both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you. Weak as we are, by continually looking to Jesus, we may be strong. "My grace is sufficient." Otherwise we walk as men, careless, thoughtless, watchless, prayerless, selfish, and worldly. Thus we defile our garments. Like "little children weak," we often fall down. Is it not so? "And let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall."

May the desire of all God's children then be for garments always white. White is an emblem of purity. Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, to keep himself unspotted from the world (James 1:27). Let us hate even the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 23). Spots are plain on a white garment. Hence the Lord counsels us "to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed" (Rev. 3:18). Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame (Rev. 16:15).

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word (Psa. 119:9).

The Lord not only washed all believers from their sins in His blood (Rev. 1:5), but He lives for us as our High Priest on high where He is also Advocate for one, if he sin. In John 13 we see Him rising from supper laying aside His garments, taking the towel and the basin, girding Himself, and washing the disciples' feet. What an act of humility and condescension on His part! But this is not all: "Know ye what I have done unto you?" His prayer to the Father was, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:17-19). He that is washed (or bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. Washed from our sins in His blood once for all, we continually need the word applied by the Spirit to our walk and ways. For 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 the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:25-27). By the Holy Ghost He brings home to every attentive believer His word, whereby we are led to confess the sins of our walk, when we fail in communion; and we obtain forgiveness of God our Father in His government of our souls day by day (Matt. 6:15, John 15:2, 1 Peter 1:17). So 1 John 1:9 is good for both saint and sinner. "Little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any one sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:1, 2). Let thy garments be always white.

II. Let thy head lack no ointment.

Ointment, or oil, in the O. T. is typical of the Holy Ghost in the New. Kings and priests were anointed with oil: both are fulfilled in Christ. Such is the order in the N. T.: first quickening, then salvation, and with it the sealing and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). "Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"; yea more "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:5-9). What true and constant cause for holy joy! Even in fasting the Lord says, Thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face etc. (Matt. 6:16).

Salvation then through the accepted work of our Lord Jesus Christ is meant to fill us with joy from above. "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." For how long? Is it less settled and lasting than for restored Israel in the coming day? "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance forever." "These things I speak in the world, that they (His own) might have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13). Was it for the apostles only to enjoy? The last was given to say to God's family, "these things write we unto you that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:4); as another had written long before when a prisoner in Rome, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be not anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:4-7).

Let thy garments be always white for His sake.

Let thy head lack no oil for our own portion in His grace.

May God bless these words of His more fully to the writer, and to all readers. T.

