Ephesians 1:3-14 (James A. Taylor) 72418

Bible Treasury: Volume N12, Ephesians 1:3-14, Two Addresses on (1:3-14)

Perhaps there is hardly any portion of the word more familiar to us than what we have here, and therefore it may not be that we have what we do not know already; but I want to press upon us what the grace of God has done for us, and our consequent responsibility. We are here, not to please ourselves, but Him Who is worthy. It is the deep sense of grace that enables us to please Him. I don't say alone, for we have the Spirit of God to enable us to carry it out; so we cannot excuse ourselves, and say we cannot carry out God's purpose for us. It is He “Who works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure"; so it shuts the mouth at once of all excuses.

Here we find the apostle breaking out in the blessings of ver. 3. Now I think you cannot have a wider charter than this. Is your idea of a spiritual blessing on a level with your temporal mercies? You would think it a great thing if God had said, “blessed us with” every earthly comfort! That was true of Israel. I do not make out that we are better, but I do make out that I am immensely more favored than the people of old—so are you—not that we are better than was Israel. Has not God a right to do what He will with His own people and His own resources? What of the parable of the laborers. “Friend, I do thee no wrong!” “Is thine eye evil, because I am good?” Because you hear of some others not working so long you begin to grumble! What are men's rights? Is has been said, Nothing but men's wrongs. We are here to maintain God's rights.

Our blessing is very varied: “every spiritual blessing.” I am sure we none of us believe it as we should. Excuse my saying so, but do we not feel it is too vast? Yet let God be true. This is what He reveals to us— “EVERY spiritual blessing.” If that lays hold of you, you will say, “Well, I am Thine forever!” We are free, not to please ourselves, but free to serve like His slaves, His bondmen, but a bondage of freedom, of love. Do I want to do anything that is not pleasing to Him? Would you grieve your best earthly friend? How much less this Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. No, we are here to please Him. Is it too much? Can we not say that whether present or absent we are “ambitious” to be well pleasing to him? He has come out according to the wealth of His own grace. I do not say you are in the enjoyment of every blessing, but they are yours. There are the diamonds on the table, flowers, books, pictures, etc., and I say, “It is all yours.” You do not take all up together; you pick them up one at a time. How much of this presentation of God's grace has your heart laid hold of? We are weak things; yes, I know it; but this is “in heavenly places” —Canaan. “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, I have given you"; but you must put you foot on it if you are to enjoy it, your must appropriate it. Caleb acted on it. “I would like Hebron—a strong city.” He goes forward and takes it. He had to go through the wilderness forty years through the fault of his brethren. We do suffer for the faults of our brethren, and are members one of another. It was no fault of Caleb—no. Well, he too must have felt the pressure of things, but he says, “I am as strong this day as when I started”. The Lord knows how to sustain His people, and the heart that is true to Him. We have the hand of Omnipotence to fall back on. We are not able to bear the force of it, but He knows how to deal gently. He delights to bless.

You never asked Him to bless you with every spiritual blessing. Had I a will in my being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world? No, I wasn't born. But does He not see the end from the beginning? And before the worlds were founded we were chosen in the purpose of God—those in the mind of God predestinated to be companions of the Lord Jesus, redeemed by His precious blood. What difficulties presented themselves! The children of Israel were brought through the wilderness, but those who came out of Egypt perished. Have you ever found God to fail? Can't you trust Him? “I can trust Him for my soul,” you say. Nay, trust Him for everything! Do you realize that your hands are full—that you cannot be richer than you are? He does not give everything now, for we could not stand it. In the day that is coming He will give us all things. But this is now. Would you have it apart from Christ? This is in Him (ver. 4). We must be according to God. He is holy; He is light. We must be suited to God's presence. “Before Him in” fear? No, “in love.” We can hardly say we are “blameless” or “holy” in the full sense of this verse, for this is the consummation of God's purpose; but we are “holy brethren,” and we are to pursue holiness—to lay hold of it. “Everyone that hath this hope on Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” There is the constant work of the Spirit of God in our souls, conforming us in spirit now to Him.

Ver 5. “Sonship” is a grand word. “Adoption” might give a false thought. While it is a good word in itself, we do not always take in its breadth. If we adopt a child, we may cast off that child. We may go out of the family, and lay hold of some waif, and adopt it; but it is not born into the family: there is no link of nature. But if I am born into the family I am a child, and you cannot deny the relationship. You may cut out of a will, but you cannot annul the relationship. John always speaks of “children.” But this is “sonship.” Not only am I brought into sonship, but born into the family. But sonship gives character and position. “He is my son.” So we have been brought into sonship, and we are waiting for the manifestation of it. It is not now displayed; we are called to suffer and groan, waiting for that day when every blade of grass will display the glory of Him that made it. Jerusalem will be the joy of the whole earth, the holy city. It was so called at the crucifixion. But what a day when that comes, and it is the joy of all the earth! That is because of “Jehovah shammah"; Jehovah is there. It is sad to see how the name of God is being deleted from the world. In all their thoughts He is not! Oh, the fools! Now it says, “according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved” (ver. 6). He is going to show that—not the praise of the glory of my belief, my trust, but of His grace. All “in Him,” or “in whom,” —all Christ—the object in this chapter.

Ver. 7. It is a peculiar verse. “We have obtained an inheritance.” Jacob was the lot of Jehovah's inheritance, but we are not His inheritance—we are the sharers with Him in it. What wonderful grace! When He takes His inheritance we are with Him, His heavenly bride. Who form this bride? The Jews of old? No. We are to reign with Christ: they are to be reigned over. And we are sealed for it. It is made true and sure by the Spirit. I pass over the central truth of this chapter, redemption (ver 7). The grand thing now is to know not only that one is saved, though that is a grand thing, but the knowledge of His will— “having made known to us the mystery of His will” (ver. 9). It is not enough that He has redeemed me, but He opens His heart to me, and says, 'I want you to see what I purpose.' The will is opened before me-hidden as it has been from before the world's foundation. That will has to do with everything connected with my position down here. Take

worship. How would He have me worship? We get it in chap. 3 and there I get the real want of my soul. Here it is the “good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself” —to do His will. Am I doing it? Is it bondage if it is the response of love? “The perfect law of liberty.” He has given the Spirit, and says “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed until the day of redemption.” It is a stimulus to know His eye is on us in our little corner. He looks down into your heart and mine, and says, “Are you true to me? Are you seeking to walk after the purpose of that will now you know it?” We are going to be manifested in the likeness of Christ: oh, don't let the world have a place in your heart—the world that crucified the Lord of Glory. We are called to wait for the Son from heaven Who delivered us from the wrath to come.

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