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The Master's Yoke.



“If a man love me,
he will keep my words.”

John xiv: 23.

THE MILK OF THE WORD.

Milk in the Word would seem to be typical of sustenance, as water is of life and wine is of joy, all ministered by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. In Isaiah we are counselled to "buy wine and milk." A definite transaction is contemplated based upon divine resources and our need. Money is not demanded, God always responds to our felt needs, whether as sinners or afterwards as saints.

We have milk mentioned in three interesting ways in the New Testament. First, in 1 Cor. III : 2, Paul says, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet are ye able." In this passage carnal Christians are in view. We often hear that there are only two classes of persons, saved and unsaved. But we see that there are three, unsaved, carnal Christians, and spiritual Christians. Now, Paul had 'deep things of God' to communicate, but while the Corinthian saints were carnal he could only treat them as young children, who could not digest anything stronger than milk. They heeded his words, for in the second epistle he makes known to them much deep and precious truth. We can only be spiritual as our eyes are on Christ—not on our brethren, not our service, not ourselves good or bad, but only Christ—to be able to say in our measure, 'To me to live is Christ.' How sad, even for an earthly parent, to have a child who does not grow up. Surely there can scarcely be a greater earthly sorrow. And how much more does our God and Father grieve over His children who, through carnality, do not grow. 'Grow in grace,' He says, 'and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' (2 Peter III : 18).

In Hebrew V : 11-14 we have another type of believer, one who has become spiritually sick—an invalid. He has tasted strong meat, but has, so to speak, taken to his bed and desires only milk. In fact, like his forefathers in the wilderness, he is inclined to despise altogether the food of God's provision and turn back to Judaism, its ritual and shadows. If in Corinthians the apostle refuses to attempt strong meat for carnal Christians whose reason and imagination might thereby begin to work, so here he refuses to be deterred from exhorting these Hebrew believers onward to the full enjoyment of the glories of Christ, and His infinite

superiority to all the shadows they were hankering after. Was He not the Light that cast the shadow?

Lastly, in Peter (1 Peter II :1) we find the apostle, still addressing believing Jews, urging them to desire the "pure mental milk of the Word" (New Translation) in order that "ye may grow thereby." There is nothing to despise in the 'Milk.' It is always a good food for growth for young and old alike. But young and weak people can take nothing else, that is the point. When we can enjoy all the precious revelations of the Holy Spirit we may still drink of the milk of the Word to our great profit and blessing.

Notice these words "as new born babes." What does a new born babe do? Why, simply desires and drinks. There is no effort in his growth, it is inevitable, if he is healthy. One is reminded of John VII. 37, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.' If anyone drinks in enjoyment of Himself, not only is there growth and refreshment for oneself, but an overflowing. This is our Father's delight that we should overflow. The effort is not to be in service, yet what greater service can we render than to be "overflowing" with Christ!

Notes of an address.

I. TIMOTHY 4.

This is not the great apostasy (2 Thess. II), but the introduction of evil doctrine within the church, and that which not merely reaches its head in Roman Catholicism, but spreads its roots wherever there is the bringing in of something more than the truth. It was an express warning by the Spirit, and all the Apostles, discerning its character even in early days, are used to combat the evil. Paul himself had warned this same Ephesian assembly to which Timothy was commissioned 'by the space of three years night and day with tears' (Acts XX) : Peter, knowing that he would shortly put off his tabernacle, utters the same warning (2 Peter II) : and John refuses admittance to those who bring not the doctrine of the incarnate Son (2 Jn). For the origin of these false doctrines is of demons, and they are raised up to combat the mystery of piety, the truth concerning the manifestation of the Son of God (I Tim. III : 16). If there is not a true yielding to the Lord Jesus Christ, that He may have control, then (because man must needs serve a master) he yields his mind

to seducing spirits, and his own reward is a cauterised conscience.

There is a setting up of man's wisdom against the Word of God. The Word is God's full revelation ; we may not alter it in any way—every word is pure—and we are called to be faithful in holding to it ; not to seek to bring in some new development, but to hold fast that which was from the beginning. This acquaintance with the Word and faithfulness in connection with it—allowing it to have its way with us—is vital. See the emphasis in vv. 3, 5, 6, 9, 13, 16, and throughout the Epistle generally. And so the precious things of God are destroyed—forbidding to marry would refuse us not only God's order for man—that it is not good for man to be alone—but the whole picture of love and relationship (and the Lord's own joy, too) which God Himself gives us by bringing us, in His infinite mercy, as the Bride of Christ. So, too, abstaining from meats detracts from the wisdom of God in providing every good and perfect gift for His children. For these things are to be received with thanksgiving (it is indeed all we can give to God), being sanctified by His Word and intercourse with Him. This should be our natural state, our fellowship is with Him, and as His children we should be found in all the intimacy and continual nearness that is spoken of as 'freely addressing Him' (N.T.)

And so Timothy, as a good servant, must hold and teach only those things that are of the faith once delivered to the saints. He must exercise himself in the propagation of sound teaching, and as he thus ministers to others in the power of the Spirit, he himself will be nourished (a beautiful expression) in those same words of faith. This is the true example for all who would seek to serve the Lord and the saints. For the exercise of piety not only provides, for us here, nourishing our spiritual life, giving us to drink of the joys of the Lord, but that which is for our enjoyment now will be also in the glory. The Lord Himself will occupy us fully then, and what we have learned of Him here will be for profit in the life to come. The Word of God is faithful, and we do well to hold fast to it: not intellectually, which only leads to the dangers outlined in the first verses, but in the heart and conscience. It must have its way with us ; we must bow to its teaching ; and life and ways, conversation and habits, must

all be formed from it. For the faithful Word is the living Word with power for life, and it leads to the living God. Because of hope in this God those who with Paul were set for a defence of the Gospel would not only labour, combatting evil doctrine and spreading the truth, but must also suffer reproach. For they lived according to the Word, following the example of the Lord Himself, Who could say, 'I am altogether that which I say unto you I am'. The way of the word is directly contrary to the way of the world, and must bring reproach in measure as we are faithful to it. But our hope is in a living God, Who is a preserver of all men, especially of those that believe.

And so the Word is for life and profit. This comes not merely from its study, but from occupation with it in a practical way. Timothy was to give himself not only to reading, but to the exercise of his gift, to upholding the truth in teaching and exhortation. We have seen (v. 6) that this exercise would not only edify his hearers but would nourish himself (see also v. 16). For life is manifested in activity, and to be negligent of any gift or service is to cause it to atrophy. He was in a special position, he had a special gift which had been the object of prophecy, and was specially commissioned to the Ephesians ; nevertheless the Word for him is the word for us that, occupied wholly with that which is good, we may refuse the evil. 'Be wholly in them'—progress should be manifest, for there is no standing still. Not to progress is to decline, and the way to progress is a sincere and whole-hearted yielding to the truth, even if it cuts across our present ways and brings reproach. Yet it will also bring the privilege of association with that One Who had hidden the Word in His heart ; more, was Himself the living Word of God. And this yielding, this occupation, is to be continuous while we are here, and as the Spirit makes the truth good to us. Full acquaintance with the truth is not necessary to a right walk, that depends upon the heart being occupied with Christ, and the eye being upon Him, but being thus occupied with Him we shall have an appetite for the Word that speaks of Him, and shall not be satisfied except we are seeking to enter more fully into the revelation of God that is committed to us. This is continuing, and to do it and to manifest that we are doing so is not merely for our own salvation, but that of those also who hear us.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

Philadelphia and Laodicea.

First of all we might make a few general remarks about the setting of this message to Philadelphia. It is less directly associated with any body or era than the preceding messages. The Wesleyan revival and commencement of the "Brethren movement" do form a period in Church history marked in great measure by the character of this message, but there have been at all times and still are those pleasing the Lord in brotherly love. Let us then beware of saying "We are Philadelphia" since this message now refers to no visible company exclusively and it has been well said that we now look for Philadelphians. The spirit that would identify any group of saints with this message as though it applied to them alone, sounds sadly akin to the Laodicean pride and assumption we shall note shortly.

We have here, then, a small and outwardly weak company giving pleasure to the Lord. There is no word of rebuke to this assembly, though the same Holy and True One is speaking to them. Here alone He shows His character as "He that hath the keys of David, that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth," and He sets before them an open door. We find "a door" connected with opportunity for witness or service in I Cor. XVI:9; II Cor. II. 12, and Col. IV:3, and it is suggested it has the same reference here. This is the spiritual condition the Lord can use - no such provision was spoken of to Ephesus—but here where, in spite of weakness, all the "little strength" is exercised to keep His word, the offer is made. Where there is real love to Christ, and brotherly love clears up the little difficulties of corporate walk, there is a company the Lord can use mightily though they be few. And no man can shut the door He opens—let us mark that. How often we tend to miss opportunities because we foresee difficulties. It may be the Lord is directing our activity elsewhere (e.g. Acts XVI:7) but if He leads us to service, let us go forward; no man can rob us of the opening. So we need to live in constant communion with Him "understanding what the will of the Lord is." These saints at Philadelphia were like that, they kept His word, and did not deny His name. In Pergamos they held fast the name and did not deny the faith—what a

vast difference. Not to deny the faith is merely to remain on Christian ground, e.g. they did not become Epicureans, but to keep His word, as John tells us, flows from the perfection of God's love in our hearts, (I John II : 5). This is the goal of Christian experience in which tribulation, experience and hope all play their part (Rom. V), learning what the Lord's interests and desires are. If one might use a simple illustration—how eager lovers are to find out each others likes and dislikes, so that they may please each other, with 'commandments' rarely entering it. Let us so occupy ourselves with the Lord that we learn His will for us and 'do those things that are pleasing in His sight.' And again, it is possible to hold fast His Name, defending the revealed truth as to His Person, and yet practically even go so far as denying it. We read 'Let everyone that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity,' (II Tim. II) and that does not refer only to ecclesiastical association, but to every point of life. Let us beware of a purely theoretical faith, which may accompany a dishonouring walk. Maybe we have only a "little strength"; well, do not despise the day of small things but use that little strength to good purpose by applying it to keep His word and not deny His Name. Professors may oppose us and tell us they are as good as we, but in the coming day He will show those He loves. Things are in upheaval now; the wheat and the tares grow together and man cannot tell the difference, but it will surely be shown.

We have in verse 10 both encouragement and further strengthening for our faith in the blessed hope. As by His grace we keep the word of His patience, enduring all things knowing the end is in His hand, we are assured that we shall be kept from (or 'out of') the great temptation yet to fall. Some tell us we have to pass through the great Tribulation before we see Our Saviour's face, but here is a clear promise that we shall be kept out of it. Now He keeps us in the midst of trial, but we look to Him as "our Deliverer *from* coming wrath," (I Thess. I) when He shall take us away to the many mansions of His Father's house. We look for HIM not the "man of sin". We await the rapture of saints, not the full-blown demonstration of evil that takes place when "He who restrains" is withdrawn (II Thess. II : 8). To us the message "Behold I come quickly" is a wonderful in-

centive and cheer :—

“ Oh, let the thought our spirits cheer
The Lord Himself will soon be here.”

There is a sober note in the exhortation “ that no man take thy crown.” We cannot lose eternal life nor any of the blessings which are ours in Christ ; but if the Lord gives us a service to carry out and we shrink from it, He will find someone else to do it and the reward will pass with it. Let us hold fast what we have—a wonderful heritage of truth indeed—for to him that hath more shall be given, and our enjoyment will be deepened and our service and worship more acceptable. It has been suggested that the “ Pillar in the house of My God ” (verse 12) does not refer to any structural support—God’s temple needs no such support. But even to-day we marvel at the beauty of many ancient pillars, and read many inscriptions on them. As the characters of “ overcomer ” are manifested in us, so shall we beautify God’s temple and bear testimony to His love and wisdom and bear His new Name. In that day we shall go no more out, what a blessed ending to a Philadelphian life ! May this brotherly love characterise our walk more and more, that we may seek to help every child of God, not offending nor driving away but “ by love serve one another ; ” that we may walk in fellowship as far as possible in such a day of ruin, keeping His word, not denying His name.

So we reach the final phase of Church history with the message to Laodicea, which shows the lukewarm state in which we find things at the present day. From each revival the following failure is increasingly serious. Love lost in Ephesus revived to bind the saints together through the persecution of Smyrna, but soon afterwards the church lapsed into worldly alliance as seen in Pergamos. The Reformation broke the power of Rome, but in Sardis we find a relapse into deadness, living merely on name. In the last 150 years the recovery of much truth produced the character of Philadelphia and decline since then has been of the most serious character. Truth is revealed that we may obey it ; that we may enjoy it ; and that we may share it with others ; but alas, in many cases it has had the effect of causing pride. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. Nothing is more blinding than pride, whether we are proud of our knowledge, our position, our

service. "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than himself" (Phil II: 1—4) is the scriptural exhortation and such humility is no bar to learning, in fact it will make the truth all the sweeter and more powerful ; it is no bar to taking a position pleasing to God, but will cause us to try and lead others to that position ; it is no bar to service, but will add new zeal and love.

In Laodicea we find them ignorant of their true position, "Thou knowest not that *thou* art wretched . . . miserable, poor, blind and naked." So Christendom boasts of its riches and self-sufficiency, but in reality it is poor—how different from "the poor of this world rich in faith"—it is blind, cannot see afar off, cannot see its own condition nor the signs of the times ; naked, with nothing to hide its emptiness from God and soon to be manifested to man as worthless. Its works are lukewarm. How exactly this sums up the "form of godliness but denying the power thereof" that characterises these last times. They have enough of Christ to take the shine off worldly pleasures ; enough of the world to cloud communion with Christ, and so there is no out and out service for Him. There is counsel suited to the case and every provision made ; gold tried in the fire, white raiment, eye-salve ; but note these have to be *bought*. It will cost something to be faithful in such a profession. We find no thought of a general repentance, however, and from Matthew XXV. we see that the "foolish virgins," the empty professors, find their lack too late and "while they went to buy" the bridegroom came. At the present time we find there is no place in the professing church for Christ ; He is without, and seeks admission to the heart of the individuals.

"Oh love that passeth knowledge so patiently to wait
Oh sin that hath no equal, so fast to bar the gate."

What joy when He is admitted "I will come in and sup with him and he with Me." What a solemn thought it is that the great part of Christendom has never experienced this joy ; that the Lord is a stranger to those who profess His Name. Can we wonder at the judgment of verse 16 ? The professing Church meeting its final judgment—to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.

While this is the state of things around us, it applies primarily, in spiritual character, to a falling away from the

faithfulness shown in Philadelphia so I think we who have been brought into such a heritage of truth largely through that revival, need to guard most carefully against this failure. We see something of the spirit of it often enough "I am rich and increased with goods." Let us flee from such a spirit. We *have* been blessed with wonderful teaching ; let us hold it fast, let us share it with other saints, let it mould our lives, let it produce worship acceptable to God, but let us beware above all that we are not lifted up in pride by reason of it. Let us accept and profit by rebuke and chastening which the Lord in love has brought upon us—it is only to those exercised thereby that chastening produces the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Heb. XII : 11). We shall in that coming day be seated with Christ in His throne ; it is for that He prepares us, it is to that He has appointed us ; it is the place for overcomers ; let us in some measure seek to be worthy of it.

This closes the history of the Church ; Chapter IV. shows us the scene in heaven after the rapture of the saints. The time is short ; our Lord will soon return ; nothing now awaits fulfilment before that glad moment. Let us keep ourselves in the love of God, abhorring pride, showing brotherly love to all His people, keeping His word and not denying His Name.

REBECCA AND THE PRESENT TESTIMONY.

The Ministry of the Spirit.

Genesis XXIV. I Cor., XI.

In the Book of Genesis we have presented to us the beginning of those things that work out in the entire revelation. In principle we have brought before us most of the great subjects of Scripture : Creation, Sin, Judgment, Promise, Sacrifice, Resurrection, God's Election of Grace and Covenant, the separation of His people from the world, the final setting up of Israel in blessing under the true Joseph, following the rapture of the Church as seen typically in Enoch (God *took* him).

Having outlined the principle subjects of Genesis we can readily see that our topic in this chapter clearly outlines the Father's or God's desire that Christ His Son should have a Bride in this scene, to share His glory in a future day and to be for His delight during His rejection on earth by Israel and

thus bringing into evidence His great purpose—it is not good for man to be alone.

In Chapter XXII. we have the true Isaac offered and received back in a figure from the dead. Hebrews XI : 19.

In Chapter XXIII. we have Sarah laid aside, a figure of Israel, and Abraham STANDING up from before his dead, signifying that what was laid aside in weakness would be raised in power, when God finally re-establishes Israel who were cut off for failure in the line of testimony.

In Chapter XXIV. which is now before us, we see the Father seeking a bride for his son, Isaac, as compensation for the loss of his mother. We see at the end of the chapter Isaac is comforted after his mother's death (verse 67). The principle characters of our chapter are as follows :

Abraham, type of God the Father.

The unnamed servant would suggest the Holy Spirit.

Rebecca, typically the Church as the Bride of Christ.

Isaac, type of Christ, Son of God, beloved of the Father and Subject of the entire ministry of the Spirit.

We cannot, when studying this Chapter, do so in a Gospel sense, as it does not seem to convey that idea, nor can we treat it as figurative of the Lord coming for His Church. One would not condemn the chapter being used in Gospel, nor object even to the Lord's coming being referred to, knowing quite well that a number of evangelists have done so to profit. As one has said, the application of a truth is *not* always the true setting of the passage, parable or narrative.

It is not the thought of God making or creating a bride that is before us. That would convey the Gospel. It is more God by the Spirit seeking decision from one who has already been made—"Wilt thou go with this man?" (verse 58). Then we have the purpose of God and His sovereignty in verses 7 and 40, "He shall send his angel before thee and thou *shalt* take a wife for my son." Abraham's faith in God is seen also in his knowledge of God's purpose for his son. Also we have the perseverance or insistent attitude of the unnamed servant (Holy Spirit)—"Hinder me not," verse 56. Most of us know of the Spirit's striving with us before salvation and during our pilgrimage down here. May each of us value and pay attention by obeying the demands and pleadings of the Spirit.

Then as to it setting forth the Lord's coming for His Church, we must remember that we are not, as a body, asked to decide as to whether we shall go or not. We shall in the twinkling of an eye be caught up to meet Him in the air and so be with Him for ever. In this chapter the bride is taken to Sarah's tent. It is more the idea of being with Him here in this scene, in the line of testimony. The tent would convey that idea. What I think is before us here is the Spirit's work in forming the Church in true bridal affection down here.

The Apostle Paul's desire was that he might present the Church as a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Cor. XI : 2), Rebecca answered to this in the action of veiling herself at the sight of Isaac coming out from the Well of Lahai-roi, meaning "My God liveth and seeth me." How beautiful it is when He, the Holy Ghost, reveals to us the Lord coming out in principle to those who are His kindred ; also being effectually swayed by the Spirit's ministry— "Who is this that cometh to meet us ?" "It is my Master." The servant (Holy Spirit) said, "It is my Master :" therefore she alights from the camel and veils herself. What a contrast to Sarah, the departed vessel of testimony. She was found without a veil— her affections were divided. But Rebecca, said, in effect, ' I am all for Christ ' (Isaac being the type), so she was beyond reproach. Sarah and Abraham were rebuked by Abimelech, who on discovering that Sarah was the wife of Abraham, gave him a thousand pieces of silver and told Sarah, " Let that be for a covering " or one might venture to say, " Buy a veil for a covering." That I think is the Spirit's effort to keep the Assembly in veiled character. I speak of the covered woman, in I Cor. XI.

Let us consider a few of the leading facts of this chapter to enable us to see the Spirit's moving with us to form us in virgin character or bridal affection. First we notice how important it is that the genealogy is correct. Abraham stresses the point of kindred. So we see the bride must be suitable in origin ; those of Canaanitish origin were not suitable for Isaac. In Romans III. we have a true picture of what man is in the sight of God — morally unsuited for the testimony of God. You do not look for moral beauty in the sinner, you try to bring before him his need of beauty. That comes in the Gospel and by accepting God's judgment of his condition he can receive the Righteousness of Christ and become morally

suited to God, and become part of the Bride. However, this side of things is not presented to us in Rebecca. As a type she is not seen as needing anything removed or cleansed. She is seen as kindred with Isaac to begin with. If a person can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," he is of an entirely different order from the man in Romans III. He is, therefore, morally kindred with Christ.

When the Lord was here on earth he became very attractive to some, and he found that which was responsive to Himself. In MATTHEW the Lord owns as His kindred "Whosoever doeth the will of my Father in heaven": in MARK, those who do the will of God; in LUKE it is those who hear the Word of God and do it. This makes it clear who His kindred are. Such persons are the product of His own workmanship.

So, my dear reader, how important it is that we should be clear as to our genealogy. How blessed a moment it was when God by His grace brought us out, so to speak, from the family of unsuitability to that of perfect suitedness, to have hearts responsive to the Spirit's ministry concerning God's Son, that when asked in this scene of His rejection we should in our affections accept the proposal, "Wilt thou go with this MAN?"—"I will go." What a decision and what a joy it is to the Lord when He hears that resolve: "I will go."

Now that we are clear as to kindred and what is God's purpose in us for His Son, let us ask ourselves the question, "Are we characterized as those who form part of the Bride?" Do we own to the world in a public way who and whose we are, or do we hold our affections for Christ in a private way? Do those who come in contact with us know we are espoused to Him? Are we walking with those who corporately are the Bride of Christ? Are we attired in bridal attire, or is it that our garments are spotted with the flesh? Do those of our household benefit by our association with Him? Have we welcomed the Lord's Spirit in our homes? Have we entertained the Spirit? Is there room for the Spirit to lodge in our household? Rebecca could say "Yes, my Lord, and thy camels also." She was found in the way of excess. She says "There is straw and provender." How blessed it is to see how Rebecca responded to the questions and requests of the servant and the result of this response for Rebecca, and her household was that the servant brought out many precious

things for herself and also her household.

Let us look at the manner of the unnamed servant's approach ; also, how he prayed that the suitable woman would come to the well and give him and his camels water to drink. Before he had done speaking, behold Rebecca came to the well to draw water, and when she was coming up from the well the servant ran to meet her and said, " Let me I pray thee drink a little out of thy pitcher " She said " Drink my lord and I will draw water for thy camels also." I think the servant found Rebecca by the Spirit of grace that came out in her—her desire to minister to his needs and all that was associated with him in his distinct mission. She gives him drink, also draws for his camels and therefore she became morally suited to receive the ring and the bracelets. I think the Spirit's ministry to us, who form part of the Bride, is to adorn us and ornament us with the excellencies of Christ, (Isa. IV : 2 R.V.). I think we have this brought before us in I Peter III : 1, 4. How precious that the hidden man of the heart be adorned with His own beauties and witnessed by the world in our godly apparel as becoming the Lord's espoused. The Spirit's ministry is by His Word—do we read it daily ? Is it our daily food ? Are we found at the readings, receiving fresh impressions of the One we profess to adore ? Are we conversing one with the other regarding His loveliness ? If we are not found at the reading meeting how can we enter with others at the Supper, corporately speaking the one mind, praising His blessed name and worshipping Him as the result of what has been made good in the soul after conferring one with the other at the reading. Let me press this point a little. Have we not noticed time and again those who are at the reading are generally at the Supper, but all who partake of the Supper are not all at the reading ? I venture to state that what we receive at the reading by the gifts through the Spirit, is what fills our priestly golden censers in worship at the Supper. Again, what we receive at the reading fits us to stand before the world in our public testimony in the Gospel or evening meeting, not forgetting our gathering for prayer to God to bless us in our spiritual activities. How can the wicked world, or religious world, see our bridal character if we are so changeable in our actions. Should we not be as strong in our six days testimony as when we come together on the morning

of the first day of the week ? Suffer this word of exhortation as the writer himself feels also the need of it.

In I Cor. X. we have the Table of Christianity where we feed on Christ. In Chapter XI. we have the Supper prepared for Him by those in bridal character, even though marked by failure. In Chapter XII. we have the gifts to profit by if used in the love set forth in Chapter XIII. Then we have effectual ministry or prophecy and its effect seen in Chapter XIV, verses 24 and 25, where an unbeliever or unlearned person shall be judged of all and fall on his face and worship God and report God is in you of a truth.

I am perfectly sure that all of us who love the Lord would like to see a measure, if not a full recovery of that which was from the beginning, and brethren dwelling together in perfect unity, all speaking the same thing and all seeking to be in testimony what we are in God's sight—one body in the Lord. It is a precious thing indeed to know we are in Christ, and members of one body, but it is more precious to be in the Lord, owning Him as Lord and Head of all things to the Church which is His Body or Bride. Let us not resort to new methods sought out by man—let us not cast away our given bracelets and ring (R.V. or nose ring). Let us use what is of Himself to satisfy Him Whom we love, since what is of ourselves is not fitting and proper. Let us have it "thus saith the Lord" and "this we will do."

Now that Rebecca is secured by the servant as to kindred, there arises the question of the household. Rebecca is marked out as being of a changed order. This is seen by Laban. He sees the bracelets and the ear ring. He sees that as to service she is secured for Isaac and her ear also secured in the line of obedience. If what was seen by Rebecca's brother was seen in each of us there would be no difficulty in leaving the household and going out entirely to Christ. That is what I think the Lord by his present day ministry is doing, calling us out from all influences, family or otherwise, to Himself. Hence we see how the servant stands for no delays, not even ten days. "Hinder me not" is his reply to Rebecca's household. There must be decision on our part. Call the damsel and enquire of her—"Wilt thou go with this man?"—"I will go." So Rebecca with her nurse and damsels and under the servant's guidance, leaves her household. Hard it may seem, and hard

it is for us to leave what is dear to us, and how hard does what is dear to us, try to hinder us from moving to a separate position, as it were, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. Abraham had this difficulty with Terah, also just Lot, but nothing matured for Abraham until Terah died and Lot was separated from him. Separation is according to the mind of God, not according to our mind, and God's mind is for us to be to Him and Him alone.

For Thee Thy bride is waiting, Lord ; and while
Her eyes grow tired with watching, yet the thought
Of seeing Him she loves can reconcile
Her heart to patience, like to His who sought
So long for her, and paid so great a price.
There's nothing here but does distress her soul,
Yet in His strength she conquers the device
Of Satan ; while she presses for her goal.

For all that hinders, tries to hold her here
Is reckoned nothing worth ; as, laid aside
She goes rejoicing to the One held dear,
A stranger here on earth, though earth deride.

For Thou hast said that Thou wilt quickly come,
And so she waits for Thee to take her home.

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