

KEPT FOR THE MASTER'S USE

by

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CHRIST FOR US

THE typical promise, "**Thou shalt abide for Me many days**" (Hosea 3:3), is indeed a marvel of love. For it is given to the most undeserving described under the strongest possible figure of utter worthlessness and treacherousness—the woman beloved, yet an adulteress.

The depth of the abyss shows the length of the line that has fathomed it, yet only the length of the line reveals the real depth of the abyss. The sin shows the love, and the love reveals the sin.

The Bible has few words more touching, though seldom quoted, than those just preceding this wonderful promise: "**The love of the Lord toward the children of Israel, who look to other Gods, and love flagons of wine.**" Put that into the personal application which no doubt underlies it, and saw, "The love of the Lord toward me, who have looked away from Him, with wandering, faithless eyes, to other helps and hopes, and have loved earthly joys and sought early gratifications—the love of the Lord toward even me!"

And then hear Him saying in the next verse, "**So I bought her to me**"; stooping to do that in His unspeakable condescension of love, not with the typical silver and barley, but with the precious blood of Christ. Then, having thus loved us, and rescued us, and bought us with a price indeed, He says, still under the same figure, "**Thou shalt abide for Me many days.**"

This is both a command and a pledge. But the very pledge implies our past unfaithfulness, and the proved need of even our own part being undertaken by the ever patient Lord. He Himself has to guarantee our faithfulness, because there is no other hope of our continuing faithful. Well may such love win our full and glad surrender, and such a promise win our happy and confident trust! But He says more. He says, "**So will I also be for thee!**" And this seems an even greater marvel of love, as we observe how He meets every detail of our consecration with this wonderful word.

1. *His Life for thee!* The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Oh, wonderful gift? not promised, but *given*; not to friends, but to enemies. Given without condition, without reserve, without return! Himself unknown and unloved, His gift unsought and unasked, He gave His life for thee; a more than royal bounty—the greatest gift that Deity could devise. Oh, grandeur of love! "**I lay down My life for the sheep!**"

And we for whom He gave it have held back, and hesitated to give our lives, not even *for* Him (He has not asked us to do that), but *to* Him! But that is past, and He has tenderly pardoned the unloving, ungrateful reserve, and has graciously accepted the poor little fleeting breath and speck of dust which was all we had to offer. And now His precious death and His glorious life are all for thee.

2. *His Eternity for thee.* All we can ask Him to take are days and moments—the little span given us as it is given, and of this only the present in deed and the future in will. As for the past, in so far as we did not give it to Him, it is too late; we can never give it now! But His past was given to us, though ours was not given to Him. Oh, what a tremendous debt does this show us! Away back in the dim depths of past eternity, or ever the earth and the world were made, His divine existence in the bosom of His Father was all for thee, purposing and planning for thee receiving and holding the promise of eternal life for thee.

Then the thirty-three years among sinners on this sinful earth: do we think enough of the slowly-wearing days and nights, the heavy-footed hours, the never-hastening minutes, that went to make up those thirty-three years of trial and humiliation? We all know how slowly time passes when suffering and sorrow are near, and there is no reason to suppose that our Master was exempted from this part of our infirmities.

Then His present is for thee.

- Even now He liveth to make intercession;
- Even now He thinketh upon thee;
- Even now He knoweth, He careth, He loveth.

Then, only to think that His whole eternity will be for thee! Millions of ages of unfoldings of all His love, and of ever new declarings of His Father's name to His brethren. Think of it! And can we ever hesitate to give all our poor little hours to His service?

3. *His Hands for thee.*

- Literal hands; literally pierced, when the whole weight of His quivering frame hung from their torn muscles and bared nerves; literally uplifted in parting blessing.
- Consecrated, priestly hands; filled hands (Exodus 28:41; 29:9, etc., margin)—filled once with His great offering, and now with gifts and blessings for thee.
- Tender hands, touching and healing, lifting and leading with gentlest care.
- Strong hands, upholding and defending.
- Open hands, filling with good and satisfying desire (Psalm 104:28, and 145:16).
- Faithful hands, restraining and sustaining. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me.

4. *His Feet for thee.* They were weary very often, they were wounded and bleeding once. They made clear footprints as He went about doing good, and as He went up to Jerusalem to suffer; and these blessed steps of His most holy life, both as substitution and example, were for thee.

Our place of waiting and learning, of resting and loving, is at His feet. And still those blessed feet are and shall be for thee, until He comes again to receive us unto Himself, until and when the word is fulfilled, “**They shall walk with me in white.**”

5. *His Voice for thee.* The “**voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to Me, My sister, My love**”; the voice that His sheep hear and know, and that calls out the fervent response, “**Master, say on!**”

This is not all. It was the literal voice of the Lord Jesus which uttered that one echoless cry of desolation on the Cross for thee, and it will be His own literal voice which will say, “**Come, ye blessed!**” to thee. And that same tender and glorious voice has literally sung and will sing for thee. I think He consecrated song for us, and made it a sweet and sacred thing forever, when He himself sang an hymn, the very last thing before He went forth to consecrate suffering for us.

That was not His last song. The Lord thy God will joy over thee with singing. And the time is coming when He will not only sing for thee or over thee, but with thee. He says He will: “**In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee!**” Now what a magnificent glimpse of joy this is! Jesus himself leading the praises of His brethren, and we ourselves singing not merely in such a chorus, but with such a leader! If singing for Jesus is such delight here, what will this singing with Jesus be? Surely song may well be a holy thing to us henceforth.

6. *His Lips for thee.* Perhaps there is no part of our consecration which it is so difficult practically to realize, and in which it is, therefore, so needful to recollect— “**I also for thee.**”

It is often helpful to read straight through one or more of the Gospels with a special thought on our mind, and see how much bears upon it. When we read one through with this thought— “**His lips for me!**”—wondering, verse by verse, at the grace which was poured into them, and the gracious words which fell from them, wondering more and more at the cumulative force and infinite wealth of tenderness and power and wisdom and love flowing from them, we cannot but desire that our lips and all the fruit of them should be wholly for Him. For thee they were opened in blessing; for thee they were closed when He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And whether teaching, warning, giving counsel, comfort, or encouragement, commandments in whose keeping there is a great reward, or promises which exceed all we ask or think—all the precious fruit of His lips is for thee really and truly meant for thee.

7. *His Wealth for thee.* Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich. Yes, through His poverty the unsearchable riches of Christ are for thee. Sevenfold riches are mentioned; and these are no unminted treasure or sealed reserve, but all ready coin for our use, stamped with His own image and superscription, and poured freely into the hand of faith. The mere list is wonderful. Riches of goodness, riches of forbearance and long-suffering, riches both of wisdom and knowledge, riches of mercy, exceeding riches of grace, and riches of glory! And His own Word says, “**All are yours!**”! Glance on in faith, and think of eternity flowing on and on beyond the mightiest sweep of imagination, and realize that all His riches in glory and the riches of His glory are and shall be for thee?

In view of this, shall we care to reserve anything that rust doth corrupt for ourselves?

8. *His treasures of wisdom and knowledge* for thee.

First, used for our behalf and benefit Why did He expend such immeasurable might or Mind upon a world which is to be burnt up, but that He would fit it perfectly to be, not the home, but the school of His children? The infinity of His skill is such that the most powerful intellects find a lifetime too short to penetrate a little way into a few secrets of some one small department of His working.

If we turn to Providence, it is quite enough to take only one's own life, and look at it microscopically and telescopically, and marvel at the treasures of wisdom lavished upon its details, ordering and shaping and fitting the tiny confused bits into the true mosaic which He means it to be. Many a little thing in our lives reveals the same. Mind, which adjusted a perfect proportion in the delicate hinges of the snow drop and the droop of its bell, with the mass of the globe and the force of gravitation. How kind we think it if a very talented friend spends a little of his thought and power of mind in teaching us or planning for us! Have we been grateful for the infinite thought and wisdom which our Lord has expended upon us and our creation, preservation, and redemption?

Secondly, to be shared with us. He says, "**All that I have is thine.**" He holds nothing back, reserves nothing from His dear children, and what we cannot receive now He is keeping for us. He gives us hidden riches of secret places now, but by and by He will give us more, and the glorified intellect will be filled continually out of His treasures of wisdom and knowledge. But the sanctified intellect will be, must be, used for Him, and only for Him, now!

9. *His will for thee.*

Think first of the *infinite might* of that will; the first great law and the first great force of the universe, from which alone every other law and every other force has sprung, and to which all are subordinate. He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.

Then think of the *infinite mysteries* of that will. For ages and generations the hosts of heaven have wonderingly watched its vouchsafed unveilings and its sublime developments, and still they are waiting, watching, and wondering

Creation and Providence are but the whisper of its power, but Redemption is its music, and praise is the echo which shall yet fill His temple. The whisper and the music, yes, and the thunder of His power, are all for thee. For what is the good pleasure of His will? (Ephesians 5)

Oh, what a grand list of blessings purposed, provided, purchased, and possessed, all flowing to us out of it: And nothing but blessings, nothing but privileges, which we never should have imagined, and which, even when revealed, we are slow of heart to believe; nothing but what should even now fill us with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

Think of this will as always and altogether on our side—always working for us, and in us, and with us, if we will only let it; think of it as always and only synonymous with infinitely wise and almighty love; think of it as undertaking all for us, from the great work of our eternal salvation down to the momentary details of guidance and supply: and do we not feel utter shame and self-aborrence at ever having hesitated for an instant to give up our tiny, feeble, blind will to be—not crushed, not even bent, but blest with His glorious and perfect will?

10. *His Heart for thee.* “**Behold . . . He is mighty . . . in heart,**” said Job (Job 36:5, margin). And this mighty and tender heart is for thee! If He had only stretched forth His Hand to save us from bare destruction, and said, “My hand for thee!” how could we have praised Him enough? But what shall we say of the unspeakably marvelous condescension which says, “**Thou hast ravished** (margin, *taken away*) **My heart, My sister, My spouse!**”

The very fountain of His divine life, and light, and love, the very center of His being, is given to His beloved ones, who are not only set as a seal upon His heart, but taken into His heart, so that our life is hid there, and we dwell there in the very center of all safety, and power, and love, and glory.

What will be the revelation of that day, when the Lord Jesus promises, “**Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me**”? For He implies that we do not yet know it, and that our present knowledge of this dwelling in Him is not knowledge at all compared with what He is going to show us about it.

Now shall we, can we, reserve any corner of our hearts from Him?

11. *His Love for thee.* Not a passive, possible love, but outflowing, yes, outpouring of the real, glowing, personal love of His mighty and tender heart.

- Love, not as an attribute, a quality, a latent force, but an acting, moving, reaching, touching, and grasping power.
- Love, not a cold, beautiful, far-off star, but a sunshine that comes and enfolds us, making us warm and glad, and Strong and bright and fruitful.

His love! What manner of love is it? What should be quoted to prove or describe it?

- First, the whole Bible with its mysteries and marvels of redemption,
- Then the whole book of Providence and the whole volume of creation.
- Then add to these the unknown records of eternity past and the unknown glories of eternity to come.
- Then let the immeasurable quotation be sung by angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, with all the harps of God, and still that love will be untold, still it will be the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.

But it is for thee!

12. *Himself for thee.* Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us. The Son of God . . . loved me, and gave Himself for me. Yes, Himself!

What is the Bride's true and central treasure? What calls forth the deepest, brightest, sweetest thrill of love and praise?

Not the Bridegroom's priceless gifts, not the robe of His resplendent righteousness, not the dowry of unsearchable riches, not the magnificence of the palace home to which He is bringing her, not the glory which she shall share with Him, but Himself! Jesus Christ, who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree; this same Jesus, whom having not seen, we love; the Son of God, and the Man of Sorrows; my Saviour, my Friend, my Master, my King, my Priest, my Lord Mid my God—He says, "***I also for thee!***"

What an "***T***"! What power and sweetness we feel in it, so different from any human "***I***," for all His Godhead and all His manhood are concentrated, in it; and all for thee!

And not only all, but ever for thee!

His unchangeableness is the seal upon every attribute; He will be this same Jesus forever. How can mortal mind estimate this enormous promise? How can mortal heart conceive what is enfolded in these words, "***I also for thee***"?

One glimpse of its fulness and glory, and we feel that henceforth it must be, shall be, and by His grace will be our true-hearted, wholehearted cry—

"Take myself, and I will be Ever, only,
ALL for Thee!"

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