

LIVING WITH CHRIST

Articles of Comfort and Blessings Offered to the Reader

Dear reader: Blessed are the eyes who see the words of Christ and hear his calling by heart and obey! Pay attention for the words you will read in this issue, they are part of your heart and mind, and the Lord will guide you to obey. Enjoy. Note: All quotations are taken from the New King James Version, if not otherwise mentioned.

Volume Four

Chapter 3

**“Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.”
(Matthew 11:29)**

FOR CHRIST TO BE GENTLE, is a quality of the Son who came down to us from the Father’s. And gentleness is the pinnacle of simplicity in the sweetness of humility, the source of both being the heart that beats with love.

Christ said, “I am the light of the world”¹; for the qualities of Christ shine, forming around Him a halo. The book of Hebrews described it, stating that Christ, being the brightness of God’s glory, came down from the Father’s carrying the express image of His person², which we would see if the cloud of sin is removed from the human eye and the vision corrected by the Spirit for the manifestation of the unseen.

Yet, when Christ loves, He offers to man His entire hidden mystery behind the body, the same way Peter, James and John saw Him on the mount of transfiguration, as even His clothes were shining in the brightness of His light. For He said, and how beautiful is His saying, “He who loves me...I will love him and manifest Myself to him”³, where “manifest Myself to him” is the true meaning of “reveal Myself to him”. And the revelation of Christ’s self is the uncovering of the mysteries of His being that is before the ages, and the depth of His love that was manifested in the cross, which is what happened to Paul who, throughout his life, boasted that he saw Christ: “Have I not seen

¹ John 9:5.

² Hebrews 1:5.

³ John 14:21.

Jesus Christ our Lord?”⁴ That revelation was nothing but gazing upon the gentleness of His love and lowliness of His heart.

Now, when Christ says “learn from Me”, He says it with willingness to give Himself to everyone who believes in Him and loves Him. Is not that what the Apostle Paul said, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me”⁵? Christ dwelt in Paul, occupying him and filling his life and love. Hence, the phrase “Learn from Me” means “Take Me and rejoice in Me”; for when Christ was incarnate, He belonged to everyone who believed in Him and loved Him.

Christ made Himself the fullness of everyone in whom He dwelt. Thus, those who believed in Christ and loved Him reached the truth of His gentleness and lowliness of heart, which is considered a permit for entrance into eternal life and His joyous kingdom. For that reason, He insistently asks that we learn from Him. And learning the knowledge of Christ’s gentleness and lowliness in heart is the treasure of eternal life that Christ offers to everyone who sits at His [feet], learning every day. The Bible says that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge⁶, He Himself being the book of eternal life that can be taken and eaten. And this is the mystery behind Christ’s saying “he who feeds on Me will live because of Me”⁷, for He is the true food of love and gentleness that reaches to the depth of the lowliness of heart, otherwise, what would be the meaning of “he who feeds on Me will live because of Me”? In such way does Christ uncover the mystery of eating the body, that it is the mystery of life in its perfect gentleness and deepest lowliness. This is also the secret behind the Apostle Paul’s saying, that “Christ lives in me”. For in what image does Christ live in the Apostle Paul other than that image of His living, eatable gentleness and His lowliness of heart that, with its beats, stirs the tune of beautiful humility to which move all the hearts? For the humility of Christ’s heart dominates all the hearts that live for Him and He in them.

Thus, Christ’s saying “Learn from Me” is the gospel of the new man, who eats from it and drinks the life of humility which is victorious over the pride of the world, and the lowliness of heart which is victorious over the exaltation of false pride.

The man of the world bears on his back his labors and misery, and there is no escape to exit from underneath this mortal slavery except by knowing the mystery of Christ’s life who says, “Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart”. This is the antidote to freedom and eternal and joyful rest. He ensures that by saying, “and you will find rest for your souls”. This is the heavenly rest which is triumphant over all the labors of this world. Indeed, this is the mystery of Christ who says, “he who feeds on Me will live because of Me”. Yes, for with Christ is the mystery of the heavenly rest.

December 13, 2005

⁴ 1 Corinthians 9:1.

⁵ Galatians 2:20.

⁶ Colossians 2:3.

⁷ John 6:57.

Chapter 4
**“Love your enemies, bless those who curse you,
do good to those who hate you,
and pray for those who spitefully use you.”**
(Matthew 5:44)

THIS IS THE FLUTTERING FLAG OF CHRISTIANITY, the jewel of the gospel, the weapon of the faithful and the steps of the narrow road that leads to eternal life. Its beginning is love, and its end is prayer. It is a lofty stand before enmity, a bow of the head to hatred, a blessing poured on the heads of those who curse, and a true prayer from the heart in front of spite.

These are the four pillars that bear the gospel of Christians and the four corners for building the cathedral of salvation.

First Corner: “Love your enemies”

This is a kind of love that the world cannot recognize and every non-Christian denies. For the enemy pours his wrath and revenge on the Christian, while the Christian pours his love on the head of the enemy. The enemy comes out of battle gaining the world, whereas the Christian comes out of battle wounded, stripped, clothes rent. The enemy comes out winning the battle, with the medal of the world on his chest, which is not placed except on the chests of those who step on the cross and curse its bearers.

He curses, you love; and the world applauds the former while ignoring the latter. He takes what is not his, and you lose what is yours. At the end, the former is no more, whereas the latter is glorified. The devil is pleased by the former while the angels praise the latter.

Second Corner: “Bless those who curse you”

He curses, you bless. He curses without grounds, and you bless because he curses; for the curse stirs in the Christian person memories of Him who was crucified for no reason. He goes overboard in cursing in order for his heart to rest, while you go overboard in blessing in order for you to rest on Christ’s chest. Those who cursed Christ crucified Him, for the cross is the fruit of the curse, and the blessing is the fruit of the Crucified, and those who exposed themselves to crucifixion inherit it. The curse and crucifixion are inseparable friends, for the cross is the son of the curse, and the blessing is the daughter of Him who hangs on the cross, as He was considered cursed. Those who curse do not rest except in hammering the nails, and the cursed does not rest except if his hands and feet are nailed and his side pierced with the spear like Christ.

The fate of the one who curses is the people’s applause, whereas that of the cursed is the inheritance belonging to the Crucified and attainment of the cross’s blessing in heaven.

Third Corner: “Do good to those who hate you”

Hatred is strange to the Christian’s feelings; for hatred is ignited by the fire of hell, and hell was extinguished by Christ on the cross, and thus, it left the Christian’s circle. As for charity, goodness and goodwill, they are all synonyms that take root in love. Love is abundance from the cross, and the cross is an expression of a love that crucified itself for loving those whom it loved as a ransom for rescue from sin, death and a coming judgment.

Thus, toward the enemy’s hatred, charity opens up for the cross in order to extinguish the wrath of the hater who knows no mercy. He rages for no reason. For hatred dwells in the heart of the hater and does not rest in it except if it sees blood poured forth from the face of him who did good to it. Only blood is the goal of the hater, without grounds. So, if he who does good asks him who is angry with him, “Why do you hate me?” His answer would be, “For my heart to rest”, because anger means rest to the heart of the hater, for no reason. And if he who hates asks him who does good, “Why do you do good to me when I had insulted you and beat you?” The doer of good would answer, “Because I love you without motive, just as Christ loved me and delivered Himself to be crucified for me and for him who was spiteful to Him”.

Hence, hatred is a paternal inheritance of him who is alienated from the cross, while goodness is a divine inheritance inherited from Him who was crucified without cause.

Fourth Corner: “Pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you”

Spite is the nature of the haters of the cross and the Crucified, and prayer is seeking mercy and forgiveness for the spiteful and the persecutors. They spite and persecute, and we pray and lift up our eyes, hearts and hands, that Christ may not charge them with a judgment at the time of judgment.

December 13, 2005

Father Matta El-Meskeen.

Excerpt from: *Our Vision of the Cross*, St Mark Monthly Review, (April 2016, p 2).

[Jesus’ vision of his own crucifixion was perfectly clear. Thus it is only reasonable to expect that this clarity of vision would be fulfilled precisely with no anxiety on Christ’s part in spite of multiplied sorrows. I have previously related some of my meditations on the sufferings of Christ while I was a young monk. I read Saint Paul’s words: “I have been crucified with Christ” and “...provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Gal 2:20; Rom 8:17). I began to wonder how I would react if I were suddenly called upon to literally share in Christ’s suffering and crucifixion. I pondered how I might accept Christ’s passion as my own portion for the rest of my life. I began to envision his travail enclosing me from all sides. I became terrified. However, the power of the cross pierced through the cloud of distress and revealed the glories of this suffering. I found myself accepting his passion, albeit with great distress, until the light of the resurrection flooded my way; the resurrection that accompanies the cross and proceeds from it.]