

Hall Family Papers and Sugar Plantation Records

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Page from the New Testament book of Ephesians



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tance; such abundant Riches and transcendent Glory found in it as overwhelms the Mind of Man that here enters upon the close Contemplation of it. Heaven will appear to be a glorious Inheritance, if we consider the Glory of the Place, the Glory of the Company, the Glory of the Employment, and the Glory that will be then and there put upon our Souls and Bodies. Lord, make us meet for this glorious Inheritance of thy Saints in Light.

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power; 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead,

The next particular which the Apostle prays for on Behalf of the Converted *Ephesians* is this, that they might know, or sensibly apprehend the Greatness of that Divine Power which God had exerted, first, in their Conversion, next, in carrying on that Work step by step in despite of all Opposition, then in giving them the extraordinary Gifts of his Spirit, as Miracles, Tongues, and Prophecy, also the sanctifying Graces of the Spirit, as Knowledge, Faith, Hope, Love, Joy, and Patience, to enable them to go on in suffering for Christ to the uttermost; and lastly, that they might know the exceeding Greatness of that Power which God will farther exert towards them as Believers, in raising up their dead Bodies, to enter upon that glorious Inheritance which God by Promise insured to them, which Power he assures them would bear some Likeness to and Correspondence with that Omnipotent Power which God put forth in raising Christ from the Dead, and advancing him to the Heavenly Glory, where he is Lord of all. Observe here what an heap of Words our Apostle makes use of to set forth the Power of God in the Soul's Conversion from the Power of Sin, and in the Body's Resurrection from the Power of the Grave; he calls it Power, the Power of God, the Greatness of his Power, and the exceeding Greatness of his mighty Power, and the Power which raised up Christ from the dead. Lord! What a glorious Power was that which opened our Redeemer's Grave, when he lay in the Heart of the Earth with a mighty Stone rolled upon his Sepulchre? May the same Almighty Power break asunder all those Bars of Unbelief, which keep our Souls under the Power and Dominion of Sin now, and at the great Day break in Pieces the Bars of Death and the Grave, that it may be altogether impossible for us any longer to be holden by them; for towards thy Saints, and in order to their Salvation, thou dost engage the uttermost of thine Attributes, the uttermost of thy Love, and the exceeding Greatness of thy Power.

20 — And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, —

Our Apostle in these Words discovers to us Christ's Exaltation, or that Glory and Dignity which after his Resurrection and Ascension the Father put upon him as God-Man, or Mediator, far surpassing the Glory of all created Beings. Now this is represented to us by the Notion, and under the Metaphor of Christ's *sitting at God's right Hand*; this imports, (1.) Fulness of Rest and Pleasure, that he doth quietly, securely, and everlastingly possess all that Happiness and Satisfaction in Heaven which God himself is possessed of and delighted with, far above all the Pleasures and delightful Satisfaction which all the glorified Saints and glorious Angels do or can possibly enjoy. (2.) It implies a Fulness of Honour and Glory, of Dignity and Respect; when *Salomon* sat *Bathsheba* at his Right Hand it was in token of Honour and Respect to her. *Heb. 2. 9.* We see Jesus to be crowned with Glory and Honour, setting down at the Right Hand of Majesty on high. (3.) Christ's sitting at God's Right Hand, imports his having all Rule, Dominion and Power put into his Hand, to govern all things both in Heaven and on Earth, (4.) It imports and implies Ability to execute that Power; all those Royal Glorious Endowments which God filled the Humane Nature of Christ with, to make him fit to be the Supreme Head of his Church, and the great and wise Governour of the World; all this doth God's setting

Christ at his own Right Hand import and imply. In the next Verse (21.) The Apostle expresses more plainly what he had said in the former Verse figuratively, God hath exalted Christ (says he) *far above all Principalities and Powers, Might and Dominion, and every Name that is named, and hath put all things under his Feet.* Where *Note*, (1.) The Eminency, (2.) The Universality of our Lord's Exaltation. Its Eminency appears in the Height of his Exaltation; he is not only above, but *far above* all Principalities and Powers, Might and Dominion, and in the Lowest of the Subjection of all things to him, *having put all things under his Feet.* And the Universality of Christ's Exaltation appears by insinuating in *Principalities and Powers, Might and Dominion*, under which he comprehends all things that are excellent in Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, &c. all Creatures whatsoever being placed in a Degree of Inferiority beneath him, and in the lowest State of Subjection under him. Whence we Learn, (1.) That the Humane Nature of Christ and his glorified Body, by virtue of that unspeakable Union between the two Natures of Christ, his Godhead and Manhood, is so highly dignified and exalted in Heaven, that all the Glory of Heaven and Earth, of Kings and Emperors, of Sun, Moon, and Stars, of the Souls of just Men made perfect, yea, and of the spotless glorious Angels themselves, is nothing to it, nor may be compared with it. Christ sits now in Heaven, in our glorified Humanity united to his glorious Deity; that Body which hung on an ignominious Cross in Blood and Gore, now shines brighter than Ten Thousand Suns in the Kingdom of his Father. All this Honour and Homage, Glory and Praise, Dominion and Power, is due to our Lord the Redeemer as the Reward of his Sufferings; God hath set him at his own Right Hand, far above all Principalities and Powers. Learn, (2.) That although the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ shall cease at the last Day, (and be delivered up by Christ unto his Father) as to the way wherein he now administers it, by ruling in the midst of his Enemies, whom he shall then have finally subdued and destroyed, yet his Natural Kingdom as God shall never cease, but continue in the World to come without end. Those Words here, *not only in this World, but in the World to come*, do shew the Duration of Christ's Kingly Government, and that he is King for ever and ever, that his Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and his Dominion endureth through eternal Ages.

22 — And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

St. Paul having spoken of Christ's Sovereignty in general over all created Beings, both in Heaven and Earth, in the foregoing Verses, doth in the Words before us declare, that as he is an Head of Dominion and Authority to the whole Creation in General, so he is an Head of Influence to his Church in Particular. *Note*, Christ was given by the Father to be the Church's Head: Now this Metaphor of an Head implies several things; as, (1.) Eminency above the Church, as the Head is above the Members. (2.) Authority over the Church; the Head governs all the Members. (3.) Oneness of Nature betwixt him and his Church; to see an Head of one Nature, and Members of another, is monstrous. (4.) It implies a strict, intimate, and close Union betwixt him and his Church, as betwixt Head and Members; which Union, as to the Members of the Visible Church, is a Political Union, but as to the invisible Members, (real Believers) the Union betwixt Christ and them is Mystical, Spiritual, Supernatural and Indissoluble. Lastly, This Metaphor of an Head given here to Christ, implies a Communication of Influences from himself unto all his Members; an Influence of common Gifts to the visible Members of his Body, and an Influence of spiritual Life and Motion to the invisible Members, (true Believers.) Indeed Christ is the Head of Angels as well as Saints, but in different respects; to Angels he is an Head of Dominion and Government, an Head of Authority and Superiority, but to his Church he is an Head of Dominion and Direction also; not only an Head of Authority, but an Head of vital Influence too: The Angels are Christ's Honourable Subjects, but Saints are the Mystical Members of his Body; the former are as the Nobles in his Kingdom that attend upon his Person, but the latter are the endeared Spouse that lies in his Bosom. O Glorious Dignity of the meanest Believer above the highest Angel! For as the Nobles in a Prince's Court think it a Preferment

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ment and Honour to wait upon his Queen; so the glorious Angels account it no Dishonour to them to serve and administer to the Saints, to which honourable Office they are appointed, *Heb. 1. 14.* namely, to be *ministering or servicable Spirits for the good of them that are the Heirs of Salvation.* As the chiefest Servants disdain not to serve the Heir, so the Angels delight to serve the Saints. *Observe (2.)* As the Character here given of Christ, *The Head of his Church,* so the Honourable Title put upon the Church, *she is his Body, the Head over all the Church, which is his Body;* not his Natural, but his Mystical Body. This implies (1.) The Church's Union with Christ and her Relation to him. (2.) The Church's receiving Influences from him, Life, Motion and Strength, all which the Members of the Body receive by virtue of Union with their Head. (3.) It implies the Duty of Submission and Obedience due from the Church to Christ, as from the Members to the Head. (4.) It implies the Union and Order among the Members themselves; that as all the Members of the natural Body sympathize with, and are subservient to each other, so should all the Members of the Church, Christ's Mystical Body, employ their Gifts, and improve their Functions and Offices, for the general Good of the whole, and the mutual Benefit and Advantage of each other, as becomes the Body of Christ and Members in particular. But especially the Church is said here to be the *Body of Christ, and he her Head,* (1.) With respect to a Communication of Influences; Christ our Head is our Fountain of Life; our Head is our Heart also, out of it are the Issues of Life; from him we live, by him we move; and our Spiritual Being is derived from him, strengthened and sustained by him; the whole Church receives Spiritual Life, Motion and Strength, from Christ, as the Body doth from the animating and enlivening Soul. (2.) Christ is called here the Head of the Church his Body, with respect to a *Communication of Interests,* as well as a Communication of Influences. As the Head and the Body, as the Husband and the Wife, so Christ and his Church are mutually concerned for each other; they stand and fall, live and die together; whatsoever he has is theirs; they have nothing but through him, they have all things in him, and by him; his God is their God, his Father is their Father, his Blood, his Bowels, his Merit, his Spirit, his Life, his Death, is theirs; and as all that he has is his Church's, so all that he did is for his Church, called here *his Body.* He obeyed as his Church's Head, he died as her Head, he rose, ascended, and reigneth as her Head, and hath in his Church's Name taken Possession of Heaven as a purchased Inheritance for her. How fitly then may Christ be called Head of the Church and the Church be called the Body of Christ? *Observe (3.)* How Christ came to be the Head of his Church. God the Father gave him this Authority, *v. 22.*— *And gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church;* that Dignity and Superiority, that Dominion and Power which Christ had over his Church, is given to him by God the Father, none else was fit for it but himself; and although it was due unto himself, yet it must be given him. Now if Christ did not exercise any Authority over the Church till it was given him, what bold Presumption is it, and will it be, in any Person upon Earth, to assume any Power over, or to exercise any Office in the Church, when never called to it, nor authorized by Christ to undertake it? We may demand of such confident Undertakers as the Pharisees demanded of the holy and humble Jesus, *By what Authority dost thou these things? And who gave thee this Authority?* *Observe (4.)* The high Honour which is put upon the Church by being Christ's Body, by this she becomes Christ's Fulness. — *The Church which is his Body, the fulness of him.* — Yet Note, The Church is not the Fulness of Christ Personal, nor of Christ Mystical, nor of his Natural, but Mystical Body; every Saint, and every degree of Grace in a Saint, is part of Christ's Fulness. The Work of the Ministry then is the best and noblest Work in the World, because it is an adding to the fulness of Christ. God had but one Son in the World, and he made him a Minister: And if encreasing the Number of Converts, and adding to Persons growth in Grace, be an Addition to Christ's Fulness, then how glorious a Sight will the great Day afford, when Christ shall have all his Fulness, when there shall not be one Saint wanting, nor one degree of Grace in any Saint wanting, when Head and Members shall be both full, full of Grace, full of Joy, full of Glory, when Christ shall be fully glorified in his Saints, and they everlastingly filled with the Fulness of him that filleth all in all. *Observe (5.)* The Glorious Title

here given to our Lord Jesus Christ, as head of his Church he filleth all in all; he filleth all Persons, both Angels and Men, he filleth all Places, Heaven with Glory, Earth with Grace, Hell with Horror; he filleth all Ordinances, Prayer with Prevalency, Preaching with Efficacy, &c. he filleth all Relations, Fathers with Paternal Affections, Mothers with Maternal Bowels; he fills all Conditions, Riches with Thankfulness, Poverty with Contentment.

C H A P. II.

The Design and Scope of our Holy Apostle, in this Chapter, is to set forth before the Ephesians the Happiness of that State and Condition which by their embracing Christianity, upon the preaching of the Gospel, they were brought into; to which End and Purpose he shews them the deplorable Misery of their former Condition before Conversion; declaring, that their natural heathenish Estate was a State of spiritual Darkness, yea, of spiritual Death, they being dead in Trespases and Sins, in which they, and the whole heathen World with them, did generally then lie, before the publishing of the Gospel, as appeared by their manifold Idolatries, which the Grace of the Gospel had both convinced them of, and turn'd them from; accordingly the Apostle thus bespeaks them.

AND you hath he quickned, who were dead in trespases and sins,

Observe here, (1.) The deplorable Condition which the Ephesians were in by Nature, and all Persons with them, before their Conversion from Sin to God. It is a State of Spiritual Death; the natural and unregenerate Man is a dead Man, spiritually dead in Sin: Our Apostle doth not say they were in a dying, but a dead Condition; not half dead, but altogether dead; but how so? Not dead as to natural Actions, they can eat and drink; not as to rational Actions, they can reason and discourse, not as to civil Actions, they can buy and sell, bargain and trade; nor is the natural Man dead to Moral Actions, he can pray, read, and hear the Word, meditate upon it, and discourse of it; if he please he can hearken to the Voice of God's Judgments, consider and call his own Ways to Remembrance; but as to spiritual Acts to be spiritually performed, here he is dead till quickned by a vital Act of the Holy Spirit, whose Office it is to enlighten blind Eyes, and whose Delight it is to quicken and enliven dead Souls. But what doth this State of spiritual Death imply? *Answer,* It doth suppose and imply a State of Separation from God, Insensibility of that dismal State, an Impotency and Inability to recover our selves out of that Condition, and our Loathsomeness and Offensiveness to Almighty God whilst we continue in it. In short, every unregenerate Man is a dead Man in a double sense. He is, (1.) Legally dead, being under the condemnatory Sentence of the Law, we call a Man under a Legal Sentence of Death a dead Man. (2.) Spiritually dead, as being destitute of a Principle of Spiritual Life, a quickning Principle to enable the Soul to perform spiritual Operations. Thus, before Regeneration are we dead in Opposition to Justification, and dead in Opposition to Sanctification also, and the Fatal Instrument by which our Souls die is here discovered, dead in or by *Trespases and Sins.* This is the Sword that kills Souls, and cuts them off from God; you hath he quickned, being *dead in Trespases and Sins.* *Observe (2.)* The choice and singular Privilege and Favour vouchsafed to the Ephesians in and under the Power of spiritual Death. They were quickned, that is, made spiritually alive by the quickning of life-giving Power of the Spirit of God. A regenerate Man is a living Man; he lives a Life of Justification, which consists in Pardon of Sin; a condemned Man's Par-