

THE
STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS
MADE
Citizens with Saints,
AND OF THE
HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.

BY JOHN BAILEY.

“Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,”
&c. Eph, ii. 19, &c.

THE design of the apostle in this epistle, is to set forth the important doctrine of God’s free eternal love and grace, particularly in election and effectual vocation, which he illustrates, and highly esteems, from the consideration of what they were by nature, and of the glorious blessings which they were made partakers of through the everlasting gospel.

The word stranger, is often used in scripture.—1. It signifies one that is in a strange land; “I am a stranger with you.” Gen. xxiii. 4—2. One that is not a Jew; “the strangers shall be joined with them.” Isa. xiv. 1.—3, One that is ignorant of God, and his grace; “and at that time ye were strangers

from the covenant of promise; but now, no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

In attending to this passage of scripture, let me call your attention to the following observations.

First—The Ephesians were no more strangers to God, because they were quickened by his good Spirit, and the eyes of their understanding were enlightened, that they might know him, and his dear Son Jesus Christ, “whom to know is life eternal.” The promise of God, relative to his people is, “they shall all know him, from the least unto the greatest.” And John says, “we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we might know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” 1 John v. 20.

Secondly—No more strangers to the true grace of God; for they saw the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards them, through Christ Jesus. They were saved by grace, “through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God.” It is by free and sovereign grace every vessel of mercy is saved; hence called the election of grace. And they are helped to say, with the apostle of the gentiles, “by the grace of God, I am what I am.”

Thirdly—No more strangers to the everlasting love of God; for they were chosen in Christ “before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blame, before him in love. Therefore God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. That Christ might dwell in our hearts by faith; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may

be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

Fourthly—No more strangers to communion and fellowship with God; “for through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Hence John says, “truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” We have communion with God the Father, who is the Father of Christ, and as such has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ: has chosen us in Christ, and as such regenerates us according to his abundant mercy; and is the Father of mercies, and God of all grace; our covenant God and Father in Christ; through whom we have access, and address him, as “our Father which art in heaven.” We cry, “abba, Father;” and beseech him to

“behold we are all his children.” Moreover, the Lord encourages us to call him our Father, and declares he will never turn away from us.

Fifthly—No more strangers to Christ, but have communion with him, in the goings forth of their souls after him in faith, hope, love, &c. upon his person, as the Son of God; “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” They behold his glory as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, and the express image of his person, full of grace and truth, when he appears to them altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand. They view him in his complex character, the God-man Christ, in one glorious person; and are agreed with the spouse, “my beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.” In his divine and human nature, they behold the mighty God, and the infant of days: yes, “his head is

as the most fine gold; his locks are bushy, and black as a raven; his eyes are as doves' eyes by the rivers of water, washed with milk, and fitly set; his cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh; his hands are as gold rings set with the beryl; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars." Here is a beautiful description of the Lord Jesus Christ as her beloved. But this, as well as all other descriptions, fall infinitely short of his beauty. She concludes her description of him in the following words—"his mouth is most sweet. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!" Sol. Songs v. 10, &c. And if he has ever said to you, my hearer, "thy sins are forgiven thee," you never can forget the sweetness of his mouth, or the gracious words that dropped from his lips.

Sixthly—No more strangers to Christ, as their Prophet, Priest, and King, As their Prophet, he teaches them by his Spirit, word, and ordinances: to him they listen as their teacher, and the great Prophet of the church; for it is written, “all thy people shall be taught of the Lord:” again, “they shall sit down at his feet, every one shall receive of his words, and receive that anointing which teacheth all things.” And as their High Priest, they apply to him for cleansing, and pardon, by his blood; and for justification and acceptance with God, by his righteousness; and for atonement and expiation of all their iniquities, by his sacrifice. They view him as their Advocate with the Father, and put all their petitions into his hands, to be offered up by him on their behalf; and they are perfumed with the much incense of his mediation. Well may the apostle say, “seeing we have so great an High Priest, let us therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace,

that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”—Again, through rich grace, they are brought to acknowledge Jesus Christ as their King; and as their rightful Sovereign, bow to his sceptre, submit to his government, yield obedience to his commands, love his laws, and esteem his precepts, knowing all things he hath commanded to be right; and being clothed in his righteousness, they have joy and peace in believing.

Seventhly—No more strangers to his voice. “They know not the voice of strangers;” but delight to hear the voice of Christ, the voice of their beloved, which is a small still voice, but yet commanding and constraining: hence he commanded many in the days of his flesh to follow him, “and they immediately left all, and followed him.” And to this moment, when the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ salutes the ear, and his love and

power attracts the heart of a poor sinner, like blind Bartimaeus, he casts away the garments, (of the flesh) and immediately follows Jesus in the way. And as the believer loves to hear Christ's voice, so the Lord Jesus loves to hear his people's voice. Hence he says, "let me hear thy voice, let me see thy face; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely:" to which they answer, in the language of David, "my voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord! in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." Psalm v. 3.

Eighthly—No more strangers to the Holy Spirit; for he had quickened them to a feeling sense of their helplessness, "and raised them up, and made them sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and though they were sometimes darkness, now they were light in the Lord; the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they might know

what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.” They were delivered from Satan to God—from death to life—from sin to holiness—from error to truth—from darkness to light—from bondage to liberty—and from confusion to peace. The Holy Spirit appeared to them as a Comforter, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts—by taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them to them—by glorifying Christ in the ministry of his word, and in their experience—and by sweetly applying to them the promises of God, which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus; even “exceeding great and precious promises, whereby we are partakers of the divine nature.”—He also declares their pardon, by pronouncing the sentence of justification in their consciences, and by being the blessed

earnest and divine seal of their future inheritance and eternal glory. Hence we are said to be “sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

Thus you see the saints are no more strangers to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are interested in, and are partakers of the love of God the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit. They also are interested in the covenant of grace, its mercies, blessings, and promises; and can say with David, “he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: this is all my salvation, and all my desire.”

Ninthly—No more strangers to their own hearts, which are by nature “deceitful above

all things, and desperately wicked.” The more they see of the purity and holiness of God, the more on the other hand they see of their own impurity and sinfulness. Every renewed soul under heaven finds, more or less, “that every imagination of his heart is evil, and only evil, and that continually;” and a deceiving heart often turns him aside from God; and then, like Ephraim, “he joins himself to idols, and goes on forwardly in the way of his heart,” and thereby pierces himself through with many sorrows; which makes him cry with David, “create in me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me.” Such a one knows his heart is a den of thieves, a cage of unclean birds; and, like the prophet’s chambers of imagery, he is constantly turning in to behold some fresh evil: and the more divine and spiritual light he has, the greater abominations he beholds. Thus

His own bad heart creates him
smart, Which only God can know.

Again, there are the inbred corruptions of nature; as the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. These are in the world; and the believer being in (*though not of*) *the worlds* is tormented from day to day with these things. Temptations to outward acts of sin, and inward lusts and corruptions, often harass and perplex him, and make him cry with the apostle, “O! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? When I would do good, evil is present with me; the good I would do, I do not; and the evil I hate, that do I: yet; it is not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”

All that believers can do, is to look to Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit; and in looking, he finds that as the sun dispels the mist, so his enemies disappear; but the Canaanites are still in the land, and come out

of their holes and dens when the Sun of righteousness goes down. “Thou makest darkness, (says David) and it is night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth;” that is, vain thoughts, unholy desires, beastly lusts and corruptions, &c. which is the counterpart of all that is in the world, lying in the wicked one: and these things the believer finds in himself. But when the Sun of righteousness ariseth, these beasts gather themselves together, and lay down in their dens, that is, the mind and heart; for “the carnal mind is enmity against God; and the heart is deceitful, and desperately wicked.”

Tenthly—No more strangers to the devices of Satan, “who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” They are not ignorant of his temptations—“he is the accuser of the brethren,” and brings a Variety of charges against the poor sensible sinner, in order to keep him from Jesus. He often

suggests that he is too vile, that his sins are too many and aggravating, of so long continuance; and that he has been such a rebel against God, that there can be no hope of mercy for him. But I would say, poor sinner, in the language of a good writer—"If a soul should object, *through the temptations of Satan*, the high aggravation of his sins, they cannot be higher than those everlasting hills from whence the blessings of grace and salvation flow. Deut. xxxiii. 15.—If he should complain of the cursed depth of sin, it cannot be deeper than the eternal counsels of God. Eph. i. 9.—If he should complain of his long continuance in sin, it cannot be longer than the streams of God's everlasting love. Jer. xxxi. 3.—If he should complain of the number of his sins, they cannot exceed the multitude of God's mercies. Psalm li. 1.—If he object how extensive his sin is, it cannot be more extensive than the place of broad rivers, which is God himself. Isa. xxxiii.

21.—Has he been a rebel against God? Christ has received gifts for the rebellious also. Psalm lxxviii. 18.—Is he the chief of sinners? Christ came into the world to save sinners, *even the chief of sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15.—Is his soul lost? Christ came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke xix. 10.—Is he bound under the tyranny of Satan, and *the fear of death*? Christ came to deliver those that were subject to bondage. Heb. ii. 15.—Is his conscience wounded by sin? Christ healeth them that are bruised. Luke iv. 18.—Is he defiled, so that no part is clean? “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.”

But though there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, yet so long as they are in the body, Satan will molest, harass, and tempt them, with horrid blasphemies, evil imaginations, and hard thoughts of God, his purposes, providences, and ways. But the promises, the absolute and

unconditional promises of God, are as follow: “when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him, which standard is the Lord Jesus Christ. Isa. lix. 19.—Again, “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation also, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” 1 Cor. x. 13.—“The trial of your faith is much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. i. 7.

Eleventhly—“Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners,” in the commonwealth, which is the church of God, “but fellow citizens with the saints,” who are citizens of Mount Zion, the city of the great King, where he dwells; “for the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his

habitation. This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell; for I have desired it.” Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14. And Jesus Christ is the foundation: hence it is said, “his foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.” Psalm lxxxvii. 1, 2. This city is well fortified. “In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.” Isa. xxvi. 1. Which walls and bulwarks are threefold.

1. The protection of angels, who are “ministering spirits, sent to minister to the heirs of salvation; and encamp about those who fear the Lord.” See Heb. i. 14, and Psalm xxxiv. 7.

2. There is a wall of providence. “They that trust in the Lord, shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about

Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever.” Psalm cxxv. 1, 2.

The third wall is God himself; who hath said, when speaking of Zion, “I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.” Zech. ii. 5.

Moreover, the situation of this city is beautiful and delightful; “beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King,” Psalm xlviii. 2; which is situated by the river of everlasting love, “the streams whereof make glad the city of God; the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.” Psalm xlv. 4.

Thus every renewed soul is a fellow-citizen with saints, being “sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus, and called; and by the Holy Spirit regenerated and made new creatures, whereby they have

a right to a name and place in the church of God on earth, and are citizens of the heavenly city above, not by birth, nor by purchase, but by the free and sovereign grace of God, which gives them both a right and meetness for “the inheritance of the saints in light;” it is added, “and of the household of God whose house are we, whether jews or gentiles, “who are brought nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;” and hath made us, as believers in Jesus Christ, one family, called the household of faith, the family in heaven and in earth; in which blessed family, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is our Father, Christ is the elder brother, or first-born among many brethren. Ministers of the Spirit are stewards of the household; and the family of Christ are made up of babes, children, young men, and fathers; and they are all equally dear and precious in the sight

of the Lord their God, who so loved them, as to resign his only-begotten Son up into the hands of justice, to be punished in their room and stead; and their elder brother, *Jesus Christ*, so loved them, that he voluntarily gave himself for them, and thereby redeemed them from the hands of him who was stronger than they. And the Holy Spirit so loved them, as in the fulness of time to testify of Jesus, and come into their hearts; and as the Spirit of adoption, enable them to cry “abba, Father:” and thus, by adopting grace, they have access to God, are interested in all the privileges and immunities of God’s covenant, share in the fulness of grace in Christ; are well fed, and gloriously attired as king’s sons, in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto

salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

May the Lord the Spirit open and apply these truths to our precious souls, and bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. And may it please him to lead us on from strength to strength, until we all appear in Zion above. AMEN.

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