

The Reciprocal Inheritance

by F.B. Meyer

The sermon explores the double thought of inheritance in the Old Testament, highlighting the idea of our inheritance in God and God's inheritance in us, and emphasizing the importance of appropriating God's grace in our lives.

Scripture: Psalm 16:5, Ephesians 1:14

Topics: "Surrender to God", "Reciprocal Inheritance"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the profound concept of reciprocal inheritance between God and believers, illustrating that we are both heirs of God's grace and God's treasured possession. He explains that the Holy Spirit serves as the earnest of our inheritance, which is ultimately God Himself, and encourages Christians to fully explore and utilize their spiritual inheritance. Meyer warns against holding back from God, urging believers to yield their entire selves to Him, as true richness in faith comes from complete surrender. He draws parallels between the appropriation of God's grace and the diligent cultivation of land, highlighting that the depth of our relationship with God is determined by how much we engage with His gifts. Ultimately, Meyer concludes that God finds His inheritance in us, and we must not limit our offering to Him.

Transcript

THROUGHOUT the Old Testament there runs the double thought of our inheritance in God, and God's in us. And, as we shall see, this two-fold aspect of one deep conception interpenetrates the heart of the apostle's teaching in this Epistle (Psalm 16:5-6; Deuteronomy 32:9).

INHERITANCE AND INHERITED. (Ephesians 1:14)

In the opening paragraph of this epistle the apostle works up to this as his climax, that the Holy Spirit is given to us as the earnest of our inheritance. And, obviously, inasmuch as God is the earnest, nothing less than God can be the inheritance. In the same verse the apostle describes the saints as God's possession, which is not yet fully acquired by Him, though fully purchased; but which is awaiting its full occupation in that day of glory, when not a fragment of the purchase of Calvary shall be left in the power of the grave, but body, soul, and spirit shall be raised in the likeness of the glorified Saviour.

In the first clause of this verse, he therefore speaks of that inheritance which is ours as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. In the second, he speaks of ourselves as that inheritance upon which the Son of

God so set his heart, as to be willing to obtain it by the sacrifice of the glory that he had with the Father before the worlds were made. We are therefore in turn inheritors and an inheritance.

THE SAINTS' INHERITANCE IN GOD. (Ephesians 1:14, Ephesians 5:5)

When an emigrant first receives the title-deeds of the broad lands made over to him in the far West, he has no conception, as he descends the steps of the Government office and passes into the crowd, of all that has been conveyed to him in the schedule of parchment. And, though acres vast enough to make an English county are in his possession, rich and loamy soil, or stored with mines of ore, yet he is not sensibly the richer. For long days he travels, towards his inheritance and presently pitches his flimsy shanty upon its borders. But even though he has reached it, several years must pass before he can understand its value, or compel it to minister, with all its products, to his need.

O child of God, thy estate has been procured at the cost of blood and tears; but thou didst not buy it! Its broad acres have been made over to thee by deed of gift. They became thine in the Council chamber of eternity, when the Father gave Himself to thee in Jesus. And they became thine in fact, when thou wast born at the foot of the cross. As soon as thou didst open thine eyes to behold the crucified Lord, thou didst all unconsciously become heir to the lengths and breadths, and depths, and heights of God!

No sooner has the emigrant reached his estate, than he commences to prospect it. He makes a circuit of its bounds; he ascends its loftiest hills; he crosses and recrosses it, that he may know all that has come into his ownership. And this is God's message to thee, O Christian soul! Look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all this land is given to thee! Precious things of the sun and of the moon, for God is light; of the ancient mountains of his faithfulness, and the everlasting hills of his truth; of the fountains and brooks of his love, that gush spontaneously forth to satisfy and enrich.

But next to this, the emigrant encloses some small part of his inheritance, placing around it a tentative fence or partition; and here he begins to expend toil and skill. The giant trees are cut down; and their roots burnt out, or extracted by a team of horses. The unaccustomed soil is brought beneath the yoke of the plough. The grassland yields pasture to the cattle; and there is not a square inch of the enclosed territory that does not minister to the needs of the new proprietor. But not content with this, in the following year he pushes his fences back further into the depth of prairie or forest, and again renews his efforts to compel the land to yield him her secret stores. Year after year the process is repeated, until, perhaps when twenty years have come and gone, the fences are needed no longer, because the extent of occupation is commensurate with the extent of the original purchase.

Let every reader mark this, that supposing two men obtained a grant of an equal number of acres, if other things were equal, their wealth would be in exact proportion to the amount of use which each had made of his special acres. If one had learnt a swifter art of appropriating the wealth that lay open to his hand, he would be actually, though perhaps not potentially, richer than his neighbour. All of which is a parable.

The difference that obtains between Christians is not one of grace, but of the use we make of grace. That there are diversities of gift is manifest; and there always will be a vast difference between those who have five talents and those who have two, in the amount of work done for the kingdom of God. But as far as our inheritance of God's grace is concerned, there are no preferences, no step-children's portions, no arbitrary distinctions. It is not as under the laws of primogeniture, that one child takes all, while the younger children are dismissed with meagre allowances. Each soul has the whole of God. God gives Himself to each. He

cannot give more; He will not give less than Himself.

If then you would know why it is that some of God's children live lives so much fuller and richer than others, you must seek it in the differences of their appropriation of God. Some have learnt the happy art of receiving and utilizing every square inch if we may use the expression of that knowledge of God which has been revealed to them. They have laid all God's revealed character under contribution. They have raised harvests of bread out of the Incarnation; and vintages of blood-red grape from the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary; and pomegranates and all manner of fruit out of the mysteries of the Ascension and the gift of the Holy Ghost. In hours of weakness they drew on God's power; in those of suffering, on his patience; in those of misunderstanding and hatred, on his vindication; in those of apparent defeat and despair, on the promises that gleam over the smoke of the battle, as the Cross before the gaze of Constantine; in death itself, on the life and immortality which find their home in the being of Jehovah.

The analogy that we have quoted, however, fails us utterly in its final working out. The emigrant at last covers his estate, its mines become exhausted, its forests levelled, its soil impoverished; but when a million years have passed, the nature of God will lie before us as utterly unexplored and unexhausted, as when the first-born son of light commenced like a Columbus in the spiritual realm to explore the contents of the illimitable continent, God.

When we were children, the map of Africa gave us a few scattered names around the coast line; but the great interior was blank. Modern maps containing the results Of the explorations of Livingstone, Stanley, Burton, tell another story of river, Savannah, tableland, and of myriads of inhabitants. Probably, ere long the whole will have been opened up to European civilization and commerce. But with God this shall never be. We shall never know the far-away springs of the Niles and Congo's of his nature; we shall never unravel the innermost secret of his being.

GOD'S INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS. (Ephesians 1:18)

What an extraordinary combination! It is a mystery that God should find his inheritance and portion in the love of men and women like ourselves. But that he should find the riches of glory in them!--this passes thought. It may, however, be explained by a piece of farming that I learnt recently. The other day, when travelling in Scotland, I was introduced to some farmers whose soil was naturally of the poorest description; and yet, in answer to my inquiries, I found that they were able to raise crops of considerable weight and value. This seemed to me very extraordinary. Out of nothing, nothing comes, is the usual rule. But they unravelled the mystery by telling me that they put in, in enriching manure, all that they took out in the days of golden harvest.

Is not this the secret of any grace or wealth there is in Christian lives? Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thee, O Christ of God, be the glory! Whatever Thou dost get out of us, Thou must first put in. And all the crops of golden grain, all the fruits of Christian grace, are Thine from us, because Thou hast by thy blood and tears, by the sunshine of thy love, and the rain of thy grace, enriched natures which in themselves were arid as the desert and barren as the sand. Augustine therefore said truly, "Give what Thou commandest, and then command what Thou wilt."

But we must see to it that we keep nothing back. There must be no reserve put on any part of our being. Spirit, soul, and body must be freely yielded to the great Husbandman. We, who are God's tillage, must make no bargain with his ploughshare, and withhold no acre from the operations of his Spirit.

This is the curse of Christian living. Here is the reason why God is so little to us. We are mean enough to wish to make all we can of God, and to give Him as little as possible of ourselves. We fence off a part of ourselves for God, excluding Him from all the rest. But it is a compact that will not hold. Love will only give itself to love. The shadows of secrecy or reserve on either side will blight a friendship in which all the conditions seem perfectly adjusted. And many a life that might grow rich in its heritage of God is dwindled and marred, because it sets a limitation on God's heritage of itself.

Give all thou hast to God. As He bought, so let Him possess, everything. He will occupy and keep thee. He will bring fruit out of thy rockiest nature, as the Norwegians raise crops on every scrap of soil on their mountain slopes. He will put into thee the grace that thou shalt give back to Him in fruit. He will win for Himself a great name, as He turns thy desert places into gardens, and makes thy wildernesses blossom as the rose.

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