

# *The Gospel Herald*

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“As the truth is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21)

For The LORD’S PILGRIMS, STRANGERS & SOJOURNERS

by

Donald E. Martin, Sr.

*Excerpts from*

## *The Head of the Church*

*By Joseph Irons*

*“Allow me here to observe, that all wise, spiritual people are as willing to trust this to Christ as God the Father is. God the Father trusted my soul in His hands, and everyone, in the fulness of time, is ready and willing to trust his soul in His hands also. God the Father trusted all events relative to conversions, comforts, and feastings in the hands of Christ, and you and I will trust them there too. We still use the means, we will come to His house, we will read His Word, we will present ourselves at His feet, and hold social intercourse with the followers of the Lamb, just to receive what He shall be pleased to bestow, according to His own absolute authority in the Churches. What peaceful lives should we be passing if we were ever living under the authority of Christ, in all things acknowledging it, and glorifying Him in that He has condescended to take such an interest in us. As the Head of His body His Church, He is held responsible—and we cannot dwell too frequently upon that doctrine— He is held responsible to satisfy all the attributes of Deity; He is held responsible to sanctify all His blood-bought family; He is held responsible to glorify all He redeems and sanctifies. Look for a moment at this responsibility. He is held responsible to satisfy all the attributes of Deity—justice, holiness, and truth, as well as mercy, love, and tenderness. The compassion of Jesus’*

heart expands with a fulness of merit, and love, and righteousness, to satisfy all the justice of God; to sheathe His sword since it smote the Shepherd, the Head, to spare the sheep. The holiness of God has no more to ask in the way of meritoriousness, but what is found in Christ, emphatically called the Holy One of God. The truth of God is met and centres in Him, and every iota of it carried out and fulfilled according to His own declaration. The mercy of God is embodied in Him, so that He is emphatically styled the “mercy promised;” and no mercy is obtained by ruined sinners but in union with Christ and from His fulness. The love of Jehovah centres in His Person, is fixed upon Him officially, and embracing all the living Church in Him as members of His mystical body. Our precious Christ is held responsible for all this.

Moreover, He is held responsible not only for satisfying, but for the sanctifying of His Church. I bring this in with more intense interest, because there are so many mistakes made about sanctification, and because the lovers of truth of God are so frequently accused of denying and rejecting it altogether. But so far from this, we rejoice to know, that “He is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification” –mark, sanctification, as well as – “redemption.” So that the sanctification of the whole Church is laid upon Christ. His own holiness, His own life, is imputed and imparted also; and all the objects of His love, redeemed by His most precious blood, are, sooner or later, made to receive sanctifying power and grace, which He sends down the Holy Spirit to communicate to their personal experience, and with that sanctification come in all the graces of the Holy Spirit, which henceforward are brought into lively exercise, act upon the Person of Jesus, and go forth towards God; so that the believing family of God are set apart from the world, separated from those who know not God, made to pant after spiritual attainments, and grow up in to Christ in all things. And for all this He is responsible. When this is Christ’s work, a holy life and holy principles will be imparted, and they shall be made to grow until they reach the fulness of the stature of Jesus Christ. For all this He is held responsible.

Moreover, He is held equally responsible for the glorifying of all whom He has redeemed with His blood, justified by His righteousness, and sanctified by His Spirit. Hence the apostle was led by the Holy Ghost to speak of them all in the past tense in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, “Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.” Moreover, “whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” He does not say, “them He also will glorify.” He does not add the conditions of poor worms, and say, “If they will persevere, and improve the grace that is given

them.” There is nothing of the sort in the Bible. But it is set down as a thing done, a thing already accomplished, and therefore it is, “whom He justified, them He also glorified.” “What shall we say to these things?” the apostle might well ask. “Say,” exclaim modern, squeamish professors, “why that they are very dangerous things.” Well, you may say so, if you like, and reproach God for putting them in His Word; but I dare not say so. Beware, however, of what you are doing. Do not insult God. If you ask me what I say to these things, I reply, that they are glorious things; that our precious Christ, as the Head of His Church, should be held responsible for, not only all that is due to the attributes of Deity, but all that is requisite for His Church, even to her glorification. Nor would He be satisfied, nor would He sit upon His throne ultimately, if one member of His mystical body, or one object of His electing love, were not glorified along with Him! Oh, the blessedness of this security!”

*Delivered in Grove Chapel, Camberwell, Sunday Morning, April 29, 1849.*