

"The dew of Hermon"

Psalm 133.

C. H. Mackintosh.

The expression "the dew of Hermon" has, it seems, long proved "a geographical puzzle" to some. But to one who has the mind of Christ it is no puzzle, but a most striking and beautiful figure. Hermon is the very loftiest peak in all the land of Palestine, and from its snowy cap, when all the surrounding country is parched, the refreshing dew descends upon the mountains of Zion; and this is one of the figures used by the Holy Ghost to illustrate the beauty and pleasantness of brethren dwelling together in unity.

Let us quote the entire psalm.

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion; [The interpolated words, "and as the dew," spoil the beauty of the figure.] for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

Here we have two lovely illustrations of unity among brethren. It is like ointment descending from the head of the high priest to the skirts of his garment; and it is like the dew descending, in refreshing power, from Hermon's snowy top.

How truly delightful! And yet they are but figures used to set forth the divine idea of unity among brethren. But how is the unity to be promoted? By living sufficiently near to our great priestly Head to catch the fragrant ointment as it descends from Him — to be living so near the Man in the glory as that the refreshing dew of His grace may drop upon our souls, thus rendering us fragrant and fruitful to His praise.

This is the way to *dwell* in unity with our brethren. It is one thing to talk about unity, and another thing altogether to dwell in it. We may profess to hold "the unity of the body," and "the unity of the Spirit" — most precious and glorious truths surely — and all the while be really full of selfish strife, party spirit, and sectarian feeling, all of which are entirely destructive of practical unity. If brethren are to dwell together in unity, they must be receiving the ointment from the Head, the refreshing showers from the true Hermon. They must live in the very presence of Christ, so that all their points and angles may be moulded off, all their selfishness judged and subdued, all their own peculiar notions set aside, all their *cues* and crotchets flung to the winds. Thus there will be largeness of heart, breadth of mind, and depth of sympathy. Thus we shall learn to bear and forbear. It will not then be loving those who think with us and feel with us as to some pet theory or other. It will be loving and embracing "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

The blessed Head loves all His members, and if we are drinking into His spirit, if we are learning of Him, we shall love all likewise. No doubt, those who keep His commandments enjoy His special love — the love of complacency; and so we cannot but specially love those in whom we trace most of His blessed Spirit. But this is a totally different thing from loving people because they adopt *our* line of truth, or *our* peculiar views. It is Christ, and not self; and this is what we want, if we are to "*dwell together in unity.*"

Look at that charming picture presented in Philippians 2. There truly we see, first of all, the divine Head Himself, and from Him the ointment descending to the skirts of His garments. Where did Paul get the grace to enable him to be ready to be poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice of his brethren? What was it that made Timothy care for other people? What led Epaphroditus to put his life in his hand to supply his brethren's lack? What is the one grand answer to all these questions? Simply this: these beloved servants of Christ lived so in their Master's presence, and drank so deeply into His Spirit, they dwelt so near the Man in the glory, that the fragrant ointment, and the refreshing dew, fell upon their souls abundantly, and made them channels of blessing to others.

This, beloved Christian reader, be assured of it, is the grand secret of getting on together. If brethren are to dwell together in unity, they must have the "ointment" and the "dew" dropping continually upon them. They must live close to Christ, and be occupied with Him, so that they may show forth His virtues, and reflect His blessed image.

Then, what joy to be enabled, in any little measure, to refresh the heart of God! He delights to see His children walking in love. It is He who says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Surely this ought to stir our hearts to seek in every possible way to promote this lovely unity. It should lead us to sink self and all its belongings, to surrender everything that might tend in any measure to alienate our hearts from Christ, or from one another. The Holy Ghost exhorts us *to "endeavour"* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Let us remember this. It is the unity of the Spirit, not the unity of the body, we are to keep in the uniting bond of peace. This will cost us something. The word "endeavouring" shows that it cannot be done without sacrifice. But the One who so graciously exhorts us to the service will ever supply the needed grace. The ointment and the dew will flow down from Him in refreshing power, knitting our hearts together in holy love, and enabling us to deny ourselves, and surrender everything which might tend to hinder that true unity which we are imperatively called upon to maintain.