

He that hearkeneth unto counsel  
is wise. *Proverbs xii, 15.*

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...Addresses...

THE GOSPEL

OF THE

BURIAL of CHRIST

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The ATMOSPHERE of the INN

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THE YEAR of RELEASE

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The Counsel of the Lord that  
shall stand. *Proverbs xix, 21.*



## THE GOSPEL OF THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.

Luke 10: 30-42.

We were referring to this Scripture on Lord's Day evening, and I suggested that on another occasion we would take it up in a little more detail, and enquire as to its significance for us at the present moment.

It has frequently been referred to as indicating the service of the Lord Jesus Christ towards a poor sinner in his distress about his sins; and you will pardon me if I say that I do not think it is a picture of the Lord Jesus coming in for such an one to deliver him from the sense of the consequences of his guilt, but rather of the way in which He deals in grace with one who, having received the initial blessing of the Gospel, has set out to take up a position in connection with "the testimony of our Lord," but who has to be fitted for that position. At any rate, I propose that we should look at the story from this standpoint, and regard this man as one who has been up to Jerusalem for blessing, and is on his way down to a place of testimony in Jericho, the city suggestive of this present world, the scene where everything is away from God, where the curse is, where there is

confusion as the result of the working of man's lawless will, and where everything is contrary to the mind and the will of God.

There are a vast number of people to-day (and wherever one goes one finds them) who through infinite grace know something of the value of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus in respect of their sins. They tell us that they have put their trust in His blood, and that they have nothing else that they are looking to, and that they have no other hope and no other expectation than that which comes to them on the ground of His finished work. All such I look upon as those who have been up to Jerusalem for blessing—and they have got this much at any rate. But to the newly-awakened soul, to the one who has been brought to rest on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, there very soon comes the desire to be for Him in this world. We do not think very much of anyone who says he is converted, but who has no exercise about being in the place of testimony here, but one sees that the one who sets out to take up such a position has to be fitted for it. Now the first great lesson that the soul has to learn is that it has no power in itself to overcome the assaults of the enemy. It is set forth here in what happens to this man as he goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He is confronted with the full power of the enemy. The thieves come upon him. It is evident that

the man put up the most tremendous fight against them. He fights against them so strenuously that when they have finished with their robbery of him they have wounded him and left him half dead. He is absolutely helpless by the roadside. That is not the picture of a man in alliance with the thieves. He is **opposed** to them, and he does not propose to give in to them. Many of us know something of an exercise like that. We have set forth from the place of blessing to do what is incumbent upon us—to take up a position in connection with the testimony here. On the way the enemy came upon us, but we set up a good fight. I do not think much of a man who has not fought with his lusts and passions. A man has certain bad habits from which he wants to break away, and he wants to be delivered from their thrall and power. Perhaps he has a very bad temper, and he feels it is unsuitable that he should be in a position of testimony until he has overcome it. So he fights against it, but it is too strong for him. Perhaps he has a habit of exaggeration, or a love of light literature. He fights against these, and he prays against them, and makes resolves against them, and perhaps even makes some solemn vows to God about them—that he will never give into them again. But he does. So the man fights on. Is this where you are to-night, struggling with these things with

all your might? "I want to throw off their thrall," you say. "They seem to have some tremendous power over me, but I am fighting it out." All I can say is that I am very glad you are fighting. It shows you have faced Jericho. You are going down to the place of testimony, and you find there are these things opposing you which are unsuitable, but which are too strong for you. The man in the story at last comes to this—that the thieves have completely mastered him. They have reduced him to weakness, robbed him of his possessions, and stripped him of his raiment. So has it been in our case. The thieves robbed us of our joy, our happiness, and our assurance; but it is a great point gained when I come to the sense that I have lost my raiment as well, in other words, that I have lost my character. I have confessed the name of Christ, and have not been able to live up to it. I have lost everything. It is a wonderful moment when we find that by no efforts of our own can we overcome these tremendous powers arrayed against us to interfere with our being for Christ in the place of testimony down here.

At this point of the story, the priest and the Levite come in. People have been apt to speak about them disparagingly, but they are useful persons in their proper sphere and place. I think they just felt that the case was outside their province. Perhaps you have

tried ordinances; that is what is indicated in the priest. The most terrible device on this line is that some even think that if they only could take the Lord's Supper, it would help them against their besetments. Or perhaps you have tried to reduce yourself to order by setting laws and commandments before you. This is the work of the Levite. He insists upon God's holy law and his commandments. You have accepted them as God's standard for you, but you have not been able to live up to it. So that neither ordinances nor the law can give any help to a man under such conditions as we have depicted here. If you find yourself similarly situated, feeling utterly helpless and hopeless, and that you are ruined in your moral constitution by the onslaughts of sin, you are brought, like this poor man, to the point where deliverance can be known.

The Spirit of God would compel us by all these workings with us to look outside ourselves for deliverance from the power of sin, and would bring us into an apprehension of how the blessed Lord Jesus has not only in His precious death taken up the question of our sins, but also the question of our whole state and condition in nature, so that we may be delivered from the power and domination of sin. That is what the blessed Lord proposes to do for everyone here who is in trouble as to thieves.

So we see that when the man is brought to this point, the Good Samaritan draws near to him to take up the question of the terrible condition in which he is found. The first thing is that He comes where he is. Let me try and comfort you with this. The Lord has taken account of you in your exercises, consequent upon your having faced the place of testimony. If it had been that your state of soul was such that you were content with having received blessing at Jerusalem, and were just content to wait until He takes you on high, you would miss all these exercises, but you would also miss the privileges of the present moment. If you were looking out only for a glorious and happy eternity, but had no exercise about your position in testimony; none of these things would appeal to you. May the Lord give to every one of us deep exercise as to the call addressed to us that we should definitely take up this position here for Him.

The Good Samaritan drew near to this man. The Lord Jesus Christ is drawing near to you. He takes account of you in your trouble. He has not been unmindful of your exercises. He has watched your overthrow at the hands of the enemy. He has taken account of the fact that at last the power of the enemy has got complete dominance over you, and that you are so discouraged about it that you are disposed to say you will give the whole thing up,



and that Christianity is a failure from start to finish. He has taken account of all that has gone on, and waited until you were found in a suitable condition to appreciate the grace that He is so ready to administer.

The first thing the Good Samaritan does is to bind up the wounds. I think when the Lord Jesus comes nigh to us, He would minister to our souls the sense that in His precious death He has not only taken up the whole question of what we have done, but also that of what we are in our state before God. He knew all about the absolute condition of weakness to which man had been reduced by sin. He took up that question when He went to the Cross. He entered into it all with God, and in His precious death He laid the righteous foundation on which not only the question of our sins might be settled, but on which also He might draw near to us in view of our deliverance from the domination of sin. We find in 1 Cor. 15, that the Apostle indicates the four great staple facts of His Gospel, and the first is that "Christ died for our sins." That is the initial blessing of the Gospel to which we have already referred. We thank God for the Gospel, which tells us of a blessed living Christ in the presence of God who once died for our sins. Not what Jesus did at the cross merely, but that there is a blessed living Man in the presence of God, at this very moment adorn-

ing His throne, Who once took up the question of our sins at Calvary's cross and died for them. We love that story. Do we love equally the Gospel of His burial? The Gospel of the burial of Christ? You say, "We have never heard the Gospel of His burial preached." If we preach the Gospel of His death, we must also preach the Gospel of His burial. What are the glad tidings connected with His burial? I understand by it that the Spirit of God would seek to bring home to my soul this most marvellous fact, that Christ not only died for our sins on the cross, but that in His wonderful grace He carried down into the tomb on our behalf, out of God's sight for ever, all that we are as children of Adam. Is not that good news for you? You have struggled and fought with sin. The glorious Gospel of the blessed God is that this chapter of your soul history has been closed in the death and burial of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is not expecting anything from you and me as after the flesh, for when Christ went down into the grave He closed forever before God that condition in which you and I had been so offensive to Him. This is a grand gospel to a man who has been struggling to make himself go right and finds he cannot:—

"Jesus died, and we died with Him,  
Buried in His grave we lay."

We have been "buried therefore with Him by baptism unto death." We have been "baptised to His death" (Rom. VI., 3 and 4), "Buried with Him in baptism" (Col. II, 12). What a glorious termination to the struggling with the moral condition that is past mending! I beg you to pay attention to this, for it is a point of the very greatest possible moment. I know the difficulties that souls are in, and I want to show you how the Spirit of God desires by means of the experiences and exercises through which you are passing, to bring you to the point that God Himself has arrived at in relation to what you and I are as after the flesh. The blessed God has declared in the death of Christ that there is no place for us before Him in the flesh. Have you come to the same conclusion? Are you still trying to put things right? Are you seeking by curbing the lusts and passions of the flesh to ameliorate a condition which God has judicially terminated in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? Are you trying the Priest and the Levite in connection with it, trying to put yourself right by ordinances and commandments? If so, you are trying to put straight what the blessed God Himself has declared must be, and has been, removed from before Him in the death of Christ. What the Spirit of God would say to you to-night is, "Submit to God's judgment about it."

It is a moment of supreme importance when

the believer finds that he can make no headway against the thieves, and gives up all his strugglings and looks outside himself for deliverance from their power. At last he has come to the sense of his entire weakness in the flesh, and that he has no power against that which has hitherto held him under its dominance. Then the Lord binds him up; that is, He brings home to the soul the sense that in His own precious death on the cross all that we are as after the order of sinful flesh came under the holy judgment of God, and we begin to appreciate, in a living way, the fact that when Jesus died we died with Him. We have commenced an entirely new appreciation of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and begin to see it now as in its application to our state before God, and not only as an atoning sacrifice in respect of our guilt. This is the dawn of an entirely new day to the troubled soul of the believer, and he is greatly relieved as he accepts this light of "the Gospel of the burial," knowing this that "our old man has been crucified with Him that the body of sin might be annulled that we should no longer serve (i.e. be under the dominance of) sin" (Rom. 6: 6, N.T.). But let us beware of stopping there, as if we had reached finality, for there is yet much more into which our souls must enter. I have come across many who tell me "I know that in the cross of our Lord Jesus our old man

was crucified with Him." They have come by faith into the light of what God has done with it, but now the question has to be raised not merely as to what God has done with it, but what you and I have done with it. Did you endorse the sentence? It is not only a question of what God has done; we get that in Romans 6. But when I come to Galatians 5: 24, N.T., I read, "They that are of the Christ have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts." Have you started on that line? Have you in your soul the joy of the Gospel of the burial of Christ—the great joy that you have not got to trouble yourself about the amendment of that which after 4000 years of probation God has finally rejected as worthless?

The next thing is that with the binding up He poured in oil and wine. It is a fine moment when the soul receives the oil. These exercises which we have been considering, and which so many of the people of God go through, are all used by the Lord to the end that they may come to the point where they are ready to receive the oil; in other words, when God can give them His Spirit. You say, "I received the Spirit when I was born again." That is the very thing you did not do. No man ever received the Spirit when he was born again. His being born again was a direct action of the Spirit, but it is one thing for the Spirit to touch me in

new birth, and awaken me to the sense of my condition before God, and quite another thing that I should receive the Spirit in order that my soul should apprehend the power that is at my disposal in a risen Christ. When the believer has come to the point when he looks outside himself after the combat with self is over, and takes in the marvellous fact that there is a blessed Man in the presence of God in whom is all power, he has received the Spirit. Have you received the Spirit? Is it any wonder that we are weak when we have not received the Spirit? Everything was true for me in purpose when God touched me in new birth. He touched me in view of all that was in His heart for me. All that he had enfolded in Christ was mine in purpose directly the Spirit of God wrought with me in new birth, but God has given His Spirit to the end that everything which He has enfolded in Christ might be unfolded to me and made good in me in the power of that Spirit. All power has been enfolded in Christ. Here is a man that has been reduced by the thieves to this point—wounded, naked, half dead, Priest and Levite no good to him. Now the blessed Lord Jesus draws near to one in such conditions, and not only binds him up, but gives him His Holy Spirit, establishing a conscious link between the soul and Himself, to the end that the power that is in Him might work livingly in the be-

liever here, and that he might be empowered for conflict. It is a wonderful movement when we begin to look to the right place where the power is, when we give up looking at ourselves or our own ideas and find that all the power is in the hand of that blessed living Man in glory, and that He gives us His Spirit to the end that all that He is may be available to us. Have you been through this two-fold exercise—first about your sins and then about yourself? The end of it is that you turn to Christ and appreciate Him as Saviour in an entirely new way. What grand news for a man who wants to be in the place of true testimony for Christ! There is power in Christ to support him in spite of all the opposition of the enemy, and he need never have another overthrow from the thieves. He is going to be victorious over them in the power that indwells a blessed living Christ. Is it good news for you to-night? Do you like to hear that there is power in the blessed Man up there and that the Spirit has been given to you so that the power that is in Him up there in the heavens might be available to you here in this world, that you may know down here the support of the very self-same power that Christ was in as a blessed Man when He was here? People have got somehow or other the idea that Christ obviated the difficulties of His pathway here as Man by the power of His Godhead (He was God

over all, blessed for evermore), and that He had a power whereby He moved along down here, other than that put at our disposal. The marvellous thing about the manhood of the blessed Saviour is that He came down here and took up the condition of weakness and dependence on God in such a real way that He could say, "Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust." The very selfsame spirit He had when He was down here in this world, and in the power of which He "went about doing good," is now to be communicated to you and me, in order that we may be empowered for testimony here in this world. That is grand news! I look up to Christ where He is, and I receive His Spirit, and I am in touch with the Source of "all power." The practical outcome of this is that we shall walk even as He walked. What a consummation! What an issue to the exercise! How blessed of the Lord to pass us through an exercise that brings us to the point where we find in Him the positive source of all the power that we want for every detail of our pathway in connection with the will of God here. Some think that all you need to do is to have your time of prayer and reading, and study the Scriptures well for an hour or so; read a bit, and then pray a bit, and then you will get through the day without further difficulty. No you won't! You will break down before break-



fast is over! The Lord will never allow it, because that makes us independent of Himself. As with the tramway systems in this, and other great cities, so with ourselves, an overhead power is introduced. There has to be an acceptance in the soul of the pathway of Christ here, and then the Spirit will maintain the believer in touch with the power overhead, so that he may be sustained every moment of the day. In the case of an electric car in some colder latitudes there are three things dependent on the trolley-wheel, viz. (1) the movement of the car, (2) its light, and (3) its warmth—for they carry electric heaters. The power is in the wire, but it does not come into the tram unless the trolley-wheel is on the line. If in the power of communion and of an ungrieved Spirit my trolley-wheel is held against the wire and I find that I have power for movement, power for testimony, and the enjoyment of the warmth of the love of God, there will be one constant stream of power coming down to me in all the circumstances in which I am found down here in this world in connection with the pathway of the will of God. No man comes out in practical Christianity until these questions are settled. The blessed, glorified Man Who has all power in His hands gives it to His people as and when they need it, so that they may not break down in their pathway. Wonderful provision has

been made for us in case we should fail. We have an Advocate with the Father, so that if by some piece of folly we break down, and the trolley-wheel gets off the wire, He restores the communications. I have thus found a settlement of every question that could possibly be raised in connection with my position down here in this world. My sins, and my state, and everything else, have their solution in the risen Christ in Whom there is "all power."

The time is gone, and we must leave the rest of the story for another occasion. May God grant that everyone of our souls may lay hold on what is enfolded in Christ, so that we are no longer afraid of the thieves. our wounds are bound up, the oil is poured in, and we are in touch with all the resources found in the Christ of God.

G. W. WARE.



## THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE INN.

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Luke 10: 30-42.

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We were considering this portion of Scripture together a week ago, and we proposed, as you will remember, to look at it not from the standpoint at which it is commonly taken up—of the first meeting of the soul with the Lord Jesus Christ—but rather as an illustration of that second meeting, when the soul makes its further acquaintance with Christ, and when it finds that He is not only a blessed Saviour from all the consequences that it has been exposed to by its guilt, but that the same blessed One Who took up the question of its guilt is able to deal with the condition of powerlessness to the discovery of which it has been brought. We saw that a believer does not perhaps all at once reach that point, but that the great incentive is that having received the blessing of which I think Jerusalem is significant, the Believer passes down to take up the place of testimony in this poor Jericho world, that he might be a witness for the One Who at such infinite cost has brought him blessing from God. On his way down the man in the story

is met with the power of the enemy. The thieves come upon him. He puts up a great fight against their power, but they prove themselves to be too strong for him, and they overcome him and he is brought to a most pitiable condition. Everything he possesses is taken away from him. He is stripped of his raiment, and he is left wounded and half dead by the way side.

In that way he is a picture of the condition to which one who is truly a believer in Jesus is brought, through the assaults of sin. The believer has to come to the point where, through perhaps the most painful experience, he frankly acknowledges that he has no power of his own whereby to make a stand against the forces of evil, but that they overcome him and brought him to the discovery of his condition of complete weakness. When the soul reaches that point, then the blessed Lord Jesus Christ draws near to it in a new way altogether; not now to speak to it about the forgiveness of sins, but to bring home to it the wonderful fact that there is a new source of power altogether, and that instead of there being any capability in man in his own strength to face the power of the enemy, he has to be brought to such a sense of his own utter weakness that he gladly looks outside himself for a source of power, and finds it in the blessed Christ of God Himself.

All that we were engaged with last week.

We saw that the Lord Jesus, in all the rich and blessed grace of His heart, delights to draw near to the one that has come, through the most painful experience, to the sense of his own utter weakness. He comes in with bandage; that is, to give to him the sense that he has no longer to be found contending against these forces of sin, but that the whole state and condition in which he was found after the flesh, has been taken up by the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, and finally and completely ended for God. Wonderful comfort this to the soul, when it comes to the fact that it has no longer to seek to bring about an amelioration of a condition which is perfectly hopeless, but when it sees that the condition which it cannot ameliorate has been terminated for God in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a supreme moment in the history of the believer, when he looks outside himself, to find in a blessed Man, who by His death has terminated the whole condition in which he is found as a child of Adam here, the source of a new power altogether.

We saw, towards the end of our meeting, that Christ presents Himself as the One in Whom there is treasured up all the power that His people need for their conduct in the pathway of the will of God down here. I think one great reason why people are missing this great blessing at the present moment, is this, that they have failed to see that all

the power of God, and all the support of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the comfort of the Holy Ghost, only flow in one channel here in this world, and that is the channel or the pathway which has been marked by the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ. In no other pathway can the power be experienced. If the soul is not set for the pathway that Christ has marked out, it will never prove what is the power that is in Him to maintain it here according to the will of God.

I used the illustration last week of the tram. I would like to say further that if the tram is to be in the good of the power that is overhead, it must be on the marked-out tram-line. If the tram gets off the pathway, it cannot experience the good of the power that is overhead. One would like to set it before every one of our souls that the pathway has been marked by the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ here in this world, and outside that pathway there is neither power, comfort, support nor solace for the people of God. Why? Because all this is ministered to us, as we were saying, by our Lord Jesus Christ. There is only one pathway He knows anything about—

“There is but that one in this waste

Which His footsteps have marked as His  
own.”

In that way all this solace and support and comfort flow. Outside it, they do not flow at all.

I find a great many who complain that they do not prove the power and the support which they hear spoken of and the reason of it is that they have been seeking to walk in a pathway of their own choosing, and in that pathway they cannot experience the good of the support that is treasured up for them in Christ. He knows nothing of such pathways. He cannot sympathise with us in such pathways, or succour us. He will sympathise with us, succour and support us, and give us power, in the pathway of God's will here in this world, but He will give it nowhere else. Would we seek that He should give it to us anywhere else? The pathway that Christ marked by his feet in this world is the only pathway in which we can prove the good of all that He is as an all-sufficient Saviour for us along every bit of the road. One would like to put it to the very youngest soul, have you addressed yourself to that pathway? If you have, it has brought you into very deep exercise, but the issue of the exercise is that you are brought to the discovery on the one hand of your own weakness, but, on the other, that there is in the Lord Jesus Christ all that is needful for you in the pathway of the will of God.

It is at this point in our spiritual history that we receive the Spirit, and we become conscious of a new link between our souls and Christ, and begin to prove in a very new way what Christ can be for us as a people down here in this world. I would like to ask you, have you the conscious sense of a definite link in your soul with Christ, so that by the Spirit all the power there is in Him as a blessed Man in Glory, may be administered to you as you pursue the pathway of the will of God down here? The Spirit of God is given to that end, among others. If it were not for the Spirit of God, there would be a complete gap between the people of God on earth and the blessed Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. Whatever there might be in Him in heaven would be for the pleasure of God, but it would not be effectual in the people of God on earth. The Spirit is given that everything that is enfolded in Christ might be freely administered to us.

Turn away your ears from everybody who tells you that you received the Spirit when you were born again. Nobody received the Spirit when he was born again. You were born again in view of your receiving the Spirit. There comes a moment when God gives us His Holy Spirit. It should cause the deepest exercise with us, and cause much turning of our hearts to God, that we may have the assurance, in our souls that we have received



the Spirit, and with Him the conscious sense of a definite link with Christ.

It may be just the beginning of things here. I think in this chapter we get the initial step in this line. The wounds are bound up, and the oil is poured in. Then another thing happens. Not only is the oil poured in, but wine is poured in as well. "Pouring in oil and wine." In the pouring in of the oil there is indicated, as we have been saying, the presence of the Spirit, linking the soul with Christ. By the wine is indicated the new order of things connected with Christ in resurrection, and as the believer who has received the Spirit apprehends his links with that order, and takes account of himself as in Christ, the joys of the new creation begin to affect his soul. He has received "oil and wine." I think the binding up has effected two things; it has put the soul in link with Christ, as the source of all power, and it has given it a sense of association with Him, according to the purpose of God, in a condition of things that will never be tarnished by the inroad of sin, but where everything will be according to the good pleasure of God for ever. What a change has come to pass in the soul when it realises that in Christ there is all power for the whole of its condition here in this world, and that when these conditions are ended there is a scene, on which indeed the gaze of the soul

is fixed, where everything is according to the thoughts and mind of the blessed God for ever. It puts things on a totally different footing for us. We see everything in a totally new light, and instead of having the objects of our souls in a scene shadowed by death, we find our joy in a scene of life that never knows a shadow. Have we begun to breathe such an atmosphere as this? Do we know what it is to be linked up with this blessed Man in the glory of God—not only finding in Him the source of a competent power over every difficulty on the way through which we pass, but also having our souls filled with the joy of belonging to a condition of things where there will be nothing to disturb our rest or God's rest for ever? A new condition of things has indeed begun to dawn upon the soul!

The next thing I find is that the Good Samaritan puts this man upon His own beast, and brings him to the inn. It has been said that this is significant of the Lord Jesus bringing a believer into the enjoyment of assembly privileges. I do not think that is the thought. What I see is that there is in the hands of the blessed Spirit of God down here in this world at the present time a heavenly system where all the grace of God is administered, and it is in the mind of God that the believer, having passed along the road, and knowing something of the wonder-

ful service which is indicated in the story, should experience the good of this system of divine administration. It is according to the will and thoughts of God that there should be a condition of things here in Adelaide which corresponds to the "inn," and which is absolutely necessary in connection with the carrying into effect of the purposes of Divine grace.

One would like to ask how much we have been exercised as to this thought of God, that we should be so in the hands of the Spirit that there should be a circle in which all the heavenly graces of Christ are found in administration for the benefit of souls, so that when one is reached in the way we have been considering, he may be brought into the midst of that circle. It is not the thought in the mind of God that people should be immediately brought into Christian privileges, and that they should be found breaking bread; but that souls in this condition should come into the midst of the people of God and find administered there all the graces of Christ and a true heavenly atmosphere. In other words, it is in the mind of God that there should be a condition of things found among us as God's people here in this world that is conducive to the convalescence of souls. They should come into our midst and prove that there is among us a heavenly atmosphere, permeated with the very graces of Christ, in

which you and I in the hands of the Spirit are administering down here in this world that which is of the very heaven itself to which Christ belongs.

One would seriously like to raise the question as to how far such a condition of things is found amongst us as a people of God. We should just give ourselves up to this: Are we bringing into the midst of the people of God a heavenly atmosphere, something which is of Christ? And are we channels whereby that which is of Christ, and of the heaven where Christ is, is brought into the midst of the people of God down here in this world? When the Lord Jesus Christ brings a poor soul from the conditions of which we have been speaking, is there that in our midst that may be brought to bear on it, that it may be recovered of its sin-wounds? When this man was brought into the inn, the bandages were on him. They were not taken off in a few hours. He is bound up, and the Good Samaritan stays there for the night, and takes care of him. On the morrow He leaves him to be cared for by the host. In that inn where the heavenly administration is begun, the man receives that which he stands so sorely in need of; he finds himself cared for, and that which is of Christ ministered to him. He is strengthened, and after a little time the bandages will come off, and through grace what will happen will be that the man who

has been picked up under these dire circumstances will be enabled to take up a place in connection with the administration, and have his share in all the privileges of the assembly of God. Let him get rid of his bandages. Let him get help and recovery from the condition he is in. Let him prove what the power is that he has discovered in the risen Christ, and what heavenly grace is, as expressed in His people who constitute the "inn," so that he may have the joys of the new creation scene a little more developed in his soul, and advance in the consciousness of being linked up with entirely new conditions. One delights to see this going on among the people of God.

Dear young souls have passed through much exercise, and they come into our midst. What are they finding among us? Do they find the very graces of Christ in full administration amongst us? Do they find an atmosphere where the spirit of the world is, or conditions which bring home to their souls in power the sense of the blessedness that is in Christ? So that what is in Christ working in the power of the Spirit in the people of God down here confirms and strengthens their souls, and they are prepared to take up their part in connection with the administration? If that is found among us, we shall get a great many more in our midst, for the Lord Jesus will delight to bring them under our

notice. Do not talk to them, or give them books, merely; but let us be concerned that we should be found so in touch with Christ ourselves that in the power of the Spirit we are able to communicate to them something of the very graces of Christ and the blessedness of the heaven where He is, as they come into the midst of the people of God here in this world. That is the atmosphere in which these souls will grow, and get healing from their wounds by reason of the helpful conditions they find among the people of God.

Towards the end of the chapter I find something more. It is remarkable how Luke puts the story of Martha and Mary following on that of the Good Samaritan. Luke does not put events in historical order, but in their moral connections. There is a great moral connection between the story of Martha and Mary at the end of the chapter, and the story of the Good Samaritan. In Mary we have a picture of one who has been found on the Jericho road, brought into the good of the Inn, got rid of her bandages, healed of her wounds, and who now is in a perfectly healthy Christian condition, sitting at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, in order that she might make her own personal acquaintance with Him.

In Martha I see one who is not recovered from her conditions. I see her as one who is still in her bandages. Mary comes before

me as one who is in a perfect state of spiritual convalescence; the bandages are gone, and the desire of her heart is that she might know more of the blessed One through Whose grace she has been brought into this blessing. What a privilege that you and I should be able to contribute to the passing on of souls as they come up to us from the Jericho road into the position where they sit down at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ to receive His words; that is, that they might come under His own formative ministry. It is a wonderful thing when souls begin in quietness of spirit to sit down before the Lord, not to go in with their wants, but where they are concerned that they should just receive from Himself an impression of what He is in His own blessedness, that the blessedness that is in Him should be communicated to the soul, which would thus be found growing in acquaintance with Christ. That is what is indicated in the attitude of Mary here; sitting down just to receive the words of Jesus.

How much do you and I know of an exercise like this? The quiet sitting down that we might gather impressions of Christ, so that we might be competent to administer them in the midst of the Christian circle down here in this world? How much time do you and I give every day of our lives to the quiet sitting at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we might receive impressions of

Himself, that we might become so formed by them that we appear in His character down here? This is where we get fitted to take part in the administration of the "inn." We can get books, and study doctrines, and listen to ministry, and merely fill our brains, but that is not what makes a man effectual down here. What does make him effectual is the measure in which he has received a divine impression of Christ, which has enabled him to put off the natural characteristics, and to put on the character of Christ instead, so that he becomes a totally different person. Instead of that which marked him previously now characterising him, he is marked by a new character, which he has received from Christ. This is only gained when our souls quietly retire from all the rush and bustle of life here, and from our cares and troubles, into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sitting down at His feet give Him the opportunity of pouring into our souls a little bit of His own blessedness. Might I call it a habit of spiritual retirement? We do not know much about these things. We would not like the Spirit of God to declare how much time we have spent in the past month in quiet retirement in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ; but this I do know, that if we are not found in such condition, receiving from Christ the impression of what He is, there will not be very much of Christ coming



out in us. There may be much doctrine, perhaps, but how much is there found among us of what Christ is?

That is what one wants to find. It is not to be obtained merely by studying doctrines and books. I read ministry, and I do not believe for a minute that we can get on without the ministry the Lord gives us; but you may be sure of this: that if we are going to depend upon ministry entirely, we shall never become spiritual.

What really engenders a spiritual condition among us is that we retire into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sit down there and let Him fill our souls with the sense of His own blessedness. What will come to pass is that we shall come into the midst of the dear people of God down here in this world, and we shall be a power in their midst for the spreading abroad of that which is in Christ. We miss these things. We have overlooked them. I do want to impress on you that you may have a constant flow of the most blessed ministry that can be found among the people of God on earth, and yet you might be unspiritual, and that what really produces spiritual power among us is not only the ministry, but the blessed One to whom all the ministry points—to Christ—and as we are found in His company, drinking into our souls all that He is, we come out here as an expression of it in this world.

One earnestly desires that it might be found among us: We do not want to be marked by anything great; but we should be a people marked by this, that the graces of Christ are found in full flow among us, and each one contributing to that atmosphere by the way in which we are found in constant retirement from all the confusion in this scene, into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are found thus, drinking in what He is in the power of the Spirit, we shall be the diffusers of Himself in the midst of the people of God. I would like us to go away with the sense that the Lord has called us, and proposes to fashion us so that we may be contributors to a condition of things here in this world that shall conduce to the convalescence of wounded souls that come into our midst, and find the very atmosphere of heaven itself there, and the graces of Christ in full display, so that the soul is nourished into a healthy condition.

One earnestly desires that such things might be found amongst us. The difficulties are great enough; but what comforts one is that there is an absolute sufficiency in the blessed Lord Jesus Christ to give effect to that wonderful purpose that there should be a circle on earth, where, as I said before, His own graces are in display; a company that abounds in all the graces that are found in the Head in heaven, so that those graces are found not only in the Head, but in the midst

of a people here in the world. And so we find, according to Ps. 133, that the precious ointment on the Head goes down over the beard to the skirts of the garment. You have a company in this world endued with power and clothed in the graces of the Head in heaven. You have something for the good of souls, a circle in the midst of which a poor soul can come and find that which will be for his strengthening as he is brought up from the distressing conditions in which he was found.

I think, if we take it up each one for ourselves and have to do with the Lord about it, we shall find that it will be for the very greatest possible blessing. We mourn a great deal that we do not find more distressed souls among us. If we were more exercised on these lines we should find that the Spirit of God would bring into our midst souls in all sorts of conditions, to be nourished, taken care of, ministered to (not talked to, merely), and who may find the heavenly atmosphere of the graces of Christ among us in the time of their very great spiritual exercise.

I feel I have put these things in a very poor way; but one has this confidence, that the Spirit of God can take them up and make them good in our souls to the end that there should be more of the graces of Christ found amongst us—the graces that are found in Him, flowing freely in our midst in the power of the Holy Ghost. G. W. WARE.

**THE YEAR OF RELEASE.**

Deuteronomy 15: 1-11; Luke 4: 16-20, 5: 27-29; Philemon 1: 10-17.

Deuteronomy tells us of conditions under which we can enjoy the good land to which God has brought us. Two things constitute the blessings of the land of God's purpose—two things God intended to mark the people as they dwelt there. Firstly, that they should dwell together; that they should occupy the land as one great family living together in affection towards one another, considering one another. Secondly, that they should know the reality of God's presence amongst them. God said that if His commandments were carried out, He would dwell with them and walk with them. They would thus be different from all the other nations. They would have God with them, dwelling with them and walking with them. John says that if we love one another God dwells with us. We cannot have the last without the first being true. If divine affections are in our hearts toward one another, God dwells with us.

Most of the Book of Deuteronomy gives us instructions as to how we are to be regulated one toward another so that God's presence may be known. One of the regulations of the Book of Deuteronomy is the year of release. Every seven years they were to have a year of release. All claims which any of the people had against another, everything

that had been loaned, every claim that was outstanding, should be released. They were in the good land God had given them. In the appreciation of what God had given them, they were to give to one another, not with regret, but willingly. They must be careful that there should not be any thought in their hearts that the year of release was near, and treat their brother grudgingly, but act as God had acted towards them in releasing them. God had released them. They were once slaves in Egypt; but God had come in in the goodness of His own heart, and had released them, and He enjoins upon them that they should take character from Him, and release one another of every claim they had against one another, so that God would bless them. They were to do it, so that God would bless them.

The Lord Jesus came into this world, and in the 4th Luke He stands up and says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4: 18-19). He was going to move on from that moment, preaching the year of release, telling everybody that the acceptable year had come in which God was releasing men from every claim he had made upon them. How blessedly acceptable is such a year, in which God is

“not imputing trespasses,” “frankly forgiving both,” making no claims on anybody, but coming in with nothing but divine grace. That is what the Lord preached: the acceptable year of the Lord.

In Luke 5 Peter toiled all night and had nothing. He was in the strait of poverty. The Lord Jesus preaches to Peter the acceptable year of the Lord, and releases Peter from his poverty, and instead of being a poor man, his net cannot contain the multitude of fishes. The Lord was not even claiming the use of Peter's boat, but gave him good measure for its use. Then He comes to the leper, and says, “I will, be thou clean.” That is the acceptable year. Then He comes to the palsied man, and says to him, “Thy sins are forgiven thee.” That is the acceptable year, and the man goes out liberated and set free from every claim. The Lord Jesus went on preaching that right to the cross, where the dying thief saw the immensity of his debt and heard of one of the days of the acceptable year of the Lord: “This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

Going back to the 5th chapter of Luke, we find that, “After these things” (Luke is writing with method) the Lord sees the publican Levi sitting at the receipt of custom—comfortable, sitting down, making claims on people—claiming on everyone he could. To get a right conception of it we must understand that he was not collecting these taxes for the Roman Emperor. In those days, as

most of us know, the tax gatherers bought the right to collect the taxes in any district, so that once they had paid a certain sum, it was their right to get every bit they could out of the people. Here was this man, making claims as big as he could on everybody. But he had seen the Lord moving about, preaching the acceptable year of the Lord, as it says "after these things;" and when the Lord says "Follow Me," Levi says in effect: "I can never collect another tax; I am done with taxes." "He left all, and rose up and followed Him." It was an attitude of heart. It was not that he rose up and left all. "He left all and rose up and followed Him." He says: "If it is the acceptable year of the Lord, I am not going to make another claim." Instead of making claims on people, he starts to give. He makes the Lord a great feast. He gets all the other tax gatherers, and induces them to come to the feast. He wants them to come under the influence of the One Who is preaching the acceptable year of the Lord.

To pass on, the Apostle Paul takes it up. Going down to Damascus, the immensity of his debt dawns on him. He speaks of it afterwards as "where sin abounded." Outside Damascus he sees the amount of the claim that might be made up against him, and then he discovers it is still the acceptable year. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," and released his debt. He immediately sets about himself to main-

tain the year of the Lord's release. Ever afterward he moves about without making a claim on anybody. At the close of his ministry he gathers the Ephesians together, and says: "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel" (Acts 20: 23). "I have not made any claim on you." "These hands have ministered unto my necessities and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord, how He said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20: 34 35)." To the Corinthians who were speaking against him he says: "I shall most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your souls, if even in abundantly loving you I should be the less loved" (2 Cor. 12: 15, N.T.).

In the Book of Philemon Paul has Onesimus on his heart. Onesimus had run away from Philemon, leaving an account there. He had ignored his obligations to Philemon, but he had come into Paul's hands, and Paul sends him back, and writes to Philemon and says to him: "Philemon, Onesimus owes you something. Whatever he owes you I will pay. I don't say that you owe me your own self: I am not making any claims on you. I could show you that you owe me everything that you have, but I don't say it." What do you think Philemon did? Did he turn up his ledger and transfer Onesimus' account to Paul? I believe he saw it was the year of release, and so he credited against all that



Onesimus owed him (and it may have been a great deal) all the grace of God he had received, and the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the grace of the Apostle Paul, and the grace of all the brethren. He said: "I have received abundance of grace. There is sufficient left over to receive Onesimus as a beloved brother for ever."

If we are going to live in the land, and have God's presence with us, this is one of the regulations. It is still the year of release. I do not mean that we release what is due to God; but it is the year of release as to what we consider is due to us. If we are going to have God with us, this injunction must be carried out—not compulsorily, but willingly. We have to leave the receipt of custom. As we appreciate the Lord's release, we should be like Levi—we should rise up from the receipt of custom. We have seen some unhappy brethren sitting at the receipt of custom, claiming some acknowledgments, some apologies, or something of that kind. All that is on the line of tax gathering. The Lord would have us, in the sense of the year of release, to give up tax gathering. The Lord would have us move amongst one another as givers. The only happy hearts are the hearts that give. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20: 35). God Himself is blessed for ever for that very reason. As we appreciate His giving and His releasing, it is our privilege and our joy (and it secures to our hearts the blessing

of God), to move amongst one another, not making claims. The Apostle Paul says: "I have used none of these things" (1 Cor. 9:15). May the Lord give us absolutely to leave the receipt of custom. That is what brings in trouble and disappointment. How many have said, "The love of the brethren is not what it used to be." Such people are sitting at the receipt of custom, seeking to collect taxes. If they were to move on the line of giving, how happy they would be "Of His fulness have we all received, and grace upon grace" (John 1: 16). There is an infinite supply in the heart of the Lord Jesus and in the heart of God to enable us to move amongst one another as givers, contributing instead of receiving. It is the contributors who are happy. In our little measure it is our joy to take part in the year of release. Christianity is that seventh year going on all the time. The Lord Jesus continued it in resurrection. The Lord said: "Go back to Jerusalem and preach repentance and remission of sins" (Luke 24: 14). They were to begin at the city He might have claimed most from. This was continued in Paul—and is being continued now. If we want the presence of God amongst us, it will be true of us, that this spirit of giving is with us, and it will be so easy if we are living in the appreciation of the release that has come to us.

May the Lord grant that we may leave the receipt of custom, and rise up and follow Him, for His name's sake.

W. J. HOUSE.



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