

# Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

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Vol. XLV

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No. 1

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# WORDS OF HELP

## A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

**WE** are indebted to an esteemed fellow-helper for the following, which is commended to the careful attention of all our readers:

#### Rules for the Use of this Magazine

- 1 DO NOT on any account read it through at one sitting;
- 2 DO read one article at a time, with care. Read also from your own Bible the Scripture portion referred to in the article, either at the same time or as soon after as possible;
- 3 LATER, read the next article, with its Scripture; later still, read the next, and so on.

The reason for the above is that a magazine is not a book, and is not to be treated as one. Rather treat each article as a separate book to be read and thought over along its own lines, and you will get its own profit from each.

- 4 DO pray to God about what you have read;
- 5 DO write to the Editor whenever you have the desire;
- 6 DO pass the magazine on to another when you have finished with it;
- 7 DO NOT cease to pray for Contributors, Editor, Publisher, Readers and every copy printed.

*And may God in all things be glorified through Jesus Christ.*

(W.H.L.G.)

## LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS

### VI JESUS—NAME OF GRACE AND GLORY

(Notes of an address on Phil. ii. 3-11)

**T**HE more we consider it, the more amazing it is that when the apostle desires to set before us an example of humility, he brings before us the Lord Jesus Himself—the One to Whom all glory belongs, the One of Whom we were reading that in the beginning He was, and was with God, and was God. That is far better than all the definitions that men could ever give of the doctrine of Christ. He was the Eternal, and He was not only the Eternal, but He was eternally distinct. The Son was what the Father was not, and the Father was what the Son was not, and what the Spirit was not. He was with God, and He was also God. And it is because of what He is that His humiliation is His glory.

We have in Philippians ii. the most absolute contrast to all that man has been in his history, to all that we are by nature. It is natural for us to desire to rise in the world. It is not our ambition to go down. More than that, as was long ago pointed out, to depart from that place where God has placed him, whether it be an angel or a man, is apostasy. The angels that kept not their first estate, He spared not (Jude 6; 2 Peter ii. 4). So it was with Adam. The temptation to Adam was to rise above that place, blessed as it was, where God had placed him: "ye shall be as gods" (Gen. iii. 5).

It was only because the Lord Jesus Christ was Who He was, because He was not a creature but the Creator, that He could humble Himself and leave His first estate. Then follow these wonderful words, He "counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God" (R.V.). It was not a question of attaining anything, but rather maintaining. He sought not, it was not the ambition of the Lord Jesus to maintain the glory that was His. Might I say, if the language is not too strong, that the being on equality with God was not that which He valued, but He emptied Himself of divine glory and He came down and took the place of a creature. He took the place of a man, of a servant. May I say in passing, what a wondrous revelation we have in these verses of the thoughts of God towards

men. When you think of the universe, and of the world itself on which we live being nothing compared with it, and then what is man on the face of the earth? Yet what was there in all the universe in the eyes of God to be compared with man? Man was the object of His love. It was a man that God had crowned with glory and set over the works of His hands (Psa. viii. 6), and what ruin had come in!

But here was the manifestation of the marvellous thoughts that were in God's heart to man. The Deity Himself came down and became man, and took upon Him the form of a servant. God in His grace has given us in the Gospels the wondrous path of service which the Lord Jesus Christ walked. It moved our hearts to worship as we read it. We know how when we were young Christians we naturally turned to the Epistles, especially to the Epistle to the Romans, when our consciences were not yet in perfect peace. But what joy it is, the older one grows, to turn back to the Gospels and to read of the blessed One who came down from heaven; to contemplate Him in that infinite grace that made Him to be here a Servant for us, for poor guilty sinners, and for those that were guilty among the guilty too, those that were outcast even among sinners!

We see Him stooping even to ask a drink, even to being beholden to a poor woman that was an outcast. Is it any wonder that her heart was touched, that all else was forgotten—the errand on which she had come—and that she went back and could testify of Him in the ears of her fellow citizens. How full of surprise, how incredible the news must have seemed to them! “You tell us the Messiah has come and has been speaking to you? You! Had He any idea of the creature He was speaking with?” “Yes,” she says, “He told me all things that ever I did.” “And did He not repel you?” “No,” she says, “He told me that if I had known Who it was speaking with me, I would have asked of Him and He would have given me living water.” Is it any wonder that the whole town came streaming out? That when the men came home from their work they left their evening meal and went out to see the wonder of the Christ of God sitting at that well? How blessed it is for us to see how grace and glory meet in that blessed One!

But He went even beyond that. We have the second step in the Lord's humiliation: "He humbled Himself." It was not enough for Him to become a servant, to be here in fashion as a man, but "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." There was no staying until He had reached the very bottom, until He had gone as low as it was possible for Him to go, down, down until He is found beneath the judgment of God, alone and forsaken, upon the cross.

And now what will God do? How will God not answer to such grace! God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name. That is a figure of speech which occurs in Scripture more than once. It means that God has given Him honour, as you read that "David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians" (2 Sam. viii. 13). "God has given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

"At the name of Jesus"; that is the Lord's own personal name, and we come very far short of the truth if we see in the name of Jesus simply "Saviour." "Hosea" means "saviour"; but it is Jehovah—"Jehovah shall save" that is the meaning of the word Jesus. And at that which is His own personal name, the name of Jesus, "every knee shall bow." This is not simply grace; this is power. "Of things in heaven," whether it be archangel, or angel; of things on earth, or of infernal beings; every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus because of the personal glory that belongs to Him. That name by which He was known here in the world, in the days of His flesh, when He walked in lowliness and meekness through this world, that is the Name that is to be honoured, and all will own His personal glory and bow to Him because of Who He is.

And then there is something more: "and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." That is the righteousness of God; God's righteous answer to the cross. Not only will all bow to the name of Jesus, not only will all own His personal glory and worth; but for the glory of God the Father, the righteous answer of God to all the shame of the cross will be, that every tongue shall

confess that He is Lord. Beloved, well may we sing as we do sometimes in our hymn:

“Oh, then may His glory and love,  
 Make us walk in the service of heaven,  
 'Mid obedience and suffering to prove  
 That we to the Lamb have been given.”

G. F. Cox.

(The above notes apparently remained unrevised by Mr. Cox at the time of his home-call in 1933. But how well many will recognise the tones of the ministry of one who was greatly beloved by all who were privileged to know him—Ed. W.O.H.).

## HIS NAME

Scriptures to be read:

Psalm ix. 10 and xcvi. 8; Malachi iii. 16; Matthew xviii. 20;  
 Philippians ii. 10; Revelation iii. 8, 12.

**M**ATTHEW xviii. 20, the central verse of the above named scriptures, is so well known and accepted for its simple preciousness that it may not be realised it sets forth a profound fact of a revolutionary character which every Christian should grasp.

In John xiv. 1 it is recorded that the Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.” Hitherto their hopes had rested in the promises of Jehovah as had all the faithful and godly in Israel. Henceforth their trust was to be in Him, the Lord Jesus, not for a place on earth but in heaven, in the Father’s house. He was going away to prepare it for them and come again to conduct them to it. They were to look for His coming just as they had previously “looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” No longer was the Name of Jehovah to be upon their lips but the Name of Jesus. To them it was to be “the sweetest Name on earth” and whenever they gathered to that Name, as they had previously gathered to Jehovah’s Name, He would be in the midst of them. It indicated the end of an old era and the commencement of a new one. This was indeed revolutionary and if we

look at the Old Testament scriptures named above we shall see steps in the pathway of faith leading up to it.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan sowed the seeds of doubt in fear of, and disrespect for God on the one hand, and of confidence in man on the other. Ever since that time if a man has presented himself as a benefactor and leader, he has been accepted as such, and God has been forgotten or disregarded. Men of faith, however, have realised that God is just and good, and has a purpose of blessing in all His ways.

### **Knowing Jehovah's Name**

In David we see a man who had very trying and perplexing experiences but who knew that God cared for him and would in His own time and way bless him and his family after him. He says in Psalm ix. 10 "They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee." How often he had proved Jehovah to be all that he needed! None other of the gods, so called, of the nations around them could be compared with Jehovah and they that knew His Name could with certainty put their trust in Him. His name was famous, for His works were marvellous and such a God could be trusted indeed. This was not a blind hopeful faith, but a sure and personal knowledge of Jehovah.

### **The Glory due unto His Name**

This knowledge of God led David and those of like faith to sing His praises. The writer of Psalm 96 says "Give unto Jehovah the glory due unto His Name." No half hearted praise or worship was appropriate. His salvation and His wonders were such that they should be showed forth from day to day and declared among all people. All should come into His courts with an offering and worship Him. Universal praise and thanksgiving was due to Him from all kindreds of people. This was the glory due unto His Name, for the psalmist says "The Lord is great, and greatly to be praised."

### **Thinking upon His Name**

Jehovah was in great honour then. He was taking action to establish David's throne in his son Solomon with great earthly majesty and might, typifying the much greater majesty and might yet to be set forth in David's Greater Son, the Lord

Jesus Christ. When we come to Malachi's day however we find very different circumstances. The glory of the Lord had departed from Israel, idolatry and sin having taken hold of them. God had given them over to captivity by Gentile oppressors and though a remnant was back in the land, the throne of David was unoccupied and the City of David was in dishonour. There was a pretence of the worship of Jehovah but the leaders were far away from the faith of David's day, and were in fact using "stout words" against Jehovah. When charged by Jehovah they claimed to be guiltless and argued with Him. It was a time of apostasy and the Lord was rejected. "Then" we read in Chapter iii. verse 16 "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened and and heard." What did He hear? He heard them speaking reverently of His Name, and noted them as fearing Him among their godless fellows. He noted even when "they thought upon His Name" and said they would be His in the day when He made up His jewels.

Jehovah jealously preserved the line of these faithful ones down to the times of the Gospel. In Luke ii. we read of Simeon, a "man just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel," and of Anna, a prophetess who "spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Israel." The Lord had His eye upon such and gave them the joy of seeing "His Salvation."

### **Gathering to the Lord's Name**

In due course the apostles were brought into this line of faith, for to them was "the arm of the Lord revealed." Through Peter they declared of the lowly Jesus of Nazareth "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Flesh and blood had not revealed it, but the Father Himself. On such a revelation and declaration of faith, the Lord Jesus said He would build His Church which would supersede Israel in the order of blessing, the least member of it being more privileged than John the Baptist, the last and greatest prophet in Israel.

Thus those that trod the pathway of faith were led in the ways of God through His patient dealings with Israel to a new position wherein His Son sets up a new people for God which He called "My Church" and to whom His Name would be



precious. Further, where "two or three" of those people gathered to His Name, He would be in their midst (Matt. xviii. 20) and actions they took on earth would be confirmed in heaven. This was surely revolutionary for those that were "Israelites indeed" and indicates the peculiar and privileged position Christians stand in before God.

### **Bowing to His Name**

It is not to the memory of Abraham's name or to the prospects of the recovery of David's throne that we gather but to "His Name." It is not to form, pomp and ceremony but to a Person who has died and risen again "according to the scriptures," and who has been highly exalted and given "a Name which is above every Name" at which every knee should bow.

It is at the Name of Jesus that every knee must bow. It is the Name that was on the lips of the men and officers who came with lanterns and torches and weapons to arrest Him, and that was inscribed in derision above His blessed head on the cross. It will soon ring throughout the universe of God, and every knee shall bow to it, and every tongue shall confess the bearer of it to be Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10). Then the words of Psalm xcvi. 8 will, as prophecy, at long last be fulfilled.

### **Not Denying His Name**

How wonderful that we can gather now in simplicity to this Name and have the glorious Bearer of it in our midst. But apostasy is developing, and Malachi's day is repeating itself. Christendom is sadly denying the Name of Jesus and stout words are being used against Him again. Those that seek to walk faithfully are few and have little strength but He knows them and takes notice that they keep His Word and do not deny His Name. (Rev. iii. 8).

The religious leaders today may ignore Him but He has the highest place of authority. In His own time He will bring them low before those who have remained faithful. If we think of our weakness, we must marvel at His grace and seek to be worthy by keeping His Word and not denying His Name.

## His New Name

In the glorious day soon to dawn when He makes up His jewels, He will give to each who has kept the word of His patience, the joy of being a pillar in the temple of His God—a temple not made of stones, but of His blood-bought saints. Those that have been faithful to His Name will be inscribed with His Name so as to set forth the wonder and beauty of it in universal exhibition throughout the ages of eternity.

If we have a privileged position now, how much more so it may be in eternity. The pathway of faith could have no better end.

As we have seen, men of faith from the beginning have realised God had a purpose of blessing for them, and the gradual unfolding of it made them trust and love His Name through persecution and suffering. When at last the Lord Jesus Christ revealed Him fully and endeared Himself beyond compare, we who walk the pathway now wish for nothing more than His Coming and desire meanwhile that His Name should be set forth in testimony by our gathering to it alone, and by our not denying it in our walk and ways. May He encourage us, though of "little strength," to do so for His Name's Sake.

D. G. MILLETT.

## LESSONS FROM THE STORY OF BALAAM

### VI DIVINE WARNINGS

Scriptures to be read:

Numbers xxv. 1-9, xxxi. 1-8; 2 Peter ii. 15-16; Jude 11;  
Revelation ii. 14

*(Notes of an address at Wildfell Hall, Catford, 21.6.56)*

**T**HREE separate warnings from the history of Balaam are given by three different writers in the New Testament. Peter refers to his "way," Jude to his "error," and John records the Lord's own reference to the "doctrine" of Balaam.

In these articles Balaam has been described throughout as a thoroughly bad man. It is true he uttered good words, but he did this only under the compulsion of Jehovah, because he

was afraid of the consequences if he disobeyed. Had his true character been otherwise we can scarcely imagine that the Holy Spirit would, on three occasions, have drawn attention to his conduct as something to be avoided.

It is a solemnizing reflection that pious and plausible words are no proof of the speaker's genuineness. The Lord applied to the Pharisees Isaiah's condemnation of Israel in his day, "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mark vii. 6). Nor is it sufficient to know the right thing to say, and even to say it earnestly, for our Lord said again, "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21). Judas Iscariot was outwardly so like his fellow-disciples in what He said and did that when our Lord challenged them, "One of you shall betray me," not one suspected Judas: they all enquired, "Lord, is it I" (Matt. xxvi. 22). It is the heart of man which needs regeneration and cleansing. Balaam's heart was covetous, with neither love for God nor reverence for His holiness.

Peter refers to the way of Balaam, the way of self-will which disregarded what God had expressly said as well as His efforts to restrain. It was the way of a man who, for his own reasons, wished to appear pious, but was ungodly in heart.

In the day when Peter wrote, there had crept into the church of God false prophets and teachers, and the apostle devotes a chapter to their exposure, warning believers against them and proclaiming their doom. He did not refer to such men as being well-meaning persons who interpret the Scriptures a little differently and must be borne with, as much as to say, "they may be right, and ourselves wrong." Nothing of the sort. Peter describes their evil teaching as "damnable heresies," and themselves as "cursed children; which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet."

There is today an easy-going toleration of evil teachers which is utterly wrong. Under the guise of charitable broad-mindedness which thinks unkindly of no one, believers are

encouraged to tolerate, even if they do not accept, teaching which is contrary to the Word of God and positively blasphemous. The apostles, however, knew nothing of such softness. Concerning persons who leave the wholesome Word of God for man-made doctrines they used the proverb, "the dog is turned to his vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." There is no wishy-washy tolerance about that, but open, even scornful opposition and condemnation. Are believers to tolerate those whom the Spirit of God execrates?

How scornful Peter—or may we not say, the Holy Spirit—is about Balaam! So insensible was Balaam to God's own and to every other warning voice, that he had to be rebuked by "a dumb ass, speaking with man's voice." May God preserve us all from the way of Balaam, and make us worthy defenders of His holy truth!

Secondly we have the error of Balaam mentioned by Jude, who states plainly that Balaam ran greedily after reward. He was a man who allowed personal acquisition to dominate his whole outlook, prostituting the service of God to his own greedy ambition. Is this not an evil today?

One of the most serious features of this particular sin is that it cannot be readily detected, at any rate in its early stages. Covetousness is a sin of the soul; greed an impure motive of the heart, which nevertheless can prompt actions with a praiseworthy appearance. Motives are hidden and secret, therefore difficult for another to discern. Condemnation of motives needs to be restrained, except when one's own are under review.

Balaam was a man who would do anything if there were sufficient reward attached to it. He would cheerfully have cursed a whole nation to fill his own purse with gold, or to secure honour for himself. He was both greedy and vain.

Jude, like his brother apostle was speaking about the false teachers who were creeping into the church at the beginning; men who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness; men who tickled their hearers' ears with what they wished to hear instead of giving them the wholesome Word of God they needed; men who glossed over sin instead of rebuking it; and who did

such things because they wanted to be popular and prosperous. Let every minister of the Gospel beware lest he succumb to the temptation which ruined Balaam!

Thirdly, in Revelation ii. the doctrine of Balaam is mentioned. This reference is remarkable because the reading of Numbers xxv. would not lead one to suspect that Balaam was behind what happened. The Lord, however, states that he was, and thus brands Balaam as a crafty and wicked person.

What happened would appear to be this. Balak and Balaam failed in their open assault on the people of God, because God intervened to protect them. So Balaam whispered in Balak's ear that, since any show of force against Israel would be unsuccessful, he should seduce them by subtlety, suggesting that he should send out the women and girls of Moab to flaunt themselves before the young men of Israel in order to induce marriages between Israel and Moab. It was a foul plan, which, if successful, would weaken the power of Israel and bring them into an alliance with Moab contrary to the expressed will of Jehovah (Deut. vii. 1-4).

Sad to say, this ruse succeeded, and God's own people, in disobedience to Him, mixed themselves up with the people of Moab, incurring God's very serious judgment. A plague fell upon the nation, and no fewer than 24,000 of Israel died. Revelation ii. tells us that it was wicked Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. Oh Balaam! you have a terrible indictment to answer. At your door lies the blood of each one of those thousands who died in the plague! You were responsible for their death.

This part of the story is far-reaching in its implications. The people of God must be most careful in their friendships and associations, for the friendship of the world is still enmity with God (James iv. 4). God's people are expected to be a separated people, not stand-offish in an I-am-holier-than-thou spirit of superiority, but on the other hand to avoid those degrees of friendship between believers and unbelievers which are specifically forbidden in the Scriptures (see 2 Cor. vi. 14-18, etc.). Those who disobey the Word of God in this matter will incur His displeasure, and maybe His discipline.

Balaam's end was fitting. Having defied God, and succeeded in getting Israel into trouble, he lost his life when Israel avenged themselves against the Midianites. It was Moses' last task before God laid him to rest. Israel slew the five kings of Midian, and Balaam the son of Beor they slew with the sword. Apparently he never saw his home again, his life ending in disaster and dishonour.

The writer would like to conclude these articles with the Old Testament tribute to God's faithfulness in which both law-giver and prophet concur:

"Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee."  
(Deut. xxiii. 5).

"O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord."  
(Micah vi. 5).

E. A. PETTMAN.

(CONCLUDED)

## CORRESPONDENCE

Ramsgate, 10/11/56.

Dear Mr. Editor,

With reference to your articles in Words of Help, being notes of ministry as to Balaam in Numbers xxii - xxiv, especially to the fourth paragraph on page 92 of the August issue, I think it would be profitable to point out why God's anger was kindled because he went (Chap. xxii. 22). God had distinctly laid down the conditions under which he was to go—"If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them" (ver. 20). But Balaam ignored these conditions, and rose up in the morning and saddled his ass and went with the princes of Moab. I believe this is important; otherwise, after telling him to go, it seems on the face of it to appear arbitrary on God's part to withstand him (ver. 32). In this how unlike Balaam was to David in 1 Chron. xiv, who, when told by God, in response to his second enquiry, to wait for the "sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees" (ver. 15), did as God commanded him, and obtained the victory.

Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,  
T. Wilson.

## AN OLD APPEAL (Psalm II)

Why do the nations rage?  
What will it bring?  
Now kings and rulers stage  
Their own vain thing!  
Off-casting all restraint:  
Have our own way!  
Reality or feint:  
This is man's day!  
Soon, Heaven's Rule will laugh,  
God will deride:  
Then anger's words and staff  
All will decide!  
My King has now been set  
On Mine Own Hill,  
And my decree shall yet  
Proclaim My will!  
Thou art Mine Own true Son,  
This natal day:  
All, all that Thou hast won,  
Ask for I say!  
Inherited by Thee  
All nations stand:  
The uttermost shall be  
Under Thy hand!  
As with rod iron smash:  
Break them all up!  
All, all in pieces dash,  
Like earthen cup!  
Be wise now, O ye kings!  
Ye judges learn!  
Service's reverence brings  
True joy in turn!  
God's Son, while wrath looms, kiss:  
Don't perish, bow!  
In Him to trust is bliss,  
Accept Him now!

G. S. PURNELL

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# **WORDS OF HELP**

## **A Monthly Magazine for Believers**

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### **EDITORIAL NOTE**

Letters from readers of **WORDS OF HELP** are always welcome, not only for the interest displayed, but because of the help they can afford in the task of compiling the Magazine.

A speaker addressing an audience can usually discern whether his hearers are interested by their attentiveness, or otherwise, and can receive encouragement by a word of appreciation, or even a warm handshake, at the close of the service. An author cannot know readers' reactions to what he has written unless he receives a letter, either direct, or through the Editor. If therefore a particular article has helped you, please write and say so. The author will appreciate the encouragement, and the Editor will be grateful for the guidance afforded as to the type of ministry that is proving helpful.

We hope (D.V.) to publish in our March issue an Open Letter to Younger Brethren, by someone in the north of England whose many years of service for the Lord and ripe experience lend great value to his counsel. Will you please do all you can to see that this letter is widely read.

## CONVERSATION ON 1 JOHN I

(Founded on fact)

(Will readers please first peruse the chapter mentioned)

**CHEERFUL.** I am always glad to turn to the epistles of John and Peter, for they are lovely writings and yet they seem to me to be rather neglected in these days compared with the epistles of Paul.

**STEADFAST.** We may be sure we have no room to question God's wisdom in the choice and use of His servants. Paul was the great apostle of the Gentiles, and his writings are therefore specially valuable to us Gentiles. They cover an immense range of truth, including the great foundations of the Gospel, the mystery of Christ and His church, the second coming of Christ, and a great deal of practical truth concerning both the individual and the collective christian walk.

**GOODHEART.** Paul's epistles (not counting Hebrews) cover 62 pages in an ordinary Bible, compared with 26 pages for the other epistles, so of course they need relatively more time for their study. However, I agree that John and Peter are somewhat neglected; nor must we overlook James and Jude also.

**CHEERFUL.** What you two, and all of us, must keep well in mind is the simple fact that the real Author of all Scripture is God Himself. So we are entitled by faith to take each and every verse as coming direct from Him to the soul. I remember once meeting an elder Christian who said that he envied his mother her faith; she really believed that her Bible came down straight from God into her lap—just like that! But I think that in a very real sense she was right.

**STEADFAST.** Certainly, and we should not just envy such faith, but have it ourselves. We can and ought to take every word direct from God with divine authority over us. It is this that distinguishes the Bible from all other books, that as we read it in faith it has the power to make us know that it is God speaking directly to us. So it brings us into His presence, face to face with Him in the light.

**GOODHEART.** Yes, and in love. I think this epistle (1 John) is a good example of the point. It is clearly a letter, but it does not say who the writer is nor who are those addressed, and yet

we all feel sure as we read it that it is *God* speaking to us.

Going back for a moment to what we were just saying, it is a point of interest that at the age of 82 and within a few weeks of his death, Mr. J. N. Darby wrote (March 1882), "I am not aware of anything to recall—little now to add . . . I do add, let not John's ministry be forgotten in insisting on Paul's. One gives the dispensation in which the display is, the other that which is displayed."<sup>(1)</sup>

**CHEERFUL.** Whatever are we to understand by that?

**GOODHEART.** Well, the language is a bit obscure, but I believe his meaning to be that Christianity being the full revelation, or display, of God, Paul was used to show the conditions of the revelation, how it is received, by whom, etc., whereas John gives the meaning of the revelation itself, the sort of God (speaking reverently) Who is revealed. For illustration perhaps we might think of a gracious King who wished to know his subjects and to be known by them. One newspaper might describe the receptions and interviews at the palace with its glories, the arrangements for his royal visits to different parts of the kingdom, as well as his public acts of beneficence. Another paper with inside knowledge would tell us something of the king's private life, his thoughts, feelings, desires, hobbies, his ways in family life, his character.

As J.N.D. wrote elsewhere, "John sets God before us, the Father revealed in the Son, and eternal life in Him. Paul sets us before God accepted in Christ."<sup>(2)</sup>

For myself, I think this is over-simplification, especially the quotation of 1882. The difference is hardly so simple and clear. Also, what of the ministry of Matthew and Mark and Luke, where God is revealed so blessedly in the Person of Jesus? However, while we seek to prove all things, we must hold fast that which is good, and not despise prophesyings (1 Thess. v. 20-21).

**STEADFAST.** It is time to look at our chapter. We can take the first four verses together. "The beginning" in verse 1 is no doubt the incarnation of the Son of God. The apostles followed Jesus and lived with Him and so became acquainted

1 Letters of J.N.D., Volume III, Page 264

2 Synopsis: Volume V, Page 422

with the life of Jesus through their senses of hearing and seeing and touch (being taught of course by the Holy Spirit). And they understood that this life of His was divine life, the life of God the Father revealed in His Son, another kind of life altogether from that in Adam, and yet seen in its perfection in a Man, in Jesus, in this world: a life too which is now communicated to believers, who are born of God and receive eternal life in Christ.

Through this revelation the apostles knew God. Not only so but they had fellowship with Him. And they were inspired by the Holy Spirit to pass on the revelation and knowledge in writing, so that others also might be privileged to know God and have fellowship with Him, and of course fellowship with one another. Here is true joy, as the Psalmist wrote "God my exceeding joy." (Psalm xliii. 4).

**GOODHEART.** In this part of the Scriptures the Spirit uses mostly short, simple words, but writes of the deepest things. The word "life" for example: who can define what life is? Yet every child knows the difference between a doll however life-like and a live baby, however tiny and weak. It is good for us to think over the wonder of life. And if natural life is wonderful, spiritual life must be far more so. Human life is far above animal life; how very superior spiritual life must be. God is a living God; His life must be eternal; He is also a Spirit (John iv. 24). This spiritual eternal life is made known to us in Christ Who is the Eternal Life and is also the Manifestation or Showing Forth of it.

**STEADFAST.** The great subject of this epistle is, no doubt, eternal life shown out in Christ, then communicated to believers in Him, and after that tested in them to show its reality and guard us from being deceived and misled.

**CHEERFUL.** Life is truly a wonderful thing, as Scripture says, "a living dog is better than a dead lion." (Eccl. ix. 4). How blessed to be born again, born of God! It is all of God's love and grace, and not our merit. And sometimes we feel more really one with other believers than with our own natural relatives who are unconverted, though to be sure we must always love them and seek their salvation. I expect this

feeling towards other Christians is the "fellowship" of verses 3 and 7.

Perhaps we could comment in turn upon the remaining verses.

**STEADFAST.** Certainly. Verse 5. The two essential Names of God are Light and Love. Here we have the first, "God is Light." Very simple, but worth thinking over. He is always and only light. The statement is as absolute as possible, positive and negative, "in Him is no darkness at all." As regards love, I notice that while we read "God is love" (Chap. iv. 16), yet it is clear that God also hates. For example, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness" (Psalm xlv. 7). So that it would not be correct to say "God is love and in Him is no hate at all." However, we are right, I am sure, in saying that the nature of divine life is light and love.

**GOODHEART.** Verses 6 and 7. Here walk is mentioned, and one proof of life is movement. To be in the light is to know God in truth; ignorance of Him is darkness. And the two cannot go together. Every true believer is in the light and walks in the light; it is where he has his active spiritual existence that is, in the knowledge of God to Whom he refers everything. To walk *according* to the light is another matter (see Ephesians v. 8), and there we often fail, no doubt. Walking in the light denotes standing (forgive the contradiction!) or status before God. But how can a *sinner* be there? Because when he believes he is cleansed from all sin by the blood of Christ. So we have fellowship together as those who know God.

**CHEERFUL.** Verses 8-10. Statements are made here I think in a general and absolute way, as often in John. First, a converted man is one who feels and owns his own sinfulness. He has allowed the light to show him up as he is, and does not try to hide the truth. If it is otherwise, he is unconverted and in a state of self-deception. The truth is not in him.

Second, the glorious truth of the grace and love of God is that when I repent of my sin and confess all to Him, He forgives and cleanses me. In doing so He is faithful and just because of the atonement of Christ on the cross. The word "just" here should be "righteous." God is righteous, and He cleanses me from all unrighteousness, just what the awakened

soul so desires, to be cleansed from all that is contrary to the holy and blessed God.

Third and last, God's word declares I have sinned. If I say I have not, plainly I contradict that word, that is, I make out God to be a liar. I reject His Word; I will not have it in me. How dreadfully serious this is! May those who listen in to this conversation not refuse the truth, but accept and believe, repent and confess, to the eternal blessing of their souls.

W. H. L. GRAHAM

*(To be continued D.V.)*

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## LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS VII. ALL THAT NIGHT

Read Exodus xiv. 19-22

**N**EVER had sunshine seemed brighter to the Israelites than on the never-to-be-forgotten morning when they beheld the Egyptians dead upon the shores of the sea that was to divide them henceforward from the land of their bitter bondage. The miracle of their deliverance had been accomplished; and they now turned their faces towards the land of promise with a vivid exhibition of the power of God to fortify them against the problems and perils of the journey thither.

On the other side of the sea, with a relentless enemy in the rear and impassable mountains on either side, Israel had been commanded to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. What form this would take, and how it would come about, were questions over which there must have been much anxious brooding as the sun set on the evening before. Then came the darkness, and we are told that the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night. What a wind! What a night!

The east wind was an emblem of sorrow. Not so long before it had brought a devastating plague of locusts upon the Egyptians. Could wind from such a quarter herald salvation? Furthermore it was night. What chaos, surely, if the mighty, yet poorly organised host of Israel should attempt to seek its

own way of escape from the Egyptians under cover of darkness! The historical facts are recorded in Exodus xiv. Let us consider their symbolical significance.

Do not our thoughts turn immediately to that east wind of sorrow which enwrapped our blessed Saviour at Calvary! "Behold," lamented the prophet, "and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." (Lam. i. 12). Where indeed can adequate comparison be found, or a standard by which to measure the accumulated sorrow of the Man of Sorrows? With adoring hearts we sing:

We think of all the darkness  
Which round Thy spirit pressed,  
Of all those waves and billows,  
Which rolled across Thy breast.

well aware how unfathomable are the depths of all that our Saviour passed through. His measureless sorrows are a theme for holy contemplation, not comprehension.

But His sufferings wrought our salvation. From the bitter cup He drank comes our joy, yea, His own also. For it was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. The east wind of His sorrow drove back the seas of God's judgment for us, and removed every cloud between ourselves and God, so that we may now enjoy the undimmed sunshine of heaven's eternal favour.

Then we read that the east wind blew "all that night." It was when the sun had ascended to its noontide zenith that, by the decree of God, darkness came down upon Calvary, and indeed covered the whole land until the ninth hour. And we hear again the plaintive cry of the Holy Sufferer, "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest me not; and in the night season, and am not silent" (Psalm xxii. 2).

All that night! It was at midnight that the Lord smote all the firstborn of Egypt, and that Pharaoh had bidden Israel, sheltered under the blood of the paschal lamb, to go forth from the land of bondage. Now again it is during the night that Israel's salvation from the power of the enemy is accomplished.



All that night! All that night! From the earliest moment of His coming into this world the light of God's face had cheered and encouraged the heart of His perfect Servant. But at Calvary that face had turned away; light had given place to darkness. And the bitter cry of the Victim was heard from out of the darkness, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" What a night!

My soul! forget not thou all that thy Saviour hath done for thee! Thou mayest sing in thy triumph, "The Father's face of radiant grace shines now in light on me." But remember the darkness thy Saviour passed through to bring that light to thee.

We cannot wonder, as we reflect upon these things, that the Lord Jesus should have expressed, in that dark night in which He was betrayed, the wish that His own should remember Him. We have before us an unending day in which to contemplate His glory and to explore the exceeding riches of God's grace. In the meantime, while here in the world, with forgetfulness amongst our many failings, let it be our holy privilege to recall "the strong east wind all that night" whereby our deliverance was accomplished. And remembering, let us worship.

E. A. PETTMAN.

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## RESURRECTION

**S**CRIPTURE teaching on the subject of Resurrection is clear and definite, though in several respects it differs from ideas often accepted even among Christians.

There can be no doubt, whatever Modernists may say, that believers in Old Testament days believed in a coming resurrection, but their knowledge of the future life was most hazy and it is not until we turn to the New Testament that "life and incorruptibility are *brought to light* through the gospel." (2 Tim. i. 10). Hence we must not look for the full truth on this subject in the Old Testament. So Job says (Ch. xiv. 12), "Man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep," and this though

true of many, is not true of all men as the New Testament reveals.

When we turn to the pages of the New Testament, we meet for the first time the truth of a resurrection *from*, or from among the dead, in contradistinction to the idea of the "resurrection of the dead," i.e., of all the dead (Apostles' creed, so-called), or "the general resurrection at the last day." (Prayer Book).

In the 5th chapter of the Gospel of John the Lord Jesus speaks of *two* resurrections, different in character, one the Resurrection of Life, the other the Resurrection of Judgment. Moreover, when in Revelation xx. we read of the same two resurrections, we learn that a thousand years separates them.

### **The First Resurrection, or The Resurrection of Life**

The false teaching that there is no resurrection, found even in early days in the Church at Corinth, gave occasion to that wonderful exposition of the truth which we find in 1 Corinthians xv. There the First Resurrection is seen to begin with Christ Himself, and the apostle shows that He is both first in point of time, and also the glorious pattern to which all His own shall be conformed. Let us consider this in some detail. *Christ the First-fruits* (verses 20 and 23).

In Leviticus xxiii., verses 10 and 11, Israel was commanded to bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest to the priest, who was to wave it before Jehovah on *the morrow after the Sabbath*, that is, the day when the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. Here is then a clear type of His resurrection (and also a most interesting link with John xii. 24, which we cannot here pursue), and certainly that to which Paul's phrase "Christ the First-fruits" refers.

Paul insists that Christ should be the first that should rise from the dead (Acts xxvi. 23). He must be pre-eminent in this, as in all things.

A difficulty is sometimes felt about Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration, but needlessly. He is not there said to be risen, and we must not add to scripture. But was he not *visible*, and did he not *converse*? So was the spirit of Samuel, when he appeared to King Saul to announce his doom (1 Samuel

xxviii. 7-20)! And the glory that there encompassed Moses implies nothing as to his resurrection, for was not his face shining gloriously when he came out from the tabernacle?

The same thing appears in the careful statement of Matthew that the saints who arose and appeared to many in the Holy City, did so *after* His resurrection.

*Christ the Pattern.*

As Adam was head of a dying race, so Christ risen from the dead becomes Head of a risen and immortal race. And as we have all borne the image of the earthly dying one, so shall all that are Christ's bear His own heavenly glorious image. And be it repeated, it is to the image of the heavenly Man that we shall be conformed, not made like Christ as a man down here, but like Christ revealed from heaven: "The Second Man is the Lord from heaven." (verse 47).

Now who shall share in this resurrection? It is "they that are Christ's at His coming." All believers, all the saved ones from Abel onwards, who have died, shall be raised then. And with them all who are alive and trusting in Christ shall be "changed"—their bodies of humiliation being made like unto His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. iii. 21).

To these facts which we find in the Epistles, the book of the Revelation adds a little more. It shows that after Christ has removed from the world all that are His—the "harvest" of which He is the first-fruits—there will still be a "gleaning" (Lev. xxiii. 22) from those who perhaps had never heard the gospel. God's grace will still work, among both Jews and Gentiles, but for them it will be a time of fiery persecution, and many will be martyred.

These martyred ones, as we find in Rev. xx. 4-6, also share in the First Resurrection: "They lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the 1,000 years were finished. This is the First Resurrection." The beginning of verse 4, "I saw thrones, and they (or "men") sat on them" doubtless refers to those already risen and glorified.

This is the place, perhaps, to deal with a difficulty often raised by unbelief as to the impossibility of any resurrection—

a difficulty which the believer sometimes cannot meet adequately because of his holding traditional rather than scriptural views. It is "that the body cannot be raised because its material atoms have been scattered, and may well form part of other living matter." Now in the first place it is well known that the actual material of the body is continually changing, yet it remains the same body, so that it would be no difficulty for God to re-form the same body out of different material atoms. But in fact Scripture emphasizes rather that the body when raised is *different*, even as the wheat plant is different from the seed that is sown. "That which *thou* sowest," says the apostle, "thou sowest *not* that body that shall be," but "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him." The resurrection body, not now a "natural" body, and not now dependent upon a physical environment, needing food, air etc., but suited to eternal conditions, is something entirely beyond our conception.

"If we are to be so changed then," asks another, "shall we know one another?" The very question shows how difficult it is to conceive of so immense a change in us! For then shall we know not merely those we have known here, but all the saints; and that not by familiar features, but in an entirely new way, with an intuitive, spirit-taught knowledge which surpasses all that we can imagine. "Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

### **The Second Resurrection, or The Resurrection of Judgment**

The solemn facts of this resurrection are recorded in Rev. xx., 5 and 11-15. Taking place, as it does, 1,000 years after the First Resurrection, it answers to the "end" of 1 Corinthians xv. 24, when Death, the "last enemy" of Christ the all-conquering King, is itself destroyed, and the last of the human race brought from under its power. But first, heaven and earth—the visible heaven no doubt—themselves pass. We note that the dead are still called "the dead," even after the resurrection—this is not the Resurrection of life. The Lord says, "they shall not see life."

They are judged every man according to his works. Can any child of Adam be judged on that basis and escape condemnation? Impossible. They that hear His word and believe the

testimony of the One who sent Him, the Lord Jesus tells us, do not come into judgment, but are already passed from death to life. This second resurrection is the Resurrection of Judgment, of Condemnation. It ends in the Second Death; the Lake of Fire. Not more is told us, nor need it be. The Word of God is written that we should escape judgment and condemnation, and enter into life eternal, with Christ for ever.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN.

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## LOWLINESS

Luke xiv. 7-11 to be read

“AND he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms.” It is just the place that nature likes. The world which has no relations with God delights in exalting self and shutting him out. Self gets for self what it likes, and forgets God. Man is always setting up self, pushing for self, against God. He does not think so, for he says he is only using his faculties. But so Adam did to hide himself from God. Do not we use our faculties to please ourselves, rather than for God? While the master is away, the servants go on their own way and do their own will. A man is naturally hurt when he is put down in a corner and despised. Flesh does not relish being thrust aside, but this seeking for a place is to seek for it where Christ had none. “Therefore,” He says, “when thou art bidden to a wedding, sit down in the lowest room.”

The point of this parable is seen in verses 8-11: it refers the heart to the Master, to “him that bade thee.” If I am conscious of being a sinner, and therefore deserving no place, I shall take none, but wait till God bestows one on me. I shall have honour indeed, when God gives me a place. The point is, What does he bestow on me? Having the eye upon God, and referring to Him, seek for the lowest place as Christ did. It will not do to say, I will not have a place in the world; the great thing is, the heart resting on God’s place in the world. When the eye is thus upon God, self is forgotten; if not, I am thinking of the slights I receive, and neither faith nor grace is

in exercise. If I could think nothing of myself, I should be perfect. The man who bade the guests has the right estimate of each and the honour due to them. The evangelist's place, the pastor's, the apostle's, etc., will all be appointed by God. When God gives me a place, it is one of power and nighness to Himself; but when a man takes a place for himself, it is one of weakness and alienation from God, because self is the object.

Then, again, we must guard against the mere refusing to take a place in the world, because we know it is wrong, as followers of Him who has been rejected. A mere legal estimate of what is right can never last. A thing may be very right; but there is no stability in pursuing it, because there is no power to subdue the flesh in merely doing what one knows to be right. There was the sense of obligation with the law, but the law did not set an object before me to attract my heart; it did not bring God to me, nor me to God. That lasts which feels that we are nothing, and that God is everything. Many have begun very energetically, and taken a certain place, right in itself; but if legality be the source of it, there will be no power of perseverance, for that which is taken up under law will be sure to be lost in the flesh. When God is the object, the low place here is sufficient. He Himself carries me on; and whatever it be, if the mind and affections are upon Him, what was hard at first is no effort as I proceed. His love, which attracted and gave me power at first to take such a position, becomes brighter and brighter when better and longer known; and what was done, at first tremblingly, is easy with increasing courage. The only thing which can enable me thus to go on is to have CHRIST the object before me, and just in proportion as it is so can I be happy. There may be a thousand and one things to vex me, if self is of importance; they will not vex me at all, if self is not there to be vexed. The passions of the flesh will not harass us, if we are walking with God. What rubs we get when not walking with God, and thinking only of self! There is no such deliverance as that of having no importance in one's own eyes. Then one may be happy indeed before God.

If we look at Christ, we learn two principles: first that He humbled Himself, because of the sin of the world all around Him; second, the world did all they could to humble Him,

for the more He went down, so much the more they sought to pull Him down.

No one cares for another; so that if a man does not care for himself, he will be sure to be pushed down low enough. Then again, so deceitful are our hearts that it is possible we should be willing to humble ourselves, if we could get anything by it, even the approbation of men. On the other hand, if we, in the usual sense of men, merely seek to imitate Christ in this, it will be but legal effort. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." He humbled Himself. First, "He made Himself of no reputation"; that is, He emptied Himself of His glory to become a man. In doing this, He left the Father's glory to become a man. This was a great descent (though we think a great deal of ourselves). But was that all? No. He humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross. It is the same principle which is put before us in this chapter in Luke. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Real lowliness is being ready to serve any and everybody; and though it may to the eye of man look low, it is in reality very high, being the fruit of divine love working in our hearts. God, operating in our hearts, makes us unselfish. The only thing worth doing in the world is this service, except it be enjoying God. We should be ready to serve one's enemies. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This is not only being humbled by humbling one's self, and not doing it before those who would honour us all the more for being humble. Paul could say of himself and others, "ourselves your servants for Christ's sake." He felt they had a title to serve in grace; and in proportion as he took the humble place, he will be exalted in the day that is coming.

J. N. DARBY (1800-82)

*(From "Notes of Addresses on the Gospel of Luke).*

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# WORDS OF HELP

## A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

It is a great pleasure this month to welcome two new contributors to **WORDS OF HELP**, and we commend what they have written (the first and second articles) to our readers for careful study.

### NOTICE OF BOOK

**THE BOOK WE NEED**, by C. E. Falkus. Stiff paper covers, 32 pp. Price 1s. 6d. (London: C. A. Hammond).

In this booklet the talented authoress of "Are you satisfied?" gives various reasons for believing the Bible to be "God-inspired," and summarizes the contents of each book in answer to the question "What is the Bible about?" The final chapter is a challenging presentation of the gospel to the individual reader.

As to inspiration, sound reasons are given from the Bible itself. The shifting sands of archaeology and human science, although referred to, are necessarily inadequate and insecure. It may perhaps be pointed out that "inspiration" and "revelation" are not interchangeable terms. Another has distinguished them as follows: "Inspiration is the instrumental power by which unknown truths are communicated by God to the human mind," whilst "revelation is the declaration, the actual promulgation of unknown truths." For example, the historical books (Samuel, Kings, Chronicles) are "given by inspiration of God," though not strictly revelation.

In summarizing the Bible (which no one can do adequately, as Mrs. Falkus would unquestionably agree), over-simplification and undoubtedly lack of space have led to the statement on page 16 that "it is the story of the love of God and His desire to have near Him those who could share His thoughts and plans." God is love, but the fact that He is light is put first (1 John i. 5; iv. 8). The holiness of God occupies a large part of the Old Testament. In the Bible God has been pleased to reveal Himself, His attributes, His ways, His counsels and His purposes, including His provision in grace and love, yet consistent with His holiness, to bring man into eternal blessing through faith.

One other phrase (page 26) calls for comment—"The gift of eternal life—the same life that Christ has." Scripture does not put it so, and the deity of Christ needs safeguarding.

By "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4)—not of "divine life" as mentioned on page 27—Mrs. Falkus does not mean that believers are partakers of deity, which is, of course, incommunicable. J. C. KELL.

**LET DAYS SPEAK****(An Open Letter to Young Men)**

Bradford,

December, 1956.

Dear Younger Brethren,

Our little gathering here has just passed its fiftieth anniversary, and the Editor of *Words of Help*, who was with us for the occasion, and was able to rejoice with us in the Lord's goodness, has suggested that I write you concerning assembly life and behaviour. Looking back upon the past we can raise our Ebenezer—"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

When we began, there were a few in Bradford waiting with expectancy for a meeting to be established. One dear sister, a true saint, converted to God from Roman Catholicism, had sat under the ministry of C.H.M. There were also another man and wife, besides a few others. At the time when our hearts were being exercised before the Lord as to the future, standing one Sunday evening at an open air meeting a brother from Carlisle made himself known to the writer. Within a fortnight the Lord graciously opened the way for us to meet together for worship and the remembrance of the Lord. This brother—a man of sterling character, devoted to the Lord and never failing to be in his place at the Lord's table at the appointed hour, serving the Lord and his brethren with humility of heart—and myself, have been together all these fifty years. We have some splendid sisters too who are always ready to help in every way in the Master's service.

The little assembly, commenced on Lord's Day, 30th September, 1906, in a master's room at one of the national schools, has continued in happiness and peace all these years through the great goodness of God. Naturally during such a long period there have been ups and downs, with little difficulties now and then, some persons joining us and leaving later without real cause. On the other hand there are those breaking bread today who have been with us from childhood, having come in through the Sunday School where they learned the truth, and have gone on happily ever since, seeking to please the Lord.

There was one lovely feature about the early gathering. Following the Sunday School we held a fine Bible Class which was well attended. In those days we kept a register, and it was good to see what efforts were made to be at the top in number of attendances. Brothers who visited us rejoiced with us in this particular sphere of work.

We have always encouraged parents to bring their children to the meeting, and on the whole these have been very good and quiet. From the very start we have felt it right to train the children in the way they should go, and this has had happy results. The writer, one of a family of eleven, was brought up to attend a Calvinistic Chapel from early days—rather dull? yes, but good training! Another feature has been the service of dedication of infants to the Lord, which has always proved a real joy to the parents.

Many elder brothers from our assemblies have now gone to be with the Lord, and you younger brothers are having to fill their places. There has been great weakness in many gatherings, some depleted through strife and sad division. A sense of superiority has also manifested itself in many places, a “we-are-the-people” attitude, instead of true humility of spirit. Brethren! there is need to get low before the Lord, confessing our failure, looking to Him in true repentance and seeking His gracious revival in our midst.

How necessary it is to be much in prayer! I know that the prayer meeting may sometimes be dull through brothers holding forth at great length. (Which of us has never been guilty of this?) I well remember what a joy it was to be in a prayer meeting of miners gathered to the Lord’s Name in a village not very far away. How earnest their prayers were, short and to the point, asking the Lord for what they wanted! Brothers, do not kill the prayer meeting by long prayers, sometimes with no very definite petition in them. We are not heard for our much speaking. Again, do not use the Name of the Deity over and over again. We should not do such a thing when addressing earthly parents: why then do it when speaking to our Father in heaven?

Another word of advice—in connection with hymns. It is so easy to give them out, perhaps the easiest part to take in the

meeting. But be sure you do not take this part unless you are guided to do so by the Holy Spirit. Do not come to the meeting with hymns already chosen. I remember on many occasions hymns being given out which were altogether unsuitable—once a funeral hymn at the breaking of bread; surely a most difficult hymn to sing in the Spirit! Some make a practice of reading the whole hymn. This can be very trying for those who have to listen and then join in singing the words right through again. We sing to God; does He wish to hear the words twice over? By all means read a verse, or even two, if much laid upon the heart. And, of course, if you should have a blind person in the company, you could be forgiven for reading the whole.

The same applies also to the gospel service. What a mistake for the preacher to read all the verses, particularly if it is a long hymn! Preaching the gospel is a great responsibility; a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death, and it should never be lightly undertaken. There are many whose work does not lie in this direction, and for such to speak would not be of God. Every man has his own gift from God, and special service to render to the Lord.

Remember! if you do give the gospel message you are just then an ambassador for Christ. Let self be hidden, and Christ revealed and exalted:

Low thoughts of self befitting

Proclaimers of His praise.

Your message, too, must be given from a loving, tender heart, if you are going to win souls for Him. It is well also to remember the young when preaching, and not to overlook the needs of God's dear people.

When reading the Holy Scriptures—follow the example of those in Nehemiah and Ezra's day (Neh. viii. 8): read distinctly, give the sense, and cause those who hear to understand. What is more delightful than to hear God's word well read? Do not read in a dreary voice, but use expression: imagine yourself in the very scene, and make the Word live.

Lifeless meetings are so depressing; prayers mumbled and hymns sung with a drawl, some hardly opening their lips . . . dreary! Oh so dreary! Is it to be wondered at that young people go off to where they find more life and warmth?

Some years ago a sister from Switzerland (not then breaking bread) came to our hall. On two occasions previously she had been to gatherings where she had received no word of welcome from anyone. She was greatly disappointed. Not every stranger likes to be spoken to, but you should always be ready to speak with them. And perhaps if they have the Lord's day free and have nowhere to go, you might welcome them to your house, if convenient. You may find yourself entertaining angels unawares!

In closing this letter, I would exhort you who are to fill the ranks of those gone before, or who will soon be gathered home if the Lord does not come: don't be dogmatic; exercise a loving care for the assembly; be gracious, yet at the same time firm where the truth of Christ is concerned. All may not see eye to eye with you. But while you believe the ground of gathering to the Lord's Name to be right, try to see the point of view of others, and go with them as far as you are able. Don't be narrow-minded, for the Lord has His people everywhere. And remember! the day is soon coming when strife and division will be a thing of the past, and all will be safely gathered home to be in the presence of the Lord for ever.

Affectionately yours in Christ,

E. F. PRIOR.

(The Editor recalls with great pleasure his weekend in Brødford—the happy spirit in the gathering there, so many free to take part in worship; also the ready deferring to one another in the afternoon Bible Reading. And if the singing where you are is poor, spend a Lord's Day at Bradford, and recommend that others do the same! Ed. W.O.H.)

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## THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD

Read Ephesians vi. 10-20

**N**OWHERE in the Scriptures is the believer encouraged to expect an easy, tranquil passage through this world on his journey heavenward. On the contrary, he is taught that he must face tribulation, conflict and the determined opposition of the evil one.

The apostle Paul presents the believer's life as a battleground where unceasing vigilance, courage and faith are

required. In writing to Timothy he exhorts him to "Fight the good fight of faith," and to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 3). Peter expresses the same truth: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith" (1 Peter v. 8, 9).

It is in the epistle to the Ephesians where we are taught that the highest blessings are ours; that we are quickened, risen and seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus; that the Spirit of God reminds us that even here we must expect the fierce onslaughts of the enemy. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ch. vi. 12).

The powers arrayed against the believer are unseen, but nevertheless real and very powerful. All the artifice and deceit of Satan and his wicked emissaries are directed against the believer to harass him, to lead him astray, to spoil his testimony, to blunt his spiritual sensibilities, to interrupt his communion with the Lord and to rob him of the joy of those spiritual blessings that are his priceless possession in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

Nevertheless, we need not be dismayed. Our ever faithful God has measured the might of our adversary, and has provided an equipment for us which is proof against every weapon that may be brought against us. This equipment is referred to in Ephesians vi. as "the whole armour of God." It is the armour of God, designed by Him for our complete protection. Ahab, the king of Israel, was slain by an arrow, shot at a venture, which pierced through the joints of his armour (1 Kings xxii. 34), but no fiery dart can penetrate the armour that God has designed. The armour of God is impregnable.

We must, however, put on the *whole* armour, for to neglect any one part is to be exposed to attack at that point, and Satan is not slow to discern when through sloth, pride or carelessness we are unprotected at a vulnerable point.

The "evil day" covers the whole period of this present dispensation when the prince of the power of the air is still at liberty to oppose the people of God.

The armour we are to take to ourselves is sevenfold, speaking of its divine perfection. The armour of Goliath, the arrogant defier of the God of Israel, described in 1 Samuel xvii. 4-7, was only sixfold, and only one of David's five smooth stones was needed to demonstrate its ineffectiveness.

Let us consider the perfection, the value and the effectiveness of this glorious panoply of God which He has provided for our security against the powers of darkness.

### **"Your Loins girt about with Truth"**

The girdle is the truth of God operating in the life of the believer; the truth of God submitted to; allowed to influence, guide, control and sanctify our hearts and lives. We see the truth of God exemplified in all its perfection in our Lord Jesus Christ who could say "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John xiv. 6), and who prayed for His own, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John xvii. 17). Are we allowing the truth of God to be the sole arbiter in our lives? The world, influenced by its superstitions, its philosophies and traditions, is led astray by the devil at his will. The truth of God received in our hearts and operating in our lives is our only safeguard against the false doctrines and suggestions of the enemy.

### **"The Breastplate of Righteousness"**

This is also referred to in 2 Cor. vi. 7 as "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." It is practical righteousness that gives us, at all times, a good conscience in the sight of God and men. The utmost care is needed to ensure that all our ways, our relationships, our business and domestic matters are upright and beyond reproach. Then we shall have a conscience void of offence, and the enemy will find no ground of accusation against us.

### **"Your feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace"**

The gospel of peace assures us that Christ has "made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20), and that "being



justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). Our hearts need to be grounded in the precious truth that peace with God was made when our blessed Lord and Saviour suffered once for sin upon the cross; and that our eternal acceptance rests upon the value that God has set upon His finished work and His precious blood. Peace with God is our secured and unalterable portion. This is protection for our feet against the enemy's snares, who by his poisonous suggestions, by doubts and fears, would mar our enjoyment of the peace which the gospel assures us is an accomplished fact.

### **"The Shield of Faith"**

This is to be carried "above all," that is, over all the other armour, so as to form a double defence. It is that implicit trust and confidence in God about everything, and at all times, however dark or difficult our circumstances may be. Job held up the shield of faith when he said: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15), and another said: "He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him" (Prov. xxx. 5). The arch-deceiver, whose object is to make us doubt the love and wisdom of God, may draw near with his pernicious suggestions; but faith clings to Christ and the promises of God, which are all Yea and Amen in Him. Come what may, we believe His word, we trust His love, we rely upon His care. No inflamed dart can touch us while the shield of faith is upheld against the wicked one.

### **"The Helmet of Salvation"**

This again is also mentioned in 1 Thess. v. 8, "for an helmet, the hope of salvation." The helmet is full assurance of God's salvation, which gives us confidence to hold up our head in the presence of our adversary. We give the enemy the advantage if we question the eternal security of our salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our minds and hearts need to be saturated with the assurance that our salvation depends on the glorious perfection of the work of Christ, and on that alone.

### **“The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”**

This two-edged sword differs from the other armour in that it is an offensive weapon. Its cut and thrust is feared by our adversary, and it has the power, not only to parry his attacks, but to make him flee from us in complete confusion. The Lord Jesus used the sword when tempted in the wilderness. “It is written” was His answer to each of the three suggestions of Satan. To use it effectively the Word of God should be stored in our minds and hearts, so that the Spirit of God may bring it to our remembrance in the hour of sudden temptation. The Psalmist could say: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee” (Psalm cxix. 11).

### **“Praying always”**

The seventh item of our equipment is the weapon of All-prayer. The Roman shield that Paul saw as he wrote the Epistle was large enough to cover a man completely, if he knelt behind it. What a lesson for us all! Covered in armour, we must still kneel and pray if we would be victorious. In ourselves we are weak; no match for the might of our adversary. Only in the Lord and in the power of His might can we overcome. Prayer links us with the power of God, and the armies of heaven march to our aid as we kneel and pray. Prayer is linked with watchfulness: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (Matt. xxvi. 41). It was because Peter failed to watch and pray that he succumbed to the enemy’s attacks and denied his Lord. Unceasing vigilance is needed. We must never fall asleep at our post nor lay aside our armour for a moment.

Let us give thanks to God for this glorious panoply He has provided, for its impregnable character, for the security that is ours when we have put it on, and let us resolve to stand in this evil day in the power of His might, so that, however fierce the conflict may be, we may maintain our vigilance to the end and come through victorious—“more than conquerors through Him that loved us,” to the eternal glory of His blessed Name.

## “GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS”

1 Timothy iii. 16

ALL the counsels and purposes of God are centered in Christ: He is the great Object of all Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. In the Old Testament He is hidden in type and figure, but in the New Testament He is manifested, and especially so in the Gospels, where He is presented from four different points of view. It is in the Gospels that we get the facts concerning the Lord's life on earth; His birth, His baptism, His temptation, His transfiguration, His death on the cross, His resurrection and His ascension to heaven. Seven wonderful facts concerning Him, besides His numerous acts of mercy on the blind, the lame, the lepers and those possessed by evil spirits. These acts of mercy, by which the Lord removed the results of sin, are summed up by the apostle Peter in these words (Acts x. 38), “Who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.”

But these acts of mercy, although showing Who He was, would not have availed for our salvation without His death and resurrection, and therefore, although only two Gospels speak of His birth and only two of His ascension, yet all four give an account of His death and resurrection. It is thus put by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians xv.: “I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you . . . how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

While the four Gospels record the facts concerning the Lord's death on the cross and His resurrection, the Epistles teach us the meaning of those facts. Thus in Romans iv. we read that Jesus our Lord was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. The Epistle is addressed to believers; hence the apostle says, “Jesus *our* Lord,” “delivered for *our* offences,” “raised again for *our* justification.”

We read also in 1 Peter ii. 24 that Christ “Himself bare *our* sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness,” and again in chapter iii. of

the same epistle we are told that "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit."

It is all summed up in these remarkable words in 1 Timothy iii. 16: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

These simple words contain six wonderful statements concerning the One of Whom we are speaking:

1. "*God manifest in the flesh.*" Nothing like that had been known before or could have been conceived. Emmanuel, meaning God with us, is one of the names given to Him in the 1st chapter of St. Matthew (cited from Isaiah vii. 14), and in the 1st chapter of St. John He is declared to be the Word, Who was in the beginning with God, and Who was God. Then further on in the same chapter we read, "And the Word ~~was~~ ~~made~~ flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory."

2. "*Justified in the Spirit.*" He was sealed by the Spirit at His baptism, and everything He did was by the Spirit ("God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him": John iii. 34); and after He had finished the work that God gave Him to do, the Holy Ghost came down after His ascension to glory, and bore witness to Him and His finished work of redemption. Thus the Spirit justified Him in all His ways.

3. "*Seen of Angels.*" Angels had never seen God, but when the Word, who was God, became flesh, then they saw God; and we learn from the Gospels how they watched His ways on earth and gathered up His words, so that at the empty sepulchre they could remind the women of what He had told them.

4. "*Preached unto the Gentiles.*" All nations on the face of the earth have heard of Him and His cross. The Lord Himself said to His disciples after His resurrection, "Thus it is written and thus it behoved (it was necessary for) Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem."

5. "*Believed on in the world.*" Yes, some who have heard the preaching have accepted it and have believed in Him and

bowed to His Name. "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Yes, to save sinners; and many sinners have believed on Him, although if we look around, the great majority of people seem to pass Him by, without troubling themselves about Him.

6. "*Received up into glory.*" This is God's answer to the work whereby He vindicated the majesty of God. By going to the cross and there being made an offering for sin, He established the fact that God was righteous in judging sin. He glorified God about this solemn question of sin, which had so dishonoured God (He could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do"), and in consequence He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and God said to Him, "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool."

The Lord's prayer to His Father, as recorded in the 17th chapter of John, has thus been answered. And we read in 1 Peter iii., the Lord Jesus Christ has gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.

G. KNIGHT



## NOTES OF A BIBLE READING ON GENESIS XIV-XVI

xiv. 1-11. As an answer to those who deny the historical truth of this chapter it is interesting to know that archaeological research has brought to light each name of the four kings and also the names of their respective kingdoms. In the end scholarship has to pay tribute to the accuracy of the Bible. Faith, however, takes the place of a little child and accepts without question.

Several of the races mentioned in verses 5 and 6 were "giants" who dwelt in territory bordering on Canaan (see Deut. ii).

12. Lot, who had pitched his tent *toward* Sodom (xiii. 12), is now dwelling *in* Sodom, and is carried away by the victorious

kings. Worldly-minded christians who choose the world are sure to become involved in its strife sooner or later.

13-16. Abram, now restored to communion with God, becomes Lot's deliverer. Spiritually, this shows how faith overcomes the world (1 John v. 4, 5). All the power and forces of the world are subservient to the man of faith. Christ overcame the world (John xvi. 33), and if we follow Him we shall do so too.

Abram's military victory over the kings is, typically, the victory of the remnant of Israel over the world prior to the appearing of the Lord Jesus as the King-Priest to set up His millennial kingdom. It is Abram's first victory. His refusal of the king of Sodom's offer is his second—a moral triumph (vv. 21-24).

17-20. The suggestion that Melchizedek was the Lord Himself cannot be accepted in the light of Heb. vii. 1-3, which declares him to have been "made like unto the Son of God."

"Without father, without mother, without descent, etc." (Heb. vii. 3) means that, so far as the record is concerned, these details are not given. They are inspired omissions so that Melchizedek might stand as a type of the Son of God, and they pay tribute to the unerring precision of the Spirit of God Who guided the writer of the Pentateuch. They were necessarily striking and significant, for according to the Jewish law a priest had to establish his genealogy before he could exercise his priesthood (Neh. vii. 64).

The chief characteristic of the priesthood of Melchizedek is that it is incommunicable, and thus unlike the Aaronic order, which passed from father to son. Christ is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. cx. 4; Heb. vi. 20).

The woman's Seed who should bruise the serpent's head is presented now as the King of Righteousness and King of Peace.

The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us to distinguish between the *order* of priesthood and the *exercise* of it (Heb. v. 5, 6; vii. 11). The Melchizedek *order* is in the power of an endless life; its *exercise* was connected with sacrifice, intercession and worship.

The Lord's present priesthood is after Melchizedek's *order*, but *exercised* in the manner of Aaron. He offered up Himself once for all and entered into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. ix. 11, 12). Within the vail He leads our worship and intercedes for us *now*. But He Who is within the vail will come again; He will come out of the sanctuary, and then as King and Priest succour and bless His earthly people, the Israelites.

21-24. How necessary it is to keep free of the world in every respect! Satan often ensnares us just after a great victory. In Eph. vi. we are exhorted to stand (v. 11), to withstand (v. 13) and having done all, to stand (v. 13). Ours is a ceaseless warfare.  
(*To be continued*)



## I AM THE DOOR

I AM THE DOOR—saith Christ the Lord,  
Then why not enter in?  
If careless, you remain outside,  
You'll perish in your sin.

I AM THE DOOR: yes MERCY'S Door  
Which now stands open wide;  
Without, are judgment, sin and death,  
"Come in" . . . and safe abide.

I AM THE DOOR; the Door of PEACE,  
For you my blood was shed;  
God's Lamb, once slain, alive again,  
Is risen from the dead.

I AM THE DOOR: yes GLORY'S Door;  
Hark! how the ransomed sing!  
In robes of white; and crowns of gold,  
They worship CHRIST THE KING.

Samuel Tomkins  
(1841-1926)

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# Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

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# WORDS OF HELP

## *A Monthly Magazine for Believers*

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### MY CHOICE FOR THEE, AND ME

*Luke x. 42*

When youth is buoyant and ambition strong,  
And genial sunshine crowns our opening days,  
'Tis well to pause and ask—What comes ere long;  
For summer skies give place to winter's haze.

Our time on earth, whate'er its length may be,  
Must close; and then—(think not the thought severe)  
We face to face are with eternity;  
And what we choose will in God's light appear.

This solemn thought, shall my reflection be;  
In choosing what for thee must be the best,  
For earth knows not a true felicity,  
'Tis only found upon the Saviour's breast.

Amid the busy hours of service here,  
How oft our hearts resist the still small voice,  
Of Him who rightly claims th' attentive ear;  
To heavenly things, the things of Mary's choice.

And yet her part I'd choose for thee, and me;  
Though others in mistaken zeal complain;  
For at His feet we shall not idle be,  
Sweet moments spent with Him are not in vain.

Then let the things of earth fade more from view;  
And like to Mary, let us find retreat  
(E'en though we have our duties to pursue)  
In intercourse with Jesus at His feet.

## CONVERSATION ON 1 JOHN II

(At this point the chapter should be read through)

**S**TEADFAST. In the first chapter of this epistle we are told of the great privilege of fellowship with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, in the light, and through the virtue of Christ's blood. The first two verses of chapter ii. are really connected with this and deal with the case of a believer losing his enjoyment of the fellowship (or communion) through sinning. We ought not to sin after conversion, having received a new life in Christ and the Holy Spirit to be the power of it, and the power also to keep the old nature in the place of death. But, sad to say, we may become forgetful, careless, tripped up by the enemy. So the word is, not "when any man sins" but "if any man sin," and it is then, not that we need to be converted again, but that our Advocate intercedes for us on high so that we may be led to repent and be restored to communion.

**CHEERFUL.** Why do I need an Advocate if God is still my loving Father?

**GOODHEART.** It is an important truth that the Christian's failure does not affect his blessed relationship to God nor his perfect acceptance in Christ, which are settled the moment he believes the gospel. It may help in thinking of the advocacy of Christ to remember that Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Rev. xii. 10), and if the believer sins it must surely give Satan a plain opportunity to make accusation before God. It is then that Christ pleads our cause and brings forward the merits of His death and blood-shedding for us, and because of this work above the Spirit here below will work in us to restore us to a healthy spiritual state. So we can humbly and thankfully say, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 33-34).

**CHEERFUL.** When we are grieved to see our failure, how glad we are to turn away to Jesus Christ the Righteous. What are we to think about the word "propitiation"?

**STEADFAST.** The word appears in the New Testament only here and in 1 John iv., but a similar word from the same Greek root is translated "propitiation" in Romans iii. 25, and "mercy-seat" in Hebrews ix. 5. Sin is so unbearable to God that the only way for it to be forgiven and put away is by the Person and work of Christ; thus He is the propitiation for our sins, and for the whole world, because His death is so precious to God that through it mercy and grace now abound for all.

**GOODHEART.** So the word propitiation conveys a wonderful truth, and we must not connect it in our minds with the debased use of it in idolatry, where the heathen live in fear of the anger of their gods who must be propitiated or appeased by gifts of food and so on. Thus 1 John iv. 10 reads, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and *sent His Son to be the propitiation* for our sins." What God's righteousness and holiness demanded, His own love provided.

**STEADFAST.** From verse 3 of our chapter the Holy Spirit brings forward tests to show whether the claim of a person to have eternal life is true. The main tests spring from the characteristics of this life in us, that is, obedience and love. Also the proofs themselves must be tested; for instance the love must be shown to be real. It is somewhat like proving a piece of cloth to be, say, two yards long by measuring it, and then testing the tape-measure to show it is accurate.

**CHEERFUL.** In verse 5, is "the love of God," my love to Him or His love to me?

**GOODHEART.** It is no doubt the love which God has for us. God's word declares His love, and if I receive this in implicit faith, and allow nothing to cast a doubt within me, then I enjoy His perfect love in my heart. "In him is the love of God perfected."

**CHEERFUL.** With regard to verse 6, we can remember that Jesus said "Abide in Me" (John xv. 4). If through grace we do this, His life will be in us and active to show itself in us as it did in Christ, producing the same kind of fruit; that is, our walk will be like His. How little we know of this! Perhaps it is best seen when we are least thinking of ourselves. As has been remarked, when the skin of Moses' face shone, Aaron and

the people saw it but he himself was unaware of it (Exodus xxxiv).

How should we understand verses 7 and 8?

**STEADFAST.** They are not easy. I think we may take it that as the ten commandments of Mount Sinai were the rule of life for man in the flesh, "the commandment" here, that is the word of Christ, is the rule of the eternal life revealed in Christ and now given to His own. So it is old because the life was seen in Him in incarnation, and it is new because He is now glorified and we believers are united to Him there by the Spirit and have the same life in us. It is thus true in Him and in us. In what follows up to verse 11 we are reminded of Christ's new commandment "that ye love one another" (John xiii. 34).

**GOODHEART.** Verse 12 stands by itself. The word for "little children" there is the same as in verse 1 and verse 28. It means all Christians without distinction. It is different from the word in verses 13 and 18, which means "babes." Verse 12 then reminds us that all Christians are on one level in this, that they had sins, which are now forgiven. Nevertheless at any given point of time there are of course newly converted persons, others who have been some little time in the Christian faith, and others again who are established and experienced believers. The respective names given (verses 13-27) are babes, young men and fathers.

**Sister PRUDENCE.** Does the apostle John overlook sisters then?

**GOODHEART.** No. He wrote an epistle to one (and her children). And we may be sure that in these verses we are considering, sisters are included as well as brothers, and all are members of God's blessed family by the new birth.

**CHEERFUL.** It seems remarkable that the fathers are twice spoken of as knowing Him that is from the beginning, that is Jesus surely, the very One we speak of to the youngest children. So it seems that we end where we begin.

**GOODHEART.** Yes, and the babes know the Father (verse 13), a knowledge which we might think belongs rather to maturity, as the Lord said to Thomas in John xiv. 7. "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him." Also the

young men, with all their vigour of faith and its exploits, are yet warned against the world and all that is in it. So these thoughts of Scripture are above our thoughts, and we all need all that is said. Perhaps too, any believer may change from one class to another and back again throughout life. We have our ups and downs, and may one day act as a father the next as a babe, much as Elijah won a great victory on Mount Carmel, and immediately descended to the juniper tree (1 Kings xviii.-xix).

**STEADFAST.** I disagree entirely. The fathers are those who have learned the worthiness of Christ and the worthlessness of everything of this world. They are occupied no longer with self, nor even with Christian experience, but with Christ alone, and are able to say "I know Whom I have believed." How could a father possibly unlearn all this and become a babe again? Your remarks about them may well encourage disrespect, which is clearly common enough in this lawless age.

**GOODHEART.** To encourage a wrong feeling and attitude is the very opposite of my desire. But do you not think we need to be balanced? If the fathers learn Christ, they learn also the hatefulness of the sinful nature still within them. As to experience, in the same Epistle in which the apostle Paul declared, "I know Whom I have believed" (2 Tim. i. 12), he speaks much of his experiences as a servant of Christ (Ch. iii. and iv.). The younger *should* show respect, but Peter does not stop there but adds, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter v. 5, 6).

**CHEERFUL.** Perhaps we can talk further about the babes on another occasion.

W. H. L. GRAHAM.

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### BE ON YOUR GUARD

**S**OME time ago there appeared in one of our national evening newspapers a series of articles under the general title "The Bible was Right." This agreeable title ensured, as

subsequent letters to the paper testified, that the articles were widely read by Christian people.

Despite this satisfactory title, however, the articles themselves contained language and statements which lacked proper regard for the essential glory of the Lord Jesus. And it is felt that our readers should be on their guard against teaching of the kind which over-emphasises the blessed manhood of our Saviour to the detriment, or sometimes even the denial, of His deity.

It is not without significance that the Lord is referred to repeatedly in the articles in question by His human name "Jesus." Not once, so far as we could discover, does the writer give Him His full title "Lord Jesus Christ." And whilst this omission may be due to the fact that the editorial requirements of the newspaper had to be complied with, the reader should bear in mind the importance which the Spirit of God Himself attaches to the recognition in speech of the lordship of Christ (see Rom. x. 9; 1 Cor. xii. 3; also cf. 1 John iv. 2, 3).

Referring to the silence of the Gospels in regard to the Lord's life before His public ministry began, it is said: "His childhood and early years were uneventful. They merited and received little record." It is the use of the word "merited" to which exception is taken.

Every devout believer would of course love to have the fullest possible details of the Saviour's childhood and early years, but he accepts the fact that God in His wisdom has withheld these, confident that if more information had been necessary for his spiritual wellbeing in this world, more would have been given.

But to affirm, as the writer of the articles does in such a positive way, that the silence of Scripture is to be interpreted as meaning that the events of the Lord's boyhood years were not *worth* recording, deeply offends the sensibilities of every true believer. It might be pertinent to enquire how any man could judge there is no merit in things of which he has to admit having but scant details! Letting that pass, however, the affirmation is directly contrary to what the Bible declares. For we are told that when the Lord came to John the Baptist to be

baptized, God the Father declared from heaven: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17). Now whilst that declaration undoubtedly expressed the Father's whole delight in the blessed Person of His Son, does it not also imply fully the merit He discerned in every step of the childhood and early years of the Lord Jesus here upon earth?

It was a feature of the meat offering of old that the frankincense ingredient was to be wholly given to Jehovah (see Lev. ii. 2, 15, 16). All the frankincense was to be burned; no part of it was taken by the priest, let alone reserved for the offeror. In this way surely God let it be known that there would be in the life and death of the Lord Jesus much (infinitely much, indeed!) reserved exclusively for His own pleasure; things which only God Himself could know and rightly value. And is it not highly probable that the words and ways of the Lord Jesus during His childhood and early years come within that category, and are of the nature of "frankincense," wholly for God? Otherwise, surely, we should have been told more. Precious and glorious all must have been to the Father. So we sometimes sing:

'Tis little we to Thee can show  
Of all that He hath done;  
But Thou dost all the virtues know  
Of Thy beloved One.

His praises we would fain proclaim,  
And, in His name divine,  
Upraise to Thee pure worship's flame—  
The "frankincense" is Thine.

Later on in the same article, referring to the homely illustrations which the Lord used in His ministry, particularly in the so-called Sermon on the Mount, the remark is made: "All these accomplishments, the range of His imagery, could only be the result of prolonged, habitual and acute observation." On this occasion it is the words "could only" which offend, for they overlook the fact that He was the One by Whom all things were made (John i. 3).

No doubt it was part of His humbling Himself that He learned things as we do, in part, at least. As a child did He



not "learn" to walk, and "learn" to talk, as other children do? But to say that He was *dependent* upon observation is going too far because it ignores the omniscience which shines out through all His humiliation. No doubt He did use His eyes; no doubt He did observe, and that closely. But who is able to decide where Divine omniscience and human observation meet? That, surely, is part of the mystery of His Person: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27).

What is crystal clear, if we receive the testimony of the Scriptures, is that He did not learn and judge of men and their thoughts after a mere human fashion. When Simon the Pharisee thought he detected a lack of knowledge as to "what manner of woman" it was that touched the Lord, He showed by His reply that He knew not only the woman and her sinful history, but also her real repentance, and also Simon's pitiable condition (Luke vii. 39-50). See also John ii. 24, 25.

In the one reference to the Lord's boyhood days which Scripture makes, the essential glory of Him Who was pleased in infinite grace to appear in such lowly guise is most carefully guarded. Jesus was found by Mary and Joseph in the temple at Jerusalem, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions" (Luke ii. 46). He is not said to be "learning" or acquiring knowledge. Rather it says "all that heard Him were astonished at *His* understanding and answers." Again we read in verse 52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man," and such a stupendous statement, penned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, contains enough material for the believer to ponder reverently, without any gratuitous suppositions as the mind of man loves to make. What does "increased in wisdom" mean of Him Who was divine? The words of Scripture, guided and guarded as they are by the Holy Spirit, Whose blessed office it is to glorify the Lord Jesus, are the only safe expressions of the truth as to Christ's Person, and as we read them, we should believe and fall at His feet in adoration and worship, acknowledging Him to be "over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5).

The foregoing points are examples, and from the New

Testament series only, of many regrettable statements in the newspaper articles referred to, concerning which all need to be on their guard. May all our readers be on the alert to recognise whatever is dishonouring to Christ! May each be enabled, by the strength of the Holy Spirit, to keep his own mind under strict control, so that in acknowledging the Bible to be right, he may also rightly divide ("handling aright" R.V.) the word of truth (2 Tim. ii. 15), and pay due reverence to the One of Whom it speaks.

E. A. PETTMAN.

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### FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

**T**HE following questions have been received concerning fellowship in gospel work, and since they involve points of general interest, this article is devoted to their consideration.

- 1 To what extent can we have fellowship with "other" Christians in gospel work?
- 2 Does it matter whether we "work" in our own hall or a public hall?
- 3 Should we expect the support of the local assembly either way? And should we be guided by their principles in our activities, or are we responsible to the Lord alone?

An exhaustive reply, covering every likely set of circumstances, would fill a book, and even then the precise situation in the questioner's mind might be overlooked. All we can do therefore is to indicate some of the scriptural principles applicable, bearing in mind that it is not the way of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament to lay down meticulous instructions comparable with those given in the law to regulate Jewish ritual. What He does give are principles of conduct designed to stimulate exercise of mind and conscience, and requiring His own guidance in applying them to the varied circumstances which arise.

Let us consider the responsibilities of the Lord's servants first of all to the One they serve, then to the unsaved, and lastly to their fellow-believers.

Faithfulness to the Lord demands that the gospel we proclaim, or to which we give our support, shall accord with the Scriptures. Paul, so far from tolerating one who preached another gospel, pronounced his anathema, "Let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 8, 9), even though such an one should be an angel from heaven. No loyal believer would contemplate fellowship with those preaching another gospel. But Satan can appear as an angel of light, and instances are all too frequent of so-called gospel testimony which examination shows to be unsound because one or more of those taking part deny the true glory of the Person of Christ, or reject an integral part of the gospel, e.g., the eternal punishment of the lost. Examples of dishonouring statements to be found under a plausible title are given in the article "Be on your Guard" in this issue of WORDS OF HELP.

The only safeguard against being misled is to read and study the Scriptures themselves, and to be taught of the Holy Spirit, who will suffer no word derogatory to the glory of Christ. The Lord Jesus was Himself God's perfect Witness upon earth, and scriptures such as 1 Tim. iv. 12-16, and 2 Tim. ii. 20-21, indicate the way in which we may become vessels meet for the Master's use.

Secondly—responsibility to the unsaved. A true lover of souls is not content to help a fellow man to the point of conversion, and then leave him to fend for himself thereafter. The good Samaritan of Luke x. not only went down to where the injured man was, binding up his wounds, and pouring in oil and wine; he also set him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, took care of him, and provided for the man's whole need until he himself should return. The Lord added: "Go and do thou likewise." So that post-conversion ministry is an essential complement to that designed to meet the soul's primary need to be born again.

Paul used the figure of a nursing mother to describe his own care for the Thessalonians (Ch. ii. 7, 8). A mother does not cease to care for her child after it is born! So fellowship in the gospel must include after-care of the converted, and it is

here that complications may arise if those who labour together are not of one mind.

Around the bed of a dying man it would be appropriate for all true believers available, however diverse their church views, to unite in pleading with the man to put his whole trust in Christ, to snatch maybe, by the Lord's grace, one more brand from the burning. But would it be *as* appropriate for such persons to co-operate in, say, a Sunday evening gospel service on "neutral" ground, knowing beforehand that should those converted desire to attend a prayer meeting on the Monday evening, each worker's loyalty to his own personal convictions in church matters will cause him to pull in a different direction? It is the new convert that will suffer in such circumstances. True love will surely not permit such a thing if it can be avoided.

Furthermore, a convert needs to go where he can be helped to receive the sincere milk of the word. And is not obedience to the Lord's command to remember Him in the breaking of bread important for his welfare?

The tendency today is to treat matters which divide Christians as of minor importance, and consequently to be indifferent as to which company of Christians a new convert "joins." But although the fact of these divisions is a terrible evil, dishonouring to the Head of the church and the Holy Spirit, each should have assurance as to how he stands before the Lord in such matters, and be zealous to maintain the truth as he has learned it. It is disloyal to the Lord to put oneself in a position where one is not free to show a new convert what Scripture teaches as to believers gathering together for prayer, ministry of God's word, and response to the Lord's command "This do in remembrance of Me." We know of no precedent in the New Testament for occupying such a position.

The special and individual responsibilities of the evangelist are not forgotten, nor is it overlooked that in *large* gospel campaigns means have been devised to minimise practical problems of the kind mentioned. And whilst we should all be thankful for the sovereign grace of God which is pleased to overrule the rifts amongst His people so that benighted souls *do* find their way back to Him without being stumbled, we

should not overlook the need to exercise true love and forethought in the more ordinary circumstances in which most of us normally find ourselves, so that we are not a cause of stumbling to "these little ones which believe" (Matt. xviii. 6).

Whether a "public" (by which we assume our questioner to mean a "neutral") hall should be used in preference to one of "our own" halls, is a matter to be considered in the light of love for the unsaved. The writer has known of halls where the truth preached may have been unimpeachable, but into which one would hesitate before inviting any respectable non-Christian. The world has all too good reason to be suspicious of much that goes on under the cloak of religion in some places remote from the public eye. On the other hand, the New Testament attaches no importance to geographical locations or material premises as was the case in the Jewish dispensation. What delay there would have been after Pentecost before the work of the gospel could advance had consecrated bricks and mortar been an essential prerequisite! As it was, converts were added daily through the all-prevailing power of the Holy Spirit.

But reliance upon the power of the Holy Spirit does not exempt us from the obligation to obey the promptings of divine love in our hearts, and care is required lest seeking souls should be stumbled by slovenliness, discourtesy or positive irreverence in the conduct of a gospel service. A good mother may be seen to coax a reluctant child to take the good food available. (How full of resource true love is!) Is nothing in the nature of coaxing to be permitted to the seeker or shepherd of souls?

Lastly, in connection with the relationship of the Lord's servants to the assembly, we quote a reply given some years ago by the late editor of THE BIBLE MONTHLY (Vol. xii., p. 24), to the question whether it was "in accordance with scriptural teaching for two brothers to go and preach the gospel without asking or having the fellowship of the brethren, that is, in independence of their brethren."

"According to scriptural instruction, preaching the gospel is

a service or ministry undertaken by direction of the Lord Himself (Mark xvi. 15; Eph. iv. 11; 1 Thess. iii. 11), and carried out in the power and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts xiii. 2, 4; 1 Peter i. 12) by those to whom God has specially entrusted the glad tidings (1 Thess. ii. 4). The sphere of the evangelist is in the world (Mark xvi. 15), and not so much in the assembly itself, like that of the pastors and teachers, yet the evangelist helps to build the assembly (in which he is one of the Lord's gifts, Eph. iv. 11) by the addition of those who receive the gospel of salvation through his preaching.

“We do not find in scripture that the assembly possesses an authority to send out preachers to a field of service, or to issue to any a licence to preach, or to direct preachers as to the time or locality of their service. The brethren can, however, commend the preachers to God by prayer (Acts xiii. 3; xv. 40), and they can and should have fellowship with the work of the gospel (Phil. i. 5) by contributing to the expenses of this service, by ministering to the personal necessities of the servants of the Lord (Phil. iv. 15, 16), and by many other helpful ways.

“The preacher himself, knowing his need of support in fulfilling his task, would value the important help of prayer particularly, and would seek it (Rom. xv. 30; Eph. vi. 18, 19; Col. iv. 3); but if he is clearly led of God to take up a particular service he ought not to abandon his purpose because unspiritual men withhold or refuse their fellowship.

“The two brothers in question, if they were doing the will of the Lord in the preaching, were under no obligation to seek the permission of the saints to go forward with their service, but it would have been none the worse but a great deal better for them if, like the apostle, they had said “Brethren, pray for us” (1 Thess. v. 25).

“The others should unquestionably have prayed for the two brothers, even if it appeared that they were actually violating scripture in their service. In that very extreme case, they should the more earnestly have asked the Lord to show the brothers the error of their enterprise, praying also that the

work of the gospel in that quarter might not suffer on that account.

“If the two brothers had deliberately ignored the saints, they would have acted ‘independently,’ and so would the saints have acted ‘independently’ if they had withheld their support from those whom the Lord had sent on a special service. Often when the Lord opens a great door and effectual, there are many adversaries (1 Cor. xvi. 9), but the saints should take heed that they are not on the wrong side in the conflict at such a time, and be ‘adversaries’ rather than fellow-helpers.”

We urge the questioner, and indeed all our readers, to consider the various Scriptures referred to with care and prayer, and to act humbly, yet confidently, in the light of them for the Lord’s glory, and in the best interests of the souls it is sought to win.

E. A. PETTMAN.

(We cannot accept the responsibility of offering guidance to individual readers in the application of the foregoing principles to particular circumstances. Each must decide questions of this kind for himself in the fear of the Lord. If, however, any of our readers has further light *from the Scriptures* to offer, we shall be very pleased to hear from them.—Ed. W.O.H.)



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# WORDS OF HELP

## A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

**W**HILST we think it well to give first place to the ministry of living writers who bring the word of God to bear upon current problems with which they are familiar, we unhesitatingly recognise the very great value of what was written years ago, and is preserved for us in volumes of by-gone periodicals such as *The Bible Treasury* and *The Bible Monthly*, the former having long since, and the latter recently, ceased publication. And what a wealth of good material there is to select from!

Our issue this month draws upon the past entirely. Our only clue to the authorship of the first piece, "Two Sticks" is the initial "R", but the fact that the Editor of the *Bible Treasury*, in 1878 William Kelly, considered the article worthy of publication, at a time when there was no dearth of able ministers of the word, is sufficient recommendation.

The second article is the abridgement of an address in 1933 by the late beloved W. J. Hocking. No one privileged to sit under his ministry will mistake the authorship of this piece!

The Editor regards these two articles as being in measure complementary: the first is a rebuke to the spirit of despondency, all too manifest in many places today; the second indicates the way in which the people of God collectively should face up to a crisis. The overruling of the Lord in bringing both pieces to the Editor's attention so that they can appear together, is acknowledged.

Readers are urged to give both articles their earnest consideration and reflection, so that all may profit fully from the "things new and old" (Matt. xiii. 52) which are set before them.

## “TWO STICKS”

1 Kings xvii. 12

**H**OW many believers in this day are culpably like the poor widow of Sarepta before she met the Tishbite. They know so little of the wonderful service they are predestined of the Lord to fulfil for Him here, that they are, ignobly enough, looking only for a couple of sticks, accounting that they have just sufficient in the barrel and the cruse to die upon, but far from enough to live upon! They have so little understood the wonderful fact that they have present possession of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, as the inexhaustible resources of faith—of which the meal (or wheaten flour) and the oil were types—that they go along with their eyes upon the ground; and their piety chiefly consists in a suitable preparation for death! It may be in the near, or it may be in the distant, horizon, but this only is looming before their souls. These are they who religiously affirm that “in the midst of life we are in death,” never having learnt how much happier it is to be able to say, and how much more divinely true it is to the saint, that in the midst of death we are in life, not knowing either how incomparably greater thing it is to be fit to live than to be fit to die.

When the famine had long raged throughout the land, and even beyond its borders, the prophet of God was directed to forsake Israel’s dried-up rivulet, Cherith, for Zarephath of Zidon, for there had Jehovah commanded a widow woman to sustain him; the many widows of Israel being passed over, that a Gentile might taste of His goodness, and be also the almoner of His resources. At the very gate of the city they met, and he, being entitled to draw at once upon her supplies, requests of her bread and water, only to elicit the disclosure of her abject penury. Everything but the last mouthful was gone, and she and her son were at the point of death.

Elijah’s reply, “Fear not,” etc., beautifully asserts the ascendancy of his faith. Be it that the famine was at its height, and that the person upon whom he was billeted was an embodiment of wretchedness and misery the most profound,

he had gone there in the name and at the word of the God of Israel, to live, and not to die, and to announce, as well as to receive, succour. And as the two mites dropped into the Lord's treasury by the Jewish widow of another and a later day, met the commendation that she had cast in more than all the rest, so were the "two sticks" of this Gentile widow, gathered with a view to the last desperate morsel before death, to be used for preparing, by the bounty of Jehovah, "enough and to spare," the prelude of a new lease of life to herself and to the prophet, and the pledge of unmeasured mercy and grace to the Gentiles.

She had gone forth of the city, having no object higher or happier than the "two sticks," but she found the Lord, as it were, at the gate; for there she met His prophet, and there she heard His word. How many believers are like her, as she sallied forth that eventful day, full of their own thoughts and forebodings! In what they have, and what they seek, they have self for their motive, thus rising no higher, and seeing no further than the couple of sticks, for they have not yet met the Lord at the gate, or, in other words, have not yet got their commission—the service for Himself He has assigned to them here.

What a revolution of soul she must have experienced as the word of Jehovah fell from the mouth of His prophet! Retracing her steps now, not to be the prey of death, but as one taken out of the world, and afresh sent into the world, she enters the city with composure and with dignity, as hostess of the servant of the living God. Henceforth the famine is over for her and for her household, and she ranks as a commissioned officer in the commissariat of the Lord of hosts. In a marked manner is she identified with His interests on earth, and that primarily, for the prophet had said, "Make me thereof a little cake first." Her faith and her self-denial ran together as twin-sisters, for she did so, and she and her house did eat a full year, even until Jehovah sent rain upon the earth. Had anyone told her that morning that before the sun set she should eat abundantly, and her household, and that also she should entertain the same day as her guest the most distinguished man upon earth, even him at whose word the heavens had so long been shut up, would he not have been unto her as one that mocked?

And in like manner, how little now do saints generally recognise that no higher dignity and no greater privilege could be conferred upon us than are ours already, in being sent here to find in the interests of Christ our first consideration, and in being made competent, by the divine resources we possess, to minister of them as freely to others as we have partaken of them abundantly ourselves! How simply and how confidingly did the Zidonian widow receive and act upon the Tishbite's testimony! She goes back into Sarepta ennobled by faith, and enriched with promises; qualified and commissioned by Jehovah to dispense His bounty to His honoured servant, and to be the witness of divine superiority to the deepest human exigencies, as to herself and her house; a poor Gentile by nature, but bound up now in the bundle of life with Elijah and Elijah's God!

Nevertheless she has practically to learn death. Upon the old ground she had met the wreck of every earthly hope in becoming a widow, but this would not suffice. Upon the new ground of divine favour and exhaustless benefits, death must be experimentally brought home to her heart. And so the son of her bosom is cut off before her eyes, but she receives him again at the hand of the Lord, *plus* the incalculable gain that the sentence of death carries with it to faith. She held him before, upon the uncertain tenure of the old creation, as the fruit of her womb; she gets him back upon new creation tenure as the fruit of resurrection. Moreover, the man of God (figure of Christ) and the word of the Lord are both established before her soul—"Now by this I know that thou are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."

Surely all this is full of instruction for ourselves, and beautiful in its season, for the scene around is one of dearth, and drought, and death; and how happy and how blessed is the discovery made to faith, that in the antitypes of the flour and the oil we have Christ our life, and the Holy Ghost its power, in such present plenitude as to render us eminently superior to everything here, so that the famine prevailing in the old creation only enhances more and more unto our souls the immeasurable and unailing resources of the new.

How little do they know of this who resemble the widow before she met Elijah, under pressure of what she felt powerless to avert, and only seeking to pass, without further suffering, out of this blighted scene—a sight as painful and as pitiable as a stranded ship on a barren coast! But the truly-taught saint of God should be like a noble merchantman, freighted with a cargo more precious than gold of Ophir, filling her sails with every heavenly breeze, touching at every open port to discharge somewhat of her unworldly and exhaustless treasure, carrying divine blessing wherever she is welcomed; and knowing, moreover, that she is homeward bound, having everything taut and trim to enter harbour in full sail, “for so,” says the apostle Peter, “an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

R.

(From “The Bible Treasury”—July 1878)

---

## UNITED PRAYER

Read: Acts iv. 19-33

(Notes of an address at the Memorial Hall, London, 22.4.33)

**T**HOUGH prayer itself was no new thing, this is the first instance we have of a definite prayer by the new company formed in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

From earliest times individuals had approached God for help and favour. Abraham’s servant on his delicate errand to Mesopotamia began and continued in simple prayer to God for His guidance in finding a wife for the heir of Abraham’s promise, through whom blessing should eventually flow to the ends of the earth. And he received his answer almost before he had finished speaking.

So also when the nation called out to stand as a permanent witness against idolatry was at war with Amalek at Rephidim, they gained the victory by the prayer of their representative, Moses. In the valley Joshua led the hosts of Israel to victory

because on the mountain top the hands of the interceding Moses were lifted up in prayer to God. The power of intercession was stamped upon the nation of Israel from the outset by reason of there being amongst them one who could gather up in his heart the desires and needs of all and present them before Jehovah.

Prayer was to characterise Israel's national life. When their magnificent temple was dedicated, Solomon uttered a prayer which is a marvel to read even today. It was a beautiful house, but it was also a house of prayer, not for the people of Israel only, but, in the purpose of God, for all nations. Hezekiah spreading the letter of defiance from the Assyrians before Jehovah, Nehemiah and Daniel are other instances of those who spoke to God on behalf of His people.

Here in Acts iv. however is something different. The new organisation of believers upon earth, united by the power of the Holy Spirit to their exalted and glorified Head in heaven, are not praying one for another, but are all praying. One speaks, but his voice is the voice of all. Every heart throbs in sympathy with the one audible voice that falls upon their ears. It was a new form of prayer—assembly prayer.

### **The Occasion of the Prayer Meeting**

The occasion was a crisis in the history of the Lord's witnesses. On the day of Pentecost, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter had given a testimony to those in Jerusalem that God had exalted Jesus to His own right hand, and made Him both Lord and Christ. The effect was manifest. Souls (3,000 in one day) were convicted, converted, baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and added to the new company.

Then followed the test case recorded in Acts iii. and iv. A cripple over forty years old, a well-known character, begging for alms day by day at the beautiful gate of the temple, disappeared from his customary place. Where was he found? In the courts of the temple, leaping and praising God! There was a hubbub of excitement, everyone wanting to know how it had happened. And testimony was given by the apostles that the utterance of the despised Name of Jesus had brought

this man to his feet and made him a witness of the power of that Name.

Now this event brought out what was in the heart of the High Priest, a Sadducee who disbelieved in resurrection (see Matt. xxii. 23). When Jesus Christ was crucified and safely in the tomb, they thought His despised Name was blotted out of the earth, that they had done away with the One Whom they called "this deceiver." But here was a proof of the resurrection. The name of a dead man could do nothing; the name of one who had disappeared could accomplish nothing; but the Name of Jesus Christ had healed this cripple. So Jesus Christ was alive. There in their midst was a witness to the unbelief of the nation, and to the unbelief of the High Priest who was the guardian of the religious teaching of the nation.

So the council arraigned the Lord's witnesses before them, questioning them, and proving their own weakness by what they said. They had no answer to the fact that the cripple from the gate of the temple stood before them alive, well, strong, healthy and perfectly cured by a Name—the Name of Jesus Christ.

But if they had no argument, they had power, and the High Priest had authority. Was he not the High Priest, and did not his lineage and pedigree take him back to Aaron? So he spoke in his power, supported by the council, commanding the apostles to speak no more and to teach no more in the Name of Jesus Christ.

The apostles did not promise to obey. Their point was simple and true—which is proper and right, to obey God or to obey men? To that the High Priest in his wisdom had no answer, only to threaten them still further with pain and death if they disobeyed. What were the apostles to do now?

Being let go, they came to their own company, to report what had been said to them. And what was it they reported? That Peter and John were in danger of being shut up in prison or put to death? No! these men were not afraid of their lives. They did not fear those who could kill the body. What they reported was that the power in Jerusalem had now



taken upon itself to suppress the testimony to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were there to witness for Him, and the High Priest said, "You shall not witness: we will not have His Name mentioned in the temple, nor in Jerusalem."

The honour of the Name of Jesus was before these men. They were troubled because the power that everyone respected in Jerusalem—and all the Old Testament showed what power and authority God had put into the hands of the High Priest—said, "You must not speak in the name of the Lord Jesus." So they reported the matter, not for sympathy, but for prayer.

They might have said: "We do not need to pray; we have our instructions. Did not the Lord tell us to be witnesses in Jerusalem? Surely that is enough; why pray? Why not get to work and preach in the open air that Jesus is exalted, and that through repentance and faith there is salvation for all?" No! they felt the first thing was to get God's mind about it. They felt they could not trust themselves, or their memories, or their own interpretation of the words of the Lord Jesus. They wanted something definitely from God to guide them. They were opposed by the power of the world, and they turned to God.

Peter and John had spent the night in a prison cell, and doubtless had prayed together there. Now they come to their own company, who say, "We are all one: the power that is against Peter and John is against the whole company, and we must unitedly spread the whole matter before God, asking Him for help." So they "lifted up their voice to God with one accord." There was unanimity between them, not a discordant note, no difference of opinion. They lifted up their voice in audible prayer and it went up to God with one accord.

### **Recognition of the Power of God**

What did they pray? The first thing is they recognised God Himself, and His sovereignty too. "Lord, Thou art God"—sovereign Lord, meaning God Who has complete control of everything. Peter and John had just returned from another authority set up by Jehovah Himself, but they turned back to the One Who is above all, and recognised His greatness.

“Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.” It was not the recital of a formula; there was a deep sense in every heart of God’s infinite power. In other Scriptures we are made to feel the unutterable greatness and graciousness of God in His love, and that is sweet, and tender, and helpful. Here it was a question of power. Against the power of the world, what had the little company at their disposal? They bent their knees in prayer to the One Who had made all things, and Whose power was for them.

### Intelligent Use of Scripture

Then there was the intelligent use of scripture, as taught by the Holy Spirit. They had the Scriptures in their hearts, but now the Holy Spirit enabled them to select what was suitable for the occasion, and to apply scriptural light to their circumstances. Their prayer was therefore founded upon the written word of God. They would not seek to set aside the High Priest’s authority without God’s word for it. So they based their petition upon what God Himself had said.

They quoted the first two verses of Psalm ii., which applied in particular to the position in which they found themselves. They were in Jerusalem, a little circle; all around, stretched to the ends of the earth, was the world that was against God and against His Christ. The scripture they quoted had been written because of the hatred of the human heart against God and the One He delights to honour, and they were able by the Holy Spirit to apply it in its historical fulfilment (verse 27). Thus in the presence of God the new assembly set before Him that other assembly, the assembly of the wicked that enclosed the Messiah upon the cross. It was the same spirit of opposition, hatred and murder which now said to Peter and John, “You shall not speak or preach any more in the Name of Jesus.” This handful of people in Jerusalem had God’s mind, His written thought, while the High Priest with all his knowledge, and the traditions of the elders behind him, was the one who was against the Lord. It was no question of numbers at all. The little company were in a hopeless minority, yet they

were right. They were confident of God's word, and there is no hesitation in their petitions.

Another thing they knew too: the assembly of the wicked in doing their worst to the Lord Jesus Christ were doing what God's hand and counsel had before ordained should be done. They looked at the terrible happenings of Calvary from God's point of view. All was pre-determined, and God was above it all.

It is a great mercy to have the teaching of scripture, and to be able to look at the confused things of this world from the point of view that God Himself does. He has given us His word that we might have His mind, and that we might come to Him, not as ignorant and untaught people, but as His children to whom He has been pleased to reveal His purposes.

### **The Need for Boldness**

So they come with their definite petition: "Now, Lord, behold their threatenings." They have forbidden us to do that which Thou didst command us to do, and penalties for disobedience are attached. How can we stand against that great Jewish council in its power? Thou knowest their power and our weakness: "grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word."

The early part of this chapter records (verse 13) that the council wondered at the boldness of Peter and John when they were before them. They had boldness yesterday, so why ask for it today? Clearly daily supplies of boldness are needed. Those who are strong in past days are not necessarily strong today.

*Further, they asked for boldness; not bravado—the mere shutting of one's eyes, and being blind to the dangers. That is not the boldness of Scripture. The boldness of Scripture means that we can measure every ounce of power that is against us, and yet be bold because God is for us. Not in ignorance, but with a full knowledge of the wickedness and subtlety of the power of the world, those who know their God can be bold indeed.*

## **Prayer for Divine Healing**

“By stretching forth Thine hand to heal: and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of Thy holy Child Jesus.” They desired that the Name of Jesus should be honoured; that God would heal, not necessarily the sick ones in Jerusalem, but all that needed spiritual healing; that He would heal the backsliding people of Israel of which the prophets had spoken (Hos. xiv. 4). They did not ask that the High Priest should be deposed, or his power taken away, but that he might be won, his soul saved, and that he might confess the Name of Jesus. What could not be done when God stretched out His hand? The hand that had arranged the crucifixion could order the healing of His people. And they prayed that this might be so.

So they spread the case before the Lord. They were in a new difficulty, for we do not read in the history of the Lord Jesus that the High Priest or anyone else forbade Him to speak. They opposed Him, hated Him, and sought His life, but did not close His mouth so far as we read. So His witnesses were seeking guidance, and they received it.

## **God's Immediate Answer**

When they prayed, the place where they were gathered together was shaken. There was a visible token given at the beginning as at Pentecost. It was given for their assurance, and for our own, that the united prayer of those gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ is heard in heaven, and that He gives His answer as He pleases. The times may be evil and difficult, but God is the same, and He honours the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As God looked down upon that assembled company, there was not a discordant thought, nothing contrary to the general desire for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The church was in its pristine beauty. Since then difficulties have come in, and it will never be again as it was at the beginning. But God has given us here what should characterise the church all along, not only unanimity of mind, but unity of heart and spirit

before God. That is the gracious result wherever the Spirit is allowed to work.

It was by the Spirit they prayed, and with the Holy Spirit that they were all filled. Every vessel, large and small, was completely filled by the Holy Spirit, and when a person is full of the Holy Ghost, self is excluded, sin is excluded, and the whole man, body, soul and spirit, is governed by the Spirit. And what power is there!

It was not that God sent down the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer. That He did at Pentecost once and for all. These people did not ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but the one thing that brought it about was that all hearts and eyes were on Christ. His glory was the chief object, and what could the Holy Ghost do but fill everyone, so that there was no self-seeking anywhere?

### **United Prayer Today**

Why is it that we know so little of this today, and that we look back to those early days wishing we had been alive then to have had a share in the unanimous petition that brought such a powerful answer? There is a cause. We do not believe in prayer as it is here. We do not come to the prayer meeting with the word of God in our hearts. How delightful when a prayer meeting opens with reading of the word of God, so that we may lift up our petitions encouraged by God's word.

These men in Acts iv. were marked by single-hearted purpose for the Lord Jesus Christ. They were absolutely united, bending at the throne of grace with their hearts bound in love and fervour, and admiration for the Lord Jesus Christ, and their petitions brought down a quick response.

This response was in their hearts first of all—God begins there. They spoke with all boldness, "and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." The united spirit which animated the prayer meeting was not left behind at the door. They took it away with them, so that they shared

their possessions with one another. Great power was accompanied by great grace. Power without grace is a terrible thing to have.

That humility and lowliness of mind that just waits for the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ—that is what grace is. Grace is that which enables us, poor rough things as we are, to be something like our Lord Jesus Christ. The fulness of grace was in Him: “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”; and as we get near to Him, we have something of this grace.

Here, in answer to prayer, they had great grace. Why? They had been to the throne of grace. It is there where God’s power is exercised in the way of grace. The power was given to them, not to destroy their enemies, but to pray for them, and to preach and to witness, and to show the meekness and gentleness of Christ. That is what we need.

*(The foregoing is an abridgement of an address given by our late beloved brother. The address closed with a personal word of counsel which is given verbatim).*

I just leave this scripture with you, beloved friends. I think the lesson for us is, that we have a right to expect definitely to believe that God will work in answer to prayer. If we pray because our minds have been directed and taught by His Holy Spirit through His word, we shall come before Him, not with our own words and petitions and desires that spring from our hearts and inclinations, but with desires founded upon His word revealed here; and if we are of one mind about it, God will answer and bless.

There are plenty of pleas and petitions put up for persons in difficulty—for the persecuted in R——, and so on. That is all well enough: but what is spoken of here is something founded upon God’s holy word. And we must have the instruction that God gives us through His word so that we may frame our petitions aright. If we are of one mind, and seek the mind of the Lord, as it is in scripture; if our hearts are lifted up to the throne of grace, then there is nothing in scripture to forbid our expectation of great power coming down, and great grace too.

W. J. HOCKING

## WORSHIP

“While the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.”—(Song of Solomon i. 12).

To Thee my Saviour, Lord and King  
My pound of spikenard here I bring;  
I break the box, give thanks and sing,  
“While the King sitteth at His table.”

Far from Him once I long did rove,  
Whose banner o'er me now is love,  
Such wonders has He made me prove,  
The King, Who sitteth at His table.

Brought, “but comely,” into light,  
With garments giv'n, pure and white,  
By Him Who is my soul's delight—  
The King, Who sitteth at His table.

Come Brethren, Sisters, bring your gold,  
Your frankincense and myrrh unfold,  
For Him, Whose love can ne'er be told,  
“While the King sitteth at His table.”

Pour out the ointment and perfume,  
Oh, let the odour fill the room,  
For Him Who has dispelled our gloom,  
“While the King sitteth at His table.”

Oh, feast of love! Oh, joy divine!  
I'm my Beloved's, and He is mine;  
We break the bread, and drink the wine,  
“While the King sitteth at His table.”

SAMUEL TOMKINS  
(1841-1926)

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# Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

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# WORDS OF HELP.

## A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

It has been a pleasure to receive several letters expressing appreciation of the Open Letter to Young Men, by Mr. E. F. Prior of Bradford, which appeared under the general title "Let Days Speak" in our March issue. Quite clearly this article met a need, and it is hoped that the counsel given will be duly weighed and put into practice.

One well-wisher, writing from Hadleigh, Essex, heartily endorses the remarks on singing, and comments:

"The Israelites were to bring their best, without blemish, for sacrifice; I think the same principle holds now with our sacrifice of praise. Not specially trained choirs of course, but each one singing to the Lord in the best possible way."

A little later he continues:

"Saints when offering their sacrifice of praise should sing with the spirit and understanding, and offer the best they possibly can in suitable tunes, in melody or harmony, and with heart and voice."

We commend this further note to our readers.

This month we are glad to include an Open Letter to Young Women, written by one in south-west England with many years' experience of assembly life and of the Lord's work amongst women and girls. We ask our readers to do all they can to see that this is widely circulated.

## LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS

### VIII: PROFOUND PROVISION

Read: Gen. ii. 8; iii. 17-19; Psalm xxii. 15

**T**HE early chapters of Genesis open with order out of chaos and the beauty of creation. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," and light swept away the death-shrouds of a past failure. We are not told the details of this calamity, but we may exult in the display of the power of God as day follows day with new unfoldings of His creative might. Isaiah proclaims his joy in this: "Thus saith the Lord that . . . formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." (Ch. xlv. 18).

God re clothed the sad earth and brought life where death had reigned, and out of the very dust of departed beauty fashioned a man to be His representative. "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed" (Gen. ii. 8). In a place of indescribable loveliness Adam first dwelt. There, too, he brought sorrow to God, to himself, and to the children of men. The effects of his failure have since been evident in a distorted and uneasy world, subject to the bondage of the fear of death (Heb. ii. 15).

He had been surrounded by all that spoke of life—as "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job. xxxviii. 7). The rest of God had begun. His divine ideals were evident from the perfection of His handiwork. Yet Adam brought discord into this divine harmony, and the shadow of death where abundant life had been.

The sorrow of the Creator at the marring of the work of His hands is perhaps less often considered than the effect upon Adam and the one who was designed as an helpmeet for him. Yet a complete reversal of beneficent energy was implied in the sad pronouncement "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. iii. 19). Death had certainly no place in the purposes of God for man.

But Adam did not sin solely against the creative purposes of God. There was that in God's provision for him which

could not be mistaken. It was His love. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psa. viii. 6). This was not responsibility alone. It was the loving disposal of precious things into the care of one "crowned with glory and honour." That Adam was unworthy of such love is self-evident, but the love of divine Persons seeks no source outside itself. In his Psalm David sings of the excellence of Jehovah's Name in all the earth; as for man. "What is man that *Thou* art mindful of him" (Psa. viii.) Yet Love *is* mindful of him, for it is the unrewarded love of God that provides (not creatively) with the forethought of love, for the man yet to be made. "Eastward toward Eden" there is One Who plants a garden. It is the Lord God Himself. Is it not the gracious outflowing of Divine energy of a personal character for man—the unworthy object of Divine love? Adam is to be surrounded with evidences of:

"The love, that gives not as the world, but shares  
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs."

Yet he listens to the subtle assurances of the serpent: "Thou shalt not surely die"; and the Voice of Truth follows: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

There was a promise made in the garden of disobedience. It was misunderstood by Eve, for she called her first born Cain, saying "I have gotten a man from the Lord." But God's Man was not to come in by the line of nature, and her disillusionment was evident in the name she gave to her second son Abel (vanity).

Centuries pass, and those who looked for the promised "Seed of the woman" were few and precious. But they were all of "The household of faith" (Gal. vi. 10), and all submitted to the justice of the sentence passed upon man. They knew that man had no power within himself to rise from his lifeless dust. But by faith they were enabled to see the Man of Promise Who, one day, told His enemies "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad" (John viii. 56). He exulted in that he should see the day of the

appearing of the Man Christ Jesus in His glory. His faith bridged the centuries—he saw that day and was glad. He is one among the precious family of faith of whom the risen Christ speaks before taking His last journey with His own to Bethany: “All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke xxiv. 44).

But, in the course of that fulfilment there was sorrow far more deep than Adam, as an outcast, knew: To be told of his origin and his end (“For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”) was cause for bitter grief; but who shall measure the sadness of the One of Whom David sang when he, too, saw a day of the Son of Man and cried “Thou has brought *ME* into the dust of death” (Psa. xxii. 15).

The first Adam has returned to dust, for “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin” (Rom. v. 12), but the last Adam, the second Man, the Man out of heaven (1 Cor. xv. 47) has been brought into the dust of death in order that the righteousness of God could be satisfied, and His own be brought to dwell with Him in incorruptibility.

EDWARD T. WOOD.

---

## MARVELLOUS GRACE

He giveth more grace as the shadows grow deeper;  
 His love seems more tender as trials increase;  
 Each day as I trust Him I find He is able  
 To keep me secure in His infinite peace.

Oh marvellous grace of my wonderful Saviour;  
 No measure can tell me how wide or how deep:  
 But in every trial and heartache and sorrow  
 I know He *has* kept me, I know He *will* keep.

(Author unknown)

## LET DAYS SPEAK

### (An Open Letter to Young Women)

Redruth, Cornwall.

*March, 1957.*

Dear Young Sisters,

Do you not think there is often the thought that being a sister in a meeting does not carry much responsibility with it because God's Word tells us that we must be silent?

Has it ever occurred to you that we are either a help or a hindrance in every meeting that we attend?

It is so easy to think it all depends upon the brothers and not to be exercised at all.

It is a good habit to get into, before going to any meeting to get quietly alone with the Lord, tell Him where we are going, then be quite sure we are not carrying any unjudged sin with us. It is so much better to lay before Him things we think hinder than to criticise. Ask especially that the Holy Spirit may be free and that everyone may get a sense of the Lord's presence.

I remember, many years ago, hearing one sister say to another after the meeting "I was afraid you were not coming. I was glad when you came in; you brought something with you." I thought a lot about it at the time and came to the conclusion that the sister did bring something with her. She cared for the Lord's interests. If the meeting was a happy one, she rejoiced; but if she felt things were not up to the mark, she was exercised and gave herself to prayer about it.

In our own meeting we had an old sister, and if she was absent the brethren missed her. They were so conscious of her help. *She brought something with her.*

May we ask ourselves before we go "What am I taking with me?" A chastened spirit, a soul in communion with God? A fervent desire that the meeting may be for God's glory and that Christ may be made more precious to each heart?

Then there is the Gospel Meeting, and how we need to be before the Lord as to that. To pray for the speaker that he may be a channel of blessing to those gathered to listen, to

intercede for the unsaved that their hearts may be opened to see their need and God's wonderful provision for them.

There was an old sister once in a meeting who in this way served the Lord over a number of years. She was very poor, earning her living by taking in needlework, yet was revered by all the Lord's people in that place.

If there were difficulties, the brethren often came and confided in her and asked her prayers. She cared, above all else, for the Lord's interests. The meetings were a responsibility to her, in her quiet way.

After many years serving the Lord in this way, she was taken ill and was unable to work any more. The Lord's people cared for her, but she got weaker and weaker. Her complaint was very dreadful and most painful, so they looked about for someone to stay with her. Her case was so bad that many felt they could not undertake it.

Next door to her lived a woman who had led a very bad life. The old sister had often tried to speak to her of Christ and had shewn her small kindnesses. Hearing of her dilemma, this woman offered to stay with her. She nursed her most carefully and skilfully to the end.

The old sister's last day on earth came. Two of the Lord's people called to see her; her suffering was very great. They said, "We are so sorry to see you like this." To which she replied "He is Lord of all."

There was a sequel to this on the day of her funeral. Two brethren went back to the house to pay what was owing to the poor woman who had nursed her. They found her in bitter tears and as they conversed with her she said: "I have watched over her in all her suffering, but there was never a murmur or a question as to God being hard. I thought God was very hard to her and often said so, but she would always say "He is Lord of all." Then, falling on her knees she said, "Oh, I want what she had!" They pointed her to the Saviour and in accepting Him, her sins were forgiven, a new life imparted, her old life changed and she became a devoted sister in the same meeting. In that meeting the old sister was a help and not a hindrance. We, ourselves, are either one or the other.

I heard this story when I was young from the lips of one of the brethren who visited her on the last day of her life. I heard it repeated many times after that, so I pass it on to you. How happy for us if we realise this in all our ways. "He is Lord of all."

*God the Father in all His greatness and glory has thought about us and given His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to die for us, and Who as the Captain of our salvation is leading us to glory. The Holy Spirit has come down from a glorified Christ and is here in the world working, and we can help or hinder. May it be your privilege and mine to help.*

Affectionately yours in Him,

ETHEL SIBTHORPE.

---

## CONVERSATION ON 1 JOHN III

(Please read the chapter)

**GOODHEART.** We should be brief today, but before looking at this chapter we must spend a few minutes on the last part of chapter ii. where the babes are given warnings which are needful for all. In natural things life is attended with danger, and young children especially have to be warned what not to eat, where not to go, and so on. It is similar in spiritual things, and from verse 18 onward the babes are warned against antichrists, liars and seducers.

We are not surprised that after all the blessing of the first part of the book of Acts, Satan was not slow to attack the early Christians, first by persecution from without, and then in a more deadly way by causing trouble within the church, and even perverting some (who were not "of us") and inducing them to give up their profession of faith in Jesus and to deny the revelation of the Father and the Son in Christianity, that is, its very foundation. This is what *the* Antichrist of the day to come will do (he is no doubt the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians ii., and the second beast or false prophet of Revelation xiii. etc.), but there were many antichrists already in the days of the apostles, so that it was in character the "last time"



even then. And so it is now. We must therefore at all cost follow the true Christ of the Scriptures, and we need the Holy Spirit to teach and lead and keep us, and the "unction" in verse 20 *is* the indwelling Spirit, the same word as "anointing" in verse 27. If we learn the truth from Him, we know that all else is error to be avoided.

In a condition of things where some profess to be Christians but are false (tares looking like wheat, but actually very different), we want of course to know which are real and which are not, which have been born again and possess spiritual life and which are professors only. A doctor's stethoscope may reveal the physical condition, but it cannot detect spiritual life within a person. So we have to look for outward symptoms, and the last words of the chapter are "ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." That is, if a man claims to be a believer and shows he is practising righteousness in his life, we know he is born again.

STEADFAST. So we come to chapter iii. If we are born of God we are His children and He is our Father, and this wonderful thing, which shows God's great love to us who were once sinners and enemies, starts the chapter. I rather regard the first three verses as being in brackets, a parenthesis. All true Christians are children of God, and though we do not at present look different outwardly from others, we shall do so one day, for we are going to be like Christ. And having this hope in Him, and knowing His love, we must desire of course to be like Him morally even now, and therefore to purify ourselves because Christ is pure.

There are three words in the chapter to be noted. First, "sons" in verses 1 and 2. It means "children," and is so translated in verse 10; it is also translated "daughters" in 1 Peter iii. 6. (Will Prudence please note?) Second, "transgresseth" and "transgression" in verse 4 are properly "doeth lawlessness" and "lawlessness." It is quite different from "transgression" in Romans iv. 15 "where no law is there is no transgression." And we can see that, as in the case of Gentiles, without law there is no transgression, there can be and is sin (as Rom. ii. 12 says, "they that have sinned without law shall also perish without law"), and therefore sin cannot be limited

to the transgression of the law. Third, "abide," "dwell" and "remain" (verses 6, 9, 14, 15, 17, 24) are all the same word in the original, the same word as in Acts xxviii. 30, "Paul *dwell* two whole years in his own hired house."

We can divide the rest of the chapter like this:

- verses 4 to 9. Sin and righteousness (following on Ch. ii. 29);
- „ 10 to 15. The two families (God's and the devil's);
- „ 16 to 18. Love in practice;
- „ 19 to 24. The daily walk with God.

**GOODHEART.** It is plain that in this epistle things are often looked at in their true nature and in an abstract way which does not take into account the modifications and qualifications which arise in practical fact. So in verse 9, "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin . . . he cannot sin." This is not teaching a state of Christian sinless perfection in this life, which is not found in the Scriptures. The true standard of life for the believer is Christ (not keeping the law), and we shall not be fully like Him until we are with Him. But the verse looks at things as God sees them. God looks at the believer as being in Christ, and says he does not and cannot sin for he has the divine life and nature, and *that* cannot sin. How good and blessed for us this is! In practice we may allow the old nature to act, and God will not overlook that for He requires reality and will deal with us about our failures. Nevertheless it is true that the believer has in him the life of Christ in Whom is no sin (verse 5), and as he looks at Jesus and admires His perfect life he can say "That is my life." In this way Christ and not self is the Christian's object while at the same time he can truly rejoice in possessing such a life himself.

We see in verse 10 onward the practical righteousness and the love of Christians, shining the more brightly against the dark background of the world's sin and hate. After conversion we feel in the heart a love towards other believers which was not there before, and we know something has happened, the change from death unto life. How blessed it is to be in the family of God! But the love must be sustained and practised as shown in verses 16, 17 and 18.

**STEADFAST.** As to our daily walk with God, verse 19 onward, if there is failure in me I am grieved, my heart condemns me. Yet this very thing tells me I am "of the truth" because I had no such feelings before my conversion. Further God Who is so great knows all things, and knows I love Him and trust His Son for my salvation. As failing Peter said in John xxi. 17 to the Lord Who knew he had denied Him, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." But how much happier to be kept from failure through distrust of self and dependence upon divine grace. Then there is confidence and communion and I pray in the Spirit and know my prayers are answered, prayers no doubt mostly for others.

Could we ever have a doubt that perhaps after all we were mistaken in believing on Jesus? Possibly a Jewish Christian might be so tempted! But the answer is No, it is God's *commandment* to believe on His Son, and the Name is given to make it quite certain, Jesus Christ. (Compare John xiv. 1, "ye believe in God, believe also in Me.") Then we are commanded to love one another.

And in the path of obedience there is the enjoyment of a further wonderful experience, not only that I have divine life but that I dwell in God and He in me.

**GOODHEART.** This experience surely belongs to all believers, but to be enjoying it is another thing. The Lord help us to do so. Let us seek to rest constantly upon God, to keep consciously in touch with Him, to refer everything naturally to Him as it arises and to have Him before us always in communion. Psalm xvi. 8, "I have set the Lord always before me." Then we shall know something of the meaning of dwelling in God.

Also He dwells in us. His life and His nature He has communicated to every believer; the life of the vine flows through all its branches; He has given of His Spirit to stay in us; and thus God dwells in each of His own. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19). "We will come unto him and make Our abode with him" (John xiv. 23).

Can anything compare with this?

## AGES IN SCRIPTURE

**H**OW wonderfully consistent Scripture is in what it has to say on every conceivable subject, and yet what remarkable differences there are between the Old and New Testaments as they are called. One thing has struck me of late, that while the Old Testament abounds in references to the age of persons, particularly of some very old men (see the list given in Genesis v.), the New Testament gives scarcely any details of this kind. And we might well enquire why this should be so.

Is it not that before Christ came God was dealing with men in the flesh on the ground of their responsibility towards Him, whereas in the New Testament we have the revelation of Him who is that Eternal Life, and Who gives eternal life to all who believe on Him (see John vi. 47 and x. 28)?

Scripture does tell us that our Lord was about 30 years of age when He began His public ministry, corresponding to the age of the Levites when they took up their service in connection with the Tabernacle (Num. iv. 3, 23, 30, etc.): Simeon (Luke ii.) was evidently old, but we are not given his age; nor is Anna's given, though we read "she was of a great age" and had been a widow 84 years. She was of the tribe of whom it was said "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. xxxiii. 25). The lame man (Acts iv. 22) was above 40 years old, signifying that Israel's time of testing was over. Compare this with John v. 5.

When our Lord came and was refused by the nation, the time of probation was over both for Israel and man in general (John xii. 31, 32). The old creation had come to an end before God in the cross. God was introducing a new era characterised by heavenly and eternal blessings in Christ risen from among the dead, so that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature (or, a new creation).

Moreover, "fathers" in the New Testament (see 1 John ii.) does not signify age, but moral and spiritual condition in the family of God.

Going back to the Old Testament, Elihu says in the book of Job, "Days should speak and multitude of years should utter wisdom," but he has to lament that it was not always so

(Job xxxii. 7 and 9). The Psalmist says "so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psa. xc. 12), and God has given us solemn examples of those who turned away from Him in old age, and on the other hand of those who like Caleb "wholly followed the Lord" (Joshua xiv.). May these examples, and there are many in the word of God, be taken heed to, as they are written for our warning and encouragement. The hoary head is a crown of glory, but only if it be found in the way of righteousness (Prov. xvi. 31).

After all, "What is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Again we might enquire: what is your life? "Your life is hid with Christ in God." And further, "When Christ Who is your life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." How blessed this is! And in view of it let us "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection (mind) on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. iii. 1-4).

T. WILSON.



## NOTES OF A BIBLE READING ON GENESIS XIV-XVI (continued)

xv. 1. How beautiful is the divine response to the faithfulness of Abram, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." It is entirely suited to his need: "Thy shield," against any vengeance of the defeated kings, or hostility of the king of Sodom after Abram had refused his offer: "Thy exceeding great reward," swift and abundant recompense for renouncing the riches of Sodom.

2-6. Abram does not doubt God's promise, but seeks a pledge. He is thinking about the earthly blessing, of the one who should come forth of his own bowels. God bids him look toward heaven, and assures him his seed shall be innumerable as the stars of heaven. The reference to stars indicated that

Abram was to have a heavenly seed (i.e. the church) as well as an earthly seed (Israel).

In verse 6 we read that Abram believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness. This is justification by faith (see Rom. iv. 1-5, etc.), the great lesson of the chapter. Believing in the Lord, though a simple thing in itself, is the necessary foundation on man's side of all blessing. To believe in the Lord is to repose confidence in the One Who is the source of all knowledge, wisdom, goodness and power.

God made known His will to the fathers, although the giving of the law awaited Moses' day. And God specially said concerning Abram, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" (xviii. 19).

7-21. Abram desires a sign that he will inherit the land, and God graciously confirms His covenant with him. As an assurance to Abram, God bids him prepare for a rite of covenant by the slaughter of one each of the clean creatures used in sacrifice. They were cleft, except the birds, and laid in a double row upon the ground, each half one against the other. God will bind Himself to His promises by passing between them (cf. Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19). This He does, in the words of another, "as light to guide, and furnace to try." But it is through what speaks of death He goes; only death could make all sure, and even then, as we know, only the death of One, the Lord Jesus.

God showed Abram that His blessing could only come through sacrifice. He made him to feel, by causing an horror of great darkness to fall upon him, the solemnity of having to deal with a holy God. Abram was made to feel the terror of the Lord, both as connected with himself, a sinner, though justified by faith, and with his seed to be afflicted in Egypt.

Notice in verse 11 that Abram drives away the fowls that were ready to come down and defile the sacrifice. How carefully we should guard the atoning work of Calvary against all the tamperings of wicked men!

In verse 18 the land is described by its greatest dimensions to emphasise the fulness of God's promise.

xvi. 1-16. In this chapter we read of nature's misguided attempt to effect the fulfilment of the promises of God other than in God's own time and way. This tendency is exhibited even after a beginning in faith (xv. 6). The result is a bitter one; Sarai and Hagar cannot abide peaceably for long together, and only at all while Hagar submits herself to her mistress. Had Abram and Sarai waited upon the Lord (Psalm xxvii. 14; xxxvii. 3-5; lxxxiv. 11; Rom. viii. 28), this would not have occurred.

The government of God is seen here. They must reap as they have sown (cf. life of Jacob, and foolishness of king Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 12-19). Sarai realises her mistake, but, without recognition of the sin and confession before God, endeavours to rectify matters in her own way. God will not allow this, however, and Hagar has to return. The full development awaits the birth of Isaac, the seed of promise, when the bondwoman and her son must be cast out. Their allegorical significance, pointing to the bondage of the law and the liberty of the Spirit, is taught in Galatians iv.

A. E. DONALDSON

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## BIBLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Question:*

What is "the righteousness of God" in Rom. i. 17?

*Answer:*

The apostle is stating in this verse the predominating theme of the Epistle—the righteousness of God as now revealed in the gospel.

Throughout the Old Testament God's demand for righteous behaviour on the part of man was enforced. But man, without law or under law, was consistently unrighteous, thus incurring God's righteous judgment.

The gospel however proclaims forgiveness of sins, and not vengeance. How can this be in agreement with God's unvarying habit of righteousness?

The apostle wrote this Epistle in order that those at Rome might learn the real nature of the gospel in relation to His righteousness; that every act of God is in perfect harmony with His character; and that their peace and joy and spiritual strength might be shown to be associated with, and based upon, the pure righteousness of God Himself.

(Adapted from Bible Monthly, Vol. xii., pp. 15, 16)

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# Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

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# WORDS OF HELP

## A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

**W**HILE preparing this issue of WORDS OF HELP, our thoughts have gone out to those serving the Lord in far off lands, leaving home and friends to carry the gospel to peoples of another tongue. Should anything written for this Magazine at any time strengthen and comfort such, we shall be grateful to the Lord.

May the following verses from the well known hymn by Thomas Kelly express the prayers of our readers at home for all who have gone forth:

Friends and home and all forsaking,  
Lord, they go at Thy command;  
As their stay Thy promise taking,  
While they traverse sea and land;  
Oh, be with them,  
Lead them safely by the hand.

In the midst of opposition,  
Let them trust, O Lord, in Thee;  
When success attends their mission,  
Let Thy servants humble be;  
Never leave them,  
Till Thy face in heaven they see.

There to reap in joy for ever  
Fruit that grows from seed here sown;  
There to be with Him Who never  
Ceases to preserve His own,  
And with gladness,  
Give the praise to Him alone.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

(Jude 24, 25).

## THE DOUBLE PORTION

Read: Deut. xxi. 15-17; Kings ii. 9-15; Acts vii. 54-60;  
2 Cor. iii. 18

*(Notes of an address given in Addis Ababa, 26th February, 1957)*

**T**HE sincere desire of every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is to be a faithful witness for Him in this world. This is because he realises, in small measure maybe, but none the less really, what the Saviour has done for him, and he desires to express his gratitude by devoting his life to His service.

But it is one thing to make a noble resolve; quite another to carry it out. Simon Peter was sincere when he declared that whoever else forsook his Master he would remain loyal. He meant every word when he said "I will lay down my life for Thy sake" (John xiii. 37). Yet he failed completely, not through lack of sincerity, but because he relied upon his own strength of will and determination. Self-confidence was his undoing.

Where then is the believer to obtain the strength to live as he ought to live for his Master? What is the secret of successful Christian life and witness here in a hostile world? Let us consider the Scriptures referred to at the head of this article.

The unusual circumstances of the case mentioned in Deuteronomy xxi. gave opportunity for the rule to be confirmed in Israel that the firstborn son was to inherit a double share of his father's estate. This was undoubtedly laid down in order that the firstborn might fulfil his obligation to represent worthily the one who had died. Every true father desires a son to carry on the family name, and every devoted son desires to carry out his filial duties in a manner that will honour his father. So the law of Israel granted the firstborn a double portion of his father's goods.

In 2 Kings ii., we have the account of what happened on the day when Elisha succeeded his master Elijah as God's prophet in Israel. Years before the call had come to Elisha to devote his life to the service of God, and he had left a home of wealth and substance to be the associate of the man of God who appears to have had no settled abode in the land. But

Elisha had followed his distinguished master Elijah with the utmost loyalty, and his one great desire was that when Elijah had passed on, he might prove himself to be a worthy successor.

Now the day of parting had come. Elijah and his faithful disciple were together on their last memorable journey from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, and from Jericho to Jordan. And when they had crossed Jordan, Elijah asked Elisha what he should do for him before he was taken from him. And Elisha said "let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." It was the unselfish request of one whose sole desire was to be a worthy representative of the master who was about to depart to heaven, leaving Elisha to carry on the witness for God upon earth.

Elijah's answer was significant. He said: "Thou has asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." In other words he said to Elisha, "You must look steadfastly upon me, and when I go up your gaze must follow me upward to where I go. Don't let your eye be on yourself; let it be upward to me as I go into heaven."

One can hardly imagine that Elisha removed his eyes from Elijah after that, and when the chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared to take Elijah away, Elisha gazed and gazed until he could see him no more. And then, rending his own clothes in two, he clad himself in Elijah's mantle.

The lesson for us in this is not difficult to see. He who would live worthily for Christ here in this world must have the eye of his faith trained upward to the One who is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. There is no strength to be had from looking within or around or to one another; we are strong only so long as we look "off unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. xii. 2).

Well! does this work? Let us turn to the third Scripture in Acts vii. If there is one moment more than another when a man needs strength to be a faithful witness for his Lord it is when he is facing death at the hands of those who are his enemies for Christ's sake. Such was the position of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, at this time.

Hitherto it had pleased God to preserve the lives of the witnesses for Christ in the world. They had indeed suffered beating and shame, and such was the strength given them to bear these things that they had "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name" (Acts v. 41). But how would they fare now that they were to be called upon to die for their Master? Would they still represent Him worthily, and if so from whence would their strength come?

Stephen had borne his testimony with a wisdom and spirit which had proved irresistible, and so convicting to his hearers that they stirred up the people until the scribes and elders caught him and dragged him before the council. "And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Ch. vi. 15). Then Stephen made his defence to the council until his powerful words so cut them to the heart that they would listen to him no longer, but gnashed upon him with their teeth, ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city to be stoned.

And how did Stephen behave then? Did he represent his Master worthily? Listen to his words. He kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." How exactly like his Master Who had prayed, as they nailed Him to the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34)! Surely a "double portion" of his Master's spirit was upon Stephen!

But how was it that a man of mere flesh and blood could love his enemies in this way? The answer is in verse 55. Stephen "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw . . . Jesus standing on the right hand of God." The secret of the strength that enabled him to live Christ was the upward look to the One enthroned in glory.

Beloved friends! How much do we know of this? Let each answer for himself. But the Scriptures are here to point the way. Let us seek grace so that "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord" we may be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

## THE COMING OF THE LORD: “RAPTURE” AND “REVELATION”

**T**HE Coming of the Lord is set forth in the Scriptures under two aspects: its aspect towards the believer and its aspect towards the world. These are commonly known as the “Rapture” and the “Revelation” or “Appearing” respectively. The first concerns the manner in which the Lord Jesus will bring His beloved people into the enjoyment of their eternal blessings. The second has as its main object the judgment of the evil of the world and the establishment of His public reign over it.

It is important to understand the distinction between the two aspects, and the purpose of the following article is to establish the scriptural basis for this distinction, rather than to develop the blessed subject of the Lord’s coming in its fullness, which would require a large volume.

We cannot too much emphasize the difference between the two aspects. The Rapture is full of blessing—for the believer; the Revelation brings woe to the rejectors of Christ.

The first scripture that speaks of the Rapture is John xiv., verse 3, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” No details here, but how blessed is the sense of *peace*, at the thought of the waiting saints finding themselves received by the blessed Lord into His own wonderful presence, *to be with Him where He is*, to go no more out!

With this we may link 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Let us notice next how the apostle goes on to speak of the Appearing in the next chapter in a totally different manner: “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction

cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day (not *'that day'* exactly) should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

Now the expression "the Day of the Lord" or "the Day of Jehovah" is an Old Testament one, and is used many times there to denote the time when Jehovah would appear in His glory to subdue His and Israel's foes. For example Isaiah ii. 11-19; Joel ii. 31; Zechariah xiv. 1; and especially Malachi iv. 5, "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." These and many like passages use the term "Day of the Lord" or "that day" to refer to the time commencing with the Lord's Appearing in glory—the time (not usually a literal "day") when He will destroy the wicked, both of Israel and the Gentiles, and will thereafter establish His own righteous rule.

The present time, then, is the "night"—the time when the Light of the world is hidden. But He is seen by the eye of faith. When He appears, the "Day" will dawn, but it will be *His* day, not man's day (1 Cor. iv. 3, margin), and for the world which has banished Him from its thoughts it will come like a thief in the night—as unexpectedly, and as unwelcome. But, the apostle adds, "But ye brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you as a thief." We *belong* to the day, though the day has not yet come. We are already in the light, but pass through this world's darkness, serving an absent Lord. For us, then, the day will begin when we are caught up to be with Him. How fitting, then, that Paul should use the general expression "the day" in speaking of believers, rather than the term "that day" or "day of the Lord," with its frequent associations of judgment and terror.

Let us notice, again, how the Lord, when speaking to the Church in Rev. xxii. 16 describes Himself as "the bright and morning star"—the star which is often seen just before sunrise, the star which rises just before the sun itself does. So, for the church which is waiting and watching for Him during the world's darkness, He comes to bring her into His presence

*before* the day dawns upon the world; while, for the saved remnant of Israel, He appears somewhat later as the "sun"—"Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2).

The scriptures that mention distinctively the appearing are numerous, and reference to them now must be limited to a few.

In Matt. xxiv. 29-31, the Lord speaks of "The Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Careful examination of the whole chapter establishes a number of points. His coming is closely preceded by "the great tribulation." It brings sudden destruction (like the Flood) upon the wicked. It is followed by a gathering together by angelic power of His "elect" from all the earth. Lastly, resurrection is *not* a feature of the event.

This last fact marks it off at once, for the attentive reader, from the Rapture, at which, as we have seen, the sleeping saints are *raised* before the living are changed. Who then are the "elect" that are to be "gathered together"? If we note the Jewish atmosphere of the chapter ("Sabbath day" in verse 20) and its local reference ("Judaea," verse 16, and "the holy place" verse 15) we shall readily understand that "His elect" means the believing remnant of His earthly people Israel, whose gathering together is the subject of many an Old Testament prophecy (see Isaiah xi. 11-16; Ch. xxvii. 12, 13; Ch. xxxv. 10; Ch. xlix. etc.; Jer. xxxii. 37-44; Ezek. xxxvi. 24-28).

The reference to the days of Noah brings out another difference between the Rapture and the Revelation. "They knew not," the Lord says, "until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Ver. 39-41). As in the days of Noah, judgment "took away" the wicked, so shall it be at the Lord's Appearing (only the judgment is a discriminating one, not a universal one)—the wicked are taken away, the righteous left. But at the Rapture it is the righteous who are "caught up," and the wicked who are left.



This manifest difference immediately raises another question: "Who are the 'righteous' at the Appearing, if all are taken to heaven at the Rapture?" Before answering it, it may be as well to point out that the belief sometimes held among Christians that the Rapture and the Revelation are simultaneous leaves no righteous people upon the earth for the Lord to reign over; the wicked, of course, being taken away in judgment.

The answer to the question raised is suggested by a reference to that remarkable Old Testament panorama of the dispensations—Leviticus xxiii. There, in verse 22, we read "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the Lord your God." God's harvest is gathered at the Rapture; but that does not exhaust that which His goodness will gather from the earth. Two classes are to profit from the remainder: the "poor" of Israel, and the Gentile "stranger."

The story of Joseph and his brethren in Genesis, well known as a type of the Lord Jesus, is helpful here. Joseph, rejected by his brethren and sold to the Gentiles, after great sufferings is finally glorified among them and has a bride to share his glory. Then famine brings along his brethren, and his dealings with them bring about, under God's blessing, true repentance. Then Joseph reveals himself. So when Christ, rejected and slain by Israel, is glorified in heaven, He has a Gentile bride—the Church. When she is gathered to Him at the Rapture, God's grace will work repentance among His earthly people Israel, producing a remnant (poor and despised by the mass of Israel) to whom at length the Lord will appear, for their deliverance. These, as we have seen, are "the elect" of Matt. xxiv. They are the nucleus of the New Israel, over whom the Lord Jesus will reign.

That there is also blessing for the Gentiles after the Rapture we may conclude from the Lord's statement that "this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations."

The title "This Gospel of the Kingdom" identifies it with the message which the Lord Himself had proclaimed at the beginning of His ministry, which is also called the gospel of the Kingdom. The Lord preached that the kingdom of heaven was "at hand." He ceased to proclaim this message when Israel made plain their rejection of Him, and He forbade His disciples to proclaim Him as the Christ (Matt. xvi. 20). Its resumption just before the end produces a response of which perhaps we see the fruit in Revelation vii. 9-17—the multitude of all nations which come out of *the* great tribulation—the tribulation that closely precedes the Lord's Appearing.

Thus there are clear indications in the scriptures, that, after the Lord has caught away His own from this world at the Rapture, His grace will work in the hearts of both Jews and Gentiles (presumably those who had not heard the Gospel) to prepare a people for the blessings of the earthly kingdom.

In Matt. xxv. 31-46, we find the judgment of the living nations, which *follows* His Appearing. Here again it must be emphasized that there is no hint of resurrection. But we find three parties, the first two of which correspond to those spoken of above. There are first the King's brethren. These are the repentant Jewish remnant, His brethren according to the flesh and owned as such as they have owned Him (Mark iii. 35), but hated of all nations for His Name's sake. Then there are the "sheep," that is, those of the Gentiles who had accepted the gospel of the kingdom and sought to befriend its persecuted preachers. Lastly there are the "goats," who had refused the preaching and despised its proclaimers, revealing thus their enmity to the coming King.

What has been deduced as to the distinction between Rapture and Revelation from a number of scriptures, both of Old and New Testaments, is amply confirmed by the book of Revelation.

The threefold division of that book, referred to in chapter i., verse 19, is well known. "Write the things which thou hast seen" (the vision of the Son of Man in chapter i.), "and the things which are" (the present Church period, of which the seven phases are prophetically set forth in chapters ii. and

iii.), "and the things which shall be hereafter," or "which shall be after these things"—things which the rest of the book describes.

That chapters iv. to xix. deal with a period *subsequent* to the Church period, and therefore *after* the Rapture, is confirmed by the following facts. First, chapter iv. opens with a distinctly new subject "things which must come to pass after these things." Second, the Church (nor churches) is not mentioned any more. Third, there are *glorified* saints in heaven, represented by the twenty-four elders, crowned and enthroned (N.B. twenty-four "seats" is the same word as is used for the "throne" of God) before His judgments are poured out on the earth. We know they are saints, for they only, of all those in heaven, sing the song of redemption. We know they are glorified, because of the contrast with "souls under the altar" in chapter vi. 9. Fourth, the prayers for vengeance on their persecutors, of the saints who were slain, mentioned in this last verse, are not according to the Christian pattern (see Acts vii. 60), as of those living in a day of grace; but they plead for judgment on their enemies, because they lived when God was pouring out judgment.

Now apart from a reference in Chapter xvii. 14, the Lord's Appearing is not found until chapter xix. 11, but in these intervening chapters (iv. to xix.) there are many references to "saints"; and the sufferings of these saints, both previous to and during the Great Tribulation are often mentioned. In chapter vii. especially, the elect remnant of Israel are marked out before God's judgments fall; there too, as before noticed, the Gentile multitude of saved ones is seen.

In conclusion, one further fact should be noticed. If the Appearing, unlike the Rapture, is the time when the Lord Jesus will be publicly displayed to this world, it is equally the day of manifestation for His people. It is then that He will mark His approval of faithfulness to his Name. This explains why our thoughts are directed to the Appearing whenever our walk or service is in question: "That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" (Phil. i. 10): "To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness

before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (1 Thess. iii. 13); "Feed the flock of God . . . and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter v. 2-4).

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN.



## THOUGHTFULNESS— AN ETHIOPIAN'S FINE EXAMPLE

Read Jeremiah xxxviii. 1-18 and xxxix. 15-18

**I**N the days of the great prophet Jeremiah, the people of Judah were in a bad way because of their disobedience to the word of God.

Many hundreds of years before this, Moses had placed on record (Deut. xxviii.) that so long as God's people kept His law all would be well with them, but that if they disobeyed one penalty would be that their enemies would besiege them in their cities. Now that is exactly what had happened at the time of which we read. The Chaldeans had come against Jerusalem, and in consequence famine and pestilence afflicted the people. Because they had sinned, the people of Judah were face to face with judgment.

Now if God had abandoned His people entirely at that time, they could have had no grounds for complaint since they were suffering no more than the penalty of which they had been duly warned. But in point of fact God was very merciful to them in their distress, and sent among them the prophet Jeremiah to tell them of a way of salvation, which was this—that they should give themselves up to the Chaldeans: "He that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live."

The meaning of this was plain. If a man acknowledged that he had sinned and that God's judgment was righteous, and gave evidence of this by surrendering himself to the Chaldeans, that man's life would be preserved to him; he would be saved.

Notice firstly that each man was to make the choice for himself. The people generally were not to take a vote with a view to carrying out what the majority deemed best. Each man had the opportunity to decide for himself whether he would accept or reject the way of salvation Jeremiah offered.

This is a picture to us of what Christ did for men when He came into the world. He brought to sinners under condemnation a way of salvation. Did He not Himself say "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" There is therefore salvation for each individual who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the princes in Jerusalem did not like Jeremiah's message. They said that it weakened the people's will to fight for themselves. They wished to deliver themselves by the power of their own arm. Jeremiah had said: "Confess your sins and surrender." The princes said: "Obtain salvation by your own efforts." How the natural man dislikes the thought of his own helplessness, refusing to believe that it was "when we were yet without strength . . . Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6)!

So the princes complained to the king, asking that God's witness might be put to death, and because the king was too weak to resist their will he allowed them to take Jeremiah and put him into a dungeon where there was no water, only mire, and where he would be certain to die. Their will concerning the one who brought to them God's way of salvation was "Away with him."

Is this not exactly what men did to the Lord Jesus when He came here? They heard His words: they listened to His offers of love, and then because His words did not suit them they took Him and nailed Him to the cross. Jeremiah was put into the pit of mire, and in the book of Psalms we read words which were prophetic of the Lord Jesus when He died: "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me" (Psa. lxxix. 2). Jeremiah was rescued: the Lord Jesus was not. He suffered

death, being forsaken of God because He bore the sins of His people.

Now it is at this point that Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, came into the picture. Ebed-melech did not agree with what the princes had done to Jeremiah. He thought it was a terrible thing for the one who had brought God's message of salvation to be put to death. He was a man who valued and respected what God had said, and was therefore greatly upset by the action of the princes. So he went to the king and obtained his permission to fetch Jeremiah out of the pit.

Not only so, but he took active measures to do this, mustering a band of thirty men with cords to haul him up. Notice, too, his care in taking old cast-off clothing and old rotten rags for Jeremiah to put under his arms so that the cords should not bite into his flesh. What a delightful example of thoughtfulness and regard for the physical comfort of God's servant!

It will be recalled that after He had died on the cross there was one (Joseph, a counsellor), who had not consented to the clamour of the majority, who with tender care removed the sacred body of the Saviour, wrapped it in linen and laid it in a new tomb. Nicodemus, too, was there with his mixture of myrrh and aloes for embalming. How beautifully the Holy Spirit has preserved the record of these lovely actions by two men who may have been too shy to speak very much!

In Jeremiah's day there were the two sides—on the one hand the princes who plotted and worked to ensure the death of Jeremiah; on the other, Ebed-melech taking Jeremiah's side openly and fearlessly. It would seem that Jeremiah's reappearance after having been down in the pit prefigures the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; so that just as Ebed-melech had been a link in the chain for accomplishing the former, Joseph of Arimathaea was privileged to have his part in caring for the blessed body of our Lord until the time of His resurrection.

During the lifetime of our Saviour there were three occasions when division occurred among the people because of Him (John vii. 43; ix. 16; x. 19). Two sides persisted after His resurrection, and they continue today: those who still echo in

their hearts the cry of the mob "Away with Him," and those who exclaim with the apostle Paul "The Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). Reader! on which side are you?

But there was a sequel to this incident of Ebed-melech which we do not read about until the end of chapter xxxix. It might have seemed for the moment as though the Ethiopian's kind action had been overlooked. But it was not so. God had observed his thoughtful care for His servant. And he gave Jeremiah a special word of commendation, and promise of protection, for Ebed-melech: "I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: *because thou hast put thy trust in Me, saith the Lord.*"

This recognition of Ebed-melech's service is exactly what we would expect to find, for those who trust in God are not forgotten by Him. The gift of "a cup of cold water to drink" for Christ's sake will not lose its reward (Mark ix. 41), nor is God "unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His Name" (Heb. vi. 10).

E. A. PETTMAN.

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## HIS VIRTUES

To "shew forth *the virtues of Him* who has called us  
From darkness" to dwell in His light evermore!  
To shew forth *His* virtues down here in the darkness,  
For this we are left till our time "span" is o'er.

To "shew forth *His* virtues"—ah! who is sufficient?  
"Epistle of *Christ*"—to be "read"—to be "known"—  
To "manifest" *Jesus*—"His life"—in our bodies—  
Oh this can be wrought by the Spirit alone!

Then grant us O God, by the power of Thy Spirit—  
"Beholding the glory" of Jesus our Lord—  
That "changed" by Thy "working" we here may reflect  
*Him*

Who "trusted in Thee", and Who lived by Thy Word.

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# Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

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# WORDS OF HELP

## A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

As regular readers must have observed, it is our practice to give the name of the author at the end of each article.

There are occasions however when a writer cannot be identified, as in the case of the piece in May entitled "Two Sticks," reprinted from an issue of the Bible Treasury nearly 80 years ago. Incidentally, this article, and the longer one by W. J. Hocking which followed it, proved helpful to many readers: both will repay further careful reading.

This month we break a rule to publish a small piece sent to us anonymously. We do so because the lesson inculcated is timely, and is drawn from a portion of Scripture seldom referred to. Furthermore, the omission of the author's name will ensure that the lesson is considered in its general application rather than in relation to specific circumstances which might obtain in a particular locality.

May we use this opportunity to invite for consideration short pieces (i.e. from 500-750 words) along the lines of this anonymous article, containing a practical lesson from one of the lesser known incidents in Scripture.

**"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."**

2 Timothy iii. 16-17.

## LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS

### IX. THE CAUSE OF THE POOR

Read Matthew xxvi. 6-13

(Written on the water front in Aden, Lord's Day 10.3.57)

**H**OW singularly out of place, to say the least, was the disciples' allusion to the poor on this occasion! How blind they were both to the whole tenor of the Lord's life as well as to His personal glory!

Mary's pouring of the precious ointment upon His head was a "good work" which drew forth a superlative expression of the Lord's approval (verse 13). How refreshing this glimmer of understanding must have been to His heart at a time when He was to experience the bitter and inexcusable misunderstanding of His friends and the deliberate misrepresentation of His foes!

The indignation of the disciples, voiced apparently by Judas (John xii. 4), betrayed the unworthiness of their thoughts of Himself. Pretending to greater piety than the woman whose love for the Lord had prompted such a lovely deed, they were ready to find fault with one who was displaying deeper spiritual insight than themselves.

Why should they object to this personal devotion of heart to the Lord? Had He lived a selfish life? Was He accustomed to neglect the needs of the poor, that they should begrudge Him this gift? Why, the Lord's whole life had been devoted to the needy. He had preached the gospel to them (Luke iv. 18, 21); supplied their bodily want when hungry (Ch. ix. 16, 17); healed their sick (Mark vi. 56); and taught them the riches of God's grace to the poverty-stricken (Luke vii. 41, 42; xv. 11-24). And to think that within a few hours of His giving of Himself in death anyone should put forward the cause of the poor as being one He needed a reminder to espouse! How impertinent their suggestion was!

Yet how gracious was the Lord's answer. He would indeed endorse the claims of the poor. He reminded His disciples that they would always have needy folk around them, and that they would have opportunity to minister to them whensoever

they would (Mark xiv. 7). "Freely ye have received, freely give," the Lord had said previously (Matt. x. 8). What an Example they had to follow!

But their unbelief was manifest also in their blindness to the fact that He Himself was in their midst, poor and emptied of His glory. The One who "being in the form of God," "emptied Himself" (New Tr.), taking upon Himself the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, humbling Himself and becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 6-8) is the One concerning Whom Paul could challenge the Corinthians: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9).

Had the eyes of their faith been open the disciples would have perceived that the One in their midst, Whom they sought so ignorantly to direct, was the poorest of all, not merely because He had so little in this world to call His own (apart from His disciples, John xiii. 1), but because of the wealth of heaven He had laid aside to become a man down here. Who can measure the riches that belonged to Him as the Creator of all things, and the magnitude of what He gave up?

Of Him who was the Son of God eternally, but in grace became also the Son of Man, we read: "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. viii. 20). When he needed a piece of money, for Himself and His erring disciple to share as tribute money "lest we should offend them," he relied upon a fish for it; when He needed an ass for His entry into Jerusalem in fulfilment of the Scriptures, He depended upon an unnamed man to lend Him one; and when He needed a room in Jerusalem in which to keep the passover with His disciples before He suffered, He made use of a "guestchamber" (Mark xiv. 14). Not one square inch of property did the King of Israel possess in the capital of His kingdom! How poor He was!

What an opportunity the disciples missed, through their unbelief, of sharing in an act of worship to Him Who was altogether worthy of it! Howsoever, their failure did not nullify the savour of what the devoted Mary had done, for we

are told that "the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (John xii. 3). So, one day, heaven will be filled with the praises of Him Who gave Himself for us all (Rev. v.).

Let us be warned by this incident how easy it is to lose sight of the essential glory of the Person of the Lord Jesus. But, careful of the words we utter in His presence, let us find our joy, as Mary did, in expressing to Him the adoration of our hearts.

Lord Jesus, homeless Stranger,  
 Thou dearest Friend to me,  
 An outcast in a manger,  
 That Thou might'st with us be;

O Lord, Thy wondrous story  
 Our inmost soul doth move;

(J.N.D.)

E. A. PETTMAN.

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## CONVERSATION ON 1 JOHN IV

(Please read the Scripture through before proceeding)

**CHEERFUL.** It is plain that this chapter has two parts, the first six verses being about the spirits, and from verse 7 the subject of love.

The last verse of the previous chapter mentions the Spirit (that is, the Holy Spirit of God) for the first time by Name, although He is referred to in chapter ii. as the Unction. And He is the Spirit of truth, as the Lord said three times in chapters xiv. to xvi. of John's Gospel. To think that God gives Him to every believer is wonderful. But there is in the world the spirit of error (verse 6) which speaks through false prophets or antichrists, and here we are told how to distinguish. First there must be the confession of the Person of Jesus Christ and of Him as having come in flesh—the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Second, the hearing (evidently in the obedience of faith) of the communications of God sent through the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, verse 6. It is remarkable that the negative side is added on both points. Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in flesh is

not of God. He that is not of God heareth not us. May the Lord help us all to cleave to Him and His Word, in uprightness and lowliness, so that we may be kept from error.

Verse 4 is always a cheer to me, "Greater is He that is in you than he (Satan) that is in the world." We ought not to be afraid of evil be it ever so active and widespread.

GOODHEART. As you say, the rest of the chapter is filled with the blessed subject of love. Twice it is stated that God is love (verses 8 and 16). This is His glorious nature, love as well as light, infinite source of happiness to all who know Him. And the knowledge of His love to us produces in us love to Him and to others, verse 19.

The subject of love is one to think over and to feel rather than to talk about. It is easy to use the word without any immediate sense of what it conveys. God is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent; He is the eternal God; He is righteous, holy, faithful; and besides all this, He loves, and loves as only God can love. We might do well to think for a minute what life would be like if love were quite unknown. And God is the source of love; He is love; it is His nature, what He is.

In considering this inmost quality, we are not to look within ourselves, but (happy thought!) outside and away to God Who showed His love in sending His only begotten Son into this our world. Why did He send Him? Because His love desired that we who were spiritually dead might live through Him. And again, with us there was no love to God, but only those hateful things called sins. How perfect then is the love which God had to us that He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins! And yet again, there is the wonderful objective truth that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. "Blessed be God, our God! Who gave for us His well-beloved Son."

STEADFAST. Let us however not overlook our side.

"Beloved, let us love one another" (verse 7).

"He that loveth not knoweth not God" (verse 8).

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (verse 11).

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar" (verse 20).

"And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (verse 21).

Love is with us usually a delicate plant which finds this world little suited to it. Many things in life can easily chill the Christian's heart. We must cultivate love in ourselves, and try to avoid withering it in others.

I also wish to refer to the subject of verses 12, 13, 15 and 16.

“If we love one another, God dwelleth in us.”

“Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.”

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”

“He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

Our highest blessings are the individual ones, and this is perhaps one of the most wonderful of them, I mean the Christian dwelling in God, and God in him.

At conversion, I turn to God: I begin to live to Him. The Father gives me to Christ and translates me into the kingdom of His dear Son. And I am no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit. I now dwell in God. At the same time I *receive* Christ as Saviour and He comes in to stay, to dwell in me. The Father it is Who reveals Christ to my heart, leading me to confess (with Peter) that Jesus is the Son of God. The Holy Spirit also indwells me and works in me, giving me the consciousness not only of having the new divine nature, but also of God being there. Thus God dwells in me. To have the enjoyment of this great blessing I need to keep myself in the love of God, to dwell in love.

**CHEERFUL.** It is like an empty bottle placed *in* the vast ocean, and immediately is filled *with* the ocean. It is in the sea and the sea is in it. So the believer is in God and God in him.

**PRUDENCE.** I remember some lines of J. G. Bellett which a friend wrote out for me years ago:

Thoughts of His love, the root of every grace  
That finds in this poor heart a dwelling-place;  
The sunshine of my soul, than day more bright,  
And my calm pillow of repose by night.

W. H. L. GRAHAM.

## COVERING SIN

“God blessed Noah and his sons” (Genesis ix. 1).

“And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father’s nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren” (verses 20-25).

NOAH had been saved from the flood by entering into the ark (type of Christ); now he had come forth, on resurrection ground. But he was still on the earth; failure came in, and the flesh showed itself. We often speak of the failure of Noah; Scripture, however, does not dwell upon this, but speaks in detail of the curse of Canaan. Has this a voice for us in our day?

The fact of the flesh appearing in Noah is not questioned, nor was Ham to blame because it came to his notice. But his attitude to what he saw is profoundly revealing.

“Love covereth all sins,” Proverbs x. 12—see also Jas. v. 20; 1 Peter iv. 8. Ham could have taken the way of love. Noah was “within his tent,” and the “two brethren without” need never have known. If Ham had acted as did Shem and Japheth, the flesh would have been hidden from sight, and only the garment would then have met his gaze. The garment speaks of God’s provision to meet the poor sinner’s need, that is, it speaks of Christ. Instead of being occupied with the flesh in another, Ham could have seen him, typically speaking, in Christ. He would then have come into the blessing which was given to Shem and Japheth.

But Ham makes no attempt to put the matter right in secret; rather it would seem that he found delight in spreading Noah’s shame outside. In doing this he revealed, not so much the flesh in Noah, but far more emphatically the flesh in himself. The record of his action is engraved eternally in the word of God, and he brought a curse upon his posterity. Although himself blessed by God, he brings a curse upon his children.



A far different spirit was shown by Shem and Japheth. They heard with sorrow, and we are not told that they spoke one word in reply. At once they arose, in complete unity of brotherly fellowship, to give what help lay in their power. "Their faces were backward," they refused to be occupied with the flesh in another, and saw instead only God's provision for the condition. How signally God shows His approbation! The resultant blessing redounds to the glory of God, and to enlargement and fellowship of pilgrims. "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem."

Are we showing the spirit of Shem and Japheth, or are we descendants of Ham? And what will the effect be on our children? "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. x. 11).

ANON.

---

## SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Please read 1 Samuel ix. 15 - x. 7

(Notes of an address at Wildfell Hall, Catford 3.11.56)

**I**N days of weakness the believer should be ready to examine any portion of scripture which contains instruction as to the way of strength, and it is claimed that the first few verses of 1 Samuel x. are just such a portion.

If ever a young man stood in need of strength it was Saul. Without the advantages of upbringing and education in the atmosphere of a royal household, and with no previous monarch to understudy before advancing to the throne, he had been called upon at very short notice to shoulder the responsibilities of a kingdom. Yet with Jehovah Himself to support him, and the prophet Samuel to turn to for counsel, there was no need for Saul to fail, and he would not have done so had he not leaned to his own understanding, and disobeyed the plain command of God.

That Saul's paramount requirement at the time of his anointing was strength seems implicit in Samuel's instruction to the

cook to reserve for his honoured guest the shoulder of the animal on which they were to feast. Why the shoulder? Was it not an indication to Saul that he should recognise from the outset his own personal weakness, and his dependence upon another for strength?

However that may be, Samuel follows this with certain specific instructions which Saul was to observe, as a result of which he would become the "new man" he needed to become (verse 6) to succeed in the task to which Jehovah had called him.

### **Strength Through Faith**

Samuel told Saul that in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah he would find at Rachel's sepulchre two men, from whom he would learn two things:

- i. That the asses he had sought were found, and
- ii. that his father's great care now was for his son, Saul.

In effect Saul would be told that something he had set out to achieve by himself had been accomplished for him without his assistance; and furthermore, that he personally was the object of his father's thought and care. Saul was not expected to do anything beyond receiving, and believing, the testimony of the two witnesses.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this sign is intended to convey to us the lesson that strength comes to us simply through faith. Does not the apostle John declare "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 4)? Truly the believer becomes "strong in faith" (Rom. iv. 20) as he accepts the word of God that his salvation is the "gift of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23); that "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). Furthermore, he becomes strong as he believes the love and care which God the Father has for him as an individual here upon the earth, remembering the word of the Lord Jesus to His disciples, "the Father Himself loveth you" (John xvi. 27).

Moreover the testimony to these two things would come from two persons, one corroborating what the other said. May these two not set forth the written word of God, and the gracious Spirit of God, Who "beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii. 16)?

Finally, the two men would declare their message from Rachel's sepulchre. Rachel died when her younger son was born: with her dying breath she named him Benoni, meaning "son of my sorrow," but Jacob called him Benjamin, "the son of my right hand" (Gen. xxxv. 16-18). Where do we find associated the sorrows of death and triumph, if not in the death and resurrection of our Saviour? And is it not from the very threshold of Calvary that the word of God and the Spirit of God witness together to the believer that "there is no condemnation" (Rom. viii. 1), and that God will "freely give us all things" (verse 32)? How complete the believer's security! How ceaseless the Father's care!

### **Strength through Fellowship**

Departing from Zelzah Saul would come to the plain (or, "oak," R.V.) of Tabor, where he would meet three men, one carrying three kids; the second, three loaves of bread; and the third, a single bottle of wine. If the "two" of the previous sign denoted adequacy of testimony, "three" surely speaks of fellowship. Two persons may form a friendship; three are required to constitute a fellowship proper, though it is true the Lord comes down in grace to "two or three," as will be noticed later.

This next sign suggests a second great provision of God for the strengthening of His people, viz: the fellowship of the Lord's people. Saul was to gain two loaves from his meeting with the three men at Tabor. Bread is the staff of life, building up and sustaining for its tasks and duties. Significantly, the meeting would take place at the oak of Tabor, the oak being a symbol of strength (cf. Amos ii. 9). Fellowship makes for strength (see Eccl. iv. 9-12).

One of the three men Saul met would have three kids. Could these speak of the death of Christ in its three main aspects

typified by the burnt offering, the sin offering and the peace offering divisions of the Levitical sacrifices? The burnt offering sets forth the complete devotion of the Lord Jesus Christ to God; the sin offering, the perfection of His work at Calvary to answer for human guilt and need; and the peace offering, that which restores communion between the creature and his Creator. How inexhaustible are the wonders and glories of Calvary.

Then one of the men had three loaves of bread, until he parted with two to Saul, after which he had only one. So the man with the three kids stood side by side with a man with a loaf of bread and a man with a bottle of wine. "One loaf," and "a bottle of wine"! Is there no pointer here? With what do we associate a loaf of bread, and wine?

In fellowship together, in the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine, the Lord's people are privileged to remember the Lord Jesus in His death, doing this simply in the Lord's own appointed way, and regularly: when better than every Lord's day? What a source of strength! Though they may go to "the breaking of bread" to give to the Lord the worship and thanksgiving of their hearts, do not the Lord's people invariably come away with two loaves for themselves, one for strength to live for Him, and the other to enable them to serve Him? Consider these things, reader!

Note also that the three men would be going up, not merely to Bethel, but "to God to Bethel." The purpose of their going up was to meet with a Person, not to visit a place. How precise is the language of scripture! Those receive true strength today whose centre of gathering is not a consecrated building, but the Lord's own personal presence in the midst of two or three who gather to His Name (Matt. xviii. 20).

### **Strength through Joy**

Leaving Tabor behind Saul would next find a garrison of Philistines in the hill of God (probably Gibeah); an enemy where least expected! What was to be the answer to the foe within the borders of God's territory? On this occasion Saul would

meet a company—not two, not three, but an undefined number—of prophets, with musical instruments of varied kinds. The prophets would prophesy, and the Spirit of the Lord would come upon Saul, turning him into another man.

It is suggested that the “unnumbered” company of prophets signifies the limitless power of the Spirit of God, who is given to believers to be their seal and strength, turning them into new men and women. What an example of this is to be seen in the case of the apostle Peter! On the night of the Lord’s betrayal, the challenge of a servant maid in the High Priest’s palace was sufficient to drain him dry of every drop of natural courage, so that he denied his Master with oaths and curses, and went out weeping the bitter tears of ignominious defeat. Yet, little more than seven weeks later, that same man could stand up and publicly charge the whole nation of Israel with the sin of denying the Holy One and the Just, desiring a murderer to be granted to them, killing the Prince of Life. And he did so with power so irresistible that thousands of them were cut to the heart. Furthermore, when opposition arose, so far from being cowed by the threats of the rulers in Jerusalem, it is recorded that the apostles “spake the word of God with boldness” (Acts iv. 31). New men they were indeed by the strengthening power of the Holy Ghost.

Then there were the instruments of music, the psaltery, the tabret, the pipe and the harp—symbols surely of harmony, gladness and joy. Happy men are strong men; it is the crest-fallen and anxious who are weak. It was in a day of weakness that Nehemiah proclaimed: “the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. viii. 10); it was to disciples faced with the prospect of tribulation in the world that the Saviour bequeathed His own joy, fullness of joy (John xv. 11, xvi. 24); and it was for believers in every age that the exhortation of the triumphant apostle Paul has been enshrined in the inspired word, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice” (Phil. iv. 4). Without any question, joy in the Holy Ghost is a source of strength for “the rugged hill which leads us up to God.”

Despite Samuel’s counsel, Saul proved himself a failure. His life is a warning to us for it ended in disaster because he disregarded the word of God which had been shown to him

(1 Sam. ix. 27). May the Lord Himself give reader and writer to know, and to draw upon, every source of strength placed at their disposal, so that, by God's grace, we may be able to say at last with Paul in 2 Timothy iv. 7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Amen.

E. A. PETTMAN.

---

## NOTES OF A BIBLE READING ON GENESIS XVII

**XVII.** 1-5. This chapter shows how God often has some fresh surprise of grace and blessing for us, and marks a great advance in Abraham's experience and his knowledge of God. Thirteen years had elapsed since the end of Chap. xvi., and his faith may have become a little weak. It seems from verse 18 that he was becoming more or less satisfied with Ishmael. God appears to Abraham at the critical moment, and shows him that He has not changed in His attitude towards him, in spite of the events of chap. xvi. The promise of a son would yet be fulfilled.

Abraham is commanded, "Walk before Me (the ALMIGHTY GOD), and be thou perfect." The word "perfect" means wholehearted, or sincere.

God then repeats His promises to Abraham with greater wealth of detail than hitherto. Abraham is re-named. The name "Abram" means "high father," whereas "Abraham" means "father of a multitude." He is given a name which will serve as a continual reminder to him of God's promises to him.

9-14. Circumcision was already well known among the heathen. Now God gives it a special meaning, and deep sacredness. All who are born in the house, or bought with money, are to be circumcised (verses 12, 13). Christians today are both "born" in the house and also "bought" (redeemed) (1 Peter i. 23; 1 Cor. vi. 20). The significance of the eight days is that we need to be occupied with heavenly things from

the time we are converted. The eighth day speaks of new creation, the first week of the old having run out. Verse 12 contains the first indication of God's attitude towards children, which is one of grace.

The coming of Jesus Christ was the fulfilment of the promises (Rom. xv. 8). We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh (Phil. iii. 3). The Israelites claimed to be in covenant relationship with God, and to show in their flesh that they were God's people. We learn here that relationship with God does not stand in the flesh at all, but in faith in Jesus Christ. The old order of things has ceased, and we have now the new order.

Circumcision denoted covenant relationship with God. It was not a condition of God's covenant, but only a token, as the rainbow was in chap. ix. Refusal to be circumcised involved the breaking of the covenant (verse 14), and forfeiture of the blessing. In a similar way, we stand by grace, but that does not relieve us of our responsibility (Rom. vi. 1, 3). Circumcision was a seal of Abraham's faith (Rom. iv. 11).

15, 16. The promise is now deposited with Sarah. She is to be the mother of the promised seed. In the past, reference to it had been couched in general terms. Her name is changed from Sarai, meaning "my princess," to Sarah, meaning "princess of the multitude".

19. This verse contains the wonderful promise of Isaac. The name Isaac means "laughter." Both Abraham and Sarah laughed in connection with him (xvii. 17; xviii. 12), but while Abraham laughed outright, a laugh of faith, Sarah laughed within herself, a laugh of unbelief. Faith, however, no doubt followed later in Sarah's case, on account of the rebuke.

This chapter shows the wonderful grace of God, in stimulating Abraham's faith when it was most necessary. It was grace that persisted with him in spite of every check and drawback, and it was grace that perfected everything concerning him.

A. E. DONALDSON.

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# Words of Help

*from the Scripture of Truth*

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# WORDS OF HELP

## A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

Most of the Lord's people, at one time or another in life, experience seasons of isolation from the fellowship of fellow-believers, maybe in consequence of sickness either of themselves or other persons, the nursing of young children, the care of aged folk, the requirements of business, or as the outcome of unforeseen circumstances over which they have little or no control. On occasions the service of the Lord may call to some lonely outpost for Him.

Such interludes in life, especially if protracted, can be very testing to the believer, but very profitable also if the opportunity is used for communion with the Lord and quiet meditation on His word.

WORDS OF HELP seeks to assist those in lonely circumstances who will devote time to the thoughtful contemplation of what is written, of course *after* reading the relative scripture, mentioned usually either in the title, or at the head, of each article. We shall be delighted to hear from any of our readers who can testify to having received spiritual refreshment in this way, and who would like to pass on to others the encouragement of their own experience.

This matter has however another side to it. In Revelation i. we have the record of the beloved apostle John during his lonely exile on the isle of Patmos being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," and receiving a glorious vision of the Lord Himself. Was this only for his own comfort personally? The Lord's instruction to him was, "Write . . ." (verse 19)—in order that others might share the blessing. May some of our readers seek to help their fellow-pilgrims in this way! The Editor of WORDS OF HELP will be delighted to co-operate in such service.

## LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS

### X. The Authority of Jehovah's Servant

**T**HE Lord's Supper is designed to help us to think specially of His death on the cross:

“Oh mystery of mysteries!  
Of life and death the tree;  
Centre of two eternities,  
Which look with rapt, adoring eyes,  
Onward and back to Thee!”

Though led as a lamb to the slaughter, submitting to the will of those who nailed Him to the cross, He could nevertheless speak and act with the authority which belonged to Him. And this is noticed in the Gospel of Mark which portrays Him particularly as the lowly Servant of Jehovah.

Chapter xi. 1-11 records the entry into Jerusalem, and the Lord's authority was exercised in sending two of His disciples to a place where they would find a colt “whereon never man sat.” Its owner's legitimate question “What do ye, loosing the colt?” was anticipated and answered by the word of authority “The Lord hath need of him.” Whereupon, no resistance being offered, they brought the colt to Jesus and set Him thereon.

Again in chapter xiv. 3-9, we are given the account of Mary's anointing of the head of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without positive direction to do it, or even a word of guidance, Mary performed one of the nicest deeds done for His honour while He was here. Prompted by her attachment to, and reverence for, His Person, she paid this singular act of devotion to Him. How delightful to be led to act with such propriety and intelligence! To have the spirituality to discern at all times what would please the Lord!

But His authority was in exercise when He defended her against the criticism of those who found fault. The One Who was later to give the command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, orders here that “Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”

A little further down in this same chapter (verses 13-16) we find the Lord choosing the guestchamber where He would eat the Passover with His disciples. With full directions as to how they should locate the premises, and His word of authority "the Master saith" to remove any misgivings the proprietor might have, they prepared the feast in accordance with His word. All goes well with those who follow the Lord's guidance.

There had been notable celebrations of the passover in the days of Kings Hezekiah and Josiah, and these were great occasions because of the scale of the preparations made. But was not the feast in the upper room greater than them all seeing that the real, true Passover Lamb was there present? As Paul later wrote: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."

But the One Who was presiding in the upper room exercised His authority still further by suspending the feast instituted by Moses with God's authority (Exodus xii. 14-17), to establish His own memorial feast—the Lord's Supper (verses 22-24). Who would have dared to do such a thing save the One Himself who had directed Moses in the first place?

It is a comfort in the church's declining years to know that the breaking of bread is preserved and maintained here on earth by Him who inaugurated it before He died and rose again. And in doing "this," in the way He appointed, those who gather to His Name, be they two or three or hundreds, acknowledge His authority. May our readers continue to do this, until He come!

P. WHITE.

---

## LET DAYS SPEAK

(An open letter to young men)

Ramsgate,  
February, 1957.

Dear Younger Brethren,

I have been asked to write some words of counsel, born of experience in the Christian path, to my younger brethren in Christ, but one feels how inadequate are one's own words in

the light of all the counsel contained in the Scriptures. One whole book (Proverbs) is written "to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion" (Ch. i. 4). Besides, the whole of the sacred Book of God is for our admonition and instruction in the path of faith.

However:

When youth is buoyant and ambition strong,  
 And genial sunshine crowns our opening days,  
 'Tis well to pause and ask—what comes ere long?  
 For summer skies give place to winter haze.

And it may not be easy to consent to what was written to Timothy, that "bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8).

At the outset the believer is called to a path of faith—it is by faith he receives all the blessings that God gives, founded on the work of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross (Rom. v. 1). It is by faith he is called to walk: "The just shall *live* by faith" (Heb. x. 38), and it is happy for him if he does so, heeding the words of the Lord Jesus in respect of temporal needs, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33). If I am to speak from experience, I can humbly say that, after a long life with many responsibilities, I have proved the truth of these words and the faithfulness of God. Alas! many forget the "first" things, to their ultimate leanness and damage to their souls.

The believer can always count on the Lord to open up the path before him. I remember on one occasion applying for a job when a lad in the west end of London, and on a second call was told I was not wanted. However, a day or two later I received a telegram to commence duties as someone had been taken ill. I remained there some years, but was eventually given notice to leave this establishment where, by the grace of God, I had been used to the blessing of several. This I did not understand at the time, but after settling down elsewhere I learned the Company I left had gone into liquidation. Thus does our God go before us, though we know not what a day

may bring forth. In God's goodness I never had to look for another berth.

Thus much as to temporal things. Now let us listen to the counsel of Barnabas, and "he was a good man," who "when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts xi. 23). This was counsel to young converts.

Our Lord Himself said, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John xv. 4). He also said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16).

I would say to my younger brethren, if you have not done so, do not go on in your school or employment without letting others know by your manner of life and testimony "Whose you are and Whom you serve." I have had painful experience of the neglect of this, but being brought to the consciousness of where I had failed, and restored in soul, I was able to confess the Lord Jesus, and was used to bring others to Him. You may be used to the blessing of one soul, who in turn may be used to the blessing of many. It has been remarked that Andrew fished with a line and caught one fish (Simon Peter—John i. 41, 42), but he in turn used the net and caught 3,000 in one day (Acts ii. 41).

Finally, and this is most important, I would press upon my younger brethren the necessity of constant, prayerful reading of the word of God (see Paul's instruction to Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 13-16) together with attendance at the prayer and Bible reading meetings, not to speak of other meetings, if you would progress in the things of God. As to this, what an example we have in Ezra (see Ch. vii.). It says of him, "he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given" (verse 6); and later on:

- i. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord,
- ii. and to do it,
- iii. and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

This is surely divine order, and in Ezra's case God made his way prosperous as we see in the verses that follow. (See also Joshua i. 8, and Psalm i. 3).

Ever yours affectionately in the Lord,

T. WILSON.

---

## THE VOICE BY THE FIRESIDE

Read John xxi. 1-19

**T**HIS is the third occasion on which the Lord Jesus manifested Himself to His disciples after that He was risen from the dead. Each occasion has spiritual significance.

The first manifestation was on the day of His resurrection. The disciples (except Thomas) were gathered together and Jesus came into their midst—the scene being significant of the Christian assembly. The second was eight days later. On this first day of the week Thomas *was* present. This appears to signify the revelation of Himself to the Jews, whose unbelief will be dispelled at the sight of the wounds of His crucifixion. On this third occasion there is that which is in the nature of a public display of His power. There is emphasis upon the inability of the seven Israelite fishermen to succeed, even in the realm of their ordinary vocation. They have to answer the Voice from the shore, "Children, have ye any meat?" with an admission of failure. Offering no explanation, they answer Him, "No." Thus the power is all His own, and the abounding harvest also, for the nets do not break as on that former occasion (Luke v.), which was significant of human service. Moreover He is not restricted to that which "ye have now caught." There is a fireside on the shore, and fish already there.

These manifestations of Christ, and of the coming fruits of His sacrifice, are very precious to all who love Him. How very wonderful also to meditate upon the beauty of His character when He is associated with His people! The prophetic bearing of this part of John's record is in accord with the general teaching of the word, but it is not to be dissociated from the personal aspect.

The Observer on the high shore might have been anyone who was interested in the lakeside. It was not unusual for such an one to see a shoal of fish invisible to fishermen on the lake level. It was when the failure of the night was answered by the miracle of the morning that the "disciple whom Jesus loved" knew the identity of the Watcher on the shore. So Peter, made aware of this, casts himself into the sea in eager haste to reach the One whom he felt was seeking him, and "the other disciples came in a little ship; . . . dragging the net with fishes."

How graciously He gives them a share in the work! "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught," and Simon Peter (to be the apostle to Israel) "drew the net to land full of great fishes." Jesus is manifested to them all as they gather about Him, and, though they are unaware of it, they formed part of a setting prophetic of a coming day, dear to the hearts of so many, when He Who beforehand will have prepared a remnant for Himself, will gather a multitude from the sea of nations.

"As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread (verse 9); "Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine" (verse 12).

Twice before they had seen Him. The closed doors were no hindrance to His entrance. They had heard His voice, and the greeting He had spoken had never been heard before He was crucified—"Peace be unto you." But He had not remained with them, and when He had gone a sense of loneliness descended upon them. They had been glad when they saw Him, and sad at His departure; yet it would seem they had not grasped the import of His salutation of peace based upon the redemption He had wrought. They were at a loss without the shelter of the Messiah's presence, and did not see, in Jesus risen, their new and blessed position before God. Yet, now that He had died and was risen, He had placed them in the same position as Himself with His Father and His God. So before this third showing of Himself to His disciples, there had come to them a certain introspection and a restless sadness, and it was Peter who, putting their thoughts into words said, "I go a fishing," to find some alleviation in their former occupation. Thus the seven—"We also go with thee"—bound by a



common grief and a common danger from the enemies of Jesus, "went forth and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing."

There was no sign of His presence during the night, but who shall say He was not aware of them, of their fears and of their sense of loss? "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm xxx. 5), and the morning of His third manifestation was the ending of their fruitless night and the beginning of a joy deeper than they had known before. "As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread"—it was His fireside, and His well known voice that was saying "Come and dine."

It was an invitation to men who had fled into the darkness, leaving Him alone and in the hands of those who sought His life. It was a voice with welcome in it. It held no upbraiding for desertion or for denial. Yet they had all forsaken Him and fled; one had denied Him. They had thought to hear that voice again only in memory, for its last tones had echoed from a cross. They had "trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21), and they were left with their grief. His providing presence had always been their resource. It was no empty gesture when *His* hands stretched out to bless, nor did He ever speak without purpose. They had seen the dead respond to that Voice, and no hands but His could touch the unclean with healing and remain undefiled. These memories of His companying with them seemed to add to their loss, and the tragedy of Golgotha bewildered them, for there the voice of One *forsaken* had cried out of the darkness. They had seen Him dead—numbered with the transgressors; His hands were nailed to a cross, and His voice had passed into the silence of death.

They wanted Him among them again. They longed to see the "Greater than Solomon" reigning as no king had ever reigned before.

That these and similar thoughts were in their minds is evident from their pleading question, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6). But

their own need of restoration was His present purpose, and He draws them to the family circle about the fireside that He may do this gracious work. They are not arraigned before Him as in the presence of a judiciary, overawed by the solemnity of a court of justice. They are with Him at *His* fireside, and He has broken bread with them. Who, may we humbly ask, prepared the "fire of coals there," and laid thereon the fish and brought the bread? And why the association of these things with each other?

There are only two places in the New Testament where a "fire of coals" is mentioned. In character they are far apart. Peter could never forget the first—it was in the high priest's house. "And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself" (John xviii. 18). It was the fireside of his denial of Jesus—the outcome of an enthusiastic self-confidence. Luke tells us that the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. There was no reproach in that look. It recalled to Peter his bold self-assurance. "And Peter *remembered* the word of the Lord . . . and went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke xxii. 61-62). It was a deep and poignant grief, and, in all the hours that followed, the scene of his sorrow was with him—the fireside of his failure. It burned into his memory.

To find an antidote for this unbearable condition he seeks respite in his former occupation. The others join him in a companionship of sorrow which drew them together. But though they toiled all that night they caught nothing. It is in the very midst of his defection and failure that the Lord again makes Peter so personally aware of His presence; and again it is not His purpose to rebuke. The beauty of His character unfolds as we see Him about His work of restoration. How well He knows the pain of Peter's memories as He prepares His own "fire of coals"! What sensitive understanding has He in thus presenting *His* fireside of welcome and provision to obliterate for ever that *other* fireside from the tortured mind of "Simon, son of Jonas" (John xxi. 15).

It is the preliminary to His threefold question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" So Peter hears his

natural name upon those lips—the patient persistence of the quiet voice by the fireside, until, at last, he is aware of his self-confidence as the cause of his failure. With what submission and relief he makes his humble acknowledgment, “Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee!” It is the Lord’s threefold antidote to that threefold denial. Thus Peter progressed in knowledge of “the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge”—the love that not only restored him, but, in amazing grace, gave into his care the objects of the Shepherd’s own love, the sheep He had redeemed.

Truly our affection for Him cannot be described in the same terms as His love for us!

EDWARD T. WOOD.

---

### HAS THIS A MESSAGE FOR US?

**A**N old notice of meetings—printed in November 1842—has recently been found by Mr. R. G. B—— when going through various old family papers. A photo-print of it is now before me.

The notice is headed as follows:

“The Meetings commence **PRECISELY** at the times appointed. If each one would take care to be at the place attended at least some minutes **BEFORE** the time, **ORDER** (1 Cor. xiv. 33) and **EDIFICATION** would be greatly helped.”

Is this not a word in season to us all?

The notice gives details of the meetings at eight different places in London. At the first place named the meetings were as follows:

Lord’s Day	7 Prayer, 9½ School, 11 Breaking of Bread, 3½ Worship, 6½ Testimony.
Tuesday	7 Eve. Worship and Teaching.

Thursday	7 Eve. Worship, 8 Prayer.
Friday	11 Morning, Worship and Scripture Reading.
Saturday	7 Eve. Prayer.

Summarizing the other seven places the meetings were:

Lord's Day Morning—

At 6 places, Breaking of Bread

At 1 place, Gospel.

Lord's Day Afternoon—

At 1 place, Breaking of Bread.

Lord's Day Evening—

At 3 places, Worship.

At 2 places, Teaching.

Week Nights (one only in each place)

At 3 places, Worship.

At 1 place, Testimony.

At 1 place, Scripture Reading.

A footnote to the Notice gives details of nine week night meetings for Scripture Reading held in other places in London, apparently in private houses or business premises.

One striking feature of this extract is that in the eight places there were altogether ten meetings for worship, in addition to the eight meetings for the Breaking of Bread, worship being of course distinguished from Gospel preaching and teaching. Much more time was therefore evidently given to collective worship in those days than is customary today. Outwardly there is a good deal of activity today, but are we not conscious of much weakness? Malachi iii. 8-10 seems apposite. Another feature is that there was evidently greater zeal for gathering together in 1842 than now. It may be argued that life was much less strenuous in those days. Let us challenge ourselves whether that is really the answer.

## NOTES OF A BIBLE READING ON GENESIS XVIII-XX

**XVIII.** 1-8. The themes of this chapter are communion and intercession. God appears (verses 1, 2) in the person of the Lord Himself and two angels. Abraham shows the courtesy that is customary in the East. He is very particular as to the meal, etc., and gives Sarah full directions as to its preparation. Christianity does not mean that we must not be courteous: on the contrary, it enhances courtesy (1 Peter iii. 8).

Verses 6, 7. While the three measures of fine meal speak of the Lord's humanity, we are nevertheless reminded that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him (Col. ii. 9). The calf indicates the Lord's work upon the cross (Luke xv. 23); thus are His work and His Person kept together.

9-22. It was wonderful for God to condescend to be the Guest of Abraham in his tent. Abraham here enjoys communion with God. This reminds one of Revelation iii. 20; "I will sup with him, and he with Me."

God then reveals to Abraham His plans regarding Sodom and Gomorrah, as it was important that Abraham, who was to be the means of blessing to all nations, should know God's plans with regard to them. In Deut. xxix. 23, we are told the names of the four cities which were destroyed. They were Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. There would have been five cities destroyed but for Lot's pleading to go to Zoar. These cities were the same as those whose kings were involved in the battle in chapter xiv. They also appear in chapter x. 19, as the border of Palestine. Ezekiel xvi. 53-55, speaks of God's bringing again the captivity of Sodom in a day to come. In Matthew x. 15, and xi. 23, 24, God tells us that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for the cities of Galilee.

23-33. Abraham's intercession flowed out of intimate communion with the Lord. We can only intercede for others effectually when we know the mind of God, and when we are in a happy spiritual state ourselves, having no burden of sin upon our consciences. In John xv. 7, the Lord says, "If ye abide in Me . . . it shall be done unto you." The amount of light

we have as to the destiny of the world should make all the difference in the intensity of our intercession.

It is worth noting that Abraham did not intercede for the wicked in Sodom, but for the righteous. We are to pray for all men, men of every kind, rank, condition, etc., but not for the world, as such. The Lord's prayer in John xvii. was not for the world, but for His own. Abraham ceased this intercession after he had prayed God to save the cities for the sake of ten souls. God goes much further, and saves four souls. Abraham interceded six times, one short of perfection.

Sometimes we are perplexed in our intercessions, but we can always take refuge in the word, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

There is a big gap of thirteen years between the end of chapter xvi. and the beginning of chapter xvii. There is no gap between the end of chapter xvii. and the beginning of chapter xviii. This is because Abraham was walking in obedience to God here, whereas before he was not. Chapters xvii. to xx. cover a period of about one year. Sometimes in Scripture we find a chapter or two covering a period of four to five hundred years, and then several chapters covering only one year. There is a divine reason for this in that the Scriptures are designed to teach us moral lessons.

xix. 1-38. This chapter gives us the doom of the world, and the irretrievable loss of the worldly-minded Christian. Had it not been for the comment of God in 2 Peter ii. 8, we should not have regarded Lot as a very righteous man at all. Lot was affected in every way by the appalling state and moral condition of these cities. As Christians in the world, we are in our proper state, but if the world is in the Christian, there is always loss and trouble.

The angels hastened Lot (verses 15, 16). We are not often told in scripture to hurry. Christians often act too quickly, without sufficient prayer and waiting upon the Lord, but the people of the world are far too slow. We as the Lord's people should hasten them that they might escape, and find refuge in our Lord Jesus Christ. Lot, however, was very loth to leave Sodom (verse 16), and had to be dragged out.

The fact that God remembered Abraham (verse 29) is a blessed tribute to his faith.

We are not told of the death of Lot. Is not this because he died long ago as to all spiritual usefulness and testimony? This chapter finishes his history not with the record of a glorious and honourable death-bed, but with shocking disgrace, involving the shame of his two daughters.

xx. 1-18. This is a serious and solemn chapter, describing, as it does, the revival of the same sin which tripped Abraham up when in Egypt (xii. 11-20).

The Philistines, to whom Abimelech belonged, were descended from Ham-Mizraim (x. 6). They were an Egyptian people with a small territory in Palestine. They typify the world in the church, the natural man dabbling with heavenly things. The word "Philistine" is practically synonymous with "Palestine", both words meaning migration, or emigration.

In this chapter Moses, the narrator, uses the word Adonai for God when referring to Abimelech, but Jehovah when referring to Abraham. Abraham uses Jehovah in chapter xviii. 32, though, according to Exodus vi. 3, the patriarchs did not know God in that character, i.e., they did not appreciate the significance of the name.

God is very gracious, and restores Abraham again (verse 7). He humbles him, but not before the world. He makes Abimelech a debtor to Abraham's prayers, and honours Abraham in the eyes of Abimelech. This is a very serious incident. Abraham is again rebuked by a man of the world. From verse 11, we see that Abraham thought that the fear of God was not in the place. In this he was mistaken, for Abimelech did fear God.

From verse 13 we learn that Abraham was tripped up by this sin, which had its origin in the compacts with Sarah, in the beginning when he left Mesopotamia. This sinful compact had never been broken. We must beware lest some besetting sin be allowed to go on in us unjudged. This verse, however, seems to be a final confession of the sin on Abraham's part, for we never read of his sinning in this way again. Behind it all there was no doubt a definite attempt of Satan to frustrate the promises of God as to the seed.

A. E. DONALDSON.

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# Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

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# WORDS OF HELP

## A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

**T**HE suggestion has recently been made that the value of an issue of **WORDS OF HELP** is largely assessed according to the number of articles appearing in it. How far this may be the case, it is difficult to estimate. Judging by such a standard, however, our May issue with two pieces would be deemed much inferior to June with seven! Happily the writers for May are beyond the reach of embarrassment on this account; both are with the Lord, their labours of love ended.

Treating the suggestion seriously, however, is this another example of quantity being preferred to quality? No depreciation of other writers (for whose contributions we are deeply grateful) is intended or implied when we remark that the two articles published in May have been warmly commended for both the truth expressed, and the succinctness of the style.

Undoubtedly the present is a day of light reading and shallow thinking. And whilst we endeavour to provide our readers with short pieces containing the more easily assimilated devotional ministry, suitable maybe for moments when mind and body are weary, we hope they will not skip the longer and rather more difficult pieces of expositional character, to the preparation of which much earnest thought has been devoted. Diligence in studying the profounder truths of our faith yields a commensurate reward.

**“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” (I Timothy iv. 16).**

## LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS

## XI. NOT THE MANNER OF MAN.

**W**HEN we first came to the Lord, we delighted to ponder the perfection of our salvation, and to adore our Saviour for the wonderful redemption He wrought on Calvary. While no passage of time can ever dim the lustre of the work itself, our adoration is increased when we begin to understand something of the excellence of the manner in which our Saviour approached His great task.

Let us note first the steadfastness of His purpose. We read in Luke ix. 51, that "when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." A little later (Mark x. 32) we see Him going in front of His disciples, while they were amazed, and were afraid as they followed. But neither the full knowledge He had of what His sacrifice entailed, nor the lack of understanding on the part of His own disciples, could daunt that zealous pursuit of His goal.

Nevertheless there was no ill-considered haste, such as so often marks those who are full of zeal for a great task. See the Lord Jesus actually arrived in Jerusalem, and reading in the thoughts and demeanour of His enemies the cruel death which He had long foreseen they would condemn Him to. Yet calmly He goes into the temple courts, and day after day for a whole week He pursues His labour of love, patiently instructing the people as they flocked round Him. For He was God's Prophet (Deut. xviii. 18) as well as God's Lamb, and while any part of His work of teaching was unfulfilled He does not abandon it, despite the watchfulness of His enemies. Neither on the other hand does He court death, in the brazen manner in which men sometimes do; but quietly withdraws to Olivet at the end of each day (Luke xxi. 37, 38).

Next He turns to the final instruction of His disciples. Though knowing full well that Judas has now actually communicated with the chief priests, the Lord's thought is for His feeble flock, so soon to be scattered, rather than for Himself. He has much to tell them, to prepare for what is to

happen. Above all He wishes to show them how He would have them to remember Him in the last Supper.

We cannot but admire the divine wisdom with which He ensures that that final supper shall be undisturbed. With Judas on the watch for his opportunity, the Lord sends Peter and John to prepare the Passover, giving them a sign which prevents any of His other disciples (and so Judas) from knowing beforehand where the feast is to be held.

How often do we delight to read the gracious words of our Lord on the occasion of that last meal! As given in the Gospel of John, they are the "favourite" scriptures of many believers. When we remember that the words were spoken in the very shadow of Calvary, we can only adore the grace which constrained Him to occupy Himself with the needs of His own at such a time.

Finally, let us behold Him in the garden of Gethsemane. Before He meets His enemies, the Lord would face the whole travail in communion with His Father. As we read the words of His thrice-repeated prayer, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt", we learn, first of all, that it was no inexorable fate which was to bring Him to the cross; even then He might have called upon His Father for, and been granted, twelve legions of angels to defend Him. No, it was His own voluntary acceptance of what was pleasing to His Father. Like the Hebrew servant (Ex. xxi. 5), He *would* not go out free.

Then we see also that our blessed Lord met the prospect of death, not, as men often have to do when confronted with a terrible ordeal, by shutting their eyes to it saying "I dare not even think of it," and letting it come upon them as it were blindfold. No, He looked steadily into that cup of sorrow, knowing as He did all that it would mean to Him—not the physical sufferings merely, but His atoning sufferings, the depths of which we are incapable of comprehending.

Neither did He affect to despise the suffering, as the ideal hero of this world affects to do; but prayed, with perfect confidence in His Father's love and power, that the hour might

pass from Him. Yet did He willingly submit to it, that the will of God might be fulfilled.

Very much more there is, undoubtedly, for the worshipping heart to ponder on this subject. May we ever continue to learn more, that our worship may grow. E. H. CHAMBERLAIN.

---

## FROM WANT TO WORSHIP

Read John x. and Psalm xxiii.

**B**OTH of the above portions deal with the shepherd and the sheep, figuring, as is well known, Christ and His people. The two chapters are quite distinct, in that the former gives the Shepherd's side, and the latter that of the sheep; the one deals with the whole flock, none of which is lost, and which continually grows until the end; the other expresses individual joy and devotion, increasing with the advent of the eternal state.

The study of the Good Shepherd as presented to us by John leads to worship. The first few verses of chapter x., which follow on naturally from the previous chapter, form a separate section, and relate to Jewish matters; the original fold set up by God in Old Testament days, and the presentation of the only One authorised to lead the sheep out of it. The second section beginning with verse 7, opens the new subject of a new fold. Sheep were to be led into this, not out of it as in the previous parable, and the Shepherd's duties are shown to be so arduous that He has even to lay down His life for the sheep. Thus it is necessary, for the assurance of the sheep, to introduce the Father, and to show His deep interest too in all affecting the sheep—"therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down My life for the sheep." Furthermore the sheep's safety is by no means impaired by the possibility of the death of the Shepherd—"they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave

them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

It is the Shepherd's persistence that finds the lost sheep, and His devotedness, in contrast with the hireling, that leads to His death. The blessed outcome of it all is, "*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*" This seems to put some onus upon the sheep, though undoubtedly those who know the attraction of the Shepherd will readily agree that He is more than enough to captivate and hold those who see Him.

But is there not a possibility that the eye of the sheep may sometimes stray from such a blessed Object as the Shepherd? Psalm xxiii seems to provide against such an eventuality. One can imagine the picture presented in Luke xv. being included in this Psalm, where the wandering sheep is safely on the Shepherd's shoulders, being carried home, not left to follow, and being taken right home to those rejoicing there.

The sheep has *needs*, which are met by the care and experience of the shepherd—the green pastures and the still waters. But it has also *wants*, which are quite distinct from necessities. These are things that the shepherd may, or may not, provide according to his discretion and experience. They are the things which may lead to the wandering of the sheep because they absorb the interest so that the eye is not on the shepherd, and may lead in a wrong direction so that he is lost sight of. The "want" then becomes the only object, and when in turn it fades and fails, as it always will, the deplorable position of the sheep becomes apparent, as the true facts of the case appeared to the prodigal when he came to himself.

How different is the case of the sheep in Psalm xxiii; which says from the place of security, with a note of triumph, "The Lord is *my* Shepherd; I shall not *want*"! It is as though it said to the Shepherd, "*all my springs are in Thee.*" The time is passed when there were unsatisfied wants; the abundance of the supply, and the attractiveness of the Supplier, fill the heart to overflowing. There is no room for anything else; there is satisfaction to the point of satiation. And if all our springs are in Him, that is, all the beginnings of our affairs are with

Him, the outflowing will be too; the whole trend of the life will be joy in Him, and no words could better express the heart's satisfaction than those of the Psalmist, "I shall not want."

The details of the Psalm supply much encouragement for life's pathway, the sweetness of which is well known to every heavenly traveller; but verse 5 is surely present experience anticipative of the future portion of verse 6. One who is appreciative of the Good Shepherd, and is finding sufficient in Him to fill his capacity, finds great delight in sitting down at the table He spreads in the wilderness. The presence of enemies is a matter of very small moment, for *He* is there. The enemies are defeated ones, and under the control of the One who is in the midst of His saints.

The capacity for enjoyment of Him is the anointing of the Spirit, "Thou anointest my head with oil"; and the extent of the consequent joy—"my cup runneth over." In this intensely individual Psalm there are no others introduced to share or to augment the joy; it is just the delight of the sheep in the completely satisfying portion that replaces the wants of nature. Hence it is "*my* cup" that runs over. My wants are eliminated; my needs are met; my present is secure from the enemies without, and full of His goodness at His table within; and my future is to continue in this delight for ever, though it will be increased in degree as infinity outshines the finite.

What a lovely climax to what we might call "this little song of the sheep," which can only be sung from the place of security and trust! How delightful for us, and pleasing surely to our blessed Lord, if there were in all our meetings for remembrance and worship the united outflowing of every heart after this pattern! What concord would result from such devotion to a common theme!—a concord not arising uncertainly from a mere sense of duty to one another, but unaffected unison of all hearts like tributaries running into a river, all going the same way and uniting in one great flow seawards. May we learn increasingly to know the love of Christ, that passes knowledge in the fullest sense, and be filled into all the fullness of God.

A. A. TUNLEY.

## LEGALISM LEAVES NO ROOM FOR CHRIST

Read Galatians v. 1-9.

*(Notes of ministry at Camborne, Easter Monday afternoon, 1957.)*

**A**T the council of Jerusalem of which we read in Acts xv., a tremendous issue was at stake when Peter rose and said: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they." It was however given to the apostle Paul at a later date to show clearly that God's idea for the replacement of the old economy was not a yoke, but something staggering in its simplicity, summed up in the words we read "faith which worketh by love."

The Galatian converts from Judaism had been accustomed to an ordered dispensation, everything listed as to what they should, or should not, do. They had been able to regulate their conduct by referring to the law, a law by which they vainly sought justification.

In this epistle, Paul, well qualified by his knowledge of the Old Testament, and by his own gift, gives a reasoned exposition of the way in which Christianity was to replace Judaism as a medium for the knowledge of God. He states categorically (Rom. x. 4) that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The question is therefore no longer one of conformity to outward ritualistic observance, but of a man's disposition of heart towards God. That is why the evangelist today denies the effectiveness of good works as a means of salvation, and insists solely upon trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary for justification.

A modern translation of this passage in Galatians bears the heading "Legalism leaves no room for Christ." How true that is! If any man claims to be justified by the law, he is fallen



from grace (ver. 4). The only true way is to be "justified freely by His (*i.e.*, God's) grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ" (Rom. iii. 24).

In this scripture, faith—not "the faith," the body of Christian doctrine handed down by the apostles—denotes a personal relationship to God in Christ Jesus, the committal of life, will, talent, emotion, all we have, to God through Christ. With many today the emphasis is on *what* they believe. Paul said, "I know *Whom* I have believed." Of Abraham it is recorded that he "believed God" (Rom. iv. 3, etc.); he knew Him as his Friend, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. In turn, he became known himself as the friend of God.

That is the significance of "faith" here: a personal knowledge of a personal God through a personal Saviour: personal devotion and consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ. Without faith, doctrinal knowledge is useless: with faith, it instructs the believer as to what he believes and why.

Furthermore, this faith is not merely the initial act of belief by which we accept the Saviour, and which brings us justification. Nor is it the gift of faith (I Cor. xii. 9)—the ability so to commit the affairs of life to God that the most stupendous tasks can be undertaken in complete reliance upon Him. This faith is for the ordinary person, and is the continuing committal of all that we are to Christ; the knowledge of Him in such a way that we never mistrust Him whatever seeming disaster overtakes us, whatever the trouble in which we find ourselves.

Then it is faith which works—by love; faith that is active, faith that is energetic and effective. The tense used is the continuous present. Faith begins its work within a man, transforming him, and then works outwards producing fruit. It is not spasmodic activity in service for the Lord such as preaching, though of course it includes that; it is effectual, steady operation of faith, minute by minute, in daily work, home contacts and assembly life. It is not to be a mere theoretical pastime, a nice intellectual hobby, studying the scriptures and discovering what they mean. Faith is to be in activity every

waking moment of the believer's life, transforming his attitude towards all the people and circumstances he meets.

Professing to believe that our daily circumstances are ordered by the Lord Jesus Christ, is it consistent to grumble about the weather, our state of health, our companions in the employment to which we are called, our financial limitations, wishing we had a little more? In all these things faith should be operative, so that we manifest by our patience and submission the Spirit of Christ within us, thus witnessing for Him.

Finally, faith works by love. There are three different Greek words all translated love. One denotes friendship; another human love, a wonderful gift of God to the human race; the third expresses divine love, the love wherewith God has loved us. This is the love of which those born again of the Holy Spirit are capable, and which they are to exercise one toward another, and towards those around.

This is a searching scripture. The Galatians had run well to begin with, but had been hindered. How similar has been the course of many a spiritual movement since. May God give us more faith, a faith that will be energetic and living, and work by the same love that God Himself has shown to us.

C. G. MARTIN.



## A SHORT MEDITATION ON JOHN I

(Please read the chapter)

**I**T is in no way a disparagement of other portions of Scripture to claim for this chapter a peculiarly exalted character, seeing that it sets before the reader some of the glories and dignity of the One concerning Whom Matthew, Mark and Luke had written previously from quite different points of view.

In point of fact, what the other evangelists wrote makes it easier to understand some of John's profound statements. For example, their accounts of the Lord's walking on the sea and stilling the storm immediately by His word, help us to apprehend that the Word of God was the Author of all creation.

Luke's account of John the Baptist's birth, and the birth of the Lord Jesus Himself, enables us to understand the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us. And having already read three separate accounts of the Lord's death upon the cross, we can grasp the significance of the Baptist's proclamation "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (ver. 29).

There are three outstanding truths in this chapter :

- (i) The Word of God was the Creator of all things;
- (ii) The Word of God was made, or became, flesh; and
- (iii) The Word of God was the Lamb of God, Who would, in due time, offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin.

### **(i) The Word of God, the Creator of all things.**

It is striking that this chapter opens with the same three words as the book of Genesis. In Genesis the subject is creation; in John it is the Creator. John uses words to describe the infinite, to enable finite minds to gain some knowledge of subjects which in their fullness are beyond human comprehension. Scripture calls for subjection of mind, and what is man that he should fail to render it?

The truth that the Word was the Maker of all things seems to be emphasised by the miracles peculiar to John's gospel. The making of water into wine, without the customary process of the vine (John ii); the healing of the man blind from birth (ch. ix.), a defect in nature which nature's Lord remedied by recourse to dust, mingled with life from Himself Who had made man from the dust of the ground (Gen. ii. 7); then the raising of Lazarus (ch. xi.) by Him of Whom it is said here that "in Him was life."

### **(ii) The Word of God become flesh.**

Solomon enquired wonderingly (II Chron. vi. 18) "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?" What the King of Israel seems wistfully to suggest as possible but unlikely, John and his companions beheld in very truth—the Word incarnate, dwelling amongst them. And he adds, "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (ver. 14).

The apostle John never lost the joy of having seen the Word become flesh. In his first epistle he writes with rapture of what they had seen with their eyes, and looked upon, and their hands had handled, of the Word of life; all this during the time that He was dwelling upon earth.

### **(iii) The Word of God, the Lamb of God.**

The truths of our Lord's eternal godhead and of His incarnation need to be carried in the mind as John's account of the years of His ministry is studied. How the Light shone amidst the darkness! exposing the sinfulness of men! Yet how wonderfully the Lamb of God "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26)! The apostle Paul had this before him when he wrote of God being "just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26), declaring also that God had been righteous in remitting the sins of those men of faith who lived before the Word became flesh, and the Lamb was sacrificed. He acted in forbearance, knowing the full value of the offering that was yet to be.

Rev. vii. 10 shows that even millennial blessedness depends upon the same offering for sin; the white-robed multitude ascribe salvation to God and to the Lamb, and one of the elders declared (ver. 14) that the redeemed had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Furthermore, the bliss and joy of the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. xxi.) are the outcome of the atonement accomplished by the Lamb of God.

Notice, too, how the Lamb is the central figure of the heavenly scene depicted in Rev. v. And although John does not write of the church in the way Paul did, he records the worship of those who will declare that "the marriage of the Lamb is come" (Rev. xix. 7) showing that He is the One principally concerned.

The latter part of John i. names five men who answered the Lord's call—early trophies of the grace of the Word who had become flesh and was dwelling amongst men. What an unspeakable privilege for them, and for all who have followed in their footsteps since, to be the companions of the Son of God! May we ever abide in Him, and walk as He walked!

P. WHITE.

## CONVERSATION ON I JOHN V

Please read the chapter

**STEADFAST.** We may remark as to the Authorised Version of this chapter, that “witness”, “record” and “testified” are the same word in the original, and that verse 7 should be omitted as well as the last dozen words of verse 13.

The beginning of the chapter connects with the end of chapter iv. In Luke x. when the question of eternal life was raised, and the commandment to love God and one’s neighbour, the lawyer asked “And who is my neighbour?” So here at the end of chapter iv. is the commandment to love one’s brother, and as if to answer the question “And who is my brother?” chapter v. opens by telling us that believers are born of God; so these are the brothers whom we must love, the children of God. Eternal life is mentioned in verses 11, 13 and 20.

Verse 2: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments,” is a counter-check on verse 1. That is, a man who professes to love Christians but forgets God and the love and obedience he owes to Him is not true.

For the Christian, God’s commandments are not grievous because they are all the things which his new nature (as born of God) delights in. How different this is from attempting in our natural state the impossible task of gaining eternal life by keeping the law (God’s law of course). We have life by faith in Christ, verses 1 and 13.

**GOODHEART.** The words “world” and “overcome” appear often in John’s writings, and we do well to remember them. Whatever appearances may be, the world is opposed to God and to His children, and we can only overcome through Christ and trust in Him—see verses 4 and 5. In John xvi. verse 33 the Lord says to His own, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world,” and in the Revelation there are several wonderful promises to those who overcome through Him.

Verse 6 states that the Saviour came by *water* and *blood*. In Hebrews ii. He took part of *flesh* and *blood*, that is, He

became incarnate, a real man. Here it refers no doubt to what is recorded in John xix. verse 34, how blood and water came from the Lord's pierced side, and brings before us the efficacy of the death of Christ when applied by the Holy Spirit's power to cleanse and to take away sin. This was at the end of His earthly life, but so important is it—indeed, the very purpose of His coming—that the word says “This is He that came by water and blood.”

**CHEERFUL.** The Lord once said “Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again,” and when we realise our sinful state by nature we are not surprised to know that we need a completely fresh start. But we must marvel at God's grace in making the new birth possible to us, and in such a wonderful way, through the death of His Son.

It is marvellous too that simple faith makes the humblest believer overcome the world with all its fancied wisdom and power, and its delusions, too. I read recently something Cyprian wrote to his friend in the third century: “It is a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered, in the midst of it, a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any of the pleasures of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are Christians—and I am one of them.”

**GOODHEART.** God has given His Spirit to tell us these things, to be the witness of them to us. In John xix., after the piercing of the Lord's side, the next verse (35) says “And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.” The word “record” there is the same as “witness” in our chapter, and it was the Spirit who gave John to write both the Gospel and this epistle.

The Spirit, the water and the blood are brought together typically in Leviticus xiv. where in the cleansing of the leper there is first the washing with water, then the application of the blood, followed by the oil, to the whole man (ear, thumb and toe). If we remember that it was in virtue of the death of Christ that the Holy Spirit came down, it will be clear that the blessings of purification, expiation and the gift of the Spirit

are ours only in virtue of a dead Christ. Thus they agree in one — that is, the necessity of that precious death of Christ through whose efficacy I can know God and possess eternal life.

**STEADFAST.** Verse 10 declares that the believer has the witness in himself, which I take to mean the new life which God communicates to the believer at conversion, though it is true that God also gives the Holy Spirit, Whom the believer has in him as the *power* of the new life. The verse adds, "he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar," which is very serious. We must believe God at all cost. Then our blessing is in every way linked with Christ; God gives us eternal life and this life is in His Son as its source and seat. Hence to have the Son is to have life, and the sad converse is also true. And this scripture is given so that we may *know* that we have eternal life.

**CHEERFUL.** Verses 14 to 16 revert to the subject of prayer which we had towards the end of chapter iii. Cleansed from sin and having life from God, we enjoy communion with Him, and can ask of Him in the present every-day confidence of a child. Happy is it too when I ask for another as well as for myself. We are reminded here, however, of the need to be exercised that what we ask is according to His will, and of God's ways of government and discipline with His own. All unrighteousness is sin, and some sins are such that they lead to even a Christian forfeiting his life in this world. May we understand better God's daily dealings with us and be kept from sin.

**GOODHEART.** There is cheer for us all in the following verses, where some things that believers *know* are mentioned, some of the great principles of the epistle. The poor unbeliever is sure of nothing, but the believer is wrought in by God and is blessed with inward knowledge which nothing can touch. We know the true nature of the life we have received from God, and we know that while the wicked one is the god of this world, the Son of God is come, the great Undoer of the works of the devil, and we who believe are in Him, the true God and eternal life.

**STEADFAST.** The last word is a warning, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," from all that might come in between our souls and Christ.

W. H. L. GRAHAM.

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# Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

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# WORDS OF HELP

## A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

Readers may be interested to hear of a new way in which a magazine such as WORDS OF HELP may be useful. A correspondent writes—

“Two friends of ours attend women’s meetings held under the auspices of their church. It appears some of them take turns at providing material for discussion, and this sometimes takes the form of reading an article from a book or periodical or any other manuscript available.

I have been able to pass to them some of the suitable booklets we have in circulation, as well as larger books of a doctrinal nature, all of which might be made to serve, and I believe the short articles in periodicals such as WORDS OF HELP, being concise and complete, can and do serve a very useful purpose when thus applied.”

May we suggest that on occasions perhaps when it is impossible to obtain a speaker for a women’s meeting, Bible class or other study circle, or when it is desired to introduce a suitable subject for discussion, the reading of a piece from WORDS OF HELP could be considered. It might help to stimulate interest if members of the gathering were invited to read the Scripture references as they occur in the article.

We are grateful to our correspondent for his letter, and if any others of our readers have suggestions to offer for the use of WORDS OF HELP, we shall be pleased to hear from them.

## LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS

### XII: THE FULFILMENT OF SCRIPTURE

(Read John xix. 28-30)

**A**S most will be aware, the Gospel of John was written to set forth particularly the divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God—not in the subordinate sense in which the whole human race is said to be the offspring of God (Acts xvii. 26-28), but in that unique sense in which the Lord is co-equal in deity and majesty with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

We would, therefore, expect that any incident concerning either the life or death of Christ, recorded exclusively in the Gospel of John, would serve some special purpose as a manifestation of His divine glory. Such an incident we have in the Lord's utterance as to His thirst just before He died.

We might, on first consideration, be tempted to think that this incident would have been more appropriate to Luke—the Gospel which sets forth the Lord Jesus as the true and perfect Son of Man. Surely thirst bespeaks humanity rather than deity? But the Spirit of God, in His unerring wisdom, has recorded the incident in John. And it behoves us to reflect and enquire the reason why.

Whilst the Lord's thirst was undoubtedly the distressing physical consequence of the sufferings through which He had passed, His mention of it was not to secure alleviation. Now that He had come to the point of death, and was about to yield up His life, how unimportant from the purely physical point of view was any need for His thirst to be quenched! How small indeed was the distress of thirst compared with the suffering of crucifixion itself, not to mention the spiritual anguish of being forsaken of God!

Why, then, did the Lord cry "I thirst" in such a fashion that John must needs expressly mention the incident? The answer is given us—it was that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

That the Scripture might be fulfilled! Was that the thought in our Saviour's blessed mind? It was indeed. The Lord Jesus was concerned that every jot and tittle of God's word

should be exactly fulfilled. Surely in the midst of such overwhelming sorrow and agony of body and mind, He might be excused if such a comparatively small detail were overlooked. All the great prophecies such as Psalm xxii and Isaiah liii were being fulfilled to the letter. Did this little verse in Psalm lxix really matter? Did anything of importance depend upon it? Well, it did matter—to Him; for we are told that it was in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled that He cried "I thirst".

What a mark, or shining forth, of our Lord's deity. No other mind but His could or would, at such a time and in such circumstances, have been following through with care and precision every word of God in the Old Testament. Knowing that all things were now accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said "I thirst". It is one more glorious tribute to the perfection of Him who hung upon the cross.

Not, of course, that this was the first or only occasion on which the Lord's care for the fulfilment of the Scriptures had been expressed. When, at His arrest, Peter had begun to lay about him with a sword, the Lord restrained him with the words: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. xxvi. 53, 54).

Undoubtedly a practical lesson for ourselves lies on the surface of this incident, but let us not fail, as we meditate on these wonderful words, to render a tribute of praise and worship to Him who is so worthy, because He cared so meticulously for the honour of God's holy word. E. A. PETTMAN

## THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD

Scripture reading: John xvii

(Notes of an address given at a London Conference, 8/6/57)

I wish to speak this afternoon on what the Lord Jesus has to say concerning the believer's relations with this world. The time had now come for Him to leave His disciples in a

world which had proved hostile to Himself, and would therefore be hostile to them. So He prepares them for the problems He knew they would have to face, and we have the record of this in chapters xiii.-xvii. of John.

Chapter xiii. contains His example of feet washing; chapter xiv. His instruction about the gift of the Spirit, and the invaluable privilege of prayer in His Name. In chapter xv. He talks of bearing fruit for the joy of the Husbandman, God Himself; chapter xvi. mentions possible opposition, and the Spirit's power which would enable them to overcome. In chapter xvii. He speaks, not *to* them, but to His Father *for* them.

In natural things, the realization that our conduct is causing serious anxiety to someone who loves us dearly is a very potent factor in bringing us to a right state of mind. So, to remember that our behaviour in this world matters a very great deal to the Lord Jesus Christ, that He is very concerned about it, that He knows our problems and has in His own way provided for us, and above all has prayed for us, these considerations should have much weight with us. How much it must have meant to Peter, when in despair at having denied his Lord, to recall that Jesus had said "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not"! In John xvii. the Lord prays not for "these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word": thus embracing each individual soul born again through the preaching of the Gospel.

In this chapter the Lord refers at least four times to the relations of His own with the world through which they are passing. "World" has various meanings. It may denote the physical earth on which we live. It may signify the aggregate of human beings inhabiting the earth, as in John iii. 16, "God so loved the world", which cannot mean that He loves the rocks, trees, etc., but that He loves the persons in the world. Then there is another and sinister meaning which we have in parts of this chapter, that is the world as an organised system, built up under the aegis of Satan to make man happy so far as may be without God.

In this latter sense the world had its origin with Cain. We read (Gen. iv.): "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord": a terrible thing to do. Truly he was uneasy in that Presence; but in going out he left the only Source of light and good to build a city which he furnished with every type of comfort—comforts not inherently sinful, though his motive in supplying them was—for he sought to render himself independent of God. Poor foolish man, and world, that thinks lasting satisfaction may be found away from God. How unutterably foolish for a Christian to allow himself to be entangled in it, and to seek satisfaction there apart from God who cares for him!

The world has its pleasures, its organised sport, its dancing, its social activities—not all inherently wicked—its business, its politics, trying to make the world a happy place to live in without God. And if none of these appeal, it even offers a worldly religion! But in all these things Christ is an intrusion; and often misrepresented in its religion.

The whole thing is summed up in an expression often used: "A man of the world"—one who is not out of place anywhere. Some things he likes more than others; but you must not bring him too close to God. Well, Christians are not "men of the world", but belong to Christ, which brings us to the first reference (ver. 6), where our Lord says: "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me *out of the world*", referring, I have no doubt at all, to the world in the bad ethical sense. Christians are no longer in Satan's world; not removed physically from the earth, but given to Christ *out of the world*.

This is the complement of the truth in Colossians i. 12, 13, "giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." We glory in that verse, and think it wonderful. So it is. John xvii. gives the other side of the picture.

The next point is that we are *not of the world* (ver. 16). Scripture contains many instructions concerning our

behaviour in this world. For instance, Titus supposes we have worldly masters who have no concern or time for our profession of Christ. We are *not* expected to have worldly husbands or wives. It may indeed be that one partner is converted after the marriage: that is another matter. But it is not contemplated anywhere in Scripture that a Christian should take an unconverted partner.

The Christian, then, is *not of the world*; he is given to Christ out of it: mark, not *may* be not *ought* to be, but he *is* given to Christ. Some may look as though they were still of the world, becoming heavily involved in it, thus proving a great disappointment. But whether this is so or not, **EVERY CHRISTIAN BELONGS TO CHRIST.**

For illustration, consider Lot—a man who went the whole way into the world (Gen. xiii.-xix.). Yet Lot never became one of the Sodomites. But there came a time when he uttered one word on behalf of justice and truth, and he was immediately shouted down by the people amongst whom he lived. So will it be with us if we are linked up with the world.

“Be not conformed to this world” (Rom. xii. 2). In other words, do not look like the world, seeing that you are not of it. A worldly Christian is a tragedy.

Our next reference is in verse 18: “As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” We often compare our journey through the world with that of the Israelites through the wilderness. To a great extent this is right; but the parallel is not entirely true. For one thing, the Israelites were suffering punishment because they turned aside in unbelief when they were told to go forward ten days’ journey and take the land. Our journey through this world is not a punishment. The remark has been heard, “We have no business in this world”. According to this verse, Christians have the very finest of business in it: they are sent into the world by the Lord for a definite purpose.

In the address to the church at Pergamos (Rev. ii. 13) you will remember the words “I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is.” The Lord was not, as some have suggested, blaming them for being there, but letting them know that He knew how difficult the place was in which they lived.

Though later the Lord had to reprove them, His opening words were of condolence, not condemnation. He would say the same to us. The world is our appointed sphere of service for our Lord.

The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye are the light of the world"; also, "Ye are the salt of the earth". It will be an extremely bad thing for the world when all Christians are removed. They think they can do without us, but will soon find out they cannot. In a very short time the world will plunge into utter ruin, and the judgment of God. "Ye are the light of the world"! Where is the world to get any knowledge of God from if not from those who are Christ's witnesses? Shame upon us if our conduct is such that it hides from those around us the light of heaven!

"As Thou hast sent Me". How did Jesus come into the world? His pathway brought Him reproach and persecution, and that from the religious leaders! He bore reproach for God as well as for Himself: what we bear is to be for His Name. We are sent here as ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. v.). What is the mark of an ambassador? He must be a citizen of the country he represents, and must have at heart the interests of that country. As ambassadors for Christ, whose interests do we serve? Our own, or His Who has sent us here?

Our Lord came with grace and truth. He spake gracious words; so much so that even the hardened temple police, little accustomed to returning without accomplishing their purpose, came back empty-handed, saying, "Never man spake like this man." But He was also a testimony against evil, and said of the world, "Me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil." Furthermore, He spoke words of solemn judgment—words not given to His disciples to speak, nor even, in the first place, to the apostle Paul to write. His own lips spoke of Hell, that awful lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels, but to be shared by those who refuse the Saviour. That same "grace and truth" should mark us.

I believe the neglect of this verse has led to much trouble in the assemblies of the Lord's people. There are, indeed, honourable exceptions both in companies and more amongst



individuals. We should challenge ourselves whether we have given due heed to the truth that we are sent into the world to witness for Christ.

In our Bible Readings we are inclined to talk a great deal about reproach. Some, indeed, meet it more than others. But do we not talk about it more than we experience it, because we avoid going where it is likely to arise? Acts viii. 4 tells us those scattered by persecution "went everywhere preaching the word". The word "preaching" could be rendered "gossiping", a word which has been degraded by usage to the rather poor significance it has today. But the idea is that wherever they went, they entered into conversation and talked about the word, about Jesus. That is what we should do. We rightly regard worldliness as a very bad thing: so also is aloofness.

To finish on a brighter note: we have here what I believe is the first presentation to us of the real hope of the Christian—to be caught up to be "for ever with the Lord"—this is implicit in verse 24: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world". This is indeed calculated to "lift our poor hearts this weary world above". But it is an added motive for holiness and singleness of life down here. If we think on the one hand of the Lord Jesus kneeling down and pouring out His heart to the Father about us, and on the other hand, look up and see the glory that is awaiting us there, do you not think we should be better Christians?

H. W. MARTIN

## THE DAY OF GOD

(Read: 2 Peter iii. 12.)

The question is often asked: "What does this remarkable expression 'The Day of God' mean?"

The knowledge of God by His creature, man, is one of the purposes of God unfolded in His word, and eternal life was linked with this knowledge by the Son of God when He was in the world as a man, in the body that was specially prepared for Him. Speaking to His Father, He said: "This is life

eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."

*Peter, in this second epistle, tells us that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day".* Bearing this in mind, we can, in our feeble measure, form some idea of the days of Scripture. The "Day of the Lord" is an expression of solemn judgment; the "Day of Christ" speaks of the time when Christ claims His rights as a glorified man, and acts accordingly; while the millennial Day is His reign in righteousness "from shore to shore, and from the river to the ends of the earth". Then comes the day when He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) may be all in all. Is not this the day of God?

The establishment of the Father's kingdom was what the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray for: "Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". How many who now use these words as a formula, understand that they are praying for "the Father's kingdom"?

As a man here in this world, though He was the only-begotten Son of the Father, "Yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered". His motto was "Not My will, but Thine be done", and this whatever it cost to do it. Speaking of the cross, He said: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all unto Me" (that is, everything will be in His hands). And has not everything been put into His hands? He will yet reap to the full all that His finished work involves.

In the Day of God the Son of God will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, when He has, with the authority committed to Him, put everything in order, according to the Father's heart.

A mistranslation spoils the real meaning of the 12th verse. Instead of "hastening unto the coming of the day of God", we should read "hastening the coming of the day of God". This raises another question: how is it possible to hasten the coming of the day of God? A simple understanding knowledge of all that is revealed of the counsels and purposes of God in the Scriptures, and humble submission to His word,

whatever the cost, by all who are His, will surely do much towards it.

In the present unique dispensation, the Holy Spirit of God is actually present in the world, in-dwelling the saints of God, and finding His habitation in the Church of God. He is sovereign in testifying of the One Who sought not His own glory when He was here, and in glorifying Him. He is also sovereign in keeping the anti-Christian crisis under restraint. He can be "quenched" by human efforts that endeavour, often ignorantly, to usurp His authority, and "grieved" by conduct that is not in keeping with His presence. The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: the flesh and the Spirit being opposed to one another. Simple and humble submission to the leading and guiding of God's Holy Spirit by all who can claim to be God's children will surely have an influence towards hastening the day of God when God will be all in all.

G. S. PURNELL

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

### I. PERSON, PROMISE and PRESENCE

(Notes of an address to young Christians, given at Wildfell Hall, Catford, on the 12th July, 1957)

Reading: John xiv. 15-17, 26

Acts i. 1-5; ii. 1-8

Whatever else you may forget of the things I say during these three addresses, it is very important you should all remember my opening remark that the Holy Spirit is not an influence—an impersonal influence (of course, very good and very holy)—but a Person, equal in deity with God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Scriptures leave no possible doubt as to this: they teach positively, and in many places, that the Holy Spirit is a real Person. So important is it to be sure of this, because of the difference it makes to matters to be discussed later, that I propose to examine a few of the New Testament scriptures setting forth this truth very plainly.

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## THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

First of all, in the 14th to 16th chapters of John's Gospel the Lord Jesus repeatedly referred to the Holy Spirit, not as "it", but as "He". He also declared that the presence of the Holy Spirit with His disciples would compensate them for His own physical absence. Would not any suggestion that so exacting an office could be filled by a mere influence tend to reflect upon the blessed Person of the Lord Himself? How could one Divine Person be adequately represented except by Another, equally personal and divine?

Again, Matthew xii. 31-32 records another testimony by the Lord Himself to the personal dignity and deity of the Holy Spirit: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come". What a tribute to His personal majesty!

Then we have the witness of Paul. Writing to the Thessalonians, he says "Quench not the Spirit" (ch. v. 19); and to the Ephesians, "Be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit" (ch. v. 18); and again in that same letter, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (ch. iv. 30). Earlier, Stephen had charged his nation with "resisting" the Spirit (Acts vii. 51).

These scriptures teach clearly and unmistakably that the Holy Spirit—the One upon whom we depend for so much, and without Whom we cannot get along as Christians—is a divine Person. For although an influence may be quenched or resisted, only a Person can be grieved or blasphemed. And men *do* blaspheme Him. I say *men*, because I am sure it is not possible for a Christian to do so seeing there is no forgiveness for this sin. But, alas! Christians oftentimes grieve and quench the Holy Spirit: otherwise why should they need to be admonished not to do so?

The Holy Spirit of God is co-equal and co-eternal with

God the Father and God the Son—equal with Them in might, majesty and deity. So that when, as Christians, we worship God, or invoke the Name “God”, we address Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That is the teaching of the New Testament.

### THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Referring again to John xiv.-xvi., the words there recorded were spoken in the room where the Last Supper took place and on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane. They were the Lord’s departing words to men He loved, and what they needed was comfort. But He not only gave them comfort—“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you”. He also said, “A Person is coming to take My place”. What wonderful words to fall upon their ears, “When the Comforter is come” (xv. 26). In John xiv. 16 and 26, He says the Father will send the Comforter, but in chapters xv. 26 and xvi. 7 He says “Whom I will send”. So the Spirit’s coming is attributed to both the Father and the Son, and Jesus says “He shall testify of Me”. Someone would come to be with them Who would continually tell them of Jesus. What a Comforter He was going to be! What a Comforter He is!

Furthermore, He declared that it was good for them that He, Jesus, should go away, as much as to say, “If I leave you in Bethany and go up to Jerusalem you have to be without Me; but the Comforter will be with you wherever you may be”. He is with Christians all the time everywhere in the world, wherever they may be, and *that* the Lord Jesus, as a man on earth, could not do, for He could only be in one place at a time.

### THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

This wonderful event, recorded in Acts ii.—the coming of the Holy Spirit—had been promised for centuries. Joel, who prophesied some eight hundred years before Christ, spoke of it, and Peter quotes from him. Then John the Baptist had said concerning the Lord Jesus, “He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost”. Furthermore, after He was risen from the dead, and before He ascended to heaven, Jesus Himself said

to His disciples, "Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence". He told them to wait in Jerusalem for His coming, and wait for Him they did.

The New Testament teaches that each individual believer is born of the Spirit. That is how new birth takes place, and entry to the family of God is obtained. The fact that any one of us is a Christian at all is due entirely to the sovereign action of the Holy Spirit, Who gives us new, eternal life in our hearts. We are born of the Spirit. Then again, we are sealed by the Spirit. God puts His seal on the believer: He says "This is my property". And what is God's seal? the Holy Spirit! "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). Believers are born and sealed by the Holy Ghost individually; collectively they are baptised by the Holy Spirit into one body. They are no longer only individual Christians, but are baptised into "the Church which is His body" (Eph. i. 22, 23).

Now this is exactly what happened at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, sent of the Father and the Son, came down from heaven to dwell upon earth in the bodies of all true believers, forming them into one corporate body. All are therefore united one to the other. Each Christian is bound to every other Christian, and all are bound to the Head in heaven, Whose life flows down to them. They have the same life as He has; they are one Spirit with the Lord.

Paul refers to this in his first epistle to Corinth, chapter xii., verses 12-13. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be . . . bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit". So that what affects one member, affects all: if one member suffers, all suffer with it; if one member rejoices, all rejoice with it. The Church of God is a living organism, and not just an organisation. It is not a collection of independent Christians who have come together because they like one another, or like doing the same things together. They are *bound* together, and cannot break the tie even if they would.

Our last reference will be to Acts ix. The Lord Jesus in

heaven stopped Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, and said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Now Saul had been persecuting the Christians on earth. Jesus said, "Añ! but I am the Living Head in heaven, and what you do to them affects me in heaven!" Do you know that you are so bound to Christ in heaven by His Spirit who dwells in your very body that what men do to you, Jesus feels above? But it is so. Could there be any greater proof that we are all bound together in one body?

Outwardly, the Christian Church is divided into numberless fragments. But invisibly, and in God's sight, and for my faith, and for your faith, there is an indissoluble unity, so that it does not matter what our colour or race, or where we live geographically, we are bound just as much to our dear brethren in Ethiopia and Africa, to the brethren in China, as we are to our English brothers and sisters. We are all one in Christ Jesus; livingly so. May God help us to understand better that the Holy Spirit is the unbreakable Bond Who joins us to one another, and all of us to our risen Head in heaven.

(To be continued. Next article: The Holy Spirit, the Power for Walk, Witness and Worship).

L. A. JONES

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

A correspondent has objected to the expression "A Gentile bride—the Church", in the article "The Coming of the Lord" in the July issue of WORDS OF HELP. He points out, quite correctly, that "the Church is not exclusively Gentile", but that it contains both Jew and Gentile believers, who are one in Christ Jesus.

The writer's thought was that Joseph's bride, taken from among the heathen, was typical of the fact that, when Israel as a nation rejected it, the salvation of God was sent unto the Gentiles.

It is good to see readers "proving all things". It is to be hoped that they may be equally diligent in "holding fast that which is good".

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN



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# Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

Vol. XLV

DECEMBER, 1957

No. 12

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# WORDS OF HELP

## A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

**FIRST.** Praise and thanksgiving are rendered to our ever-gracious God whose manifold mercies to all concerned have enabled WORDS OF HELP to be published uninterruptedly during another year.

**SECOND.** To those who have written the articles which have appeared, the Editor expresses the thanks of readers generally; and to those whose contributions have not found a place, his own particular appreciation of the effort made. How earnestly he wishes that sufficient space were available to relieve him of the unenviable task of selection. This however is unavoidable at present.

**THIRD.** Gratitude is also due to those who have distributed WORDS OF HELP during 1957, thus serving the Lord and their fellow-believers in a very real way.

**FOURTH.** As the Magazine is allowed to continue into another year, the prayers of all are desired that it may witness to the Person and Work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the truth of which He is the Revelation and Centre, and that all may be for His glory.

Soon will the Master come; soon pass away  
Our times of conflict, grief, and suffering here;  
Our night of weeping end in cloudless day,  
And sorrow's moment like a dream appear:  
Eternity—with Jesus—in the skies—  
How soon that Sun of righteousness may rise!

**LET DAYS SPEAK**

(An open letter to young believers)

London,

September, 1957.

Dear Young Fellow-believers,

Having been asked to write to my fellow-believers who are young in the faith, and as one who, in the mercy of the Lord, was brought to a saving knowledge of God through our Lord Jesus Christ when I was about twelve years old; as one also who is now nearing the end of life's journey down here, I very gladly respond.

First of all then I would ask you to go back with me for just over sixty-five years, when, after much prayer, my godly parents made arrangements for me to go to London as an apprentice with a wholesale drapery firm. I was within a few months of my fifteenth birthday, and found myself coming in contact with many different kinds of people.

My chief concern was that the Lord would teach me how to conduct myself, as a Christian, before my fellow-workers and others whom I met. The problem was a very real one then to me, and today I feel that it must be an even greater one for the young believer. But for your encouragement let me say that however great the problem "our God is able," and also, there is always a pathway for faith.

All through my life I have endeavoured to make the Holy Word of God the man of my counsel. The Holy Scriptures are not only "able to make thee wise unto salvation," but "are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 15-17).

I feel constrained to bring before you a very important exhortation in a chapter we do not hear very much about; perhaps the enemy of our souls seeks to cause it to be side-tracked, as he does so many other portions of God's word.

In Romans xii. there are over thirty things which are pressed upon us for our obedience; shall we say one for each day's meditation in an average month.

For our present purpose I would press upon you the great

importance of verse 1. First then, the apostle, writing by the Holy Spirit, is in deep earnest—"I beseech." Secondly—"by the mercies of God"—that One to Whom he has raised such a wonderful ascription of praise in chapter xi. 33-36. Thirdly—"that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." The great thought to me is this word "living"; all the sacrifices of the Jewish altars were such as had passed through death, but a *living* sacrifice is now for us that which is "holy, acceptable unto God."

"Your bodies"! From a creation point of view it has been said that the human body is "God's masterpiece, the most exquisite and wonderful organisation that has come from the Divine Hands." The Psalmist said "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (cxxxix. 13-18). Space does not permit me to go into the many wonders of our bodies, such as the heart and its continual beating day and night. So I pass on to the wonders of our bodies from the point of view of redemption.

We are bought with a price (1 Cor. vi. 20), and for this reason we are called upon to glorify God in our bodies. Does not such a Scripture put forth a challenge to each one of us: "Am I doing so?"

Satan will put forth great endeavours to prevent us from carrying out this important exhortation.

Seated within this body's car,  
 The silent self is driven far,  
 And the five senses at the poles,  
 Like steeds are tugging, restive of control.  
 And if the driver lose his way  
 Or the reins break, who can say  
 Into what blind paths, what pits of fear  
 Will plunge the chargers in their mad career?

Our Lord spake of His body as a temple. "Destroy this temple . . . but He spake of the temple of His body" (John ii. 19, 21). This surely underlines for us the admonitions "present your bodies," "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The Lord has purchased us at a tremendous price. While looking back to Calvary where He

bought us, and forward to the glory, that you may earnestly endeavour to carry out the exhortation of Romans xii. 1, is the sincere desire of

Your well-wisher,

C. A. HAMMOND.

(It was with very great pleasure that the foregoing delightful letter from the Publisher of WORDS OF HELP was received, and it seems fitting that it should appear in this last issue for 1957.

The publication and distribution of this Magazine have for many years been far more a "labour of love" than most of our readers would imagine to be the case.

May I take this opportunity to express to Mr. Hammond the gratitude of numberless readers, known and unknown, for his unremitting service to us all.—The Editor.)

## NOTES OF A BIBLE READING ON GENESIS XXI-XXIII

**I**N this portion we have the birth of Isaac, the removal of Ishmael, Abraham's protection sought by Abimelech, the offering of Isaac, the pedigree of Rebekah, and the death of Sarah and purchase of Machpelah.

Broadly speaking, the history of Isaac in this portion is typical of the Lord Jesus, the One in Whom all the promises of God are being fulfilled. This may be seen most easily in his birth, his service, his death (in figure), and his resurrection (also in figure, see Heb. xi. 19). The removal of Sarah after Isaac had been received back from the dead emphasises that Isaac is a type of Christ *in resurrection*, and that God's promises had been confirmed for the inclusion of Gentiles as well as Jews (Gen. xxii. 18; Gal. iii. 16-18).

xxi. 1-7. The birth of Isaac was miraculous. He came when, ordinarily speaking, he could not have come (Rom. iv. 19; Heb. xi. 11, 12). His birth was, therefore, a distinct act of Divine interference, as was the Lord's birth. From another aspect, Isaac's birth into the line of promise is analogous to the miraculous "new birth" of the believer, making him an inheritor of the blessings of the promises.

His birth also was *at the time appointed of God*; the ill-timed attempt to effect the fulfilment of the promises (Chap. xvi.) must be set aside. In Gal. iv. 4, we read, "When the fulness of

the time was come, God sent forth His Son . . ." Isaac is circumcised the eighth day, and thus comes into covenant relationship with the people of God. This was also true of Christ (Gal. iv. 4, 5). We read nothing about Abraham's birth, but the birth of the *son* of Abraham is recorded. Sarah shines here as a true saint. The laughter of unbelief had given place to that of joy, born of the wonderful experience of receiving the fulfilment of God's promise. Sarah was possessed of true faith (Heb. xi. 11).

xxi. 8-21. Sarah's spiritual intelligence here surpasses her husband's, and, contrary to the general family rule, God bids Abraham follow her advice; though in 1 Peter iii. 5, 6, Sarah's subjection to her husband is emphasized. She now discerns the mind of God that the presence of the slave woman's son in the same house as Isaac is impossible. In Gal. iv. 30, her words are quoted as Scripture, and therefore inspired. The apostle takes up the story to illustrate how incongruous for the Christian is the attempt to keep the law of Moses. Ishmael displays his true character; with no regard for the work of God in Isaac's miraculous birth, he mocks. The feasting and joy at Isaac's birth remind us of the joy round Bethlehem when the Lord was born. Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness are no doubt typical of Israel wandering among the nations at present. Their proximity to the well, though they did not know it, speaks of the blessing awaiting Israel, though now the nation is all unconscious of this.

xxi. 22-34. Here Abraham's protection is sought by Abimelech. This remarkable occurrence shows the influence possessed by Abraham. A powerful chieftain seeks protection of the "pilgrim and stranger." A similar event occurs to Isaac. This incident is no doubt typical of the millennial scene when the Gentiles will be blessed through Israel. The "well" and the "grove" speak of the refreshment and protection afforded to the world in that blest time through the reign of the Lord Jesus. The new name of God revealed in verse 33 (El Olam, the Eternal God) will no doubt be used in the millennial day, comprehending His other names. It is noteworthy that the three epochs in the life of Abraham, introduced by the words, "After these things," each end with a millennial scene: (a)

the appearance of Melchizedek (xiv. 18), (b) Abraham sought by the Gentile (xxi. 22), (c) the birth of children through Keturah, speaking of the nations associated with the true seed of Abraham in millennial blessing (xxv. 1-4).

xxii. 1-19. In the offering of Isaac we have the supreme test of faith to which Abraham was subjected. There are two aspects of the incident:

(a) *Historical*. This trial was a great honour for Abraham. His faith had been gradually strengthening since he was first called about fifty years previously. His life had more and more been brought into conformity to the Divine will in setting aside the deceitful compact with Sarah and in the final dismissal of Ishmael, and his spiritual condition is such that God is able to try his faith in this supreme way. God desires it to be manifest to all that here is one man who is prepared to trust Him utterly (1 Peter i. 7). God touches the dearest object of Abraham's heart; beside this, all previous trials seem insignificant. When the command comes, his ready response is evident. For the second time his faith leads him out "not knowing whither he went." Faith is to be a constant virtue. Abraham informs the young men that he and Isaac will worship *and come again*. They were thus witnesses that Abraham believed God. In Heb. xi. 19, we read that he counted God able even to raise Isaac from the dead. Sceptics have called the demand for human sacrifice and the outrage to fatherly feelings callous, but Abraham himself did not think so, and we can trust his better knowledge. In James ii. 14-26, we are told that through this he was "justified by works and not by faith only," clearly not before God, but before man. His justification before God by faith only is declared long before (xv. 6).

(b) *Typical*. This is one of the most beautiful types of the work of the Father and the Son culminating at Calvary. Abraham, who carries the fire and the knife, speaks of God in His judicial character, while Isaac, who carries the wood of the burnt-offering, speaks of the Son bearing the cross. In the antitype only the heart of the Father could fully appreciate the utter devotion of the Lord Jesus as the true burnt-offering (John x. 17, 18). The willing submission of the Lord Jesus



to the Father's commandment is typified by Isaac's willing co-operation. The releasing of Isaac is a figure of resurrection (Heb. xi. 19). Isaac had been three days (from the time when he set out until they arrived at Moriah) dead in the purpose of his father. The ram "caught . . . by its horns", and therefore unable to defend itself, speaks of the unresisting character of the Lord Jesus at the cross. God spared Abraham's heart what He would not spare His own. God now confirms His promise to Abraham by an oath. This, and his "word," are the "two immutable things" given for the encouragement of faith (Heb. vi.)

xxii. 20-24. Rebekah's pedigree is told to Abraham. God's intention was, no doubt, that Abraham might be assured of finding a bride for Isaac among the descendants of Shem. It should be noted that in Chap. ix. 26, the promise of blessing had been given to Shem's line; Abraham acts in faith on this communication in Chap. xxiv., but does not tell his servant specifically to choose Rebekah. This choice he leaves to God, and the result is that, in beautiful harmony, "Rebekah came forth" (xxiv. 45).

xxiii. 1-20. Sarah's death takes place before Isaac receives his bride, and after his death and resurrection in figure. So the church is *heavenly* in calling, and is linked to the risen Christ in glory. Sarah died in faith (Heb. xi. 13); her departing was that of a true saint of God in the hope of the future fulfilment of the promises. Abraham experiences true sorrow in his mourning; the life of the pilgrim and stranger does not lessen deep human feelings. This is illustrated very beautifully in the Lord's life at the grave of His friend Lazarus. In his purchase, Abraham displays the proper conduct of a man of God in his business dealings. He obtains the land by fair purchase on righteous principles (1 Thess. iv. 12; 2 Cor. viii. 21; Rom. xii. 17). This chapter is true to eastern life in all its details. The method of bargaining through the intermediary of others, the apparently generous, but merely conventional words of Ephron, the settling of the contract "in the ears of all that went in at the gate of the city," the stating of the specific items of property (the cave, the trees in the field and also in the borders) to be conveyed, the weighing (not

counting) of the money to ensure that it is current money with the merchant, are all repeated in the life of the East today.

F. T. PETTMAN.

## DIVINE ORDERING

(Read John xix. 28-42)

**I**SAIAH liii. 9 reads: "And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death." J.N.D's translation is "And men appointed His grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death."

Man's appointment to lay the Holy One of God in the same grave with the wicked, the thieves crucified with Him, was divinely overruled, for God the Father had determined otherwise, and the blessed body of our Saviour was placed in the sepulchre of a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, a disciple of Jesus. How precious to know that, "in the place where He was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus."

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, 'It is finished,' and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost." From that moment, the Father's hand of love, of tenderness and power, was stretched out to take charge of the blessed body of our Lord. With all the scripture fulfilled, with the great and glorious work of redemption accomplished at such a cost, never again was man, led of Satan, to be permitted to mar that blessed body, given for us. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (Isa. lii. 14). All man's appointments are now set aside; all now is of the Father's ordering: "For the Father loveth the Son" (John v. 20).

"Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other, which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

Long ago the Spirit of God had recorded of the blood, "I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls" (Lev. xvii. 11). "Ye were not redeemed with

corruptible things as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter i. 18, 19).

The soldiers brake not His legs to bring about His death. His life He had already laid down for His sheep. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John x. 18). "These things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, 'A bone of Him shall not be broken'." "And again another scripture saith, 'They shall look on Him Whom they pierced'." By the Father's ordering, tender hands took the body of Jesus, and wound it "in linen clothes with the spices." As Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathaea, and the beloved sisters with them did this precious service to their Lord I am sure they mourned, as restored Israel will yet do when "one shall say unto Him 'What are these wounds in thine hands?' Then He shall answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends'." (Zech. xiii. 6).

"The storm that bowed Thy blessed head  
Is hushed for ever now,  
And rest divine is ours instead,  
Whilst glory crowns Thy brow."

F. YOUNG.

## INCOMPATIBLE TEMPERAMENTS

Read Matthew x. 1-4; Mark iii. 13-19; Luke vi. 12-16;  
Acts i. 12-14

**T**HESSE four passages list the names of the apostles of the Lord, and add details which we may be sure are instructive even though they are so brief. The men were of differing types. We are thinking now of their temperaments, and select for our present consideration the two who were probably in sharpest contrast, namely Matthew the publican and Simon the Zealot.

Publican and Zealot: what do we understand by these words? First, Publican. During the period of our Lord's life on earth, the Jewish people were under the yoke of the Romans. The

land they were in, although their own, was an occupied country. The Romans appointed their own governor in each province, garrisoned the land with their soldiers, and appointed officials in every town to collect tolls to pay not only for the upkeep for the occupying forces, but sufficient also to yield a satisfactory revenue to Rome. These officials were known as "publicans."

The publicans were of two types; those who collected the more regular dues such as the poll tax, and a lower grade of customs officer who levied taxes on goods, finding plenty of scope for rapacity and extortion. No Jew could sink lower in the estimation of his fellow-countrymen than to become a publican, particularly a customs officer such as Matthew was.

How could such a man, under such disadvantage, be suitable for the Lord to choose to carry the gospel to his own nation? Surely people generally would neither forget nor forgive what he had been, and his success as an evangelist would be prejudiced accordingly! But the fact is our Lord did choose him, divine thought and ways being, as ever, far above human.

The Zealot, Simon (not, of course, Simon Peter) was a man of totally different outlook. He belonged to a band of men who carried on ceaseless guerilla activity against the Roman rulers, an "underground movement" of ardent patriots who, by violent means or otherwise, opposed and undermined the Roman power. The Zealots would not hesitate to kill any who betrayed their country to their foreign overlords. How could this man also be suitable to preach the gospel of peace in the gracious spirit of Jesus?

Can we imagine two men more completely opposite in temper and outlook than Matthew and Simon? Matthew would have exacted from Simon the last penny he possessed, while Simon would have murdered Matthew had the opportunity come his way. Yet—how remarkable!—the Lord chose these two men to be, not merely in the greater company of His followers (there were some hundreds—see 1 Cor. xv. 6) where they would rarely meet one another, nor to be members of that larger team of seventy which He sent out at a later date: but to belong to the most select and intimate band of disciples

who were to be almost continuously in His own immediate company, and in one another's, for some three years or so. Irreverent minds might question whether our Lord realised what He was doing; the devout acknowledge His authority and wisdom, enquiring what lessons He would teach by what He did.

**LESSON ONE**—Divine love is to triumph over natural incompatibilities.

First, let us recall the Lord's great and emphatic command to His disciples to **LOVE ONE ANOTHER**, meaning that Matthew was to love Simon, and Simon was to love Matthew! Consider it! Matthew was to love a man who but a short time previously would cheerfully have murdered him; and Simon was to love the unscrupulous, unpatriotic publican who would formerly have enriched himself at Simon's expense. How completely the Lord Jesus expects that the love of His followers for one another shall triumph over the most acute differences of temperament, outlook and past history, and all that attaches to them naturally as men and women in the world! There is no room for snobbery within the Christian circle. Few words from the Bible are more often on ungodly lips than the Lord's command to His own to love one another. How far do the godly carry them out? Self-examination is called for.

**LESSON TWO**—Differences of disposition are to be expected within the Christian circle.

It is to be noted that our Lord spent the whole night in prayer before He appointed the twelve. His choice and calling of them was therefore a matter of the utmost deliberation. He knew fully what He was doing, and He did all things well. Maybe at times we wonder how some of our eccentric fellow-believers can ever serve a useful purpose within the body of Christ. The Lord knows, and has given each his place within the body "as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. xii. 18).

Consider for a moment some of the differences, frequently leading to friction, to be found amongst the people of God today. There are the cheerful, optimistic, bubbling-over-all-the-time folk who have little patience with those less exuberant,

though possibly more sober and reliable, than themselves. On the other hand are those who tend to be dour, phlegmatic, even morbid, who always look on the dark side, and consider it almost indecent for a Christian to smile or express himself humorously. It is not easy for these two types to get along together.

Then there are those whose natural tendency is to be legal-minded, with a passion for regulating everything by rule of thumb. Usually steeped in tradition, such are temperamentally opposed to change of any kind. How easily many of us slip into this as we grow older! Yet how trying such folk can be to those with a more tolerant outlook, especially to the young with their ambition to try something new, but who find themselves suspected of being revolutionaries if they do!

There is also the age-long difference between ardent "churchmen" who seem for ever taken up with matters of organisation, procedure and discipline, and eager soul-winners with their much more practical turn of mind, who subordinate everything to "gospel effort," as though once souls are won for Christ, nothing further needs to be done for them. What friction there has been between "ecclesiastics" and "gospellers" as these two classes are wont to describe one another! Yet the discrepancy is largely temperamental, and nothing like so deep as may appear. Neither category really despises the other: it only seems that way at times!

Those with any experience of Christian affairs know how deep-rooted such variations of viewpoint can be, and what a task it often is to reconcile outlooks seemingly poles apart. It will help, however, to be forewarned, so as not to be surprised when these differences manifest themselves. And when they do, far better to face facts realistically than to spend time bemoaning what cannot be altered anyhow. Let all study to bring expressions of individuality, whether in themselves or others, under control.

LESSON THREE—It is possible for those of opposite temperament to live together in harmony.

Can persons of completely different temperament live together in close fellowship without quarrelling and making life un-

pleasant for others? We affirm that it is, and support this view by the actual experience in the case of the apostolic band. We never read of Matthew and Simon being at loggerheads.

The world around does not believe that those differing widely in temperament can live together. They even seek to justify divorce on grounds of such unsuitability. The word of God countenances no such thing, but reveals the gracious power of the Holy Spirit by which believers may live together in harmony.

What was it that enabled Matthew and Simon to accept one another, and abide in the same company together? Was it not their acknowledgement of a common Master: that they both followed Him? If at any time they did begin to eye each other with misgiving, the consciousness that their Master's eye was upon them would help each to accept the other. When dealing with the question of forbearance towards one another Paul says "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died" (Rom. xiv. 15). The recognition of Christ's own love for each individual believer makes for harmony.

LESSON FOUR—Likemindedness is essential for close association in the Lord's service.

Within the circle of the twelve there were sub-divisions. There was the distinction the Lord Himself made between Peter, James and John and the other nine. This favoured trio accompanied the Lord to the bedside of Jairus' daughter: they were present on the mount of transfiguration, and were called to witness the Lord's agony in Gethsemane. We are not told why they in particular were selected. Nothing is said to indicate they were worthier than the rest. But since the Lord Himself made the distinction it was right and proper.

There was however another grouping. When the Lord despatched His disciples on their mission to Israel, He sent them out two by two. Six pairs! Who paired them? Did each choose his own partner? How unlikely! Even so, however, the Lord would have known and approved the arrangement. The question is: were Matthew and Simon paired together in the very intimate link that "two by two" called for?

The records of Matthew and Luke appear to supply the answer. The four accounts are not uniform. Whereas in Mark, and in Acts, the names of the disciples are merely listed, in Matthew and Luke they are given in pairs, and we find Matthew with Thomas, and Simon with James, son of Alphaeus. Is it too much to suppose that those were the pairings that operated when they went out? This being so, we conclude that although Matthew and Simon were members of the small apostolic band, the Lord did *not* link them together in the closer yoke when they were away from Him. And if He acted thus, is there no example for us to follow?

It is generally recognised as unwise for those contemplating marriage to ignore differences of temperament, not merely because their own lifelong happiness will be at stake, but because others—children, for example—will inevitably be affected if the relationship breaks down. Are the Lord's servants to be less careful when they enter upon, or continue in, a close relationship?

How often might the stumbling of young believers have been avoided in our own day, not to speak of the past, if two servants of the Lord, finding disagreement arising between them, had faced up to the position at once and dissolved partnership with mutual respect before relations deteriorated, instead of persisting in the uneasy yoke until an open rupture dishonoured the Lord, and brought defilement to themselves and everyone else involved!

We learn from Phil. ii. 20 that the apostle Paul sought for likemindedness in those who partnered him in his work for the Lord, and from Acts xv. 36-40 that he had the wisdom and courage to break off a close association when it jeopardised the Lord's interests.

E. A. PETTMAN.



## A CLOSING CHALLENGE TO 1957 (EXTRACTED)

For, when every allowance has been justly made for the various forces which have told against the faith of recent years, nothing is more certain than this—that our chief weakness has been *within* the camp; there has been a definite diminution of vital and personal religion; sin has had victory over us; many of us have been in the grip of moods and passions, with no more power against them than the people who do not know Christ—irritability, jealousy, crude ambition, ungenerous judgments, idle criticisms, unholy thoughts. We have largely lost our fathers' faith in heaven, and their fine scorn of death; both the hurry and worry of the world have invaded our souls, and we have lost the peace and poise that belong to those who belong to God; the gay exuberance of primitive Christianity does not shine from us. Small wonder that we cannot give this glad secret away; we have so little to give.

REV. W. E. SANGSTER, M.A., PH.D., LL.D.