



Assembly Testimony



"Always Remembered"

*Could we but pierce through the clouds that surround
Him,
Gaze on the glory no mortal has known,
We should behold, with the thousands around Him,
Wonder of wonders, a Lamb on the Throne!*

(Chorus)

*Always remembered! Always remembered!
Always remembered by what He has done!
Christ on the Cross has procured our salvation,
Always remembered by what He has done!*

*Still on His glorious hands are the nailprints,
Still are the marks on that beautiful brow,
Still in His side is the wound of the spear-thrust,
Even in Heaven, where my Saviour is now.*

*Soon shall we see Him from Heaven descending,
Soon will His Church be caught up at His call,
Soon will He 'stablish His Kingdom unending,
Wonderful, Counsellor, Lord over all!*

(By Arthur Gook).

THE GLORIES OF CHRIST

in COLOSSIANS chapter 1

By F. E. STALLAN, Glasgow.

WHEN the Psalmist penned the words, "Truly God is good", he gave expression to something that had been widely acknowledged from the earliest days of man. The Psalmist, of course, had been to the fountain-head. He did not accept the goodness of God as providence and leave the matter there like many others, but he linked the demonstration with the source. The principle of this is equally true in other matters and if only man would take time to consider he would surely come to a true knowledge of God. Take, for instance, the story of the Good Samaritan: There, on the page of Scripture, the flowers, so, to speak, are in full bloom and any who care can refresh soul and spirit by a mere reading of the narrative. On the other hand, think on the four words which tell out the fourth glory of Christ in Colossians 1: "He is before all". There is no orchard of ripe fruit there, but a vast field, uncultivated as far as the outward eye can see, but nevertheless containing all the seeds of precious things which can only be brought to maturity by the industry of the worker. Diligent search is what is required, like David Livingstone who kept pressing on through darkest Africa in his search for the headwaters of the Nile until death finally overtook him. Perhaps, in the spiritual realm, a little of the purpose of the intrepid explorer to get to the fountain-head would pay handsome rewards to men and women to-day.

The writer to the Colossians was not given to flights of imagination. Extravagant language formed no part of his vocabulary. Four simple words, "He is before all", tell out more than all the words that have been written on any earthly subject. Note that the writer did not say that He *was* before all, true as that may be, but that He *is* before all. The eternal existence of Christ not only "was" but "ever is". It is not pre-existence only but ever the same from eternal ages to eternal ages. This wondrous statement, far from being a cause of perplexity, turns our eyes to the source and goal of revelation, Christ Himself. Well may we wonder and revere as we fall under His spell. Sin and failure cannot touch Him. Time and sense fall back before the majesty of His eternal person as He is revealed in four sublime words, "He is before all".

A complementary statement follows: "By Him all things consist", or as another version has it, "Held together by virtue of Him". This is the fifth glory of Christ and the central one of the nine. How fitting it is that the central glory, the pivotal one, should speak of all things being held together by His omnipotent hand. His pre-eminence, divine power and authority affect everything. Very different, however, is the number five as it is found in association with man. The monumental work by F. W. Grant, "The Numerical Structure of Scripture", teaches plainly that man has the number five stamped upon him and it shows him to be responsible before God. If he moves in the world or takes hold of it in any way, his senses, his fingers, his toes are the instruments by which he does it. The commandments also, in two sets of five each, show him to be responsible before God and his fellow-man. Not so with Christ; the number five as it is found in this list does not speak of responsibility and dependence, but rather tells out that all things—the worlds which He called into being—are held together by virtue of Him. Without Him the orderly systems all around us, above us and below us, would disintegrate. To Him we owe the praise that day follows day and season follows season, all in their order, evidence that by Him all things cohere.

Now follows the sixth glory: He is the head of the body, the Church. The terms "head" and "body" are used very determinately by Paul to emphasise the relationship between Christ and the Church. Union was effected when Christ went on high, not in incarnation. Incarnation was a necessary preliminary but until He had risen on high the Spirit did not descend to form the Body and unite it to Him. We do not read of the Body of Christ in heaven, neither does Scripture teach that part of the Body is in heaven and part on earth. True it is that many saints have died but their condition in death is not considered in connection with the truth of the Body; there is no working through departed believers to accomplish spiritual results; this is all done by believers alive upon the earth.

Of this marvellous organism, therefore, Christ is Head. This is a glory acquired in time. He could not be the Head of the Church before it was formed and it could not be formed until He, as man, ascended on high. All of this is wonderful and calls forth the highest praise from every redeemed heart. To safeguard His person, however, Paul inserts a statement which connects with the third glory of the series. Christ is the beginning, the originator of creation. Manhood was

necessary to link Him in grace with the Church, but nevertheless the greatest care is taken to preserve also His deity. What can be said then in the face of this three-fold cord, "He is before all; by Him all things consist; He is the Head of the body, the Church"? Surely only eternal thanksgivings will be uttered that ever in His grace He linked poor sinners together and caused them to be united to Himself.

Old Paths and New Ways in Personal, Family and Church Life

By ANDREW BORLAND, M.A.

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein"—Jeremiah 6. 16.

HISTORY constantly repeats itself. That statement is true in the political world: it is also true in the spiritual world. Perhaps it is true because conditions have a habit of repeating themselves; and, as cause and effect are indissolubly linked together in every age and every walk of life, it becomes almost an axiom that, given the same causes, there are bound to follow the same effects. How often it has been true in the rise and fall of empires! In the years of progress and conquest, men dare to live sparingly and die bravely for the advancement of their country's cause, building their empires upon the blood of sacrifice. Positions become consolidated, luxury saps the courage from the veins of succeeding generations, heroic deeds become merely a name, and the nobility for which ancestors once lived becomes the scorn of a prouder but enfeebled nation. Egypt's might, Greece's grandeur, Troy's magnificence, Rome's power, Venice's glory pass away and leave behind them the same sad story of decadence following on the wake of sloth and indolence, of covetousness and pride.

What is evident in the stories of men's kingdoms is much more eminently true in the kingdom where the will and law of God rule. It is an inviolable divine law that spiritual disaster and bankruptcy follow, either immediately and suddenly,

or remotely and slowly, upon a departure from the ways that constitute the code of ethics which ought to control those who own allegiance to Him and His cause. Illustrations abound in every section of His inspired Book. The lesson is so patent that it is a marvel that succeeding generations which become acquainted with the details of the preceding ones should fail to apprehend the warning and flee the pathway that brings inevitable downfall. Israel as a nation failed, failed repeatedly. The Old Testament bristles with warnings to the wary. The Church in its corporate witness has failed. History, i.e. Church History, teems with records of the rise and fall of Christian communities, once bright as light-bearers for God, now either decadent or defunct. The situation in the days of Jeremiah is illustrative of what repeatedly happens. The prophet's protest is the outpouring of a spirit moved to its very core because of widespread departure from the ways of God. The whole nation had perverted the ideals of Jehovah. The landslide from the primitive revelation had become universal. No section of the people was exempt from the denunciation of the perturbed spokesman of God. He pierced the exterior of ceremonial pretension and saw a corrupt heart within. The children and the young men together, the husband and the wife, the prophet and the priest, all were walking in the path of disobedience. Jeremiah alone lifted up his voice to bewail the sad lot of his fellow-nationals. Not often is a man left so solitarily isolated as was he in that day. None stood with him to call the people back to repentance and obedience.

And what were his charges? Let them be enumerated without comment. "The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it." "From the least even to the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness." "From the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely." They committed abominations before the face of Jehovah without blush or shame. The spiritual advisers and guides, the prophets and the priests, made no protest against the malpractices of their charges, condoning them rather, by healing the hurt of the people slightly, saying, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace.

God had a remedy then as He always has in the hour of departure. His remedy never varies. There is no deviation from divine principle in any part of the Bible. God's ways are perfect; His mind is unalterable; His laws are immutable. Here was the prophet's plaint in his days; here is his warning to us in ours: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in

the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." The remedy then is the remedy for all time and for all peoples, namely, reversion to the old paths, to the good ways. The nation in Jeremiah's time rebelled against the advice and the warning, saying in stout-hearted self-will, "We will not walk therein." Their subsequent defeat, captivity and continued disintegration are the result of that disobedience. The wise cannot but hearken and learn.

One sees in every movement of God among men a similarity of experience to that of Israel. Centuries pass, but human nature varies not. Culture and local circumstances make slight alterations in the external appearances, but the heart abides as fixedly opposed to the ways of God as ever it was. So ineradicably bad is human nature that even with those who know the power of the indwelling Spirit of God there is a constant tendency to slip back into conformity with a former manner of life, and by so doing leave the path that pleases God. That is true not only of us as individual Christians, it is true also of us as communities of Christians. A little over a hundred years ago a vigorous protest was raised by saintly men, who, dissatisfied with their ecclesiastical positions, left their associations, and, reverting to what they believed were apostolic principles capable of application to individual and church life, planted here and there throughout the British Isles little companies of sincere men and women who sought by the guidance of the Scriptures and the ministry of godly men to maintain a testimony worthy of their heavenly calling. That God blessed the movement of the Holy Spirit through these servants of His, the history and growth of these assemblies is abundant proof. But almost four generations have passed since then, the original instruments of the movement have been long since called to their reward, and but a few of the second generation remain to attest the graciousness of the Lord in those early days. With the years changes have developed. Religious traditions in many organised societies have been in the melting pot, beliefs of a hundred years ago have been scrapped by a big majority of the men who form the opinions of others in spiritual matters, while the enthusiasm that once marked ecclesiastical leaders has been damped by the cold formalism of a decadent faith. In spite of the evident changes around us, there has not been a time when the blessing of God has not in some measure been with such assemblies as gather according to the principles they believe to be absolutely Scriptural. That it

has been its cause for continued thanksgiving. Numbers are greater than ever they were. Never have there been so many young people associated with our assemblies. Never have there been at any time within the past hundred years so many missionaries associated with these gatherings labouring for the Lord in other lands. And that it is so we thank God and take courage.

But the question keeps constantly pressing itself, "Is all well?" Criticism is good for us, even if it is not always pleasant. If it accomplishes no other end than to make us re-examine our positions, then it has achieved one commendable object. If that criticism is from the outside it may be inspired by prejudice, or ignorance: but it will do us no harm if it throws us back upon our pretensions and compels us to challenge our ways in the light of the unvarying Word of God. From time to time such assaults are made by outsiders against "The Brethren." And what have these criticisms elicited? Two main facts have been disclosed.

First of these is: that such gatherings of Christians have adhered admirably to many New Testament principles without deviating one iota from the literal interpretation of Scripture, accepting it as the inspired Word of God. To-day there is as vigorous maintenance of the Fundamentals in theory as ever there was. The letter of the word is respected without question. The doctrines of the Bible are contested for without hesitation. We stand where our brethren stood a hundred years ago. And who that knows the tendencies in the ecclesiastical world of the past decade but prays with enlightened fervour that it may long continue to be so among the assemblies?

But despite all that, a second fact has been forthcoming, namely, that there is a marked tendency for the testimony to become less apostolic than it was, less distinctive than it was, less vigorous than it was. By almost inappreciable degrees such a state of affairs comes upon a community, or rather, because more correct, develops within a community. Just as the successive copyings of a masterpiece painting by imperceptible degrees changes the whole conception of the original artist's picture, so slight deviations from the original will of God as contained within the pages of the New Testament, will, by-and-by, produce a something which but very remotely answers to the ideal He has in view. That there should be the suspicion that such degeneration has manifested itself should be sufficient warning to make the considerate pause, and reflect.

(To be continued).

Symbolic Declarations

By H. WINFIELD GRAHAM.

1 Corinthians 11. 2-16.

WHEN this passage is mentioned the common idea is that it is a message solely for sisters. Not so. The teaching is equally divided between the sexes. Neither is there any reference to dress, fashion, worldliness nor modesty.

Some shrug off the passage as being of little importance, forgetting the solemn words of Christ about those who infringe one of the least of the commandments and teach men so (Matt. 5. 19). These verses begin a section which continues to the end of Chapter 14 and concludes with the declaration that these things are the commandments of the Lord (v. 37). The importance of the subject is seen by the use of the phrase, "I delivered" (11. 2), which is repeated in verse 23 in connection with the Lord's Supper, and in 15. 3 in reference to the Gospel. So the matter treated in our portion is on a par with the other two in importance.

The theme of the entire section is order, for God is a God of order. In creation He established order (Gen. 1. 26), in the nation (Rom. 13. 1), in the family (Eph. 5. 22-24), and so in the church. In 11. 1-16 we have order displayed in the posture of the gathered saints; in 11. 17-34, order in the Lord's Supper; in Chapter 12 divers gifts are distributed in an orderly way; in Chapter 13 we have the order of love in the use of the gifts; and in Chapter 14, order in their exercise in the gatherings.

In Christ there is no distinction of male and female (11. 11; Gal. 3. 28), but in the church there is. Verse 3 names three Headships by which divine order is maintained—God the head of Christ, Christ the head of the man, and the man the head of the woman. The Son, though on equality with the Father, took the place of a Servant (Phil. 2. 6, 7), and so said: "My Father is greater than I" (John 14. 28). Christ is the head of the man and the latter is directly subject to Him. The man is the head of the woman and in her subjection to him she is indirectly subject to Christ. The reason for headship being invested in the man is threefold. The woman was second in creation and made for man (vv. 8, 9), she is the weaker vessel (1 Peter 3. 7), and she was deceived at the fall (1 Tim. 2. 11-14). Headship does not indicate superiority.

The Lord Jesus ever walked in perfect obedience to God (John 8. 29), and there was no need that He should ever

make a specific declaration of submission. But God has ordained that the man and the woman should each make a public declaration of their recognition of their respective heads. One of the reasons is because of the angels (v. 10), which is proof that these regulations were not imposed because of temporary conditions at Corinth. God decreed that this declaration should be symbolic and not just verbal. There is nothing unusual in this. In baptism the candidate is immersed in water and raised again, surely a strange proceeding in the view of an unbelieving world. But it has a meaning and in it a declaration is made of allegiance to Christ. In the Lord's Supper a group of people eat of one loaf and drink from one cup, surely also a strange procedure, but the Lord is remembered and His death is proclaimed. In the matter of headships, God had appointed a strange way in which this declaration is to be made, but it is His appointment. He has appointed that the man and the woman should each bear on his and her physical head a double sign of recognition of the respective spiritual head. The man was to have his head uncovered and his hair short. The woman was to have her head covered and her hair long. This is as much an ordinance of God as Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and in none of the three cases has the believer any right to alter the symbols.

Of the two signs or tokens on each head, one is permanent and the other is adopted for the occasion. For the man to appear with covered head or long hair would be to dishonour his head (Christ) by not acknowledging Him as head (v. 4). Man is the image and glory of God and that is not to be covered (v. 7). For the woman to appear with uncovered head or short hair is to dishonour the man, her head, and thus indirectly Christ the head (v. 5). The woman is the glory of the man and man's glory must be covered in the presence of God (v. 7). *(To be continued).*

“Saviours Who Saved”

By WM. HARRISON, Glasgow.

Nehemiah 9. 27.

THERE is one Person only who is Saviour of the world (John 4. 42), Saviour of sinners (Acts 4. 12), and Saviour of the Body (Eph. 5: 23). He is without equal, without predecessor and without successor. But among the Lord's people there arise conditions and circumstances that call for

those who can exercise saving influence.

Elisha was a saviour to the King of Israel by his timely warnings. When the king sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, he saved himself there not once nor twice (2 Kings 6. 9, 10). During the Absalom crisis David saved the city of Jerusalem by leaving it. His right to be in Jerusalem could not be questioned. His servants were ready to do whatsoever their lord the king should appoint but David would not have the enemy smite the city with the edge of the sword (2 Sam. 15. 14). If he found favour in the eyes of the Lord He would bring him there again and it would be as he had left it (2 Sam. 15. 25).

As the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul glorified his ministry to provoke to jealousy his own flesh that he might save some of them (Rom. 11. 14). His counsel to Timothy to take heed to himself and to his teaching is because in so doing he would save himself and those that heard him (1 Tim. 4. 16).

Conditions of crisis produce the saviours for the occasion, but conditions that continue unchanged require the same. The Christian wife may save her husband without the Word, by continuing subjection and chaste behaviour (1 Peter 3. 1). There are times when the wife can be the saviour of her husband, and times when the husband can be the saviour of his wife. The sulky Ahab, refusing to eat and with his face to the wall could have been saved then had Jezebel been other than she was. Jezebel might have been saved from becoming the murderer of Naboth had Ahab been the man he should have been (1 Kings 21. 4-15). Silence on the part of Job's wife would have saved him from an added sorrow. Speech on his part saved her from seeming to be a foolish woman, when she for a moment spoke like one (Job 2. 9, 10). Pilate's wife, at the most critical hour in his history, did all she could to save him and failed (Matt. 27. 19). The impress of her words is still with him when he replies to the chief priests and elders. Compare "Have thou nothing to do" (v. 19) with "What shall I do then?" (v. 22); and "that just man" (v. 19) with "This just Person" (v. 24).

The tragedy of Ananias and Sapphira is that each could have been the saviour of the other instead of agreeing together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord (Acts 5. 1-9). The example of the repentant thief if followed could have been of saving effect to his railing companion (Luke 23. 40-43).

There are ways and means abundant by which we can exercise a saving influence upon others, if only we have the mind to do so.

Singing with Grace in Your Hearts

By J. B. GRAHAM, Sydney.

HOW much thought do we give to our singing? It is an activity that is very much taken for granted and yet a study of its role in the believer's life is indeed profitable.

Look at it under three headings:—

1. The part singing has in our personal relationship with God.
2. Singing as it affects our relationship with fellow believers.
3. Singing as it affects our corporate testimony as an assembly.

1. SINGING IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Read Ephesians 5. 17-20. The apostle here writes of the inner life of the believer. He shows that we are not to seek natural excitement but are to be filled with the Spirit, the context (and other scriptures) implying that this is not for some special occasion but rather as a matter of our daily living. He then goes on to show that we should be "speaking TO YOURSELVES in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody IN YOUR HEART to the Lord." God truly hears these spiritual songs as they come from a heart overflowing with praise, living in all the fulness of God's grace.

We as Christians have a lot to sing about. There is the matter of our redemption. Moses and the Israelites sang of God's grace and power in delivering them when they saw Pharaoh's host overthrown in the sea. That song is worth reading. Then there is the matter of God's grace to us all along our pathway here. Plenty for us to rejoice in here. There is the sure and clear hope He has given us that is enough to make any heart sing. The hymn writer must have had this in mind when he penned these words:—

*My heart can sing when I pause to remember,
Each heartache here is but a stepping stone
Along life's way that's winding always upward;
This troubled world is not my final home.*

*So until then my heart will go on singing,
Until then with joy I'll carry on;
Until the day my eyes behold the city,
Until the day God calls me home.*

I would suggest to you that if our audible singing is to mean anything, it must reflect the "singing and melody in your

hearts to the Lord" and come from an overflowing heart. It is not meant to be the singing of tunes for shallow emotional satisfaction but the spontaneous result of spiritual enjoyment and appreciation.

2. SINGING IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FELLOW BELIEVERS

In Colossians 3. 13-16 the apostle deals with our relationship with one another. The context includes such phrases as "forbearing one another—forgiving one another—a quarrel against any—put on charity (to one another)—one body"—phrases that deal with our mutual exercises. He then exhorts, "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The A.V. has no comma between "one another" and "in psalms", but some translations show one there. Whether this be so or not the singing of Col. 3. 16 is associated in context with our mutual relationship and we certainly should consider the effect of our hymns on our fellow believers.

In 1 Cor. 14. 15 Paul says, "I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also." The context here deals with our gathering in the assembly and the subject is our edification of each other. When we come together does the hymn we give out illuminate and express the theme of the meeting and does it edify? Can our brethren say "amen" to the thoughts expressed in the hymn? Does the hymn teach and instruct, and if a stranger were listening would the words add to his comprehension of the ministry or gospel? On the other hand, is the hymn being sung just because it has a bright and catchy tune?

When we come together let our singing be "with the spirit" and "with the understanding also". Let us remember the effect our hymn will have on our fellow believers.

3. THE EFFECT OF SINGING ON OUR CORPORATE TESTIMONY

In Matt. 26. 30 we read of the company of disciples singing a hymn before they left the upper room. In Acts 16. 25 we read how Paul and Silas sang in prison and how the prisoners heard them. These passages remind us of the public nature of our assembly singing and lead us to consider the effect it has on our testimony.

It would be true to say that every public act of ours affects the testimony of the assembly with which we are associated. The way we act, the things we say, the manner in which we conduct our business; all these things are weighed

up by the unsaved as an indication of whether there is anything in our salvation. If these things reflect the change that redemption has brought to our lives, our testimony as an assembly is bright. The converse is also true, for our corporate testimony can be marred by some thoughtless deed or action.

In exactly the same way, our singing as an assembly adds to or detracts from the unsaved person's impression of the gospel we bear. I do not mean just the singing of gospel hymns either. Only last week we heard in our hall the testimony of a man who became concerned when he heard the words of the hymn: "See from His head, His hands, His feet". We do not usually regard this as a gospel hymn, yet God chose to use it thus. Other hymns have been used to convict some. "*Assembly Testimony*" recently told of two, and we have heard of other conversions resulting from hymns.

There are people living next door to our hall, there are some in the basement and others are passing by outside. They will not be able to hear one word of what is spoken but they can hear our singing quite clearly. We tend to forget this. We should ask ourselves just what they really do hear. Can they understand what is 'being sung?' Maybe sometimes we do not sing sufficiently clearly and maybe sometimes we blot out the words by not singing in time with each other. Perhaps we sing in time and sing clearly but our manner of singing indicates that we really have no heart in what we sing, or we sing so slowly that they conclude there is no life or enjoyment in what we are singing about.

Go back to Ephesians 5. Does our singing come from a joyful heart, overflowing with praise and do our voices reflect this? In the light of 1 Cor. 14 and Col. 3 does our singing sound as if we understand and appreciate the words we sing? I am sure that if the answer is 'yes', our assembly testimony as far as the unsaved listener is concerned, will be brighter and more clearly understood.

I have heard it said of some assemblies that "they do not HAVE an organ" and of others that "they do not NEED an organ". This should be true of every assembly in both respects because there is no scriptural warrant for such in God's assembly, and if our spiritual condition is right it will be very evident that we have no NEED of such.

When Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God they edified each other, God was praised and the prisoners heard them. We all know the joyous and blessed outcome of their praying and singing. May it be the same with us.

"GOD IS STILL ON THE THRONE"

Oliver Cromwell's secretary was dispatched on some important business to the Continent. He stayed one night at a sea-port town, and tossed on his bed, unable to sleep.

According to old custom, a servant slept in his room, and on this occasion, soundly enough. The secretary at length wakened the man, who asked how it was his master could not rest.

"I am so afraid anything should go wrong with the embassy," was the reply. "Master," said the valet, "may I ask you a question or two?" "To be sure," answered the envoy. "Did God rule the world before we were born?" "Most assuredly He did." "And will He rule it after we are dead?" "Certainly He will." "Then Master why not let Him rule the present too?" The secretary's faith was stirred, peace was the result and in a few minutes both he and his servant were in a sound sleep.

The Fellowship of His Cross

Philippians 3. 10.

By GEORGE STEINBERGER, Stuttgart.

Extracted from *The Believer's Magazine*, 1902.

AT the Cross, our Head took the lowest possible place; and to us, His members, He has given the lowest place too. "The brightness of the glory and the express image of the person" of the unseen God (Heb. 1. 3) became the most "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53. 3). Since then, we have only *one* right, and that is the right to be the lowest and the least. If we lay claim to more than this, we do not yet understand the Cross.

We seek higher life! We shall find it if we enter more deeply into the fellowship of His Cross with our Head. God has given the crucified One the highest place (Rev. 5. 6), and should not we give Him the same? We do this, if we hour by hour reckon ourselves as crucified with Him (Gal. 2. 19, 20). Thus we honour the crucified One.

We desire complete victory! We shall find it, if we enter more fully into the fellowship of His Cross. With nailed hands and feet, the Lamb gained the greatest victory. Only so long as we abide under the shadow of the Cross, do we abide under the shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 91. 1). The Cross must become our home. There alone can we find shelter.

Only then can we understand *our cross*, when we have learnt to understand His Cross. Let us draw so near to it, that we not

only gaze at it, but touch it; yea, yet more, even let it operate *within* us (Gal. 5. 24), that it may become an *inner cross*. Then the Cross lives on in us, and we experience its power, displayed primarily in the fact that we are not conquered by our own cross, but bear it gladly.

The enemy always aims at taking away our cross, that we may go through life without one. The forty days' temptation of our Lord (Luke 4. 1-3) consisted in the devil's wanting to rob Him of the Cross. Therefore he said, "If thou be the Son of God": he reminded Him of His greatness and of His rights. But He renounced His greatness and His rights, and remained the Son of Man, the Lamb. And as such He overcame. Had Jesus allowed His Cross to be taken from Him, His whole life, all His doings, had been worthless, and the enemy had had the mastery. The enemy would have had no objection to our Lord's going, as Son of God, from one revelation of power to another, if He had only let him take away the Cross; for He knew well enough that His nailed feet would bruise His head, and His nailed hands (Matt. 12. 29) take everything out of his hands. Now we understand why the enemy wants to rob us of our cross. What are we without a cross? (2 Cor. 4. 16, 17). What Jesus would have been without His cross! O, do not give away your cross, hold it fast! For by the cross the Lord knows His followers. Do not shorten your cross, for by so doing you diminish your glory. Do not choose your cross, but take up the one He has prepared for you. Do not carry your cross before you like a hero; do not, on the other hand, drag it behind you as if you were disheartened, but bear it with patience on your shoulder, so that God may see the greater part, and others the lesser. The Cross is holy—and our cross too: therefore we must treat it in a holy manner, and not give our holy things to the dogs, and throw pearls before swine. This we do, if we show our cross to those who are not God's priests.

The more glory you desire, the greater cross you desire with it (Matt. 20. 22). James and John desired to sit, one on the right hand, the other on the left, of the Son of Man. Jesus answered them, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" In our Lord's case the baptism of the Holy Ghost was followed by the baptism of suffering, and the revelation of love on Mount Tabor by His being forsaken of His God at Golgotha. He was "made perfect through suffering" (Heb. 2. 10), and do we imagine there is another way to the same end for us? Very many people get no further, because they will not take up the cross God has placed in their way. On the broad way one can avoid one's cross, but on the narrow way one cannot do this; one is obliged to take it up, or else it is always in the way, and one can come no further. Do not take offence at your cross? Faithfulness is followed by the Cross, as Jesus says of Himself in Matt. 20. 28, and as He says to His own in Matt. 16. 24.

REVIEW

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

By JOHN HEADING

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