

# **THE LORD IS THERE**

**and other papers  
on Cognate Subjects**



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**Price—Threepence.**

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# THE LORD IS THERE.

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The prophet Ezekiel concludes his prophecy with the words: "The name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there (Jehovah-Shammah)." That striking statement refers to the focus of interest in the millennium. One might have been tempted to think that the characteristic mentioned should have been the transcendent glory which will make everything in the millennial state effulgent with the praise of the Lord. But not so, it is the Lord's presence which will be the most prominent feature of that day of bliss to come.

What will be known in a national (yea, in a universal) way in that day to come, is known in a specialised way in this era, which is the Spirit's day. The Lord's people have now the special privilege of anticipating the universal condition obtaining in the "world to come." "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18, 20).

The disciples to whom the Lord addressed these words formed a select group who enjoyed the Lord's presence in their midst and who were attracted to Himself. But the statement is prophetic, as indicating that His bodily presence would not be continuing with them. In His absence, the authority residing in Himself would attach to His name. Moreover, consequent upon His departure from them and His exaltation to God's right hand, the Holy Spirit has come to give power to His name and to gather people together to that common focus or centre. So that the assemblage is relieved of the imputation of being whimsical, *i.e.*, according to changeable individual opinion, or of being fortuitous, *i.e.*, according to accident.

Obviously, the Lord's presence must now be a spiritual presence, but yet not less real than that physical presence which inspired His disciples with joy, and which will yet fill the whole earth so that the significance will be impressed on the name of its metropolis.

The Lord is the point of attraction. He said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." (John 12, 32). Christ is known in the glory of His person and His work as Lord. He is not manifesting Himself in the world to claim His rights, but He is drawing people to Himself on the ground of redemption. Then those so drawn find that they have endowments, qualities and interests in common. So that fellowship or communion is expressed in connection with the name of the Lord. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4, 5).

The name of the Lord cannot be linked up with the world. The Lordship of Christ appertains in an observation way to the "world to come." The apprehension of Christ as Lord leads us at once into the light of another sphere or day. The apostle said to the Ephesian Christians, "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light." (Eph. 5, 8). Spiritual darkness has settled down on the world. Even as light and darkness are wholly inconsistent entities, so the Christian and the world are radically different in constitution, interests and destiny.

The name of the Lord then has a wonderful selective effect. Coming under the Lordship of Christ draws us to a centre where His presence is known, but in the process we are dissociated from the world, *i.e.*, the spirit or course of the age. We are no longer dominated by the ideas which control the worldling. We are relieved from even the legitimate ambitions which influence him. The Christian's interests find their focus at the right hand of God. Therefore the apostle exhorted the Colossians to seek those things, because Christ sits there!

Then the highest point to which natural ambition would tend to take him fails to satisfy the Christian for at least two reasons: (1) that the position would not be high enough (2) that it would not be permanent enough. It is useless striving to reach a mountain peak that will be blown down in a moment! Previous to the eruption that overwhelmed Herculaneum and Pompeii in 79 A.D., Vesuvius had never been known to manifest volcanic action. Doubtless the dwellers on its slopes scoffed at the possibility of such an occurrence, yet that did not relieve them from the effects of the mountain top being suddenly blown off! So the world tendencies will come to a similar climax as described in the prophetic Word of God.

However, the power of separation from the world does not depend on any qualification possessed by the individual Christian, but on an external attraction. This is exquisitely expressed in the lines of a wellknown hymn-writer:—

'Tis the treasure I've found in His love  
That has made me a pilgrim below.

That was the expression of an individual experience. Similarly what gives character to a meeting of Christians is the presence of the Lord. The antecedent is that the Spirit's constraining power draws His redeemed people together in the sense of the Lord's name, and the inevitable consequence is that the Lord honours that gathering together with His presence. Now it is well to recognise the precision of Scriptural expression. He does not grant His presence necessarily to every claimant company.

Scripture shows that there will be those in the day of manifestation who will claim: "Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name . . . and in Thy name done many wonderful works." (Matt. 7, 22). Yet the claim will be absolutely and irrevocably repudiated by the Lord. So no mere claim of orthodoxy will avail. Nor will clear enuncia-

tion of the truth afford a prescriptive right. There are lop-sided Christians who are arrogant enough to lay claim to an absolute monopoly of the Lord's presence in the connection to which this subject refers. But the claim only requires to be stated, for its absurdity to become self-evident.

The responsibility attaching to such a condition would be overwhelming. Moreover, by the fruits of the claimants shall the value of their contention be tested. In that coming millennial day, when the Lord's presence will be known in its ocean fulness, there will not be a wish expressed in dissonance with the Lord's will. There will be perfect unanimity amongst the components of society because of the Lord's will being owned. Although the conditions then and now are vastly different in a quantitative way, they are identical qualitatively. It is impossible to conceive of different results where the Lord's will is owned, and that is contingent on being in the sphere of the Lord's presence. That the claimants of such prescriptive monopoly are palpably found wanting in maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the co-bond of peace is so evident that their claim falls to the ground.

From the foregoing, it will be readily conceded that nothing else in our meetings is to be compared with the Lord's presence. Thus it is of prime importance that we apprehend that He is there. The realization of that condition will deliver us from every sentiment of human religion. All the trappings, with which man's tradition and superstition have trammled Christian assemblages, will fall off as the gravecloths fell off Lazarus at the Lord's command! If on the one hand we are freed from ritualistic tendencies we shall be prevented in the same way on the other hand from drifting into rationalistic tendencies. It is easy to weave a web of metaphysics from our own reason which will enmesh us as effectually as ritual ever did.

The Apostle, in summing up the ministry of the New Covenant, wrote: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." That is neither the "cringing servility" of ritual nor the "arrogant license" of reason, but freedom to be occupied with the Lord, so that with all the privilege of unveiled face we may behold the glory of the Lord. Then we become the subject of a wonderful series of transformation into His image from glory cause to glory effect as by the Spirit of the Lord. In such a sequence of operations we shall be reduced in our own estimation sufficiently to preserve us from all presumption. The criticism of every meeting then will be in the individual analysis: "Did I realize that the Lord was there?" Otherwise all other conditions and personal presence were valueless!

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## **THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.**

John's gospel does not give the incident of the institution of the Lord's Supper, but the Lord's words recorded in John, chapters 13 and 14, were undoubtedly spoken at that time. That the Lord is absent is implied in the celebration of the supper. We should not require it if He were present. He was forty days on earth in resurrection, but the disciples did not break bread during that period.

But during His physical absence, we have His spiritual presence. There is not only the promise of His physical return for His own in the third verse of chapter 14, but the promise of His spiritual coming to them in the eighteenth verse, "I will not leave you orphans, I will be coming to you." During His resurrection period on earth He did not remain with His disciples continuously, but He visited them occasionally.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," are words of the greatest moment as setting forth one of the fundamental truths of

Christianity. But if this is merely accepted as a dogmatic statement, it will not take us far. Apart from the soul's apprehension of the Lord's presence His supper will be a formal matter.

The realisation of His presence is strictly conditional. In the 20th chapter of John, He came into the midst of His disciples, when the doors were shut. Doubtless that has a literal meaning, but now it has an equally applicable symbolical meaning. What hinders our enjoyment of the Lord's presence is failure to close the doors of our minds, after we have closed the door of the meeting-room.

Closed the door we leave behind us  
Toil and conflict, self and strife,  
And, within, Thy love doth bind us  
In one fellowship of life.

“Cause every man to go out from me” (Gen. 45, 1), were Joseph's words. No Egyptian could be present while he made himself known to his brethren. So in symbol the “Egyptians” prevent our realisation of the Lord's presence, and the Egyptian who is most difficult to evict dwells within ourselves. In I. Kings, chapter 8, we read, “When the priests were come out of the Holy Place, the cloud filled the House of the Lord.” So long as the priests remained to share the place with Him, the Shekinah glory cloud would never have been revealed. They must go out disowning all lordship or title to the place.

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## THE LORD IN THE MIDST.

Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. (John 20, 20). Not infrequently we have applications from Christians wishing to associate themselves with us, because they are seeking amongst us for the solution of ills which have afflicted them in some centre of formal religion. We may be sure that they will be grievously disappointed, if that idea is dominant in their minds.



The disciples were glad only as they saw the Lord in the midst. What has caused much of the unhappiness and disappointment has arisen through failing to see the Lord in the midst of His own. Then we are apt to limit our affections and interest to the merely social circle. Often that is as an inner ring within an outer ring of those with whom we formally associate in Christian observances. Moreover we need to see that in a much wider sense there are countless thousands who are as dear as we are to the heart of the Lord, with whom we do not associate, and that in answering to the Lord's request in partaking of His supper we should have these in view. We do not seek merely to express the fellowship of all the Christians in our locality. But we embrace in our thoughts the whole assembly of God in a world wide sense, and that as two or three gathered together in the authority of His name we seek to express that truth.

It was a common expression at one time that certain Christians had been gathered to the Lord's name for 40 years or more and so on. Such is apt to be a misleading statement. The gathering to His name is not a perpetual gathering although it has a lasting significance. But it is only realised when we come together. If this fact is appreciated, we shall not be found claiming the monopoly of the Lord's presence, and so denying the same to any other Christian company if those who constitute such are truly gathered in the authority of His name.

At the same time our being gathered together should leave a tangible mark upon us during the week of which the assembling forms a sort of vanguard. Even as it could be said of the disciples in the early part of the Acts that people took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. So it is nowadays, the apprehension of the Lord's presence must necessarily have a similar result. The people around will recognise that although in the world we are not of it.

Meeting with the Lord on the first of the week will entail sustaining a new character, *viz.*, the bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that His life also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4, 10).

Self and selfishness are the greatest hindrances to enjoyment of the truth of Matt. 18, 20. But on the other hand love leads to self-sacrifice and is the chief condition essential in the apprehension of His presence. "If anyone love Me, he will keep My words." (John 14, 23). "Fulfil ye my joy . . . having the same love," etc. (Phil. 2, 1-4). Love cannot be satisfied with anything short of His company. He was frequently at Bethany because a company was there that delighted in having Him with them, and so it is to-day. Being like-minded in Christ Jesus, causes us in lowness of mind to esteem each other better than self and gives the proper atmosphere to the local company to experience the reality of the consolation in Christ and fellowship of the spirit. But the realisation of His presence is not unfruitful. There are precious fruits of the richest flavour. The first is peace! His first words in John 20 were "Peace unto you." Every disturbing element is hushed under His Lordship and we are free to think of Him. But joy always follows peace. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." (John 20, 20). They doubtless remembered His words, "I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you."

Then we have enlightenment as to the great sphere of blessing into which the heavenly company is introduced. "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." These two possessive pronouns "Thy" and "My" are full of significance. What divine enlightenment is contained in that revelation "Thy Name." "My brethren" speaks of the blessedness of association with Him, whose spiritual presence we have come to prize.

## BETHANY.

Bethany means the "House of Palms," hence is indicative of a place of rest, *e.g.*, an oasis in the desert. There is scriptural evidence that the Lord was wont to resort to Bethany when he was in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It would not be difficult to arrive at the correct conclusion as to the reason of His doing so. There were loyal hearts there who appreciated his company and prized his love, in contrast to the treachery of Judas, the hatred of the Pharisees, the cruelty of the soldiery and the cold hard fickleness of the people.

It was at Bethany that these loyal friends made the Lord a supper. At which the three essential features of the Christian life in the individual were portrayed in the business of the three members of the family named in the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel.

1. Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead had the privilege of sitting at the table with the Lord, indicating fellowship.

2. Martha served, hence she exhibited the feature of service.

3. Mary, in anointing the feet of her Lord with the treasured ointment, indicated worship.

These features, fellowship, worship and service are indissolubly associated. No one can rightly effect one of these, who ignores or is remiss in the observation of the others.

When all the disciples were looking forward with eagerness to the immediate display of the coming kingdom. Mary, alone, was in the Lord's mind as to the future. Her faith had apprehended the end of His pathway was necessarily that He should die, and, therefore, she grasped the

opportunity. The other women essayed to perform that service, after His death and burial, but were too late. He had risen! (Mary was not at the sepulchre). She had bestowed on Him in His life-time the choicest treasured possession which she had. There was nothing too good to give to her Lord!

Since the Lord has gone on High, the significance of Bethany has continued. In the midst of the world that hated and crucified Him He finds positive delight in the response of His own to His love. There are hearts loyal to their absent Lord. They are found maintaining occupancy till He come!

The Lord went up from Bethany. He led the disciples out as far as to Bethany and having lifted up His hands He blessed them, as the true antitype of the priest in Old Testament times, with His hands filled with the favour of God, He bestows it in an unstinted manner.

It came to pass while He blessed them (or while He was blessing them), He was parted from them and was carried up into heaven. The real sense of the expression is that His blessing was an unfinished act! Although His position is changed since He has gone on High, He is still in the process of blessing His people.

The sequel was that they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the Temple praising and ascribing blessing to God. (Luke 24, 50-53). So the Gospel which begins with great joy has a similar termination! That feature is characteristic of the whole era for the Christian. So that the Apostle Paul terminating his earthly pathway in a Roman prison could quite rightly exhort his Philippian readers to rejoice in the Lord!

The Lord went up from Bethany and it is to Bethany He will return. Bethany is still formed of loyal and expectant hearts, who join in cheerful resonance to the in-

visitation of the Spirit and the Bride saying, "Come" to an absent Lord and Bridegroom. Meanwhile, we have the peerless privilege of occupying in His interests in the brief interval "till He come." The outburst from these hearts must necessarily be:—

"Even, so come Lord Jesus!"

His answer is:—"Yes! I come quickly!"

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## **ANTECEDENTS TO ASSEMBLING TOGETHER.**

(Heb. 10, 12-25).

From the above scriptures we see that there are obviously antecedents which are essential to our coming together in assembly on a real basis.

(1) The forgiveness of sins is the indispensable initial requirement. In the 8th Chapter of Hebrews where the terms of the New Covenant are specified, this matter is stated last. But so far as the individual is concerned it must be entered first. No one is entitled to be reckoned a Christian in the real sense of the word who has not his or her sins forgiven. Their sins and iniquities will be remembered no more. Only God could do that. No lesser person could blot out the memory of sins.

Christ offered one sacrifice for sins and sat down forever, even as by that one offering, He has perfected the sanctified forever, (or in perpetuity, *i.e.*, without break or cessation for a moment). All this is in contrast to the previous dispensation of law wherein the priests daily offered the same sacrifices which were unavailing in the removal of sins. Their practice only brought up the insolubility of the problem before men, but at the same time indicating with unerring precision that in God's good time He would Himself provide a solution.

(2) The witness of the Spirit (in verse 15) presupposes the Spirit having been given to the believer. The Spirit

gives testimony to the efficacy and the peerless value of the work of Christ. The prophetic passages in the Old Testament were ever recurrent as to His coming and His work. The Spirit's witness in the heart of the believer is consonant with the witness of the Scriptures. There are well-meaning Christians (who ought to know much better) who aver that the Scriptures are not important as they merely confirm what has been already established in their hearts by the Spirit. However plausible that may seem to be it conceals a subtle error. The statement arises from defective teaching, because it is exactly the opposite way round. The Spirit confirms in our hearts what is set forth in the Scriptures; not the erroneous contention that the Scriptures confirm what is witnessed in our hearts.

There are two great spiritual agencies at work, *viz.*, the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error. The Apostle John in his Epistle shows that there are two infallible discriminating tests to which every spirit may be subjected. The spirits which are in accord with the Spirit of Truth (*a*) confess Jesus Christ come in flesh, *i.e.*, the true import of His incarnation: (*b*) they hear the Apostles, *i.e.*, they listen to the messages conveyed in the Epistles as real messages from God through the Apostles.

It is fashionable in religious circles nowadays to speak in a disparaging way about Paul's opinion or John's opinion, etc., as if either were living to-day, he would have expressed himself otherwise than he did in the first century. If the Scriptures are valued as the living Word it is impossible to entertain the thought that the passage of time will alter the statement of the One who knows no variableness nor shadow of turning. If we do not pay attention to the Scriptures then our minds become the playground of evil spirits, which will speedily lead us to adopt the ideas of the spirit of error. With such considerations in view we may well exclaim :

O! To grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be.

But the Spirit's witness is a real entity. He constantly bears testimony to the unchanging efficacy of the work of Christ. Thus the consciousness of forgiveness of sins is established in the believer's heart. We have the Spirit who knows every element of the value of Christ's work. Our having the Spirit introduces the thought that we are the subjects of the Spirit's teaching.

(3) We are apt to be occupied solely with oral teaching. Again referring to the eighth chapter of Hebrews, we see that the second feature of the New Covenant to be established with the House of Israel in the day to come is that it will be unnecessary for anyone to teach his neighbour, *i.e.*, orally. For all will know the Lord from the least (*i.e.*, the little one) to the greatest (*i.e.*, the grown up person). But the blessings of the New Covenant are now known by the Christian through the Spirit's residence in him.

God has given us His Spirit that we may be conscious that His love has removed in the death of His Son everything that was between Himself and us. To know God there must be no distance between. In the far country whatever the prodigal might have heard of his father's love he could never have been deeply conscious of it there. To know God by being near Him is very different from believing a report about Him. The result is that we not only believe the report but we love the One of whom the report speaks. The Lord Jesus has been given as the Covenant that God's disposition towards men might be known. (Isa. 49, 8). Then the love of God being poured forth into our hearts leads us to love one another. "Ye are taught of God to love one another." (1 Thess. 4, 9). No orthodox formality and ecclesiastical rectitude can ever make up for the lack of love. No matter what argument may be advanced to substantiate the claim of being well taught can be of value if love to the saints is not being manifested.

(4) "We have boldness (*i.e.*, liberty or confidence) to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus. The new and

living way which which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is His flesh. (v. 19, 20). God has opened the way to us unreservedly that we may enter where He is adored and where we can survey without a veil the glory and majesty of His ways in Christ. In the past dispensation only the High Priest could enter there, once a year, not on account of his own merit, but only in a representative way, carrying the blood to sprinkle on the mercy-seat, typifying the perfect offering of Christ.

Everything in the Holiest is in accord with the Love of God. Christ is the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy-Seat. Every thought of God for the blessing of man is secured in Christ as the Ark of the Covenant as He is also the propitiation or Mercy-Seat where God can meet man in all the need of the latter. What streams of praise would mark our gathering together if we apprehended the privilege of approach in order to view Christ in the Holiest!

God's coming out in the revelation of Himself through the death of the Lord Jesus becomes our way of going in. As a new way it is a spiritual process which supersedes all the process of man on probation and shows his total rejection by God. The way is ever fresh and living because God is revealed in Love. All that is a forerunner of our being versed in the Lord's mind. In the Holiest we apprehend what His mind is as to every subtle distinction in the spiritual sphere.

In the day of glory to come, Israel under the New Covenant will have the forgiveness of sins, the Spirit poured out on them like a deluge and they will be taught of God, but they will never enter the Holiest, nor have intelligence of God's ways nor apprehend His Glory as the saints of this dispensation have the privilege to do. In the process we have wonderful support because we have the great priest over the House of God. He is the same unchangeable person whose eye never slumbers nor do His hands hang down for a moment of time. He is the great antitype of the articles of furniture in the inmost chamber of the Tabernacle.



The thrice repeated expression, "Let us," shows that the practical bearing of this process implies conditions or responsibility. A "true heart" means that the heart responds to the love of God. "The full assurance of faith" implies that the privilege is not thought to be beyond our apprehension. "Our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" indicates that the offering of Christ is known in such a way that our hearts do not condemn us. "Our bodies washed with pure water" would require that our conduct and associations are consistent with the fact that Christ received from the world only a cross and a grave!

We shall then be holding fast the confession of our hope without wavering. We shall continue steadfastly maintaining a resolute front to the enemy as the Christians did at first. Because God is not slack concerning His promise. He is faithful. Whatever He has said He will perform in His own good time.

In the long run (because the Christian's pathway is not a short race as a rule), we shall be very considerate for each other; stimulating love and good works, being examples to the flock of God. Parallel with this we shall be found assembling ourselves together and encouraging each other thereby, and in an increasing way as we see the Day of Glory approaching. We must be confirmed in the sense of the imminence of that event, without making any claim to having particular insight to the future. However, everything points to the conclusion of man's day of glory as coming to a sudden end. Man's ingenuity and success in the triumph of mind over matter is getting to such a pitch that he cannot brook denial in his search after the essential nature of things.

Then man seems bent in the use of his great powers in the compassing of the death of his fellows. God must speedily intervene to end the chaos and the welter of blood in human affairs, in order that He whose right it is to reign shall reign to the Glory of God and the everlasting benefit of a redeemed creation.

## THE LORD'S DAY.

“ I became in the Spirit on the Lord's Day,” is a very striking statement of the Apostle John in the first chapter of the Revelation. It is a characteristic expression of Christianity, applying particularly to the first day of the week, the Resurrection Day, which introduces the sphere of walking in newness of life. There is but one day in the New Testament specially mentioned. The Old Testament was full of days, months and years, but in Christianity there is only one day of significance. We celebrate the Lord's Supper with the distinct limit in view “ till He come.” Collectively we live one week at a time; the Lord may come during the week into which we have entered. But if he does not come we start over again with a new week, and the Christian who is alive to that truth has in mind that the Lord's coming is imminent.

John was an Apostle but he does not introduce himself as such, but says, “ I am your brother and fellow partaker in tribulation.” There must be individual exercise preceding the collective exercise if our coming together is to have value. In spirit we ought to be in harmony with the significance of the breaking of bread. We should be in such spiritual condition that collectively we may be in the appreciation of the fellowship of the Lord's death.

Then there arises the matter of self judgment. A man's deeds may be such that even he cannot justify them. How often we seek to justify ourselves even when our deeds are judged! But we must judge ourselves. Whenever trouble arises it is because we are not in the enjoyment of the Christian fellowship.

In the 20th Chapter of John's Gospel we get a picture of the collective value of the individual experience of John in the Isle of Patmos. The disciples were glad when they saw

the Lord. It is only as we see the Lord in the midst that our hearts are full of gladness, and we can truly express the wish of the hymn writer that "our glad hearts responsive unto Thine, may wake with all the power of love divine."

The Lord was forty days upon earth in resurrection but the disciples did not break bread, because it would have had no meaning. The Lord's supper could only apply in His absence. We come together in the region of responsibility with the object in view of answering to the Lord's last request, but there is a marvellous conjunction in the experience of the Lord's spiritual presence in the midst of His own, which transports us into the region of the Spirit. The realisation of the Lord's presence is often frustrated by the intrusion of secular cares. It is an easy matter closing the door of the meeting room, but much more difficult to close the door of our hearts. When that is secured we experience the sense in our souls of the present love of the Lord binding us together in an indissoluble living fellowship. The experience of joy which normally goes along with the celebration of the Lord's supper in suitable spirit is the same now as that experienced by the disciples because both are in the sense of resurrection.

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## NEW WITH YOU.

"I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come." (Luke 22, 18).

"I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God." (Mark 14, 25).

"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." (Matthew 26, 29).

These variations in the accounts of the Synoptic Gospels have more than literary interest. Luke, who alone distinguishes between the cup customarily associated with the Passover and the cup of the New Covenant, simply states the fact without qualification. But Mark adds the attribute that in the coming Kingdom the fruit of the vine partaken will have a "new" character. While Matthew adds the further characteristic that the drinking will be "with you."

The little company in that upper room on the night of the Lord's betrayal had a dual or two-fold aspect. (1). They were representative of the remnant of Israel, who had carried on through the 400 silent years which connected the Old Testament and New Testament. For  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years they had been the companions of Christ. After the Church has been caught up to be with the Lord forever, there will emerge a remnant of Israel from the Great Tribulation, bearing the same characteristics. With whom their blessed Lord on His triumphant return to claim the earth for Himself will drink the fruit of the vine. The act will have the peculiar significance of being new with them. They will be the lineal descendants of the company in the upper room, viewed with relation to earth.

(2). But these disciples were also the nucleus of the new company to be formed by the coming of the Holy Ghost, consequent upon the Lord's death, resurrection and ascension to heaven. In the Lord's absence that company had the peerless privilege of anticipating the aforementioned celebration by a redeemed creation.

On the first of the week the disciples came together to break bread and drink wine, thus manifesting the significance of the Lord's death, in the interval "till He come." But in doing so that act was relieved of formality and monotony. Because in spite of His physical absence He has granted His spiritual presence. So that in very truth they had the rich experience of partaking of the cup new with

Him. It is the cup of the New Covenant ratified in His blood. The cup is the expression of the heart of God. His disposition towards His own is love in a very special way. Again we are the lineal descendants of the company in the upper room, but viewed with relation to heaven. We are linked with heaven and so have a heavenly calling.

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## MY NAME.

“ And hast not denied My Name.” (Rev. 3, 8).

“ Name ” is a word with perhaps more variation of meaning than any other. A dictionary will show that it commonly signifies the means of identification but it may also mean title, renown, character, reputation, authority, honour or dignity.

Many years ago having the experience of attending the logic class in a Northern University, the following proposition was encountered amongst others, “ Are proper names connotative? ” *i.e.*, descriptive of the attributes of the person to whom they are applied. That a negative answer should be given was well illustrated by the example of the class Professor himself, since he had changed his name in order to inherit an estate in the country.

Names in the affairs of men are largely accidental. But in their inception, names were much more descriptive of the person or the thing than is the case nowadays. Names in ancient languages were to some extent descriptive of the person. Even in our own language such a name as “ Taylor ” would arise from the person being engaged in one of the oldest of trades. But nowadays, “ Goodman ” is not necessarily any better than “ Badman, ” nor “ Stout ” bulkier than “ Thin. ”

In the New Testament, the Greek word (*onoma*) translated practically always "name" was undoubtedly connected with the root "*gno*" meaning knowledge or knowing and consequently the means of knowing. Therefore *onoma* signifies that by which a person or thing was known. We have the characteristics, the qualities, the acts and the consequences, hence the name is not merely the label of external identification, but implies the description or knowledge of the attributes and the spirit of the person.

The Lord's name signifies his authority during His absence and is more than a mere formal acknowledgment, but conveys the idea that consequent on knowing the Lord, His name exercises control over us, hence we gladly acquiesce in His domination. The result would be that we shall appreciate the transcendent thought set forth in Rev. 3. of being a pillar in the temple of God bearing the Lord's personal inscription of His new name thereon.

The Lord Himself, while here, attached great importance to the matter. Speaking to the Pharisees He said how could they speak good things being evil. Out of the good treasure of the heart a good man brings forth good things. Goodness of heart promotes doing good deeds and speaking good words. The internal rectitude of heart and external rectitude of act meet in rectitude of thought. Therefore the translation of *onoma* implies description of characteristics and spirit as well as a mark for external identification.

It would be futile to do a cruel, unfair or foolish act in the Lord's name. If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is not of Him. (Rom. 8, 9). The historical Jesuits may have borne His Name but they were apt not to manifest the Spirit of Christ. The qualities of that Name are only to be appreciated apart from the sectarianism of Christendom which shows the abundant fruit of the seed sown in Corinth.

Yet we must not conclude that our being formally apart from the ecclesiastical systems confers upon us the pre-

rogative to manifest hard-heartedness in our alleged faithfulness to the Lord. In so doing we shall be guilty of giving a false impression as to the Spirit of Christ. Faithfulness to the Lord's Name will cause us to be very considerate of others who may differ from us on many points of doctrine and practice, and yet be just as well pleasing to the Lord as we shall ever likely be.

How often after major ruptures in our ecclesiastical relationships we do not only abstain from weekly conference with our erstwhile associates about the only real matters to be considered in this life, but we refrain from visiting them in their homes:—all pastoral care for them vanishes. We may even become so estranged as to “cut” them when we meet on the street. Should it not be a salutary question for everyone who professes to bear the greatest of all names, as to how such a state of affairs can be considered congruent with the meaning of that name?

How good then it is to be found answering to the description of the Philadelphian believer in not denying the Lord's Name. How often those who profess His name are found in word and deed falsifying His character and thus earning the description of denying His Name!

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## **THE RIGHT GROUND OF GATHERING.**

For where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them. (Matt. 18, 20).

No matter how few in number or poor in intellect and spiritual gift may be the constitution of a local Christian company, if the conditions ensuring the Lord's presence are in evidence that company does not merely exhibit local responsibility, but is representative of the Church all over the world. There the Lord is paramount. The Holy Spirit in the midst excludes what is of the order of the flesh,

man's arrogant mind and all that has come under the judgment of God. At the same time the Holy Spirit introduces Christ and His glory, taking of the things concerning Himself, and making them living for the apprehension of the company. If one member suffer then all suffer, but on the other hand if one member gets a spiritual uplift all the others are uplifted too.

Much ministry, oral and written, has been occupied with the subject of the right ground of gathering. It has been often asserted that we gather on the ground of the one body. Such a statement is apt to be very misleading, although it is intended to relieve us from the imputation of sectarianism. "The one body" is an abstract term which includes all the redeemed on earth and thus denotes what is outside responsibility. But our gathering together is in the realm of responsibility, so that the expression is apt to have little meaning under existing conditions.

The real important statement is that we gather to or in the authority of the Lord's name. That name has great significance! There are also great privileges as well as responsibilities attaching thereto. The fact of our gathering to His Name is tantamount to the statement that He is rejected here as He is accepted there, *i.e.*, in heaven. The martyr Stephen in the climax of his trial bore witness to the rejected man being in full acceptance in heaven associated with the glory of God.

It should be observed that the verse quoted is in the second part of the gospel of Matthew. In the first part, Christ is presented to his people as their being yet under probation. But from chapter 16 onwards the fact of His rejection on earth is established, and the subject matter proceeds on the basis of his acceptance and exaltation in heaven. Hence the kingdom or the rule of God is described as the kingdom of heaven, finding its centre in a man at the right hand of God. Hence His name does service for His



personal presence in His absence, so far as responsibility is concerned. But the verse shows the marvellous association of His spiritual presence being granted to those so gathered.

But simple as the statement may be we are not to presume on that quality. Many who claim to be so gathered may be only deluding themselves because their practice is vitiating the sense of the Lord's Name!

Did not He in His own matchless ministry give unmistakable evidence of the truth of that contention? "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have we not cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess to them, I never knew you." (Matt. 7, 22-23). It is not sufficient to claim His name and its consequences, we must justify the claim by fulfilment of the responsibilities relative thereto in the Spirit of Christ.

There are not only responsibilities but priceless privileges connected with gathering in the name of the Lord. From the Corinthian epistle we see that they were saints by calling and thus formed the temple of God and as such they had the mind of God, and the presence of the Holy Spirit excludes the mind of man. In the dedication of the temple by Solomon the priests could not enter the house of the Lord because it was filled with the glory of the Lord. (2 Chron. 7, 2).

The next important matter is that the "salvation bringing grace of God" has appeared in Christ. He came primarily to present God to man. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Cor. 5, 19). The continuation of that ministry and power is now manifest in the church of God. All God's goodness to man is displayed there. That is matchless grace! In spite of the rejection of Christ by the world, the church and the Spirit of God are here. Spiritual gift manifests not only the glory of Christ but His wonderful grace. Indeed spiritual gift is grace.

Unless what purports to be gift is associated with manifest grace it belies its profession. Gift is not displayed externally as at first. We have not the apostles nor the gift of tongues, but otherwise all that was vital in the first century is vital to-day. We have the record of the Apostles' ministry in the Epistles, and the Holy Spirit makes that living and operative. There is abundance of resource, discernment and scriptural exposition evincing present grace for every need. We are apt to put great stress upon our endowment in the way of oral gift. That undoubtedly has a great and honoured place, but the necessary prelude to the exercise of gift in 1 Cor. ch. 14, is found in the display of love one to another in 1 Cor. ch. 13. Otherwise oral gift would be analogous to the sound of a tinkling cymbal. The proportion of real gift finds its measure in the extent of love manifested. As we apprehend the love of Christ, we love His own, because all are equally dear to Him. We are of His own whom He loved and for whom He gave Himself. There is often grave discrepancy between the oral endowment and the "hidden man of the heart," which is manifested in a meek and quiet spirit, esteemed in the sight of God as of great value. (1 Pet. 3, 4). That does not cause one iota of what is real to be null and void and the knowledge of that is a very great comfort!

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## **THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE BREAD AND THE CUP.**

The bread and the cup form the elements of the Lord's Supper, but they are not synonymous nor is the cup merely confirmatory of the bread because there is no redundancy or vain repetition in scripture, *i.e.*, the Holy Spirit does not use different expressions in scripture to mean the same.

In the Old Testament arrangement the bread was composed of twelve loaves (the shewbread) which were set

before the Lord continually. They represented the twelve tribes of Israel, maintained before God in type by Christ in resurrection, in all His unleavened perfection. The word implied presentation (literally, the bread of face). No matter how they failed in responsibility they were still the people of God, so that even a greedy prophet like Balaam in spite of himself had to bless them in transcendent terms.

But when we come to the New Testament era there is only one loaf composing the "bread." It has an unique place, it symbolically represents all the people of God on earth at the present time. They are maintained under the eye of God in the unleavened perfection of Christ and in the unity of one body, just as the homogeneous grains of wheat are held together in the loaf. The one loaf is the special perquisite of the assembly which Christ loved and for which He gave Himself. Neither Israel nor the world to come will partake of the one loaf. It appertains to the Lord's people in the day of His rejection.

The loaf is followed by the cup which is not limited in application to this dispensation. The cup is the cup of the New Covenant ratified in the blood of Christ. As such it is the testimony of God's attitude to all men. The cup of the New Covenant is primarily for the benefit of Israel in the glorious day to come. But in the present era the church of the First-born has the privilege of anticipating that day of display in the enjoyment of the blessings of the New Covenant, vouchsafed to her members in the Lordship of Christ. Later it will be the portion of Israel and in the Millenium the whole redeemed creation will rejoice in the benefits of the New Covenant and the cup which is its symbol. The testimony of the cup evinces the love of God to all men, while the testimony of the one loaf is particularly to the love of Christ who loved the church and gave Himself for her. Both are in beautiful consonance with each other. The universal bearing of the cup will be evinced in the world

to come. Then will be the full issue of the expression, "in the midst of the great congregation will I praise thee." (Ps. 22, 22). But meanwhile He leads the praises in the midst of His assembly, to the Father. (Heb. 2, 12).

These elements of the Lord's Supper can only be enjoyed properly in separation from the confusion of sectarianism which has sprung up from seeds sown in Corinth. Sectarianism reduces the celebration of the accomplishment of the righteousness of God and the victory of Christ to a mere sentimental Sacrament. The institution of the Lord's Supper on the night of His betrayal indicated the closing down in death of everything of man's pretentious sentiment under the eye of God.

The breaking of bread introduces us to a new association with the risen Christ who died but is now alive for evermore. In obedience to the Lord's last loving request we partake of the loaf and the cup in remembrance of Himself. In separation from the confusion of Christendom we realise the force of the simple statement of Scripture and thus we reject the teaching of human tradition and superstition which would seek to inculcate the idea that the act infuses some virtue into the partaker.

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## BLOOD AND WATER.

"One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side and forthwith came there out blood and water." (John 19, 34).

"This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ." (I John, 5, 6).

Blood and water are frequently mentioned in the typology of the books of Moses, because these were essential in the cleansing of those who essayed to draw near to God.

In Exodus, judgment and blessing are evinced in both ideas. In the Passover (Ex. 12) the blood of the lamb, the test of the judgment which fell on the Egyptians proved the protection for the Israelites. In the Red Sea (Ex. 14) the water which destroyed the Egyptian host was the means of salvation to Israel. In Leviticus, the idea of atonement was connected with the blood and cleansing with water. Thus in this connection there were two prominent vessels in the Tabernacle made of brass, *viz.* (1) the Brazen Altar for the burnt offering, (2) the Brazen laver placed between the Altar of Burnt Offering and the door of entrance to the sanctuary proper. Both pieces of furniture were in the court of the tabernacle.

At the altar was the only place in the camp of Israel appointed for the shedding of blood. There the guilt of the offerer was transferred typically to the sacrifice, whilst the virtue of the sacrifice was reckoned to the offerer.

In the New Testament, the cross of Christ corresponds to that altar. However, Christ is the sacrifice, the altar and the priest combined in one. He is the propitiation or atonement for our sins. But it is interesting to observe that the Brazen Altar had a curved horn on each of its four corners indicating the four points, North, South, East and West, and thus the comprehensive character of the efficacy of the blood offered upon the altar. The types of the confession of identification of the offerer with the victim through the laying of his hands thereon, the killing of the animal, the fire burning its parts, were absolutely fulfilled in the great Substitution at Calvary.

The Brazen Laver was for Aaron and his sons washing their hands and feet with water. (Ex. 30, 18, 19). Otherwise they were not fit to perform their priestly functions in the tabernacle. At their consecration the priests were cleansed by bathing in water. That operation was never

repeated, and corresponds to the New Testament thought of the washing of regeneration!

They were also sanctified by the blood of the Lamb of consecration, but subsequently they had to observe the washing of hands and feet with meticulous care.

The fulfilment of the type of the Laver is in the application of the Word of God to the heart by faith. The precious blood of Christ was shed once for all. Its efficacy for ever remains. (Heb. 10, 10.: 1 John, 1, 7). The righteous and holy claims of God have been completely satisfied so that God is now revealed as One who justifies the ungodly. (Rom. 4, 5). The blood has made peace with God. (Rom. 5, 1), and believers are now reconciled. (Col. 1, 21). The blood has made propitiation and sin is put away from under the eye of God.

The water corresponds to the cleansing power of the Death of Christ applied to the one who gets the good of the salvation effected by the sacrifice. It is applied in power to the believer at conversion by the Holy Spirit using the Word of God to bring him in accordance with the shed blood. In effect the Word of God removes sin from the believer's sight by causing him to see what the blood has done in God's view. The blood has made propitiation and the water gives the believer to know that truth!

The Blood is mentioned first in the order of the sentence in the Gospel, because there the prime interest is from God's side, therefore the blood must come first. While in the Epistle the matter is viewed more from our side and our appropriation of the truth, therefore the water comes first. The Word of God cleanses our hearts from the hatred which is natural to man in his attitude towards God.

The antecedent of the passage to that which we have quoted from the Gospel states that the Jews wished to hasten death by breaking the legs of the crucified, so that

the bodies might not be hanging on the Passover day. The soldiers broke the legs of the malefactors, but when they came to Jesus they found He was already dead. A soldier expressing the brutality of the human heart drove his spear into the side of the dead Saviour, and forthwith came out God's answer to man's wantonness, in the blood and water indicating the love of God. So that there was blessing even for the cruel soldier if he cared to avail himself of the provision. The blood would set him free from his sins in the sight of God and the water would cleanse him internally from the hatred which led him to perpetrate the cruel deed.

In Scripture, washing is always with water. The idea of washing in blood springs from analogy with Pagan practice. In Rev. 1, 5, the word translated "washing" really means "to be set free from" or "loosed from." Elsewhere the idea so conveyed is due to misconstruction of the sentences. Perhaps such theology has been moulded by Cowper's misconception of a "fountain filled with blood," founded on Zechariah 13, 1, which obviously refers to a fountain of water! "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," does not suggest renewal of application, but permanence of its efficacy.

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## **THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE.**

The Apostle had to address a Christian company at Corinth saying, "You are yet carnal" or fleshly. At first, doubtless when Paul was with them they could not be said to be such, but the test came after they were left to themselves. One may be greatly impressed on walking in the woods to see that when trees are cut down so as to lay a plantation open to the blast of wind, many more are blown down in consequence. How like that circumstance is to the experience of a Christian company. Christians cannot

stand alone, and it is the constant effort of the enemy to divide them. Paul could stand alone, but he did not mean us to attempt to do so. Even as the trees standing together helped to keep the wind out, so Christians standing in unity help to repel the blast of the enemy.

The devil is very wily. He divides the people of God into sects or parties. He will try and bring in coldness and jealousy especially with reference to Scriptural teaching. Paul, Apollos and Peter are made the names as excuses for division, and even the Corinthians sought to make a sect of special averred ecclesiastical standing in Christ. The devil always contrives to spoil the testimony and efface the image or moral likeness of Christ in those who bear His name. Dear old Rowland Hill once wrote,

“ Let names and sects and parties fall  
And Jesus Christ be all in all.”

Christ is in all the Christians, although misconduct may arise by allowing the flesh to dominate us. In Christ there is only an unleavened lump. The leaven may be working, but not in Christ. In Him there are but the features of one new man. We may allow ourselves to come under the influence of the flesh, as it is still an active part of us. There is a very good story told to illustrate these opposing principles. A raven and a dove were put in one cage. On feeding them with bread, the dove was fed and the raven starved, and vice versa when flesh was the food put in. It is at once seen that their needs will never harmonise. One of them must die. So it is with the Christian. What feeds the new creation starves the flesh, and what feeds the flesh starves the new man. The Apostle said, “ Do not let sin reign in your mortal body.” That, of course, supposes that sin dwells in our bodies. The Spirit of God says, “ The tendency of the flesh is to assert itself against the Spirit, therefore, do not let it reign.”



Then there is so much outside which appeals to us and pierces into our hearts. The eye and the ear are avenues to the heart. There is the lust of the eye, and the lust of the flesh. If they are allowed to work for a time, we are carnal for that period. Christians, when in that state, have not been keeping company with the Lord. When we forget to be alone with God, we are bound to suffer. It is a great thing to get a little time alone and confess our own weakness. Confession leads us to be well kept. The Apostle could pray that his readers might be preserved soul and body blameless by God's Holy Spirit. We are blest when in the place of dependence, and sanctified wholly from the power of the flesh. God will keep us in a state of humility and preserve us from fleshliness.

It is well to remember that we may become sectarian even in our own minds without outward manifestations, *e.g.*, there are different lines of teaching. One teacher is able to open up the Word to us, another to give the application, while the third is burning with love for souls. And we may make parties by shewing our preference to one or other of these. We need all these varied gifts. Gifts are the proof of the continuance of the love of Christ. The work of many honoured servants of the Lord is spoiled through lack of wisdom. Doubtless the faults arise unwittingly on both sides, yet the Apostle condemned the Corinthians for it.

If the Lord helps us through anyone's ministry let us be thankful for it. But do not let us put the one who ministers acceptably on any special pinnacle. Let us not pin our faith to him. Gifts adorn the Assembly. Instead of edifying, gift often evokes people's jealousy, *e.g.*, it is not uncommon if a man gives a word of ministry in any place where he is unknown, it is frequently more valued than it would have been at home. This should not be the case. We should thank the Lord for the word, no matter through whom may be the channel of communication. A very

important passage of scripture in this connection is, "Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings." (1 Thess. 5, 19-20). The utterance of five words may convey just what we need, and if there were more waiting on the Lord this would be more in evidence.

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## **A PHASE OF LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

There is a great tendency to shift responsibility on to those endowed with natural capacity for giving audible expression to the thoughts impressed on the hearts of the Christian company by the Spirit of God. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." But such procedure is not the Spirit's leading. The Spirit's business is not to please ears, but to open hearts. Hence the wakening of gladness in the heart under the power of God may call forth an audible response which may not be pleasing to cultured ears, but may gladden the heart of the Lord. He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. Thus if we realize our local responsibility better we should be found more frequently breathing out the wish expressed in the following lines:—

"That our glad hearts, responsive unto Thine,  
May wake with all the power of Love Divine."

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