

# *Words of Help for God's Pilgrims*

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*Published originally under the titles of*  
**"FROM THE CROSS TO THE CROWN"**

**by John Ritchie**

*and*

**"HEALTHFUL WORDS FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD"**

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***WORDS OF HELP FOR  
GOD'S PILGRIMS***

## “FROM THE CROSS TO THE CROWN”

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### PREFACE

THE ADDRESSES here compiled and issued in handy form for general use, have been given at various times to companies of Believers gathered with open Bibles, many of them just entering upon the path of life and feeling the need of a word of spiritual help and holy counsel to direct their feet into “the ways which be in Christ” (1 Cor. iv. 17). The aim in such ministry should be to lead TO the Word, and thus encourage children of God to search it for themselves, proving what they hear, like the Bereans of old (Acts xvii. 11). Thus their faith will stand firm and fast on “the impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture” when all else gives way. Never was there a time when such acquaintance with the Word of God was more needed than now. “Doctrines of demons”, and floods of errors of all kinds, sweep off their feet those who by neglect of the Scriptures are ignorant of them, on all hands. May the reader take the Book of God, and comparing what is here set forth with its sacred pages, be “established in the Faith” (Acts xvi. 5), and able to use “the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. vi. 17), to meet every attack of the foe.

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Kilmarnock, September, 1909



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# Separation from the World

**The Believer's severance from The World by The Cross,  
and his testimony in it for Christ**

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It has been said the Christian has three great enemies — the world, the flesh, and the Devil. To be able to cope with an enemy, it is of the utmost importance to know his true character and manner of attack. To the former of these I wish your attention — the world as we have it in the Scriptures and around us to-day.

## *What is the World's Past History ?*

This we learn from the Word of God. From that Word alone we get its true character as seen by God.

The Material World brought into existence and formed by His Word (Heb. xi. 3), He pronounced "good" (Gen. i.), and man made in His image was placed amid its beauties, to have dominion over all God's other works. Sin entered and ruined all. The world became a scene of confusion, strife, and sin, and man a rebel against his God, increasing in wickedness until God swept the race away by the flood, reserving one family, who, having been brought through the judgment waters, was again placed on earth. Noah failed ; his seed built Babel. Abram was called. A single plot was now to be tilled : the field as a whole ran waste.

Throughout the pages of the Old Testament, we trace the dark and sinful history of this people. It is a history of continued rebellion against God. Tried under law, they wax worse than the Gentiles, turning their very privileges into an occasion of showing their hatred to God and insubjection to His will.

One trial more, unlike all others, remained. "God *so loved the world* that He gave His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16), the fullest, clearest proof of His love to the world. God was manifest

in the flesh. Jesus came, not to condemn, but as it is written, to "save the *world*". "Christ Jesus came into the *world* to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). Did the world receive Him, or *was the world saved*? "He was in the *world*, and it knew Him not (John i. 10); it hated Him (John vii. 7). The light that shone from Him revealed the darkness, and the world cast Him out, saying, "We will not have this Man to reign over us" (Luke xix. 14). The *world* rejected Christ, giving Him a shameful cross, and desired a murderer in His stead. In so doing it sealed its doom. Gathered against Him were "Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the people of Israel" (Acts iv. 27), representatives of the whole world, all held guilty of the death of God's beloved Son.

Such is the world's history, deepening in guilt as it goes on, and "the thing that hath been shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done: there is no new thing under the sun" (Eccl. i. 9).

### *The World's Present Condition*

"Now is the judgment of this *world*" (John xii. 25). The *world* has been found guilty before God (Rom. iii. 18), having rejected its rightful Lord. It has expelled from it Him who came a "light into the world" (John xii. 46). It is left under Satan, who is its "god" (2 Cor. iv. 4), and "Prince" (John xii. 31). It lieth in "the wicked one" (1 John v. 19, margin). It is ruled by wicked spirits in heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12). It will continue so until the appointed day when God shall judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath appointed, Christ Jesus (Acts xvii. 31).

Fair to the natural eye as its charms may be, to the eye of faith it is but a "wilderness wide", an enemy's country, where God's beloved Son was cast out and crucified, and for which awful deed God will visit the world with terrible judgments, and "punish the world for their evil" (Isa. xiii. 11). Such is the world's present condition as shown in the Word of God, and "all that is in the *world*, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the *world*" (1 John ii. 16).

### *The Christian Delivered from the World*

Seeing the world to be such as it is, we need not wonder that when God would have a people near Himself, a people who are to be united to His earth-rejected but heaven-glorified Son, a

people given by God the Father to Him for a peculiar treasure, a Body, and a Bride, nearer, dearer to Him than any other circle of redeemed being, closer to Him than unfallen hosts, a people who are to sit with Him on His throne, to show forth His praise on earth and dwell for ever with Him in heaven, He should separate them from "the world". Therefore we read, "Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this *present evil world* (age), according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. i. 4). And again, in that wondrous prayer of John xvii., the Lord Jesus, speaking to the Father, prays, "the men which Thou gavest me *"out of the world"* (John xvii. 6).

### *The Present Evil Age*

"The present evil age", is the description given by the Holy Spirit of this present period of the world's history. It is, in man's estimation, an "age of progress". Science, art, and knowledge spread themselves abroad with wondrous rapidity. Commerce, grandeur, and greatness increase. The world seems to prosper. But faith sees it from another standpoint. Faith views it from the Cross. That Cross was the world's crisis. There its choice was made. God was there rejected. His Son was there murdered, and to this hour the world has not repented of its deed. It is still stained with the blood of One more righteous than Abel, and the murderer, in Cain-like spirit, has gone forth to build its city, and to forget the deed of blood, amid the "progress" thereof (Gen. iv. 16-22). Meanwhile the Christian is a sanctified man (I Cor. i. 2, vi. 11). He is set apart by God from the present evil age. He walks, as Enoch did, amid the sounds and sights of Cain's city, a stranger here. The call of God has brought him out from the world. The Cross has cut him off, and stands between him and that vast empire of evil.

### *Not of the World*

The Christian, although *in* the world, is *not of the world* (John xvii. 16); the *world* knoweth him not (I John iii. 1). He is part of a "chosen generation", a "peculiar people", whose "citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 20). On earth they are "pilgrims", they have no continuing city (Heb. xiii. 14). "Strangers" far from home, pressing on to the heavenly country where their home and possessions are (Heb. xi. 10). They glory

in the Cross of Christ, by which the *world* is crucified to them and they unto the world (Gal. vi. 14). Called into the fellowship of the Son of God, whose kingdom is not of this *world* (John xviii. 36), they are joint-heirs with Him of an everlasting kingdom, an incorruptible inheritance. "As He is, so are they in this *world*" (1 John iv. 17).

Dear young Christian, let these words sink into your heart and abide there. Never cease to remember that the Cross of Christ stands between you and the world, as the waters of the Red Sea rolled between the children of Israel and Egypt, the land of their bondage and idolatry. It stood a barrier to hinder their return to the land from which God had delivered them. So the "wondrous Cross on which the Prince of Glory died" forbids the return of the Christian to that world, and all its unhallowed associations, whose religious rulers crucified the Lord of Glory. Reckoning with God, the believer says :—

*The Cross on which my Lord expired  
Has won the crown for me.  
All hail, then, fellowship with Him,  
Whose death has made me free.*

### *The Christian's Position in the World*

In the riches of His grace to the world, God yet lingers in long-suffering over it, not willing that any should perish. Having delivered His people from it, He keeps them yet for a little while in it, to be His witnesses there. The Lord Jesus said—"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the *world*, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John xvii. 15), and again, "As the Father hath sent them into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John xvii. 18). First, delivered from it, then sent back into it. Like that blessed One who came to save sinners, and reveal the Father, and yet remained holy, harmless, and undefiled, "separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26). He stood among men in the consciousness that He was a stranger; continually blessing them, yet never countenancing their sinful ways. The heavenly Stranger passed through the world, receiving only cold contempt, hatred, and scorn, and at last a shameful cross. His mission here is our pattern. He tells us, "in the *world* ye shall have tribulation" (John xvi. 33); the world will hate you as it hated Me (John xv. 18). We shall



share all this, if we are at all like Him. But we are told, "marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John iii. 13). If the Master was thus treated, so shall the servant be; only let us make sure that we are not so treated for our own crooked ways, our inconsistent walk and testimony, but for being unflinching witnesses for Christ, and against the world's sin, whether immoral or religious.

## *The Christian's Work in the World*

Our work in the world is to preach Christ to it. "Go ye into all the *world*, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15); and again, "The sons of God, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the *world*, holding forth the *word* of life" (Phil. ii. 15, 16). The only channels of blessing to the world are the saints in it, and the only means that they are told to use for the blessing of sinners is, to preach the Gospel of the Grace of God. This is the lever by which God is to turn the world upside down. Some have forgotten this, and adopted other plans. But trades' unions, temperance societies, and hosts of world-reforming agencies, are not the Divine method. Some of these may benefit men for a time, but they leave the sinful soul unsaved, the sins unpardoned, and the man as unprepared to meet God as ever. If you would be a means of blessing to sinners, keep Christ before them. In season, out of season — say, "Behold the Lamb of God"; and by the double testimony of the lip and life, point the condemned world to the "Crucified One". Take good care not to get mixed up with it, or unequally yoked with unbelievers in your endeavours to do it good. Like a diver lowered down into the deep to search for lost property of his master in a sunken ship, the Christian goes into the world to seek lost souls for Christ, and brings all that he finds to his Master. He makes no attempt to reform the world; he knows it will wax worse and worse. To him it is an "ungenial clime", and he, like the diver in the deep, finds nothing to sustain or detain him there. The child of God finds nothing in the world to satisfy his heart, or sustain his spiritual life, but much to hurt. To him it is a "Vanity Fair". His orders are, "Love not the *world*, neither the things that are in the *world*. If any man love the *world*, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). And again, "Know ye not that the friendship of the *world* is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the

*world* is the enemy of God" (James iv. 4). These are plain, wholesome words, oft forgotten. The tendency of the times is toward excessive worldliness. Look at the style, the dress, the homes of professing Christians! Are they in general like a people who are "dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world" (Col. ii. 20).

We often sing —

*Pilgrims and strangers, captives no more.*

But is it true? Is there not much captivity to worldly fashion, to worldly style? Are there not many who profess to be identified with, and lovers of a rejected and murdered Christ, who would feel perfectly unhappy if they were a season behind the first rank worldling in their dress? Dear young saints, do not take your measure of separation from the world, from people of this type. Be assured, this is not what the Holy God means when He bids you "Be not conformed to this world". It is something infinitely more searching, more real, more personal than this. It costs something: it means the forsaking of what men prize: the counting loss what they count gain. In short, it involves the "losing" of one's life here, as a man of earth, for the gain, the eternal gain of heavenly things. If we turn from the world of wealth and fashion to

## THE RELIGIOUS WORLD

the deception and the snare is more gilded still. The professing Church and the world are intermarried. The murderer of Christ and His professed spouse have become friends. What an anomaly! What a sham! And this religious world with its schemes, and its mixtures, is the greatest snare to the young believer. Christ's Name is there, but His Word is ignored. His Holy Name is linked with every worldly thing, and is supposed to hallow it. Just think of the shocking dishonour to Christ of bazaars and religious concerts opened by prayer in His Name and concluded by pantomime and dance. Aye, and patronized by men who call themselves ministers of this cast-out and rejected Jesus. But it is false. "They are *of* the world, therefore the *world* heareth them". The only safe, and the only happy path, is outside the whole. This is what God calls His people to, in the memorable words, "Come out from among them and be ye separate" (2 Cor. vi. 17).

You are liable to be led into the world's bye-paths at every stage of your homeward journey — therefore, watch. Continually

watch your subtle foe. In the Word of God we have solemn examples and warnings given of those taken in the world's snare. Truly she has slain her "ten thousands". Lot was entrapped in Sodom. Demas forsook Paul, "having loved the present *world*" (2 Tim. iv. 10), after he had been his fellow-labourer for years (Phil. 24). The Lord keep us from being so entrapped, and, till He comes to take us to His Father's house, far from the scene of sin, confusion, and strife, may we walk with well-girded garments, keeping ourselves "unspotted from the world".

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## THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

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*The Church and the World walked far apart  
On the changing shore of time ;  
The World was singing a giddy song,  
And the Church a hymn sublime.  
"Come, give me your hand", said the merry World,  
"And then walk with me this way",  
But the good Church hid her snowy hand,  
And solemnly answered — "Nay".*

*"I will not give thee my hand at all,  
And I will not walk with you ;  
Your way is the way of eternal death,  
And your words are all untrue".  
"Nay, walk with me a little space",  
Said the World with a kindly air,  
"The road I walk is a pleasant road,  
And the sun shines always there ;*

*"Your way is narrow and thorny and rough,  
While mine is flowery and smooth ;  
Your lot is sad with reproach and toil,  
But in rounds of joy I move.  
My way, you can see, is a broad, fair one,  
And my gate is high and wide ;  
There is room enough for you and me,  
And we'll travel side by side".*

*Half shyly the Church approached the World,  
And gave him her hand of snow ;  
And the false World grasped it, and walked along,  
And whispered in accents low,  
"Your dress is too simple to please my taste ;  
I have gold and pearls to wear ;  
Rich velvets and silks for your graceful form,  
And diamonds to deck your hair".*

*The Church looked down at her plain white robes,  
And then at the dazzling World,  
And blushed as she saw his handsome lip  
With a smile contemptuous curled.*

*"I will change my dress for a costlier one",  
Said the Church with a smile of grace ;  
Then her pure white garments drifted away,  
And the World gave in their place*

*Beautiful satins, and fashionable silks,  
And roses and gems and pearls ;  
And over her forehead her bright hair fell  
Weaved in a thousand curls.*

*"Your house is too plain", said the proud old World,  
"Let us build you one like mine,  
With kitchen for feasting and parlour for play,  
And furniture ever so fine".*

*So he built her a costly and beautiful house —  
Splendid it was to behold ;  
Her sons and her daughters met frequently there,  
Shining in purple and gold.  
Bedecked with fair jewels and hair all curled —  
Untrammelled by Gospel or Laws,  
To beguile and amuse and win from the World  
Some help for the "righteous cause".*

*"Your preachers are all too old and plain",  
Said the gay World with a sneer ;  
"They frighten my children with dreadful tales,  
Which I do not like them to hear.  
They talk of judgments, and fire and pain,  
And the doom of endless night ;  
They warn of a place that should not be  
Thus spoken to ears polite !*

*I will send you some — a better stamp,  
More brilliant and gay and fast :  
Who will show how men may live as they list  
And go to heaven at last”.*  
*So she called for pleasing and gay divines —  
Deemed gifted, and great, and learned ;  
And the plain old men who preached the cross  
Were out of her pulpits turned.*

*Thus her witnessing power, alas, was lost,  
And the perilous times came in ;  
The times of the end, so often foretold —  
Of form and pleasure and sin.  
And they of the Church, and they of the World,  
Journeyed closely, hand and heart,  
And none but the Master, who knoweth all,  
Could discern the two apart.*

*A voice came down from the hush of heaven,  
From Him that sat on the throne :  
“I know thy works and what thou hast said,  
But alas ! thou hast not known  
That thou art poor, and naked, and blind,  
With pride and ruin enthralled :  
The expectant Bride of a heavenly Lord  
Has married the godless World !*

# The Servant of the Lord

## An Ambassador and a Witness

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Some of the titles given to the people of God express their privileges ; others their responsibilities. Some bespeak their place in the Divine presence and in the embrace of the Divine Love ; others, their attitude toward their brethren and the world.

A brief consideration of two of these may by the Divine blessing enable us to more fully appreciate the dignity and feel the responsibility which the Lord has put upon us in leaving us in the world for a brief period to represent Him among men, and to bear His Name and His Word before them as Ambassadors and Witnesses.

The former of these titles especially connects the Christian with his Divine Lord in glory, with all authority given to Him in heaven and on earth. The latter, with the Divine Spirit who is now on earth bearing witness to Christ.

The title "Ambassador for Christ" may be said to be of a double character, in that it shews the Christian in his relation to Christ as Lord, a subject of and servant in His Kingdom, to whom his Master has entrusted a sacred charge, while towards the world he stands a representative of God and Christ, an ambassador sent from the Court of heaven.

In 2 Cor. v. 20, R.V., we read—"We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us : We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God". Such is the position and such the message of the heavenly ambassador—a position at once of the highest honour and of the heaviest responsibility. Let us see what we can learn from it, and may the Divine Spirit cause us to feel and take to heart the

full measure of its solemnity.

An ambassador is "a representative of one kingdom at the court of another"—as for example the British Ambassador in Turkey, or the Russian Ambassador in London. His presence is the sign of amicable relations between the two countries ; his withdrawal is often the precursor of war.

He is there to represent his absent Sovereign, to maintain his claims, to look after his interests, and communicate his messages—in short, to *be* and to *do* what the Sovereign himself would be and do, if he were there. He is not the servant of the country in which he resides, nor does he regard it as his home : he is supported by and controlled from his own land : he remains a subject of his own King and Government, and continual communication is kept up between him and his Sovereign. He stands there a stranger in a strange land, retaining his nationality, his nature, and his language, and holds himself ready at any moment to go home at his Sovereign's call. If he acts *foolishly* or unworthily, he disgraces his country, and is an unworthy representative of it. The people amongst whom he is, judge of his King and country by the representative they have among them. In what a solemn and deeply responsible light this places the believer, the Christian, the heavenly ambassador, does it not ?

### *True of all Believers*

The title of "Ambassador" may have been applied especially to Paul and his fellow-apostles, but not to them exclusively : in various measure all believers have been "put in trust with the Gospel" (1 Thess ii. 4), and sent into the world to represent Christ, even as He was sent to declare the Father (John i. 18 with xx. 21). You will observe that this title is intimately connected with "the Ministry of Reconciliation" (v. 18), and this again is based on the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 22). At the Cross "God *was* in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself". Reconciliation has been effected : peace has been made through the blood of the Cross (Col. i. 20), and as the result, all things in heaven and on earth will yet be reconciled and readjusted according to God. The believing sinner is already reconciled (Col. i. 21 with Rom. v. 10), and the things in heaven and earth will yet be so, on the ground of a full atonement having been made, and God being satisfied.

## *Grace Reigns*

Meanwhile grace is on the throne, and judgment is postponed. Yes, "grace reigns" (Rom. v. 20) and peace is proclaimed (Eph. ii. 13-17). It is the "acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 19), "the accepted time" and "the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). Not that God winks at sin, or will neglect to judge it, but throughout this age of grace He does not impute it, or charge it home upon men. A full amnesty is declared: forgiveness is proclaimed (Acts xiii. 38). No man's sin, however great, need keep him out of heaven.

## *The Ambassador's Message*

The ambassador's message is "Be ye reconciled to God". It is more a royal command than an invitation: it is the authoritative message of the throne of heaven through its ambassador, commanding men everywhere to repent (Acts xvii. 30), asking sinners to lay down their weapons of enmity, and accepting the amnesty provided, pass over from the rule of Satan's empire to become subjects of the kingdom of the Son of God (Col. i. 13).

And Christ's ambassador is not only a preacher of peace, but likewise a man in quest of new subjects to grace his Master's kingdom, disciples to learn his Master's will (Matt. xxviii. 20). His character and ways preach as well as his words, and people look at what he is, and what he does, as well as listen to what he says. How grand it is when Christ's ambassador can turn to those among whom he has spoken the message of God, and testify, as Paul did to the Thessalonians: "We preached unto you the Gospel" (1 Thess. ii. 9), and "Ye are witnesses how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves" (1 Thess. ii. 10).

## *His Life Testimony*

The testimony of the lips and life must go together. If a man's words are not supported by his life, they will have little weight—he will soon prove a stumbling-block rather than a true representative. In certain heathen countries, the natives say that our British ships brought Bibles and rum together. This hinders the progress of the Gospel among the nations and prejudices the heathen against the servants of God.



## *An Unfaithful Ambassador*

An unfaithful ambassador dishonours his country; but an unholy preacher causes his God and the Gospel to be blasphemed. An unfaithful or inconsistent Christian does more to hinder the Gospel than all the opposition of scoffers and sceptics together.

Even in humble spheres this great principle obtains and operates for good or evil.

A young Christian girl, when asked by some one under whose preaching she had been converted, replied :—"I was not converted under any preaching, it was my aunt's practising that brought me to see there is a reality in Christ and His salvation". And we may be assured that no one lives "unto himself: we are all making our mark upon those who are around us, who narrowly watch our ways while they listen to our words, and form their conclusions accordingly.

How important then that all who speak the message of God's grace to men, should so live as to commend their message, and be in themselves living witnesses of its power.

## *An Ambassador in a Chain*

In one respect the "Ambassador of Christ" is a contrast to those of earthly kingdoms. He represents a "throne of grace". God is not dealing in righteousness at present with the world, but in grace. The conditions upon which His ambassadors remain among those who have crucified and cast out "the Lord of Glory" are, that God is not exacting from men at present that which in righteousness he might well demand. They are in "the tribulation and kingdom and patience" (Rev. i. 9) and therefore they must suffer along with the suffering Gospel (2 Tim. i. 8, R.V.). The apostle who wrote these words had to speak of himself to the Ephesian saints as "an ambassador in a chain" (Eph. vi. 20, R.V.). It is the day of a silent heaven. God is forbearing with man's sin. So must His servants. They need not expect better treatment than their Master, at the hands of those who despise His message. They will not "reign as kings" (1 Cor. iv. 8, 9) in a world where He got a felon's cross, if they are true to Him. They must suffer and learn to take it patiently. The day of their recompence will come, as sure as the Lord has promised it (2 Thess. i. 6, 7), but

they must not pre-date it by taking vengeance into their own hands, or calling for it at the hand of others.

Soon the reign of grace will be over. Then the ambassadors of heaven will be recalled, and all the fruit of their labours with them (see 1 Thess. iv. 17) to be gathered to their own country, and set down around that throne which ruled them while on the earth, in their heavenly fatherland. The next sight we get of those who were once heaven's ambassadors on earth is seated on thrones in peace, crowned with glory (Rev. iv. 4), while the throne of God is preparing itself for *judgment* (Rev. iv. 5) on that earth, which had rejected their message. Grace will no longer reign: peace is no more proclaimed: the great amnesty is withdrawn: peace is taken from the earth (Rev. vi. 4) and judgment will presently sweep the scene. What an honour, and what a responsibility has the Lord's ambassadors in this the day of grace! May the Spirit of God stir up and deeply exercise our souls regarding it, fitting and furnishing us in daily communion with God and Christ, for the fulfilment of such an honourable ministry.

### *"Ye are My Witnesses"*

The second title to which we would now briefly turn is that of *Witnesses*. When the wondering disciples asked their ascending Lord "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" His memorable answer was: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power; but ye shall receive power (strength) after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be *witnesses unto Me*" (Acts i. 6-8). This is a word of great importance to all the Lord's people who live in this present age of grace and the Spirit's presence on the earth. It is in full accord with what the Lord had said in the upper room to His disciples before He went to the Cross. Speaking of the coming Paraclete who was to be sent from the Father to take His place as Helper, Advocate, and Strength of the little band who were to be left on earth to represent their absent Lord, who was going to represent them in heaven, He said, "When the Comforter is come . . . He shall bear witness of Me", and then He immediately added, "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John xii. 26, 27). The believer is here as co-witness with the Spirit, to Christ and to the Gospel throughout this age

of grace. This is his business in the world. He is not a world reformer, he is not a politician; his business here is not to overturn governments, however corrupt, or lead in public agitations against this or the other depravity that may arise among the kings and rulers of earth. He has no call, no commission to enter on any such lines of service. He is simply a witness, and his testimony is to be concerning his heavenly Lord and Master—"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me".

### *What a Witness Tells*

A witness in a law court is called to tell what he has seen and heard in connection with the case before the judge. Second-hand information is of no value; what others told him will not be received; he must tell what he has personally seen with his own eyes and heard with his own ears. And so the Lord in speaking with the Rabbi of Jerusalem said, "We speak that we do know and testify that we have seen" (John iii. 11). A witness does not deal in generalities or in theories, he gives his personal experience; he simply speaks what he is assured of. "*We know* that we are of God" (1 John v. 12); "*I know* whom I have believed" (2 Tim. i. 12), are words that have in them the ring of the certainty and assurance that gives weight to the testimony of a true witness. It was the consciousness of this that gave boldness to the Lord's early witnesses, when the world and its religious and political leaders were against them. "We are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost" (Acts v. 32) was Peter's clear ring testimony to the Council, and we are told the result of his testimony was that "they were cut to the heart" (verse 33). A halting, hesitating, muffled testimony is of no value whatever. Men who are never sure of their "minds," or of what they believe—whatever their forte may be in the Church or the World—are not witnesses. A witness must know something and be able to state definitely and clearly what that something is.

I remember being in a Criminal Court in the City of Aberdeen, where a case of alleged homicide was there tried. There were many witnesses whose testimony was exceedingly vague. At last one little boy was brought to the witness stand; he was so small that he had to be raised up on a stool, and so young that the judge would not put him on oath. Before he had spoken a dozen words, it was evident to all that he had the prisoner's

fate in his hand. He told what he knew well, what he had actually seen and heard, and his evidence convicted the prisoner at the bar. He was there within sight and sound of the tragedy. Let all who "testify the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24) remember, that it is not "polished" essays, "cultured" sermons, or "deep" discourses that sinners need to convict them of sin or lead those who are convicted to the Saviour, but the Gospel of Christ spoken in plain and Scriptural terms, from a heart that knows its saving power, and in the Spirit who has come from heaven expressly to give it effect (1 Pet. i. 12) in those who hear.

### *A Pattern Witness*

John the Baptist is honoured by the Spirit in being described as "a man sent from God". His work, "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light" (John i. 7). And how well he fulfilled his mission is attested by the words of his disciples, who, when they saw their master's followers leaving him and going after Jesus, came to John saying, "Rabbi, He to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth and all come to Him" (John iii. 26), to which John gave answer, "Ye, yourselves, bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ"; and then in the joy of his heart as he saw the true Bridegroom winning hearts to Himself, he gladly owned "He must increase, but I must decrease". John's testimony was to "the Lamb of God" (John i. 36), and when he preached away his disciples to his Lord, he rejoiced. And this is the sort of preaching that God always uses in bringing sinners to Christ. "A true witness delivereth souls" (Prov. xiv. 25), not only from their sins, but from man, and self, and all that is opposed to Christ.

### *A Witness is a Martyr*

"When the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I was standing by" (Acts xxii. 20), says Paul. That word rendered "martyr" is the ordinary word for witness. It reminds us that a faithful witness may have to seal his testimony in his blood, as the Lord Himself, "the Faithful Witness" (Rev. i. 5) did. There must be no shrinking back, no flinching for fear of what men will say or do, if we speak and act according to God and His truth. In spite of opposition, of persecution, and what is, perhaps, a greater snare to us in these quiet times — the fear of

being ostracised and accounted "peculiar", perhaps "mad" by religious worldlings and apostate professors who "swim with the current" and are "all things to all men" in a sense the apostle never was — the man of God must speak the whole counsel of God with his lips, and act in his life and ways according to the truth, "witnessing to small and great" (Acts xxvi. 22) all that God has made known to him, and in which his heart and soul rejoice.

### *False Witnesses*

It is recorded that in the trial of the Lord before the high priest, many bear false witness against Him, "but their witness agreed not together" (Mark xiv. 56). This, in an ordinary court of justice would have ruined their case. And when the lip and life testimony of those who stand among men as His witnesses does not agree, when men do not act what they preach, they are "false witnesses" (1 Cor. xv. 15), and become a cause of offence or stumbling to those who know them, rather than a means of blessing.

The time for this earnest witnessing will soon be over, and the witnesses who now stand in the land of the stranger to speak well of their God, His Christ and the Gospel will soon be in their own country, where such service is no longer needed. Let us buy up the opportunities while they are with us, and with a zeal begotten of love to Christ and sustained by the indwelling Spirit, who be it ever remembered is pre-eminently the Spirit of Witness to Christ in the world with the Gospel. Let us not be ashamed of "the testimony of the Lord" but speak as we "ought to speak" (Eph. vi. 20), that glorious message which God has made the appointed means of the salvation of sinners — "the Gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

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### SERVING THE LORD

*Go, labour on ; spend and be spent ;  
Thy joy to do the Father's will ;  
It is the way the Master went,  
Should not the servant tread it still ?*

*Go, labour on ; 'tis not for nought ;  
Thy earthly loss is heavenly gain ;  
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not ;  
The Master praises — what are men ?*

*Go, labour on ; enough, while here,  
If He shall praise thee, if He deign  
Thy willing heart to mark and cheer ;  
No toil for Him shall be in vain.*

*Go, labour on ; though hands are weak,  
Though knees are faint, and soul cast down ;  
Yet falter not ; the prize you seek  
Is near,— a kingdom and a crown.*

*Men die in darkness at your side,  
Without a hope to cheer the tomb ;  
Take up the torch and wave it wide,—  
The torch that lights time's thickest gloom.*

*Toil on, faint not, keep watch, and pray ;  
Be wise the erring soul to win ;  
Go forth into the world's highway,  
Compel the wanderer to come in.*

*Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice ;  
For toil comes rest, for exile home ;  
Soon shall thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,  
The midnight peal, behold I come.*

# Christian Stewardship

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**Read Matthew xxv. 14-30 ; Mark xiii. 34-36 ; Luke xii. 41-43 ;  
1 Cor. ix. 16-18 ; iv. 1-3.**

These Scriptures, and many others, speak of stewardship. The believer is not only a child in God's family, a member of Christ's body, a stone of that temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells, but he is a "steward of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter v. 10). He has had his Master's goods committed to his trust, as the parable teaches, and is to trade with these for his Master's interest and gain during the period of His absence. He has been entrusted—like Joseph in Egypt of old—with the bread that is to feed those who are of the family of faith, and he is to give each his portion in due season. He has been entrusted with the Gospel of God, "put in trust" with it, as the apostle speaks, and it is his business to see that those for whom that Gospel is designed get the benefit of it.

A steward is not an owner ; he is simply one in charge of his master's property, and "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful". If in this he fails, he may be dismissed—as we learn from Luke xvi. 1, for wasting his master's goods—although he will retain his place as a child in God's family. The latter relationship stands in grace, the former is one of responsibility. There are many forms of Christian stewardship, but, for our present purpose, we will limit ourselves to the consideration of three mentioned in the Scriptures read, viz. :—

1. The ministry of THE GOSPEL toward the world, and to every creature in it (Mark xvi. 15).
2. The ministry of all THE WORD of God among all the children of God.
3. The godly stewardship of our TIME and MONEY.

## *Stewardship of the Gospel*

It was the burden of this stewardship that caused Paul to say, as he cast his eye across the world, civilized and barbarian, "I am debtor" (Rom. i. 4). It was a sense of the responsibility that came with this "stewardship" of the Gospel that made him cry—"Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 16, R.V.). Would to God that all of us in our varied measures felt the same, and were of the same spirit, the one-talent men as well as the ten! And it applies to the assemblies of God's people as it does to individuals. Each assembly has its stewardship: it is set, like the Eddystone Lighthouse with its double motto, "To give light and to save life", amid the world's darkness—to shine and to save. Yes, that small company meeting in that dark religious parish, is a steward of God's Gospel to every sinner in it, and if it prove unfaithful to its trust, God may pass its service into other hands.

The evangelist, the gospeller, the wayside worker, the tract distributor who abandons his work, buries his talent and goes in for ease or money-making—for the bed and the bushel both obscure the light—will hear of it from his Master in the day of the judgment seat.

There would not be a county, town, village, or parish in Great Britain unevangelised, if we were half-alive to our responsibilities as God's stewards in the Gospel. There would be no "half-time" preachers, no "stand-at-ease" evangelists, no half-asleep churches, and certainly no half-empty halls, if God's people were awake to the immense possibilities of their position. Just think of being "put in trust" with the most costly, the most mighty, and the last of all God's messages of grace to men!

Those who preach should reach both to "regions beyond" and those who remain should "hold the ropes", as Carey said, praying for, standing by and providing "the sinews of war" for those who are manifestly called of God to give themselves and their time wholly to this stewardship. And whoever feels the burden of this holy trust, will seek whenever, wherever, however he can, at all times, in all places, to speak to sinners of Christ, to warm them to flee from coming wrath, and to tell them of God's love and God's salvation. We often think that the day of Christ may show that more were converted through these wayside, and what men call "irregular", methods, than through the



orthodox platform and regular preaching. When one lays himself out for God and is willing to be used by Him, keeping his soul in a right condition, it is wonderful what God can do with even a "cracked" vessel. A ram's horn, the jawbone of an ass, five pebbles from the brook serve His purpose—in fact, anything so long as it is clean and humble and near His hand.

### *Stewardship of the Word of God*

The second aspect of the Christian stewardship is, to give *all* the Word of God to *all* the people of God. Not according to the pattern of one very zealous man who advertised that in a certain hall on a given night he would "declare the whole counsel of God"—that was rather a large order for a single meeting. He possibly meant that he was in a position to speak all that God might give him, keeping nothing back that would be profitable, not bound down by restrictions that he dare not mention certain truths. We must all claim such liberty, and woe betide that man who, either tacitly or by promise, keeps back what he knows will give offence. But it must be given, as one parable teaches, "in due season" (Luke xii. 42), and he who thus ministers the Word is said to be a "wise" as well as a "faithful steward". Faithfulness will not keep back what is God's truth, and profitable to the saints: wisdom will give it in due season and proportion, as they are able to bear it, giving milk to babes, and strong meat to those whose senses are exercised to receive it.

A healthy babe will thrive on milk, but a joint of meat would choke it. And when he remembers that very many are prejudiced regarding certain truths, the wise steward will seek to introduce them with heavenly skill, arranging them as "apples of gold on salvers of silver". We have often felt it was not so much the truth, as the manner and spirit in which it was spoken, that raised prejudice and drew forth opposition; and no wonder, when it is either hurled like rugged stones, or served in a heterogeneous mass like a dog's breakfast.

The man who stands in God's presence with the opened ear to hear as the learner, will have the Word in season to speak (see Isa. i. 4), at the proper time; and if, like the great Teacher, he speaks what he hears from God, he that is of God will hear God's Word (John vii. 26).

It is a burning question with some, in what sphere this stewardship should be exercised. Some claim as liberty what

others regard as license. Now, we will all agree that the Lord's servant is and must be subject to the Lord alone as regards authority. If others should interfere, or propose to act as his directors, he must say, "Hands off". But while it is perfectly true that neither the Church nor any part of it is to control the movements of the servants of Christ, or to dictate to them where or how they are to serve, it must not be forgotten by those servants that they have a responsibility toward the Church, especially toward the saints with whom they are associated, and primarily toward those with whom they are in local church fellowship. They must not use their "liberty" in such a manner as will stumble or cause to offend the weakest lamb in the flock of God. This is often forgotten in contending for the principle of liberty, but those who claim and use their liberty without due consideration of its effect upon others, show an ill-balanced mind. The man who confessed himself to be the servant of Christ alone, in the glowing words "Whose I am and whom I serve", and served and preached, "not as pleasing men, but God" (1 Thess. ii. 4); who withstood a Peter to the face when he interfered with the God-given liberty of the saints; who claimed he had liberty to eat and drink whatever was set before him, is the man who proclaims he will neither eat flesh nor drink wine while the world standeth, if it will cause his brother to stumble (1 Cor. viii. 13, R.V.). Often have we wondered, as we have heard preachers boasting that they could "preach in a Roman Catholic chapel" and such like, if they had ever read this saying of the Apostle, or what place the divine principle it establishes holds in their thoughts.

It is easy enough to ride rough-shod over the convictions of the most godly of our fellow-saints, and to rudely burst the most sacred bonds of Christian fellowship, under the pretext of liberty, but true love will never so act. It will never stumble the weak, nor will it strengthen the hands of the wilful. It will ever cherish true fellowship with fellow-saints, and never launch forth into a path which it knows will effect a cleavage between those who for years have been true yoke-fellows in the Lord's service. What havoc has been wrought, and how disastrous has been the results to themselves and others, by brethren who preach and teach going into associations, and allying themselves with men who are open opponents of many of the truths they profess to own, and in avowed hostility to the position they occupy in

separation from all the varied systems of the world's religions, gathering in the name of a rejected Christ without the camp! And what has been gained for God by such actions? Absolutely nothing. When the tear and wear of time has shown the net result, we have never seen, nor do we expect to see, a genuine work of God, bearing the Divine impress, wrought through the instrumentality of one who has surrendered or compromised the truth that he had been taught by God and once professed to own. Such liberty is only "an occasion to the flesh", alike in those who claim and those who resist it. Holier and happier were the days, and God and man got more from them, when the saints and servants of God sought unto God and the Word of His grace together, and were content to "fill a little space" far from the mixed multitude of the world's religions, and who yet were a means of blessing to all around. For although, Joseph-like, they were rejected by their brethren, and misrepresented by the world, they abode by the "well", and their branches, full of goodly fruit, ran "over the wall" in blessing to saints and sinners. But on the other hand, those who have been taught the truth are responsible to pass it on to others. The Divine principle of this stewardship is "The things which thou hast heard . . . the same commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2). Wherever a child of God is found, we are bound by the law of love to hand on to him, as one of Christ's blood-bought flock, *all* that we have learned of the truth, and not keep it back because he may be prejudiced against it. The Spirit of God can open the saint's heart and mind to receive the truth as surely as he opens the sinner's to receive the Gospel; and the servant of Christ's business is to speak it and count on the Spirit's operations in both cases. There is no need to go into unscriptural associations to fulfil this stewardship. Where there is real spiritual hunger, the sheep will seek the green pastures, and when the Word of God gets hold it will bring its subject in spite of himself to hear the truth. Fireside ministry, homely Bible readings, the circulation of sound and helpful books and tracts all come under this head, and are much used where other forms of ministry are impossible.

### *Stewardship of Time and Money*

"Redeeming the time" (Eph. iv. 16), buying up every opportunity and using it for God, is the believer's responsibility. All

his life, from the day of conversion till the hour of release, is ransomed time ; it is not his own : it belongs to the Lord and ought to be used for Him and in His service. This will leave no opportunity for gossip, none for sharing the world's "innocent amusements", none for standing all day idle in the market place.

*"Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do".*

Had David been in his place at the head of his army on the field instead of lounging unoccupied on the roof of his house, he had never fallen into the dark slough of sin that blotted his life's page and wrung from his soul the penitential cries of Psalm li. There would be fewer bitter quarrels among God's people, fewer backslidings and falls, if all the time we each have at our disposal were used for God. The judgment-seat of Christ will surely tell how much wasted time there has been in the lives of many of the people of God.

Our *money* too is to be used for God. True, it is all His to begin with, as we ourselves, yet He recognises what is our "own" as being in our "own power" (Acts v. 4), to be used by us as we please. If we remember how much He gave for us, we will joyfully yield what is ours for His service. There are poor ones and needy ones of His flock to be cared for, and there are servants of Christ spending their strength in carrying the Gospel to far-off lands, with whom we may be sharers by giving our substance to keep them. I Cor. xvi. I tells how and when we are to give, and what is thus given we are then to seek wisdom as His stewards to use. Neither hoarding up money to become rich, nor squandering it upon dress, amusements, sight-seeing and self is pleasing to God.

If our *purses* as well as ourselves were kept at the foot of the Cross, yielded up to God, owned as part of our stewardship, then there would be no money to mis-spend on flowers, feathers, jewels, and gaudy attire which so disfigure many heaven-bound pilgrims ; nothing to give for the flesh : all would be laid out for God and turned into the currency of Heaven. Soon, very soon, the day when we shall give an account of our stewardship will have come. Then it will be seen that God is no man's debtor, that all laid out for Him — time, talents, strength, substance — has been well spent, and that He gives the largest interest — even a hundredfold. With our eyes fixed on the cross

where God gave up His only Son, and Jesus gave Himself for us — we shall be constrained to say :

*“Nought that I have mine own I call :  
I’ll hold it for the Giver ;  
My heart, my strength, my life, my all,  
Are His, and His for ever”.*

### *Faithful and Wise*

“It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. iv. 1). Faithfulness is the responsibility of the servant ; success is with God. Yet how often one hears the argument that, in order to gain the people’s ears, break down their prejudices, and adapt the message to their condition, certain truths likely to give offence and cause opposition should not be spoken of. The Great Preacher never so acted. Once and again when He had the ears of the people, and when they crowded around Him in an “innumerable multitude” (Luke xii. 1), He began to speak what he knew would arouse their anger and scatter them. He never kept back the “truth” for fear of giving offence, even when He had gained the people’s favour by means of “the gracious words” that He had spoken (Luke iv. 22, with 25-29). Are His servants wiser than He, when they speak only half the message ? We may rest assured that, in the day of Christ’s judgment-seat, what He will approve of, what will gain His “well done”, is full, unhesitating obedience to His Word. Not men’s ideas of success, but His estimate of the faithfulness of His stewards, will gain His reward. “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt. xxv. 23), will be the word on that day. “Thou hast been faithful in a few things ; I will make thee ruler over many things” (Luke xix. 17). May grace be given to all who are entrusted by the Lord with His message, whether to the world or the Church, to be “faithful in all things”, even should the result be, in men’s estimation, failure. God will sooner or later vindicate the faithful servant, roll away his reproach, and reward him openly. No path ever ended with less success, as man reckons, than the path of the Lord Jesus ! Yet He was the “Faithful Witness”, and always did what pleased the Father. The full result of His testimony and service will yet be seen in a heaven filled with ransomed sinners. So shall faithful service and stewardship have its full fruition in the eternal state. But

wisdom is also needed. "A faithful and *wise* steward" is one who gives each his portion "in due season" (Luke xii. 42), milk for babes, and strong meat for those able to bear it. This necessitates spiritual discernment, which is acquired by walking in the Spirit and waiting upon God. There is a difference between God's *truth* and God's *message*: the latter is the truth given by the Spirit for that people at that time. How often the mark is missed in this!—hence the need of dependence and discernment of the Spirit's guidance.

There never was a better opportunity of spreading God's gospel and His truth among men than there is to-day. The whole world is virtually open to the gospel, and although utter indifference reigns in many a countryside, and evil doctrines destructive of the faith abound on every hand, there are weary souls to whom the world has proved itself a failure, seeking something that the gospel alone can give them, and when it is plainly and simply preached in God's power, they come to hear it. And there are children of God, worn and wearied of the dry Christless preaching they get in their "churches", glad to get a handful of the "corn of heaven" wherever they can find it. Let those who have it hold it forth to others.

Soon the day of service and stewardship will be over—the gladsome privilege of spending and being spent for Christ for ever past—and the long rest of Eternity reached. May the servants of Christ, great and small, "hold fast grace" to serve with godly reverence and fear, with their eye on the judgment seat before which they must soon appear at the call of Him whose they are and whom they serve, when He shall say, "Give account of thy stewardship", and when everyone shall give an account of himself to God!

*"So I ask Thee for the daily strength,  
To none that ask denied.  
And a mind to blend with outward life  
While keeping at Thy side :  
Content to fill a little space,  
If God be glorified".*

## HYMN

*Hark ! 'tis the watchman's cry,  
"Wake, brethren, wake !"  
Jesus Himself is nigh,  
Wake, brethren, wake !  
Sleep is for sons of night,  
Ye are children of the light,  
Yours is the glory bright —  
Wake, brethren, wake !*

*Call to each wakening band,  
"Watch, brethren, watch !"  
Clear is our Lord's command,  
"Watch, brethren, watch !"  
Be ye as men that wait,  
Ready at their Master's gate,  
E'en though He tarry late —  
Watch, brethren, watch !*

*Heed we the Steward's call,  
"Work, brethren, work !"  
There's room enough for all :  
Work, brethren, work !  
This vineyard of the Lord  
Constant labour doth afford ;  
Yours is a sure reward —  
Work, brethren, work !*

*Hear we the Shepherd's voice,  
"Pray, brethren, pray !"  
Would ye His heart rejoice ?  
Pray, brethren, pray !  
Sin calls for ceaseless care,  
Weakness needs the Strong One near,  
Long as ye tarry here,  
Pray, brethren, pray !*

# **The Coming Bridegroom and The Waiting Bride**

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The personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ from Heaven is the proper hope of the believer and of the Church. This is what He Himself has promised, and what the saints of former days expected. The Church in her early love and purity waited for the Lord, as an expectant bride waiteth for the return of her bridegroom. But the mists of tradition soon arose and hid the Lord's promise from the eye of faith. Then hope quickly declined, and love waxed cold. For many centuries the truth of the Lord's return was buried up under heaps of man's traditions. The saints were taught to look for the universal spread of Christianity and the conversion of the world, instead of the personal advent of the Lord. To the present hour this delusive hope is entertained by tens of thousands who call themselves by Christ's name. After the course of ages, the conversion of the world seemed as far off as ever, and thoughtful Christians were driven to their Bibles to prayerfully search and test their theology by the Word of God. The result of this return to the Book of God to seek information was, that they found no such doctrine taught as that the world would be converted by means of the preaching of the Gospel, and the millennium, or Kingdom of Christ, thus ushered in. They found, on the contrary, that by means of the preaching of the Gospel a people were being taken out from the world to be a bride for Christ, that He might return to receive His bride to Himself at any moment, and that the world, religious and political, would go to democracy, infidelity, and corruption. From then till now, the personal return of the Lord has been more or less a present joyous hope among the saints.



It is with an earnest desire to help fellow-believers—especially younger ones in Christ—to a further knowledge of what our Lord has spoken concerning this great event, that I would ask you to search and meditate with me a little on this glorious theme. It is pre-eminently a subject for the *heart*, and I know nothing so potent and practical in its effects on the daily lives and conduct of the saints, as the truth of the personal and pre-millennial advent of the Lord, rightly understood, and held in communion with God, quickening hope, and nourishing the soul. Mere opinions, orthodox however they may be, stored in the intellect for controversial use, help us little, but whatever brings us near to the Person of Christ, endearing Him to our hearts, we may justly value. Such is our theme. For the sake of simplicity and brevity we will look at it under the following heads :

1. The *Person* who is Coming.
2. The *Time* of His Coming.
3. The *Manner* of His Coming.
4. The *Attitude* of those who expect His Coming.

### *The Person Who is Coming*

In a quiet upper room in the city of Jerusalem, around a furnished table, the Lord and His eleven disciples reclined. There had been twelve, but of these—the traitor Judas—had gone out into the dark night. Now that He has them all alone with Himself, He unburdens His heart among them freely. He tells them that He will be with them now only for “a little while”, and then He must leave them. What a pang of sorrow these words must have carried to their hearts ! Ignorant and slow of heart as they were, they all fondly loved Him. For His sake they had given up their worldly all. They had left their homes and earthly kindred on the shores of Gennesaret to become His companions. They had followed Him and clung to Him throughout His path of dishonour and rejection in Israel. Some of them had seen His glory on the Mount and His tears at Lazarus’ grave. They had been with Him in the deserts and on the stormy deep. Once and again He had told them that He would suffer and die, but they had but feebly grasped the meaning of His words. They still clung to the hope of an earthly kingdom and to places of honour there, with Jesus as the King. Now all this was for the present set aside, and He was going away from

them. It was just then that the words fell from His blessed lips, so fraught with meaning, divulging to them and us the prospects that lie before us. "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so *I* would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And *if* I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again and receive you unto Myself* that where I am there ye may be also" (John xiv. 2-3). This is "*the Promise*" (Heb. x. 36), and "our hope" (1 Tim. i. 2); the "blessed (or happy) hope" (Titus ii. 12); for which we are to "look" and wait. The wonder is that any of us should have had another thought. Yet such has been the case, and now is, with many. Instead of looking for the fulfilment of the Lord's promise — the promise of His personal return, many of the saints are looking for death as the end of their earthly course. But the Lord's coming is not death: it is a contrast to it. When a believer dies, or "falls asleep" (see Acts vii. 60; 1 Cor. xv. 6; 1 Thess. iv. 13), the Lord does not "come again" and "receive" him. He "departs to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23). He "puts off" his tabernacle (2 Peter i. 14); he is "absent from the body" (2 Cor. v. 8), whereas, when Jesus comes, He will "change" the believer's body, and fashion it like to "His glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21). At death his body goes to corruption, whereas at the Lord's coming he "puts on incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 54), and death is swallowed up of victory. At death the saints are parted: when Jesus comes they are all "gathered together". We do not for a moment doubt that those who have fallen asleep are perfectly happy where they now are. They are "in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43), which means "pleasure"; they are "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8, R.V.). Their tears and conflicts are past, and the jarring sounds of earth disturb them no more. Happy saints! And what a throng! Ever increasing, as one by one they pass from us here. Yet they have not entered into the fulness of the glorified state; they wait for their bodies of glory in that upper waiting-room, while we wait in this lower one for the same. Our Hope is as theirs — the advent of the Lord. Nor is it a "*spiritual*" coming, or a "coming to the heart", as others have said. As surely as it was a Person who said "I go", it is the same person who says "I will come again", and who thrice from the throne within the heavens repeats the words: "I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 8, 12, 20). Not only is it a Person for whose coming we are taught to look, but for the very *same* Person who went away. "*This same* Jesus shall so come" (Acts

i. 11). Eighteen centuries in that bright glory where He now is, exalted in the highest place in Heaven, surrounded by myriads of holy beings, have wrought no change in Him. He will come forth "the same Jesus" as when He took the babe in His arms and blessed it, or stood by the grave of Lazarus and wept. There on that bright throne He sits, waiting the hour when He shall receive the Bride for which He bled, to be for ever with Himself.

*There, amid the songs of Heaven, sweeter to His ear  
Is the footfall through the desert, every drawing near,  
There made ready are the mansions, glorious, bright and fair,  
But the Bride the Father gave Him, still is wanting there.*

He waits, as Isaac waited for the home-bringing of Rebekah : we look as Rebekah looked for Isaac. It is not events : it is not prophecies fulfilled : it is not even glory, but it is Jesus Himself the saint longs to see. Not the crown He giveth, but the pierced hand ; not heaven, but "they shall see His face". To illustrate this : When the British soldiers returned from Egypt, victorious over their foes, there was a great excitement in London on the day of their arrival. Banners were flying, and crowds waited to do honour to the conquerors. By-and-by there was a public banquet, and the Queen herself decorated those who had distinguished themselves by acts of heroism. But there stood on the platform awaiting the arrival of the train one solitary person, absorbed in the object of her hope. She was a soldier's bride. More than banners or banquets to her was the hope of seeing him whom she loved, and more to him than a "Victoria Cross" was the joy of receiving his bride.

### *The Time of His Coming*

"Surely I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20). "Yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry" (Heb. x. 37, R.V.). Men have fixed dates, and proclaimed the year and day when Jesus would return, but they only displayed their ignorance and folly. The Scripture gives no hint as to the time : dates do not belong to the dispensation of the Church's call. Signs and tokens of His nearness there will be none. All has been said that will be said. The stillness of the heavens has not been broken for over eighteen centuries ; not since the last-uttered words of Jesus, "Surely I come quickly". The next will

be His "shout" as He descends, the rallying cry that will gather around Him His loved ones of every clime. Dates there are in the prophetic Word, events to transpire, and prophecies to be fulfilled ere He can return to earth in manifested glory to set up His Kingdom and to reign, but between us and His return to "receive" His Bride there is nothing. No event that *must* transpire. Not the thickness of a sheet of tissue paper placed between us and His return. Do you really believe this, dear fellow-saint? That, ere the sands of this day run out, the Lord Himself may come. That our feet may stand even now on the outskirts of the glory, and that in an eye-twinkle we may be there. Like Israel of old — encamped on the banks of the Jordan — the goodly land lying just across, full in view, and all that had to take place ere they were in it, was the silent passage of the ark through the stream, an event unrecognised by the nations, and quickly accomplished. O, for hearts to beat true to the cadence of the well-known, thrilling words:—

*I can almost hear His footfall  
On the threshold of the door ;  
And my heart, my heart is longing  
To be with Him evermore.*

### *The Manner of His Coming*

Here we must distinguish between His coming to the "air" (1 Thess. iv. 17) and to the "earth" (Zec. xiv. 4): His coming *for* His saints to receive them unto Himself (John xiv. 3), and His return *with* them in manifested glory (Col. iii. 3). These two events, or rather these two successive stages of one event, are carefully distinguished in the Scriptures. The one is termed "that blessed hope", the other "the glorious appearing", or "appearing of the glory" (Titus ii. 13). The one is to the saints, the other to the world. Great events in Heaven and on earth will intervene between them; but these are not our hope. There will be an earthly people deeply interested in the signs of these terrible times, scanning them intently; for in them are to be found the heralds of their coming deliverance. But no such sign has been promised to us. The manner of His coming for us will be of a wholly different kind. But let us hear the evidence.

A little company are quietly wending their way up the slope of Olivet. This is the risen Lord with a few of His disciples. The world knows nothing of that quiet walk, for the world has not

seen Jesus since He hung upon the Cross full forty days before. But His own are with Him. He raises His hands to bless them, and, as He blesses, He is quietly parted from them, and ascends out of their midst up to the heavens. They see Him go, and stand gazing up after Him, until a cloud veils Him from their sight. The world saw and heard nothing of all this. As the disciples stood gazing towards the heavens, whither He whom they loved had gone, two men in white apparel appeared to them, and said : "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). These words inform us as to the *manner* of His return. It will be in "like manner" as His going. How did He go? In the act of blessing His people, from their midst, without the world's knowledge. Such will be the manner of His coming. The world will know nothing of it. It will be a secret so far as they are concerned. Does this seem strange? It need not. Heaven's doings have often been as secrets to the world. Enoch was "translated", but there is no account of the world seeing him go. Elijah was "taken up", but only Elisha saw him ascend. The "sons of the Prophets" sought for him on hill and in valley. The heavenly host *sang* on the plains of Bethlehem, but only the shepherds saw and heard. And our rapture to meet the Lord will be of a kindred character. Not so when He appears in glory. Then "Every eye shall see Him" (Rev. i. 7). His manifestation in glory will be as "the Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. iv. 3), and as the "Flaming Fire" (2 Thess. i. 8). But He comes to His people as the rising of "The Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. xxii. 17). The Morning Star steals silently into the lower heavens, shedding a brilliant, silvery light, a harbinger of the coming day. Its rise is unobserved by the sleeping world, but the watchman on his watch-tower hails its light. It appears in a unique moment, which can neither be reckoned night nor day, but is rather the witness that the night is past and the day at hand. The coming of the Lord Jesus as Son of God to receive His Bride will be the "morning" of unclouded bliss to the saints, the dawn of a long, eternal day, to know no night. O, who can conceive the joy, the untold delight, that will fill and thrill the heart when we see His face! To gaze upon the brow once wreathed with thorns! To hear the voice that stilled the stormy wave! To look on the pierced hands and feet! To be near the Eternal Lover of our souls! To be for ever *with* the Lord!

## *The Attitude of those who expect His Coming*

The saints of early days were looking for the return of their Lord — His personal advent — the fulfilment of *the* promise, "I will come again". The response of the Church, the Bride of Christ, while yet in the dew of her youth, to His last utterance from the throne: "Surely, I come quickly", was — "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 20, R.V.). This is the last glimpse we get in the Word of the "Coming Bridegroom" and "The Waiting Bride". He from yon Heaven above whispering to her heart — "I come": she from her watch-tower below, with uplifted eye, replying — "Come". O, lovely attitude! Just what we are told in other portions of the Word was to characterise the saints. To be "waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 7). "*looking* for that blessed hope" (Titus ii. 13); "*to wait* for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 10); to *look* for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus" (Phil. iii. 20).

Mid their trials, persecutions, and bonds they held fast "the confession of *the hope*" (Heb. x. 23, Greek). They waited for the Lord, as they that wait for the morning. Abounding in hope, they suffered shame and dishonour for His Name. The world was beneath their feet: Heaven was near and real. They believed that He might descend at any moment, and that a breath might waft them home. No wonder that the saints of those days were a power among men. The world could not shut its eyes to the fact that they were a waiting people. They were strangers and pilgrims, content with pilgrim fare. Earthly possessions had little attraction for them: they spoke of 'an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled', and their manner of life was such that people around them were made to feel they really meant it. There was a power in their hope, gladdening the heart, purifying the life, and keeping them separate from the ungodly world around them. How the devil must have gloried when he succeeded in robbing the saints of all this, by quietly slipping in the doctrine of the lapse of ages, the conversion of the world, the fulfilment of prophecy, and a millennial earth to intervene, ere the coming Bridegroom could claim His waiting Bride. Or, as some will have it, who own a pre-millennial advent, that the Church must pass through a period of unprecedented trial, known as "the great tribulation", ere she can meet her Lord. How utterly incompatible is all this with waiting and watching for the Lord's

return, and how it all robs the saints of their joyous, proper hope, which is *that the Lord may come at any moment* — that you, dear saints of God, may be in glory with Him to-night. If we only half believed this, if its sunshine filled and thrilled us, what a happy people would we be !

I was travelling by rail not long ago. My fellow-travellers were a father and his little daughter. They had come a long journey, and I saw the child was weary. By-and-bye I noticed she became brighter, and the father kept whispering now and again words into her ear, only two of which I could catch. These were “Home” and “Mother”. I saw it all in a moment. They were nearing home, and every mile the child seemed to grow brighter and happier, until, clasping her little hands in an ecstasy of delight, she cried aloud : “I’ll see my mother”. As the train drew up at the next station, she gave one bound from the carriage into her mother’s bosom, and locked her arms around her neck. She had gained the object of her hope, and she was satisfied.

*How shall I meet those eyes :  
Mine on Himself I cast ;  
And own myself as Jesus’ prize,  
Mercy from first to last.*

For centuries this blessed hope, with all its practical issues, was virtually lost to the Church. Even now, when through grace it has been recovered, the devil would destroy its power among the saints by postponing it until this or that prophetic word shall be fulfilled ; until an Antichrist arise, or a Babylon be rebuilt, and signs appear. But these are *not* our hope. The hope of the saints of this age is a heavenly hope, over which events of earth exercise no control. Our eyes are not to be toward the earth, or watching the course of the world, or marking the fall of empires, but steadfastly looking upward toward the heavens whither He has gone, and from whence “we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus”, to receive to His heart and home with joy unspeakable His Bride, the purchase of His precious blood and the object of His everlasting love. Haste, happy day !

*Come, Lord, come, we wait for Thee,  
We listen still for Thy returning ;  
The loveliness we long to see,  
For Thee the lamp of hope is burning.  
Come, Lord, come !*

# The Judgment Seat of Christ and the Rewards of Service

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Among the hopes and prospects of the future, to which the saints and servants of God are directed, the judgment-seat of Christ holds a unique and important place. A right understanding of this event—its time, its place, its character, and of the believer's relation thereto—will do much to remove traditional and erroneous thoughts concerning judgment, and to enable the believer, as the servant of the Lord, to intelligently pursue His divinely-chosen path of service here, having as his aim the pleasing of his Master now, unto the receiving of His approbation and reward on that coming day, when the Lord shall call His servants before Him, to give an account of their service here.

With the earnest desire to be in possession of the truth on this deeply interesting and intensely practical theme, I would ask dear fellow-saints of God and fellow-servants in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, to search the Word with me a little on this subject, with a view to our mutual profit and blessing.

The theory of a general judgment of saint and sinner, although widely spread and commonly believed, has no foundation in the Scriptures. That the unbeliever will be judged in the future, the Scriptures do teach. The Judge (Acts xvii. 31); the Throne (Rev. xx. 11); the judgment (John v. 30); and the destiny (Rev. xx. 14, 15), are all marked out with a precision and certainty that may well arrest the attention of the sinner, and cause him to tremble. To him the future is black with clouds of coming judgment, which must sooner or later burst upon his unprotected head, and although men are doing their utmost to fritter away



these solemn utterances of the Holy and Almighty God, they will surely come to pass, as surely as He is God who has uttered them. But to the believer in Christ the future has no terrors. As a *sinner* his judgment is already past ; it fell upon his spotless Surety when he stood in his place, bearing his sins upon Golgotha. In that death God reckons the believer to have died, and he, reckoning according to God, exclaims "*I have been crucified with Christ*" (Gal. ii. 20, R.V.). He is therefore judicially dead already. Judgment has been executed : it cannot be repeated. That it will not is beyond all doubt, for it is the One who will Himself be the Judge of the sinner, who has said to the believer — "He that heareth My Word, and believeth Him that sent Me *hath* eternal life, and *cometh not into judgment*, but hath passed out of death into life" (John v. 24, R.V.). These precious words clearly tell of the believer's complete deliverance from judgment to come, no matter what that judgment may be. There will be judgments great and many — judgments of the living and of the dead ; some in time (Matt. xxv.), some in eternity (Rev. xx. 11), but in view of *all* of them, the word concerning the believer is, that he "*cometh not into judgment*". Well then may he tune his heart, looking backward and onward, and sing, in the intelligence of faith —

*Death and judgment are behind me,  
Grace and glory on before.*

But although the believer no longer stands as a sinner before God awaiting judgment, he is a son within the Father's House, and therefore a subject of its rule and of the present discipline exercised by the Father in the circle of His children (Heb. xii. 6-9, 1 Peter i. 17) and of Christ as Lord in the Church, the present aspect of His Kingdom (see 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32). This is neither past nor future, but present, and all the children of God are continually sharing it. Obedient ones receive the Father's approval (Heb. xi. 5), and His companionship (John xiv. 23) ; disobedient ones, His corrective word (John xv. 4) and rod (Heb. xii. 5). But all is of grace, and for our profit (Heb. xii. 10). Into the circle of the children, judgment unto damnation cometh not. The severest forms of the judgment of the Lord among His own have as their ultimate object, salvation, and not condemnation (see 1 Cor. v. 5 ; xi. 32).

But the believer is not only a *son* in the family of God, he is also a *servant* of the Lord Jesus. He has been entrusted with his

Master's goods (see Matt. xxv. 14), and left on earth as His steward to use them for Him (1 Peter iv. 10). He has been called to a life of service and warfare in the Kingdom and House of his absent Lord and Master (Mark xiii. 34; 2 Tim iii. 3, 4), and the reward and recompense of that service is not for the present made known. It will be in the future, at the judgment-seat of Christ. There the servants of the Lord will be gathered to receive their Master's verdict on their service and warfare here, and it is concerning this great future event and its wondrous issues that we would now seek to gather the mind of the Lord from His Word. In order to give simplicity and precision to our meditation, I would suggest that we seek to gather the testimony of the Scripture on this subject under the following heads:—

1. The Time and Place of the Judgment-seat.
2. The Character of the Judgment-seat.
3. The Rewards of the Judgment-seat.

There will be a judgment of the *living* at the commencement of the millennial reign of Christ (Matt. xxv. 31), and of the *dead* at its close (Rev. xx. 2), but neither of these is the judgment-seat of Christ. In the former of these scenes of judgment there is a gathering of sheep and of goats before the Throne of Christ's glory, and there they are divided, the sheep passing into the "Kingdom", the goats into "everlasting punishment". In the latter, "the dead, small and great", are arraigned before "the Great White Throne", and from thence all whose names are not written in "the Book of Life" are cast into the "lake of fire". There is no such judgment awaiting the servants of the Lord. They are already "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6), their names are in "the Book of Life" (Phil. iv. 3), and already they rejoice in the knowledge that in Christ Jesus there is "no condemnation" (Rom. viii. 1).

### *The Time and Place of the Judgment-Seat*

"Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is *with Me*, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12). "Judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*" (1 Cor. iv. 5). "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke xiv. 14). It was when the day of David's rejection was over, and before the day of his glory and kingdom, that the men who had

accompanied with him, and faithfully served their master, counting not their lives dear for his sake, were called before him and rewarded for their service. The three who broke through the ranks of the Philistine host to reach the Well of Bethlehem that they might give to their weary master a drink of its pure waters, received no present recompence for their act of love. But the remembrance of that deed was treasured in David's heart, and in due time the faithful men were appointed to places of honour in the Kingdom. And thus it shall be in the coming day of glory. The cup of water given to one of Christ's, for His Name's sake, will be remembered then, and rewarded. The day of man's judgment will be past, and men and things will appear in their true character. The saints will be in their bodies of glory too, able to see and know in a way they cannot now. At the descent of the Lord into the air, the sleeping saints will be raised incorruptible, the living saints will be changed to immortality, and altogether they will gather around their Lord and accompany Him to the Father's House. That welcome over, to the family circle, the home of love, it would seem as if the glorified saints would then be manifested in their character as servants before the judgment-seat of Christ.

The *Beema*, or Judgment-seat, was an elevated place on which the umpire of the Grecian games sat viewing the race or contest, going on. At the close, the runners and wrestlers were gathered before him, and received from that judgment-seat his verdict of their work. The successful competitors were rewarded by having a wreath of laurel or parsley put upon their brow, and the rest retired without reward. They suffered the loss of the victor's crown, but that was all. There was no criminal condemnation. This is the imagery used by the Apostle in describing his service, as one "running in a race", or "striving for the mastery", to receive an incorruptible crown (1 Cor. ix. 25, 26), as also his reference to the laws or rules of the game (2 Tim. ii. 5).

The race and the warfare are present, the results will be heard of hereafter. As one has truly said—"Heaven will be the best and safest place for the servants of Christ to know the results of their labour". And it would be well for them to leave these results with their Lord until He makes them known.

The judgment-seat will be set in Heaven, and the servants of Christ, in their glorified bodies, will be gathered there. Who can conceive the beauty and the brilliancy of that assembled

throng? All like Christ — perfectly like Him. Bodies fashioned like unto the body of His glory. All perfectly able to stand in the light of God, and in His light to see light clearly. Nothing to dim their vision now; no ignorance, no pride, no selfishness: things that, alas! so oft obscure the spiritual vision here. The glorified servant will then be in possession of his Master's thoughts; he will see the past as He has seen it, and say "Amen" to His verdict upon it. From that judgment-seat he will pass to other scenes of glory with wondering gratitude and praise, extolling the grace that bore with him and supported him in earthly days of service.

### *The Character of the Judgment-Seat*

"After a long time, the Lord of those servants cometh and *reckoneth* with them" (Matt. xxv. 19). "He commandeth those servants to be called to Him, that He might know how much every man had *gained* by trading" (Luke xix. 15). "They watch for your souls, as they that must *give account* (Heb. xiii. 17). That there will be no criminal arraignment before the judgment-seat we have already seen. But there will be "reckoning" and "giving account". The character of our service will be reviewed and manifested there, and all that has been according to God, and of His grace, will be rewarded. There will be much that will not bear the test of that day. "Every man's work shall be made *manifest*, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be *revealed* by fire, and the fire *shall* try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. iii. 13). There is much that is of great account in the estimation of man that will not stand "the fire". "The wood, the hay, and the stubble"—bulky materials that occupy much space, will be burnt up, while "the gold, the silver, and precious stones" will pass through the fire and abide to the worker's praise. There will be those who will be *losers* in that day, whose deeds were blazed abroad through church and world, and who seemed to be the very excellent of the earth. But the esteem and the plaudits of men are not the judgment of the Lord. Heaven's thoughts are not as ours. Yet although these works will not pass through the fire, the worker will. "He himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire". As "just Lot" escaped from Sodom's doom, though all his works were burnt up, so shall every one of the Lord's true servants escape from the judgment of the ungodly. Grace will triumph even then, amid the glory, as it had before con-

quered on earth, and the redeemed and precious servant will pass into the Kingdom of his Lord, but that "abundant entrance" which others who have faithfully served and followed Him, receive, will not be his.

The *motive* of the Lord's servants will be manifested also on that day. Great things are often done from base motives with a desire to gain the approval of men. "The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness". All that was of self, and done to glorify self, will be seen in its true character then. There is much of what passes current for "zeal" and "faithfulness" now, that, when the hidden springs are seen, will be found to be only self and sin. Deeds done "for the glory of God" will then be found to have really been for the pleasing of self, and "valour for the truth" only a vindication of what was pleasing to the flesh. O what revelations, what manifestations, the "light" and the "fire" will make ! Dear brethren and fellow-servants, let us accustom ourselves to their searchings now, and by help from Heaven, condemn and renounce what we *shall* not have to grieve over — if that be possible — then. The nearer we come to God's thoughts now, the more we are possessed of the mind of Christ, and the closer we cleave to the written Word in our service, the less will we have to see reduced to ashes, disowned, and disapproved, on that coming day. "Why don't you write your biography ?" said one aged saint to another. "*It is already wirtten*", said his brother, with a smile, "and will be published *in the morning*". Ah, yes ; on the morning of that coming day, before the time of manifested glory to the world, the life-story of the saints will be "published" and made known. And remember, it cannot be corrected then : it must stand as it has been written. And on that day the Lord will allow us to read it in His light.

*Deeds of merit as we thought them,  
He will show us were but sin ;  
Little acts we had forgotten  
He will own were done for Him.*

There will be others there, who were little thought of here. Their labours, privations, and sufferings for Christ's Name sake received no acknowledgment on earth. They passed away unknown, unnoticed, and unnamed by the great ones of earth. Yea, some of them bore the brand of shame and dishonour. As one

who knew by experience the meaning of it, sang —

*"I have borne scorn and hatred,  
I have borne wrong and shame ;  
Earth's proud ones have reproached me  
For Christ's thrice-blessed Name :  
Where God's seal set the fairest  
They stamped their foulest brand ;  
But judgment shines like noon-day  
In Immanuel's land".*

Yes, blessed be God, the Lord whom they loved and served, and for whose Name and truth they suffered, will overturn the world's verdict, and reward His servants on that day.

There is something here for the servants of Christ to look forward to and to wait for. When men speak evil of you, let it pass. The Lord will make a note of it. Remember Joseph in the prison of Egypt : his feet fast in the stocks, his name dishonoured and branded with infamy. It seemed as if the Lord had taken no notice of it. But the full time of recompence had not yet come. When it did come, Egypt knelt at his feet, and his brethren who had hated him bowed the knee before him. Verily, he received his reward, and the Lord rolled away his reproach.

### *The Rewards of the Judgment-Seat*

"Every man shall receive his own *reward*, according to his own labour" (1 Cor. iii. 8). "Ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance" (Col. iii. 24). "Well done, good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21).

To serve the Lord Jesus faithfully here brings no present reward, so far as men can see. The servant himself may have the consciousness that he is serving God (Heb. xi. 5), and he will have the companionship of his Father and his Lord (John xiv. 24), but so far as outward prosperity goes, such as men of the world count gain, there is none of it promised to the servant of Jesus Christ here. On the contrary, he will suffer loss for his Master's sake, and be accounted a "fool" by the wise ones of earth. The day of his recompence lies beyond. His reigning time will come, as surely as that of his Lord and Master. "To him

that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne" (Rev. iii. 21), is the sure and faithful promise. The "crowns" that will be given from the judgment-seat will be rewards for service done on earth. They are "victors' crowns". Such is the meaning of the word chosen to describe them. There is "the victor's crown of life" (Rev. ii. 10), "the victor's crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. iv. 8), and "the victor's crown of glory" (1 Peter iv. 4). The life, the righteousness, and the glory are not rewards. They are gifts of God's sovereign grace. All the saints share them, and ever will, on the inalienable ground of grace alone. But the victor's crown of life, of righteousness, and of glory are given as the recompence of suffering, or martyrdom, and for service done on earth.

The particular form of honour expressed by these terms we may only know in part while here — it has not pleased the Lord to describe in detail what these honours will be, but they all include association with Christ, and honoured places in His Kingdom. "As one star differeth from another star in glory", so shall the degrees and spheres of the servants of Christ in the coming Kingdom (see Luke xix. 17, 18) and glory. "O what will it be to be there!" To see Him crowned and honoured who was the Outcast and the Stranger here! To serve Him amid the glory there, where His praise is sung by every tongue! Lord, tarry not, but come! Haste, happy day!

### *The Lost Reward*

"Look to yourselves, that ye *lose not* those things which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward" (2 John 8). "Let no man rob you of your prize" (Col. ii. 18, R.V.). "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take (or receive) thy crown" (Rev. iii. 12, R.V.).

Some, who in the early days of Christian life "ran well", in later years slacken their pace. Others, who fearlessly and faithfully serve the Lord, holding fast His Word, settle down into respectable worldliness and indifference to the things of God. Solemnly sad it is to think that their reward may be lost, and the victor's crown that would have decked their brow will be received and worn by another. It is not enough to begin well. Many start the race with energy and zeal; but it is only those who finish well who are crowned. It was at the *close* of a long life of service for his Master that the Apostle was able with con-

fidence to say, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness*" (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, R.V.). Yes, "*laid up*. He *knew* it was now won, for "*the course*" had been finished. Up to that time his motto was, "*I press on*" (Phil. iii. 12). Now the race was over, and he saw the crown "*laid up*" in safe custody, till that coming "*crowning day*", when he with all who have fully followed and faithfully served their Lord in earthly days, shall receive from His pierced hand the incorruptible crown, and hear from His blessed lips the joyful "*Well done*".



## The New Jerusalem and The Eternal Glory

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The destiny of the believer is to be "for ever *with* the Lord". His everlasting Home is the New Jerusalem, the consummation of his hope the eternal glory of God and the Lamb. Like the pilgrim patriarch of early days, he passes through the world as "a stranger and sojourner", with his eye on the "City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God". There the pilgrim pathway ends ; the land of his possession is reached ; he is at *home*. Even now his longing spirit is in love with the place, and he sings as his feet press on —

*My heart is onward bounding,  
Home to the land I love ;  
Its distant joys and pleasures  
My longing passions move.  
Fain would my thirsty spirit  
Its living freshness breathe,  
And wearied feet find resting  
Its hallowed shades beneath.*

The first stage of this pathway of glory will be at the descent of the Lord Jesus into the air to meet His saints. "The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of 'God". The immediate response to this shout of the returning Lord will be a resurrection from among the dead of all the sleeping saints. The graves will yield their ancient charge ; the dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible, in bodies of glory, in the image of their Lord. At the same moment — in the twinkling of an eye — the living saints

on earth shall be changed, their bodies shall be fashioned like unto Christ's, mortality swallowed up of life, and both caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. Gathered together thus around Himself, He will lead them in triumph to the Father's House. This translation will end the pilgrim pathway of the living saints who, like Enoch of old, shall "go without dying", and it will also sweep the graves of all who have fallen asleep, and those unclothed spirits have been resting in paradise with Christ.

Now they receive that fulness of salvation, that redemption of the body, for which in the days of their faith and hope they longed and sighed. Now their sighs are turned to songs, their expectations to realisation. They have been awaked in His likeness, and they are satisfied—fully, perfectly satisfied. So also is their Lord, for, looking upon His gathered flock, His blood-bought Bride, He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul and "shall be satisfied". His saints are with Him now, He has presented them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, and their cup runneth over. Goodness and mercy hath followed them all their earthly days, and now they have come to "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever".

*To find each hope of glory gained,  
Fulfilled each precious word ;  
And fully all to have attained  
The image of their Lord.*

## *Glorified !*

The next glance that we get of this glorious company is within an open Heaven, seated, clad in priestly robes, with royal crowns upon their heads (Rev. iv. 4 ; v. 8-10), far above and beyond the rising storm that sweeps the guilty earth, and calls forth the righteous ire of Heaven. Here it is that Christ's *Beema* or judgment-seat will be set, and here He will bestow His rewards for faithful service during earthly days, and appoint to His servants their places of honour in His coming Kingdom. Later still (Rev. xix. 4-9), the marriage of the Lamb is celebrated in the Heavens, and then He is seen returning with His saints in glory to the earth (see Rev. xix. 11-14) ; Zec. xiv. 4, 5). It is not our present purpose to dwell on these events, blessed and glorious as they are, nor to trace along the line of Scripture the

various stages that usher in the glorious reign of Christ over a restored and peaceful earth. Stretching far beyond the thousand years of millennial blessedness, there lies the eternal glory ; the everlasting rest of God and His redeemed ; the new Heavens and the new earth in their eternal beauty, fresh from the hand of their Creator ; the Paradise of God, into which no lurking serpent shall ever steal ; the peaceful abode of the last Adam and His Bride ; that sinless, tearless, unending Sabbath, where "God shall be all in all". Thrice blessed as will be the thousand years of millennial rest and peace, they will not be the final rest of God with His people. Sin, although suppressed, will still lurk there. Death, the last enemy, will not have been destroyed : Satan will not have met his final doom. The thousand years of Immanuel's reign, and of the beams of His glory on the earth, will not alter the heart of unregenerate men, and so we find the millennium will be followed by an outburst of man's wickedness and hatred to God, more terrible and daring than any that had preceded it—an open attack on the glorified Christ upon His Throne. But, unlike that hour of His sorrow when He hung on Golgotha, in which His enemies gathered like ravening and roaring lions around Him and were allowed to vent their wrath upon Him unrevenged, is this the day of His power. Swift judgment falls upon the assailants. So it is written—"fire came down from God out of Heaven and devoured them" (Rev. xx. 9). This is followed by the final doom of Satan and his hosts, the judgment of the Great White Throne, and the passing away of the present heavens and earth. Then there shines out in bright and blessed splendour the new Heavens and the new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii. 13), the fair eternal home and rest of God and His redeemed, into which the new Jerusalem is seen descending "as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. xxi. 2). And, beloved fellow-saints, surely we should accustom our souls to think and meditate often on this ever-blessed vision, this Divine description of our eternal home. When we are absent from our earthly dwelling-place, where our friends and loved ones are, we often find our thoughts and affections turning thither. We cannot restrain them if we would. Unwittingly, shall I say, we find ourselves humming "there's no place like home". And if it be so with our earthly tent and those we love below, how much more ought it to be our habit to turn, with longing eye and heart, to that home and mansion which

“eternally shall stand”. As the late beloved Robert Chapman sang —

*May not an exile, Lord, desire  
His own sweet land to see ?  
May not a captive seek release,  
A prisoner, to be free ?  
A child when far away may long  
For home and kindred dear ;  
And she that waits her absent Lord  
May sigh till He appear.*

Yet alas ! how seldom do we hear its “glories confessed” with an ardour worthy of the theme. Saints of earlier and less-enlightened days, who knew less of the world than we do, had more to say about it. It may be they were behind us in their general knowledge, but it often occurs to me, as I read their utterances and listen there, as it were, to the breathings of their hearts, that they were miles ahead of us in their aspirations after heavenly things, and in their enjoyment of them. They were less at home on earth, and better acquainted with the City to which they were going. It was of this City that the aged Bernard so sweetly sang —

*Jerusalem the glorious ! the home of the elect !*

*O dear and future country ! our eager hearts expect,  
E'en now by faith I see thee, e'en here thy walls discern :*

*To thee my thoughts are kindled, and strive, and pant, and yearn.*

To view this fair City, the exiled John was led by an angel to a “great and high mountain”. Surely we may gather from this, that in order to have this glorious scene revealed to our hearts now, we need to be on the mount of God, in communion with Him in spirit, far from that world in which everything is so utterly opposed to Him. He sees the holy Jerusalem “descending out of Heaven from God” towards the earth. The first eight verses of Rev. xxi. give a view of the City in its relation to the eternal state, the new heaven and the new earth : the following verses give a retrospective view of the City in its relation to millennial times, as we judge. The contrast between the restored heavens and earth of millennial times, and the freshly *created* heavens and earth of the eternal state, is plainly marked. In the millennial earth sin remains in the flesh of those inhabiting it,

although not as now in manifested form: in the eternal state every trace of the fall, all "the former things" will have passed away. The leaves of the tree of life will be used for the "healing of the nations" during the millennium, whereas, in the eternal state there shall be "neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain".

### *The New Jerusalem during the Millennium*

The new Jerusalem is first seen descending *toward* the earth, but during the millennium it will not descend *into* the earth, but rather appear *over* it, the abode of Christ and His heavenly people, the seat of His government and glory. As one has said—"the Adamic earth is not adopted to its glory. It remains therefore throughout the millennium connected *with* the earth, but not *in* the earth, and it is not until the first heaven and earth have passed away, and *new* Heavens and a *new* earth created, that it descends again, and finds a home suited to its glory". During the thousand years of Christ's reign it would appear as if it occupied a place between the Heaven above—the dwelling place of God—and the earthly Jerusalem, the metropolis of the world of that time. It will be filled with the glory of God, and hung as a lamp to lighten the earth below with its holy light. "The nations shall walk amidst the light thereof" (Rev. xxi. 24, R.V.). The earthly Jerusalem, "the City of the Great King", will be lit up by the beams of glory from the Heavenly City, as it is written—"Arise; shine! for thy *light* is come, and the *glory* of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isa. lx. 1). That glory will fill the Temple (Ezek. xliii. 1), and be a defence and a shadow to Jehovah's earthly people (Isa. iv. 5). "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it" (Isa. xl. 1-5). The Transfiguration scene on the Mount was a foreshadowing of this blessed time. In the Heaven of heavens, high about all, God the Father is heard speaking. Lower down, and within the vision of those who stood upon the earthly Mount, Christ is seen transfigured, shining in heavenly glory, in company with Moses and Elias, fit types of the sleeping saints who have been raised and of the living changed without tasting death, while the earthly people, like Peter, James and John, basking in the light of that face which did "shine as the sun" are well able to see and hear the converse of the Heavenly company. So shall it be when the glory of God—now shining in the face of Jesus Christ, but hidden to the world—

shall beam forth in all its brightness in the Heavenly City, and radiate through its crystal walls to the earth beneath.

## *The New Heavens and New Earth*

"We, according to His promise, look for *new* heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter iii. 13). This, although not the proximate hope of the Church, is the great end of the purpose of God: the final consummation of all His dispensational workings. Blessed and glorious as the millennial Kingdom will be, it falls far short of absolute perfectness; it is not the "eternal glory" to which the saints have been "called" (1 Peter v. 10): it is not the eternal rest of God and His redeemed. This rest will only be reached when every trace of sin and sorrow has been done away, when every mark of the fall and the curse has been wiped off: the last enemy destroyed, and the whole of God's redeemed—including those who will live on the earth in mortal bodies during the millennium—have been brought into the perfectness and glory of the new creation. Then it is that all that connects itself with the first Adam and the first creation disappears for ever, the old heavens and earth pass away, and new heavens and a new earth appear, in which God will be all in all; the fair Paradise of God; the eternal home of the last Adam and His Bride, into which neither Satan, or sin, or sorrow shall ever enter. The glory of the new Heavens and new earth we can at present feebly apprehend. The first creation was glorious ere sin had marred it: even now, amidst its groans for deliverance, there are traces of its great Creator's hand, which proclaims His wisdom and His might. But the beauty and the glory of the new Creation will exceed the old, as the glory of Christ the Second Man exceeds that of the first Adam, who was of the earth. It will be a creation worthy of Him for whose glory it will be formed, and under whose headship and dominion it will be placed. It will stand secure for ever in the power of His redemption—even the Lamb who was slain. With this glimpse of the Eternal State the curtain drops and the Scripture ends. The Book of God had opened with an account of the creation of the first heavens and earth, and with a view of the first Adam and his bride amid the beauties of an earthly paradise, with its tree of life and flowing rivers: and the Book of God now closes with a view of the new Heavens and the new earth, and of the Last Adam and His Bride amidst

the eternal glories of the Paradise of God, where "the Tree of Life" for ever grows, and "the River of the Water of Life" unceasingly flows. Fair scene! over which no cloud shall ever roll, or day of sorrow come. Full well may we sing —

*Beneath Thy touch, beneath Thy smile  
New Heaven and earth appear,  
No sin their beauty to defile,  
Or dim them with a tear.*

### *The New Jerusaem in the Eternal State*

It is to this new earth that John sees the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God as a Bride adorned for her husband. Her thousand years of millennial blessedness, during which she had flooded the earth with her glory beams, are past, but her freshness and beauty are still the same. She appears as a Bride adorned, clad in her bridal robes — in the fair, unfading loveliness of resurrection — descending now as the tabernacle of God: His eternal dwelling place among glorified men, whose capacities for the enjoyment of God, and for abiding in His presence will be perfect. His will shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Heaven and earth will no longer be at variance as they now are, but in blessed unison, courts of the same glorious dwelling place of God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — Triune God of Light and Love — "ALL IN ALL".

### *A View of the Holy City*

To John's enraptured vision the City is at length revealed and described by an angel. Surely it was of grace that God's lonely witness was allowed to see this glorious sight of the Heavenly City and the calm, eternal Sabbath of rest that lay beyond the sorrows of his earthly lot. The sight of that Eternal City would never be forgotten. It would ever be present to him in his lonely Patmos. If we by grace have the vision made plain to us, our hearts shall be so won by it, that the world with all its tinsel glory, will fade and die. It will have no charm, no attraction, by reason of the glory that excelleth. Holy Jerusalem! Perfection of beauty! how our grovelling spirits need thee!

*Yes, I need thee, Heavenly City,  
My low spirit to upbear;  
Yes, I need thee; earth's enchantments  
So beguile me with their glare.*

*Let me see thee : then these fetters  
Break asunder — I am free ;  
World ! thy pomp no longer charms me,  
Faith has won the victory.*

The Book of the Revelation abounds in symbols, and this description of the Heavenly City is chiefly symbolic in its character. Without attempting to expound these symbols—for we only know in part—yet surely we may gather from them the character of that Heaven and home to which God is leading us.

“The city was *pure gold* like unto *clear glass*”. Divine righteousness—absolute purity. “The building of the *wall* was of *jasper*”, a perfectly transparent medium ; nothing to sully the Divine glory, as, alas ! there is in us now. “The *street* (or broad-way) of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass”. No spot or stain contracted there ! No more need of the Laver or Brazen Sea ! All is purity, perfectness, holiness there. “The city lieth *foursquare* : the length and the breadth and the height of it are *equal*”, a transparent cube, fifteen hundred miles each way ; perfect alike above, around, below. “And had a *wall* great and high”—perfect security : no roaring lion, no subtle serpent there. Watchfulness no longer needed ; the day of the sword and shield is past. “The *gates* of it shall not be shut at all”—perfect freedom ; yet “there shall in no wise enter it anything that defileth”. Solemn words for the sinner and the unclean. Gates open, yet no desire to enter. Hell would be more tolerable than such a Heaven to unregenerate man ; everything holy and Christlike there

*The charms that woo the senses  
Shall be as pure as fair,  
And all, while breathing o’er us,  
Shall tell of Jesus there.*

“The city had no need of the sun”—“the glory of God did lighten it”—“the Lamb is the light thereof”. “The throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it”. All Divine : all of God and the Lamb. “The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel’s Land”.

*God and the Lamb —’tis well,  
I know that source Divine ;  
Of joy and love no tongue can tell,  
Yet know that all is mine.*



*God and the Lamb shall there  
The light and temple be ;  
And radiant hosts for ever share  
The unveiled mystery.*

"I saw *no temple therein*". In the earthly city there will be a temple (Ezek. xli.), but in the Heavenly City all are priests, and all abide equally near, in the holiest. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple". And, better than all the glory, "they shall *see His face*". O blessed sight ! Not a brief glance, but a long, eternal gaze. "Thou settest us before Thy face for ever", and there, for ever like Thee and with Thee, and with all Thy redeemed, glorified in Thine image, we shall behold Thy glory and gaze upon Thy face throughout eternity. This shall be Thy people's Heaven, and this their everlasting home.

*Soon where earthly beauty blinds not,  
No excess of brilliance palls,  
Salem ! City of the Holy,  
We shall be within thy walls.  
There, beside yon crystal river,  
There, beside life's wondrous tree,  
There, with nought to cloud or sever,  
Ever with the Lamb to be,  
Heir of glory,  
That shall be for thee and me.*

## **FOREWORD**

**A**NOTHER BOOK, to be added to the many now in circulation, may seem unnecessary. And especially so, when the subjects treated are not new, but matters that have been written about, by abler pens, again and again. Yet, it is hoped these "Papers" may find a place, and fill a niche of their own. They have been selected out of many, which in a limited way have seemed to be a help to some, when published in a monthly magazine. If in this collected form, He whom we are honoured in serving, should still further bless them to His people, we shall be glad, and the glory shall be all His own.

T. D. W. MUIR



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## Five Mighty Facts

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In the Bible we are brought face to face with *facts*. Men propound *theories* — and later modify or discard them. God, in His Word, deals with facts — mighty facts. The most important of these “facts”, relate to the Lord Jesus Christ. First, is the wondrous fact of His *Incarnation*. “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth” (John i. 14). Thus does the Spirit of God announce to us that

### CHRIST HAS COME.

Through the centuries that followed the ruin man brought upon himself in Eden, because of his disobedience to God, we find the Spirit of God continually testifying concerning One who was to come. He was to be the “Seed of the woman”—a real Man (Gen. iii. 15), and yet Divine. He was the “Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace” (Isa. ix. 6). Historian, Psalmist, and Prophet, all have spoken of Him — and the hope of His coming had buoyed the hearts of many.

The types and shadows of the Mosaic economy were, in reality, but foreshadowings of Him who was to be, in Himself, the Sacrifice, and the Altar on which it was offered. The Tabernacle and the Temple, with their vessels, the ritual thereof — even the glory which filled the holy place, all pointed onward to the One who was coming. The songs which the faithful sang, the prayers they uttered, all breathed out the hope that He would come. They looked, longed, and waited for Him, as the One who, in Himself, would bring redemption and rest to men.

At last He came. “*When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son*” (Gal. iv. 4). Not with pomp and earthly glory did He come, but in lowliness and poverty. Born in Bethlehem, that the prophecy of Micah v. 2, might be fulfilled; He was

brought up in Nazareth — an obscure village — until, when about thirty years of age, He stepped forth to begin His work among men. But how did men receive Him? We are told, in John i. 10, 11, “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and *the world knew Him not*. He came unto His own, and *His own received Him not*”.

Thus it was, that when God fulfilled His promise, in the sending forth of His Son, He found men, as a whole, so insensible to His grace, that they said in effect concerning Him : “We will not have this Man to reign over us”, and so they rid themselves of Him, by nailing Him, as though He were a felon, *to a Cross !* It was a foul deed, and God still holds the world responsible for His murder. And the world will never be the same again in consequence of that coming. Whether men receive Him, or whether they refuse Him, all will be responsible for what they have done with Him.

In Him has the Father’s *heart* been revealed. Creation might tell of His power ; His daily mercies manifest His goodness ; angelic hosts might proclaim His glory. But it needed the Son to come from “the bosom of the Father”, to tell forth the *grace* that was there for lost sinners. And, blessed be God, the Son of God has come, and we believe it !

## CHRIST HAS DIED

But there is another mighty fact, all-important to us, and that is that Christ has *died !* Man conspired against Him, and slew Him, it is true. But man could have had no power against Him, apart from the perfect will and the eternal purpose of the Father and the Son. Man’s enmity was very real against God’s Christ ; but, after all, he in his blindness did only that which God’s hand and His counsel determined before to be done (Acts iv. 28).

**Christ has died** — yes, died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. He died, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Peter iii. 18). He “died for the ungodly” — even “for us” (Rom. v. 6-8). “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2 Cor. v. 19), and as a result of that work of reconciliation, He is proclaiming peace to rebels, wherever they are.

What a mighty fact, then, is His death ! How fully it has answered every claim of God’s holiness ! How completely He

has met the deepest need of our souls! "Grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 22). Not grace at the expense of righteousness, but grace on the very ground of it. So that Satan will have no accusation to bring against God, for having the vilest sinner with Him in heaven. The full and all-sufficient answer to every charge will be, "Christ has died!"

### CHRIST HAS RISEN

But Christ is not on the cross, neither is He in the grave, now. He is risen! The Romanist has pictures around the walls of his "church", representing the so-called "Stations of the Cross", in which are portrayed various fictitious representations of supposed occurrences in the last hours of the Lord. But the closing picture shows Him as being put into the tomb—and *leaves Him there!* But He is NOT there. No man could take His life from Him. He laid it down, that He might take it again. This He did, in resurrection. And now, as the Risen One, He is giving eternal life unto all who believe on Him. He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19).

Now, surely this is another mighty fact—and of vital importance to us. Had He been left in the grave, how would we have known that the work He came to do had been satisfactory to God? What assurance could we have that the question of our sins would not come up again? But, He *has* risen, and that "for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). God is "Just, and the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26). How solemn the alternative, if it had been true, that Christ had *not* risen. Says the Apostle, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 17). But He *is* risen, and we who were in our sins, and in death, are "quickened together with Him", and seen by God as "raised together with Him", even to be associated together with Him, in His glory, for ever. Let us never forget, then, dear Christian reader, that we are eternally linked up with a living Christ—justified from all things, and standing, in Him, holy and without blame before God!

### CHRIST IS LIVING

The challenge in Romans viii. 34, "Who is he that condemneth?" is answered by a fourfold statement of fact. "It is

Christ that *died*”—“Yea, rather that is *risen* again”—“Who is even at the right hand of God”—and “Who also maketh intercession for us”. Thus are we assured that there is “no condemnation to them who are *in* Christ Jesus” (Rom. viii. 1). Christ’s death, resurrection, exaltation, and priestly intercession at God’s right hand, are four mighty facts, which stand as bulwarks between the believer and condemnation !

And the Holy Spirit, whose coming was consequent upon the glorification of the Lord Jesus (see John vii. 29 ; xxi. 7, and Acts i. 7-9), now makes good to the believer all this perfect security that he has in Christ. Thus have we rest as to the future, for we are assured not only that He died, and is risen, but that He appears “in the presence of God for us” (Heb. ix. 24).

We look *back* to the Cross, and we see One there who *died* for us. We look up to the Throne, and we see there One who *lives* for us ! Reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we are now being “saved by His life” (Rom. v. 10). Because of what He is, “He is able to save evermore those who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. vii. 25, margin). His work of reconciliation is finished, and will never be repeated, but His work as our High Priest in the presence of God, and our Advocate with the Father (1 John ii. 1), is continuous, and will not be finished

*Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Be saved to sin no more.*

### **CHRIST IS COMING**

“*I will come again*”, said the Lord Jesus to His sorrowing disciples, on that last night He was with them ere He died (John xiv. 3). “*This same Jesus*”, said the angels to the disciples on that ascension day, “*shall so come again* as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts i. 11). Thrice more, in the last chapter of the last book of our Bibles, does the Lord Jesus announce that He is “*coming quickly*” (Rev. xxii. 7, 12, and 20). The Corinthian saints were said to be “waiting” for His coming (1 Cor. i. 7)—and so were the Thessalonians and others. It *was*, and *is*, the proper hope of the Church of God ! Our expectation is not a deathbed ; our prospect is not “the shroud, the coffin, and the grave”. We look for the One who once died for us, and now lives for us, to *come personally* for us (1 Thess. iv. 16)—how soon we do not know. But we *do* know that He *is* coming, and the last word from Him

is, that He is coming directly ! He won't wait one minute longer than is needful !

Oh, that this ever-imminent event might get a fresh grip on our souls ! What a consummation it will be of all our hopes and expectations ! How the mists of earth will be dispelled, and the things we do not understand now, will be then seen clearly. How necessary we will then see the sorrows and disappointments of the way to have been, as the tangled thread of our life-skein will be unravelled in His presence. With what wisdom we will see He has led us, even when thwarting our own plans and purposes. And with what tender care we will see He has preserved our feet from the paths of the destroyer.

Even now, the expectation of His speedy return becomes a purifying hope, for we read, "He that hath this hope set on Him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John iii. 3, R.V.).

It was when the servant said, "My lord delayeth his coming", that he "began to eat and drink with the drunken" : and it is when the child of God loses sight of the mighty fact that Christ is coming, that he can be friends with the world, and love the things that they love, and indulge in the things in which they indulge. It is true we may hold this truth, intellectually, but if *it* does not hold *us*, we shall not be, in any true sense, the better for it. Oh, to "set our hope on Him", and find in the power of this hope that which weans us from this present evil world, its maxims, its ambitions, and its ways !

And we shall find also, that this mighty fact is an energising hope. The prospect of His speedy return will nerve us to increasing activity for Him, make us "steadfast, unmovable, *always abounding* in the work of the Lord", forasmuch as we "know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58). Thus will we "hasten" that coming, realizing that each one added to that company which no man shall be able to number, will be one that brings nearer the consummation of all our hopes — His coming again ! Thus have we those five mighty facts of Scripture connected with the Lord Jesus for us :

First, He has been here — His Incarnation.

Second, He has died — Our Reconciliation.

Third, He has risen — Our Justification.

Fourth, He liveth evermore — His Exaltation.

Fifth, He is coming — The Consummation ; His Hope and ours.

# God's Work For Us and In Us

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In preaching the Gospel, we do well to keep before ourselves, and those who hear us, that we are not saved by the Spirit's work *in us*, but through the work that has been done *for us*, at Calvary, by our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel is, that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures ; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4). It is a message as to what has been *done for us by Another !* To receive Christ by faith, means salvation. To reject Him, means death and hell, as the inevitable outcome.

That there is a working *in every* true believer, that it is the blessed fruit of the new relationship which the believer now sustains towards God, is also clear, however, as we shall see.

## TWO SPIRITS

Scripture speaks distinctly of two Spirits, one or other of which energizes every human being. The one is the spirit of Satan, the other is the Spirit of God ! For instance, we read in Ephesians ii. 1, 2, concerning the *past* condition of the Ephesian Christians, that they had "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in [or energizeth] the children of disobedience". That is, the motive power that carries the unsaved on in the course of this world, is the power of the spirit of Satan. Solemn thought ! Rich and poor, learned or illiterate, religious or profane, all alike are energized by this same mighty spirit. They may not believe it, they may never have heard of it, nevertheless it is true — awfully true. Possessed and energized by the Devil !

In Ephesians i. 12-14 we find, however, the other Spirit referred to. A great work had been done for these people — they had been quickened into life eternal. They had been forgiven their many sins, according to the riches of God's grace, and now in chap. i. 13 we read, "In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation ; in whom also after that ye believed [or, upon believing, R.V.] *ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise*", etc. The Spirit of God takes possession, and is the seal of God, marking



the believer as belonging to Christ, to be claimed by Him when He comes. And concerning those who lack this, the Word is clear : "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9).

## THE ENERGY OF HIS POWER

In Ephesians i. 18, 19, the apostle prays for the saints, that "the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of of glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the *exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe*, according to the working [energy] of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead", etc. The same mighty power which brought Christ from the dead, was displayed in the quickening of every true child of God. For we have been subjects, not only of His *grace*, but of His *power* — His exceeding great power.

Oh, the reality of the work of God in the soul ! The Lord said to Nicodemus : "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John iii. 7). And this new birth is emphatically a work of God in the soul. Has the reader made sure on this point ? Have you been born again ? Many, alas ! who make a loud profession of "Christianity", lack this one thing. Regeneration, or the new birth, is simply a new, a divine life, implanted by the mighty power of God, in the soul, and it is well to remember there is no middle ground to occupy between being "dead in sins", and having "the life of God" in the soul. Men sometimes speak of "quickenings", as though it were a condition midway between death and life. God's Word ever uses it most emphatically as meaning all that is involved in the Spirit's work, both in the *awakening* and *regeneration* of a soul.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on His Name ; which were *born . . . of God*" (John i. 12, 13). "Ye are all the children of God, *by faith* in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). By nature, the "children of wrath, even as others"—by grace, through faith in Christ, made the children of God—the standing monuments, through all eternity, of the grace and power of Him who quickened us into life in Christ !

## GOD WORKING IN US

But in giving us life, God was but *beginning* with us. It is His blessed purpose to work *in us* that which is well pleasing in His sight, bringing forth the blessed fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23).

As we read in Philippians ii. 12, 13, "Wherefore, my beloved . . . *work out your own salvation* with fear and trembling : for it is God that *worketh in you* both to will and to do of His good pleasure". This portion, very much misunderstood by many, does not say, "work *for* your own salvation", but "work *out*" etc., for it is "God that *worketh in you*". This is not the *means* of salvation, but it certainly is one of the "things that accompany salvation" (Heb. vi.). If there be first life in Christ, then we may expect to find fruit in keeping with that life—and God calls for it.

It might be well, here, for the Christian reader to ask himself or herself the question : "Are the things that 'accompany salvation' found in me ?" Is God, by His Spirit, working in me that which is His good pleasure, enabling me to work out in my life the salvation I call "my own" ? In other words, dear reader, let us ask the old-fashioned question at this point :

### HOW IS IT WITH YOUR SOUL ?

How is God's work prospering in your own soul ? You may be busy with "Christian work" of one kind or another, but is the work *within* keeping pace with the activity *without* ? Are you having exercise in the presence of God over His Word, and at the throne of grace ? Do you really enjoy reading and meditating on the Word of God ? Is this joy increasing, or not ? An honest searching and trying of our ways before God may now reveal to some of us the hidden reason of our lack of progress in the things of God. And if our condition be judged in the light, and the Spirit being ungrieved once more, is able to work in us unhindered, then the prayer of the apostle, in Hebrews xiii. 20, 21, might be answered in us to the glory of God, our own joy, and the blessing of others !

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working *in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen*".

There is just one point more. In Philippians iii. 20, 21, R.V., we learn that our "Commonwealth", or "citizenship", is in heaven, from whence we look for the Lord Jesus to come for us. And our hope is that He shall change this body of humiliation, fashioning it like unto the body of His glory. And all "*according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself*".

The energy of His power, therefore, which quickened us into life, and energized us for service, will, in that day, complete the work, and fashion us like unto Himself — as we read in 1 John iii. 2 — "We shall be *like Him*, for we shall see Him as He is". What a prospect ! The Lord keeps His own on the tip-toe of expectation looking for Him. And "every one that hath this hope set on Him", will "purify himself even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3, R.V.).

## "Old Paths," to Walk in

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It is something for which to be devoutly thankful that God has not only made it plain, in His Word, how a sinner may be saved, but He has marked out a straight path for our feet, now that He has saved us. In these paths we may walk, to the glory of God, and the blessing of ourselves and others.

Said a servant of Christ at one time to a believer : "You are saved, by the grace of God, and you are happy in the Lord, and Satan knows too much of God's Word to believe that he may yet rob you of eternal life, and get you down to hell. But do not forget that he will be on your track, night and day, to trip you up, or lead you from God's path into his own. Your only safe course, is to WALK WITH GOD, and GO BY THE BOOK in everything". Weighty and solemn words ! No doubt, proved to be true in the history of all who have been long in Christ. Who of us has not found it true, that to walk in the ways of God brings peace and spiritual prosperity, while our self-chosen paths were those of barrenness and misery ?

"Concerning the works of men, *by the Word of Thy lips*, I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer", testified the Psalmist. Then, in the next verse, he prays, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psa. xvii. 4, 5). Many of God's dear people, because they are not acquainted with the "Word of His lips", fall into these "paths of the destroyer", with the result that their growth is hindered, their testimony marred, and in many cases it is hard to distinguish them from the world around them.

May we, then, give heed to the prophet's call to God's people of old : "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 to your souls" (Jer. vi. 16). *They* "would not walk therein", and hence wandered farther into the paths of the destroyer — until there was no remedy. God grant that we may not be like them in this ! May we the rather "stand still", if needs be, and *ask* for those paths — the "good way" — and *walk* in them. The paths of the Lord still "drop fatness"; His ways still are "ways of pleasantness", and "all His paths are peace".

## TURNING TO THE WORD

We find there is no uncertain sound, in God's Word, either as to precept or practice. In the New Testament we find teaching that embraces every path of life. How we should walk with God personally, in the family, in business, towards the world, and in and towards the Church of God. It is still true that, "if any man be in Christ, he is a *new* creature : old things are passed away, all things are become new, and all things are of God" (2 Cor. v. 17). This might be called the *normal* condition of the truly regenerate soul. Born of God, his desire is to please God in all things. Like Saul of Tarsus, on the way to Damascus, he will ask the question, "Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do ?" And the Divine answer to this, if attended to, will regulate every department of life.

Let it be clearly understood, however, that we speak only of those who have been converted to God. No one out of Christ, be he ever so estimable as to moral character, or even religious, can walk in God's paths. He may *imitate*, as to form, much that the children of God do, but "God desireth truth in the *inward parts*", and only such can please Him, as have the truth "dwelling in them" (2 John 2).

## WALKING RIGHTEOUSLY

Personally, the child of God is to walk in the paths of righteousness and true holiness. He has been "made the righteousness of God" in Christ, and that apart from his works, good or bad (2 Cor. v. 21). But, the Spirit of God anticipating the anti-nomianism of our hearts, also reminds us that "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (1 John iii. 7). In other words, his character and manner of life is to correspond with the place he has in Christ. Does God call us "holy brethren" (Heb. iii. 1) ? Then, He tells us, in that same epistle, "Follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14).

Thus is the balance of truth preserved and the child of God taught to walk with God. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation . . . teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts [desires] we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus ii. 11, 12). The grace of God does not "bring salvation", and then leave the child of God to go on in the old way, or even to seek new ways of his own, but, as we see,

teaches him, negatively, to "deny ungodliness and worldly desires", and, positively, to "live soberly, righteously, and godly". These are surely "God's paths", and rest is found in walking in this "good way".

### **SOME OLD PATHS**

The believer finds, as he reads the Word, that there are paths laid out for him, that were marked out there by God, and trodden by the saints in early days. Sometimes we hear it said that it matters not about these "non-essentials", if one truly loves the Lord, and the heart is right. But the question may be asked : "Are there any 'non-essentials' in God's Book?" If I truly love the Lord, shall I not seek to know His will, and to do it? The Lord Himself says, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words"; and, again, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John xiv. 21-23).

And yet again, we may ask, if one is right in heart with God, will it lead him to disobey, or minimize the importance of any commandment of the Lord? We believe not. As the Lord Jesus said to the Jews in His day : "Whosoever . . . shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 19).

### **THE EARLY CHRISTIANS**

What strikes one in reading the Acts of the Apostles is, the simplicity and quick obedience of the young converts. They seemed to say, with the Psalmist, "I made haste, and delayed not, to keep Thy commandments" (Psa. cxix. 60). They "gladly received His Word and were baptized", is the simple statement of the Spirit in narrating the wonderful results of Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost. And in almost every instance throughout the Acts, it is the same. The Gospel was preached, the people heard it, some of them believed, and then they were baptized. There was no argument about it—no "diverse views". God had spoken, and that was sufficient—they simply and promptly obeyed the Word of the Lord.

And, dear saints of God, let us not forget that this is the Word of the Lord and His way still, and will be as long as this dispensation lasts. And all who have not been baptized since they believed, are either ignorantly or wilfully walking in disobedience to a plain truth of God, which He means them to obey unless

physically or otherwise prevented from doing so. And no amount of reasonings, emanating from the busy brain of man, can set aside the plain statements of the Word of God, nor invalidate the responsibility of every child of God to be obedient thereto.

## **"CONTINUING STEADFASTLY"**

And these converts, of the day of Pentecost, did not stop with receiving the Word, and being baptized. We are told that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine [or teaching] and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42).

There is something beautifully simple, yet very definite about all this. God had brought them into something, and there they continued — going on from that basis. No doubt they were saved as individuals, but they soon found that God's purpose was to unite them together in a common fellowship. God, who was faithful, had "called them into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord (1 Cor. i. 9). The apostles' teaching would, in measure, unfold to them what was connected with that fellowship, or partnership, into which they had been called. And as they continued steadfastly in the teaching, they would be enabled, more and more, to enter into the wealth of all that they had "together", as partners with Christ and with one another. And so we read "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching *and fellowship*", or — as Mr. Thos. Newberry, drawing attention to *the* article, renders the statement — "and *the* fellowship". That is, there was something definite in the way of fellowship, into which they were brought and in which they — continuing steadfastly — went on. Not only was there the partnership or fellowship of life, in which all saved ones have a share, but there was a definite circle of known and enjoyed fellowship of saints, where they shared in certain things ordained by God, and in these they continued.

## **THE BREAKING OF BREAD, AND IN PRAYERS**

As we read through the Acts and the Epistles, we get further unfoldings of the teachings of the apostles and of the practices of the saints, but in none of these is the simplicity of this the first chapter in Church history abridged or changed. The children of God walked in obedience to the Word of the Lord, whether it came through a Peter or a Paul. They continued to be baptized in the Name of the Lord, and to gather together in the Name of the Lord Jesus only, in fellowship one with another. The expression

of that fellowship is seen in "the breaking of bread", where they remembered Him who died for them, and waited for His return, according to the word, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26).

And their continuance "in the prayers" also shows a further expression of that fellowship. *Individually*, they could pray at home, or anywhere else ; *collectively*, they expressed their fellowship in coming together for united prayer. Prayer is the expression of our dependence upon God for all things, and the means by which we draw upon God's infinite resources, even "His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19). What a marvel that we are so slow to pray ! What an evidence of our self-sufficiency and indifference that the prayer meeting is so neglected by many ! Those early saints "continued steadfastly" in prayer — and what mighty work God was able to do through them ! And *He* is ever the same. May we, then, seek for these "old paths", and walk in these "good ways", and so find rest and blessing to our souls.



# Outside the Camp

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One of the things that characterize the present age, and distinguishes it from others which preceded it, is the place of blessing into which the Christian is brought, in Christ. The death and resurrection of Christ having settled the question of sin, the way into the holiest is now made manifest, so that the worshipper no longer stands at a distance from God, but approaches in virtue of the blood, into the holiest of all, there to worship God in Spirit and in truth (John iv. 23, 24, and Heb. x. 17-22), his place of acceptance and privilege being now "inside the veil", where Christ is.

When we turn to Hebrews xiii. 10-17, we find that the same link with Christ, which brings the believer "inside the veil", brings him also into a place of responsibility. He is to go forth unto Him "without the Camp", there to be a sharer of His reproach. This expression, "without the camp", or "outside the camp", is used in at least a fourfold way in the Scriptures.

1. It was the place given to the leprous and the unclean (Lev. xiii. 45, 46) — the place also where they carried the body of the sin-offering, that it might be wholly consumed. (Read Leviticus iv. 1-12, especially verses 11, 12, and Leviticus xvi. 27, etc.).

2. It was the place to which Moses removed the "tent of meeting", after Israel had defiled themselves, in supplanting the Lord by a golden calf, which they worshipped as their deliverer. (Read Exodus xxxiii. 7-11.)

3. It was the place to which they led forth the Lord Jesus, when they crucified Him. The city, He had preached to, prayed for, and wept over, had rejected Him, and, in giving Him the place of a malefactor, they led Him "without the gate"—outside that "camp", that thus manifested there was no room in it for the Lord Jesus (John xix. 17, 18 ; Heb. xiii. 12).

4. It is the place of responsibility for all who would take sides with a rejected Christ, in this the day of His rejection. The "crowning day" of which we often sing, will be coming "by and by", but we *cannot* suffer with Him then. Hence, the word for the present is, "Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii. 13, 14).

We judge, then, from these various Scriptures, that the words, "Outside the camp", are used in connection with :

FIRST — *God's judgment of sin.*

SECOND — *Separation from evil.*

THIRD — *Christ's rejection.*

FOURTH — *Our identification with Him.*

## GOD'S JUDGMENT OF SIN

In the ritual connected with the day of Atonement, as ordained by God for Israel (Lev. xvi.), Aaron, the high priest, was commanded, first, to bring a bullock as a sin-offering for himself and his house, which he offered before the Lord (verses 2, 6, 11, etc.). Then he was to cast lots over two kids of the goats before the door of the Tabernacle. These were for a sin-offering for the people. One lot was to be "for the Lord"—the other for a "scape-goat". The goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, was slain, and its blood carried by the high priest into the holiest, and sprinkled there upon and before the mercy seat seven times.

The scape-goat, having had the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of the people confessed upon its head, bore those sins (typically, of course) into the wilderness.

But, while the blood of the sin-offering was brought within the veil — there to form a righteous *cause*, on the ground of which God could forgive His people, and the scape-goat could carry those sins away as the blessed *effect* of that atoning sacrifice — yet there was one thing more needed to mark God's judgment of sin. The body of the sin-offering was carried outside the camp, and there *wholly consumed by fire* (Lev. xv. 27).

To this the Spirit of God refers in Heb. xiii. 11, and then adds : "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" (verse 12). He was the true Sin-offering, by whom the sins of His people are *actually* put away — the consuming fire of God's judgment having burned against them, in that place of judgment, "without the camp".

Turning now to our next Scripture, and reading carefully Exodus xxxii. and xxxiii., we find that "the camp" there, and the city without whose gate they led our Lord Jesus, are morally alike in one thing ; namely, there was no room for God in either of them.

## A DEFILED CAMP

Moses, the servant of Jehovah, was on the Mount with God too long for the patience of the people below, and, in their apostasy from God, they turned to a calf of gold, which they had "made themselves naked" to provide (Exod. xxxii. 1-4, 25).

It is a striking fact that, even now, men, professing to be the children of God, will readily give their money lavishly towards unscriptural projects and practices, when they would hesitate to devote the least of it to forwarding that which is according to the Book, and really of God. Israel made themselves "naked" for an idol. How few of God's people are willing to deny themselves for God — *till it hurts!*

But God is a "God of judgment"; and judgment ever "begins at the house of God" (1 Peter iv. 17), as Israel found to their cost. Moses, as the mediator, had turned away the severity of God's wrath from the people, yet he realized that a holy God must separate Himself from such wickedness. Hence, he removes that which was the meeting-place with God (for the Tabernacle was not yet made) to a place "outside the camp". The consequence was, that all who would have a meeting-place with the Lord, had to go outside the defiled camp to get it.

## A REJECTED KING

Looking on to 1 Samuel xxii. 1, 2, we find the Lord's anointed Ruler is a cave, while Saul, who represents "the will of man", is on the throne, ruling God's people, Israel. Our chapter tells us of some who were attracted — not to the cave, but to the Lord's anointed, who was in the cave — and they gathered themselves unto him. "Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented [*"bitter of soul", margin*] *gathered themselves unto him*; and he became a captain over them".

The iron rule of Saul, which caused distress, debt, and bitterness of soul among many of the Israel of God, was the means of turning their eyes and hearts towards David, the anointed of Jehovah, and they went forth *unto him*. His palace was a cave, and his throne a boulder, nevertheless they went forth, but it was "unto" David. The person of the Lord's anointed filled their vision, and satisfied their hearts, so they "gathered themselves unto *him*, and he became a captain over them". They acknowledged David as their leader and ruler.

For, be it noted, that while they cut themselves loose from the rule of Saul, it was not that they might be lawless, and do "as they pleased", but that they might be under the rule of God's chosen king, under David. He was their captain, and it was their joy to obey him ! They were outside the camp with David to do his bidding, and in acknowledging the true king, who was still in rejection, they were

### **"BEARING HIS REPROACH"**

Note how strikingly the Spirit of God has blended these two narratives of Exodus xxxiii. and 1 Samuel xxii. together in the exhortation to us in Heb. xiii. In Exodus xxxiii, we find the principle of separation *from evil* emphasized. In 1 Samuel xxii. separation *unto a person* is set forth, and that person the Lord's anointed !

In Hebrews xiii, the One who is rejected by the religious world — for such it had normally become — was placed "outside the camp". As far as the religious world is concerned, He is *still* there. Hence the word to all who would be true to Him is : "Let *us* go forth, therefore, *unto Him*, without the camp, bearing His reproach".

Many who are truly the children of God, and it may be faithful to all the light they have, yet remain in the defiled camp of Christendom. There they may occasionally raise a feeble protest against the dishonour done to the Name and Word of the Lord. And for this they may suffer a measure of reproach. Nevertheless, the world will still respect them because they remain in fellowship with them, to *support* their "cause". But let any give the Word of the Lord its true place, own no name but His, turning their back on the "camp" of man's religion, going forth unto the rejected Lord, and the world, as ever, will have nothing but reproach — "the reproach of Christ" — for them. It is not merely the reproach of being a Christian, or even of bearing testimony to the Gospel for Him ! it is the reproach and stigma of being an outcast in the world that had no place for Christ ! Shall we not seek, then, grace to take that place now with Him, that He once took for us ? As we sing :

*When we see Thy love unshaken,  
Outside the camp ;  
Scorned by man, by God forsaken,  
Outside the camp ;*

*Thy loved cross alone can charm us,  
Shame need now no more alarm us,  
Glad we follow, nought can harm us,  
Outside the camp.*

The world, social and political, is so manifestly a scene of defilement and Christ-rejection, that, with many, the instincts of the divine life teach them to turn away from it, and they thus bear their testimony against it. But the Word of God would have His people to be as separate from man's *religion* as from the other things in which he finds his pleasure and boast. The call to separation is full and clear: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18).

### **JONATHAN AND DAVID**

Jonathan was a lover of David. From the day he stood by the side of Saul his father, and saw David get that mighty victory over the giant of Gath, Jonathan loved David "as he loved his own soul" (1 Sam. xvii. 18). Many a time he visited David in his exile, and communed with him there. Many a time did he comfort him by his affectionate words. And in the court of Saul his father, many a time did he speak in David's favour, and bring upon himself the wrath of the king. Thus he suffered reproach for David, whom he loved.

Yet Jonathan, with all his personal devotion, did not sever his link with the court of Saul, to *go out* unto David and *stay out* with him, sharing thus in his rejection. We do not find Jonathan in the cave of Adullam with David, as one of those who gathered unto him there. Dear Jonathan was not prepared to go so far in his association with God's rejected king. So he remained in the court of Saul. And while he loved David until the end, he fell side by side with his father, in the disastrous battle on Mount Gilboa (1 Sam. xxxi.). How many of God's dear people in our day are somewhat similarly placed! They love the Lord Jesus, and enjoy communion with Him in many things. They talk with Him of the time of His coming glory, which they shall share — nay more, they testify for Him where they are, and are reproached for His sake. But they cannot bring themselves to make a complete break with the popular systems of man's religion which have

## Helpers of the War

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In the days when David, the Lord's anointed, was in rejection, and being hunted by Saul the king, it is refreshing to read of some whose hearts went out after him, and who were, in many cases, led to turn their backs on the court of Saul, and the honours and emoluments that go with such a connection, in order to be with David ! Attracted by *his* personality, as we have said in a former paper, they went forth "unto him". Anything else there was not ; for he had neither throne nor kingdom, honours nor wealth, to bestow upon them. And as God has recorded the names and doings of some of them, they were certainly an acquisition to any cause. God calls them "helpers of the war" ! (1 Chron. xii. 1).

### MEN WITH A PURPOSE

It was no idle curiosity that gathered them unto David. Nor was it hope of sordid gain that was in their minds. They may have been of those of whom we read in 1 Samuel xxii. 27, who, because of Saul's reign, were "in debt", "discontented", and "in distress", but they had evidently, in some measure, entered into God's thoughts regarding David, and hence their purpose was like God's to put the Lord's anointed on the throne ! They came, — not to be "hangers-on" to David, and receive of his benefits, but that they might be "helpers of the war" he was carrying on. Their fortunes were linked up with those of David, and they who were with him. If needs be, they could "hurl stones" and "shoot arrows", with the right hand or the left. Some had faces like lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains. An overflowing Jordan could not stay the course of some of them, as they fought in fellowship with David. From various tribes of Israel did they come, Gad and Reuben, Simeon and Levi, Ephraim and

so little place for them and their Lord. So they remain, like Jonathan, in the court of Saul, in association with that which is opposed to God. The judgment-seat of Christ will alone tell out how they have missed it, and from what causes they failed to be sharers of that place which, while it has its own peculiar reproach, has ever its counterbalancing joy, and will have its glory by and by. As we sing :

*Unto Thee the homeless stranger —  
Outside the camp ;  
Forth we hasten, fear no danger,—  
Outside the camp ;  
Thy reproach far richer treasure  
Than all Egypt's boasted pleasure,  
Drawn by love that knows no measure,  
Outside the camp.*

May the Lord Himself grant us to have a heart for Him, and grace to take our place with Him now. We may join “assemblies” or “meetings”, large or small, and it may cost us little, but, if we truly “go forth unto Him”, we shall find we must share with Him the scorn and reproach of that world that still has no room for Him ! And, if truly with Him, in this way, we will find that our very association with Him will affect our manner of life, and the things that are inconsistent with His presence, can no longer be allowed to find a place with us or in our ways.

If we are but out unto “a place”, whether that place be Scriptural or otherwise, we may glory in our position, and be as worldly as the next one. But if the heart has truly found its object in Christ, and we are, in truth, sharers with Him of the rejection of this world, then the world will not court us — nor will we desire the world ! The Lord grant that thus it may be with us till Jesus comes, and the glory dawns.

*Soon Thy saints shall all be gathered,—  
Inside the veil ;  
All at home, no more be scattered,—  
Inside the veil ;  
Nought from Thee our hearts shall sever,  
We shall see Thee, grieve Thee never,  
'Praise the Lamb!' shall sound for ever,  
Inside the veil.*

and Manasseh, Dan and Asher, besides Judah and Benjamin, Issachar and Zebulon. And God reminds us that even of Saul's brethren, of Benjamin, did they come, three thousand of them, the greater part of whom "kept the ward in the house of Saul" (1 Chron. xii. 29). Thus did they show themselves to be "men of purpose", who could sacrifice self-interest that they might be loyal "helpers of the war".

## A COUNTERPART NOW

The One of whom David was a type, in his rejection, is our Lord Jesus Christ. Bethlehem, His birth-place ; the lonely mountain side where He oft resorted,—having no place to lay His head ; and the cross with its shame and woe ; all told the same story, as far as man is concerned — there was no room for Jesus ; or, to use the language of the prophet (Isa. liii), "He is despised and rejected of men". And what the world thought of Him then, they think of Him still. As we sing :

*Our Lord is now rejected,  
And by the world disowned ;  
By the many still neglected,  
And by the few enthroned.*

But it is ours to give Him the supreme place in our hearts, and to own Him in our ways, as the One we acknowledge as our Lord — our Master.

In a general sense, no doubt every child of God will assent to this ; little reckoning where it would lead them, and what it might cost them, to be truly identified with Him in this the day of His rejection. In the world, the most of men want a religion, and in so-called Christendom, the popular religion calls for some sort of an acknowledgment of Jesus. But even in the apostle's day (2 Cor. xi.), we find him speaking of "another Jesus", and "another Spirit", and we, therefore, need not be surprised if we find, upon investigation, that the "Jesus" of whom the world sings and speaks, is *not* the Jesus of the Bible — not the Christ of God ! The one whom the world owns, is with them in all their worldly affairs, by which it is supposed His cause can be sustained and advanced, by a revival to-day and a private theatrical to-morrow, if needs be. Whereas the Christ of God was, in life and death,



## SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD'S RELIGION

Crucified without the gate of Jerusalem, He was there apart from the world's religion, of which Jerusalem was the centre. And, identification with Him there, involves going "forth unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii. 13). The "camp" then was Judaism ; — the "camp" now may mean to the child of God any of the many human systems of worldly religion which have no room for the Christ of God and the Word of God. And where He and His Word have not the highest place, there, surely, there is no room for any loyal child of God. Loyalty to Him who is the Lord's Anointed must take us out of such, — *unto Him !* Others we may find there where He is. If so, let us thank God, and cast in our lot with them. But let us ever remember that the primary thought is identification with HIM ! With others we may be, but if not so privileged, He is enough, and we can share the reproach with Him.

Of David's men, it is said, "At that time, day by day, there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God" (1 Chron. xii. 22). Thus there was a steady increase of those who came — they came *day by day*. Again the Lord's anointed was their objective — they *came to David*. Yet again they came to David, not for what they got from him, but — *to help him*, until the host grew to be like the host of God !

What picture to contemplate ! How complete as a study of what one might call the power of love to a person ! Hearts won to the Lord's anointed, made them willing to forsake all, that they might cleave to him in the day of his rejection ; and every man in that mighty host was a true *helper* in the war. And let us remember that the conflict is still raging. The enemy is still malignant, and determined, and the loyal saint — in fellowship with the purpose of God concerning His Christ — must take his stand on the side of the truth, and valiantly use the Sword of the Spirit, if he would be a "helper of the war".

## NUMBERS DO NOT ALWAYS MEAN POWER

Numbers, alas, do not always mean power. In an assembly of God, it is often the case that with the increase of numbers come in strife and lawlessness, and a clamouring for place and authority on the part of some ; while, in places where the company is small, there is oft-times a heartiness and zeal, as well as a co-operating vigorously in the work of the Gospel, that is lacking,

when because of numbers increasing, the activity of the flesh is more manifest than the power of the Spirit. And it is ever well to remember that "the flesh" can never be a "helper of the war"!

Among the "gifts" God has bestowed upon the Church is that of "*helps*" (1 Cor. xii. 28). All cannot be apostles, or teachers, or even evangelists, in the wider sense of the term. But it is a great privilege that all may enjoy, according to their several ability, to be a "*help*". None are too poor, or weak, or obscure for that. The poor widow, who in the days of our Lord here on earth, gave her *all*, in the shape of two mites that make one farthing, was commended as a "*help*", who in that act had given more than the rich out of their abundance. Andrew, who brought his brother Simon to Jesus, and Philip who sought and brought Nathaniel also were "*helps*", who though obscure enough afterwards, so far as our records go, yet did a work that day, from which all succeeding generations have had to thank God. For

*No service in itself is small,  
Or great, though earth it fill ;  
But that is small, that seeks its own,  
And great, that seeks God's will.*

It is reported that the late Mr. Robert Chapman once said, in bidding good-bye to a young brother who was going to the foreign field : "Remember that the greatest thing you can do in Africa, as in England, is to *please God* !" And may we not add that the only way we can please God is by doing what He tells us in His Word ? And in the measure in which I do His will, and teach others the same, am I a "*help*" to them — and a "*helper of the war*". And, in reverse order, the measure in which I am careless about my own ways, and my own obedience to His Word, am I a hindrance to others who may be influenced by my conduct.

When David reached the throne, he remembered those who were truly his "*helpers*" in the days of his rejection. And we do well to remember that the judgment seat of Christ is before us, when the Lord will review all we have been and done for Him. In that day, all who have sought to be true helpers of our David's cause, and of all who would be true to Him, by strengthening their hands in it, will be manifested, and He will see to it that they lose not their reward. Reproach they may have now,— it is but *His* they are sharing. Epithets may be hurled at them by the ungodly, and even by carnal Christians,— let them remember

the world, religious and profane, gave *Him* a cross ! No doubt it may cost much to stand with *Him*, and at no time will it be an easy path, but *His* presence and *His* smile will make up for all the sneers of the world, and the misunderstandings, aye, and misrepresentations perhaps of others, from whom better treatment might have been expected. To give *His* heart joy, should fill us with joy, and well will it be for each one of us, if *His* coming, and the judgment seat that shall follow, will make manifest that, in the midst of much weakness and failure, we have sought to be true "helpers of the war" !

## Fellowship in the Gospel

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The grace that God displayed in saving us is wonderful, and beyond comprehension. But what shall we say of the grace that takes up those whom He has saved and associates them with Himself in the present work He has on hand, of glorifying and exalting Christ among the lost? For, be it remembered, that apart altogether from its results upon the sinner, the Gospel, if preached in fellowship with the heart of God, exalts Christ, as the One, who though once humbled unto death, is now seated on the throne.

To Him God has given a "Name which is above every name", and to that Name every knee shall yet bow — of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Yes, reader, God is going to see to it that even those who have heard and rejected the Gospel of God, shall bow — even in hell — to the Name of that One whom He has exalted! This will *not* mean that in hell there will be *reconciliation* to God's favour, but it does mean that there will be *forced subjection* to Christ — for Satan will not be lord in hell, as poets have pictured him — but one of the most despicable of all God's rebellious creatures, in that prison of the lost!

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### "NOW" THE "ACCEPTED TIME"

But "the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 16). Hence, God wants it proclaimed. And the instruments He uses in this blessed and honourable work are sinners saved by grace! He used angels to announce the birth of Jesus (Luke ii.), but after His death and resurrection, when He would have the Gospel preached to Cornelius (Acts x.), He sends an angel to direct the centurion to send to Joppa for

Simon Peter, who would "tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved" (Acts xi. 13-14). Why did the angel not tell Cornelius the Gospel? Did he not know that Christ had died and risen again, and that through faith in Him, sinners were being saved? Assuredly he did. Then why send for Peter? Doubtless the answer is this: God's workers in this business are those whom He has saved from among men, and unto whom He has committed the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. v.)! *It is part of the fellowship, unto which they have been called!* We are called to be partners and fellow-workers — not only for Him but *with* Him.

It is true that some are especially called and fitted for the more public preaching of the Gospel, but that does not set aside that which is equally a fact — that God has called *every child of His* into fellowship with Himself, in the matter of making Christ known among the perishing. We are called unto it, and will be held accountable for it, as servants of the one Master.

Do you recognize this? If so, what are you doing about it? What has God or the world gotten out of you during the past? If the Lord should come now, what would the record be, as far as you are concerned, at the judgment seat of Christ? How much of it would stand the scrutiny of His eye, and bring forth His words of approbation, "They have done what they could"? These are testing and searching questions, and yet they might well exercise us.

### HOW AM I TO DO IT?

But perhaps some one will ask, "What can I do?" and "How am I to do anything?" Perhaps they further add, "I have no gift — I cannot preach — I have no influence, and the circle of my possibilities is very limited".

To such questions no one answer can be given. The persons, their gift or ability, and their sphere of service, have much to do with it. But there are some general principles that apply to all. For instance: As of old it was said, "*Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord*", even so now are we exhorted to let our behaviour "be worthy of the Gospel of Christ . . . that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the Gospel" (Phil. i. 27, R.V.). In other words, I commend the Gospel, by the manner of my life, and this should lead on to fellowship with my brethren who are of like spirit; that together

we might "co-operate vigorously" for the faith of the Gospel.

This is most important. God is Sovereign, and can bless His Word through whom He pleases. But His way usually is, to use *clean* vessels, thus fitted for the Master's use. How very solemn when by careless or worldly living, we hinder Him using us !

Another way by which we may have fellowship in the Gospel surely is through our testimony by tongue and the printed page. Alas, how many who have no trouble at all about speaking of worldly things, comfort themselves as to their failure to preach Christ to those with whom they come in contact, by saying they "have no gift". The Lord said, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh", and if the heart were as full of Christ as, alas, it is so often of the world, and worldly things, there would be less trouble in speaking of Him !

Then there are hundreds of clear, simple Gospel tracts and booklets, neatly printed and easily procured, that if scattered by us among the unsaved, would be the means, under God, of leading many to Christ. And yet, is it not true, that hundreds of God's people never think of devoting time or money to such an important service ?

Again, there is *fellowship in prayer*, for those who are actively engaged in the work of the Gospel.

Said the apostle, in writing to the saints at Rome, "Now I beseech you, that ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me" (Rom. xv. 30, R.V.). How encouraging to a servant of God, who is in the out-of-the-way places of the homeland, or plodding on in some distant land, or — what is sometimes more trying and needing more grace and wisdom — labouring among the assemblies of God's people, where difficulties may abound, to know that here and there, saints are "*striving together with him*" in their prayer to God for him ! Let us not forget we may have real fellowship in the Gospel, by way of the throne of grace.

## FELLOWSHIP IN GIVING

In Philippians, where "fellowship in the Gospel" finds a prominent place, we learn (chap. iv.) how, during the short stay of Paul and Silas in Thessalonica, after they had left Philippi (Acts xvii.), that those Philippian saints "sent once and again" to their necessities. He says, "Ye did well that ye had fellowship with my affliction" (Phil. iv. 14, R.V.). "Not", he adds again, "that I seek the gift ; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to

your account" (Phil. iv. 17, R.V.). We are not told *what* they had sent to him there in Rome, but he gives it a high place in verse 18, when he speaks of it as "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God". As with the burnt offering on the altars of Israel, so with this — it was "an offering of a sweet smell to God".

Dear child of God, we would press this home on your conscience, as we have on our own. Has there been much of this during the past? *Has the work of God been on your heart, and has it caused you to express your fellowship in this practical way?* That which God calls "*filthy lucre*", when laid on the altar of His service, becomes "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing unto God". Thus, service in this sense becomes "priestly service", in which I sacrifice, not the fruit of the lips only, but communicating of my substance, I experimentally learn the meaning of that Scripture, which assures me that "with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 16).

But, let us not make the mistake of supposing that God wants our *patronage* in His work. He *needs* neither ourselves nor our money. In grace, He may use both, and seeks our fellowship in this way, but mere patronage, which "helps along" the work, or the preacher, God spurns! It is unworthy of Him, and it is unbecoming in one for whom grace has done everything. Rather may we "present our bodies" as "living sacrifices unto God, holy and acceptable", and then, having yielded ourselves to God, we shall freely give Him all we have, singing with a new meaning :

*Nought that I have mine own I'll call,  
I'll hold it for the Giver ;  
My heart, my strength, my life, my all,  
Are His — and His for ever.*

## A Patron or a Partner?

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There is a great difference between being a "patron" and a "partner". The one may have a passing interest in a man or his business, which makes him try to help it along by patronizing it in some way. The other is interested because it is his business, and hence everything he does, is done from the standpoint of a partner, whose prospects are bound up in the success of the concern.

Now, "God who is faithful, has called us into the fellowship [or partnership] of His Son Jesus Christ". And this means partnership in everything that concerns Him. It is ours now to be in fellowship in the *spread* of the Gospel of Christ. It is ours now to be a partaker of the *afflictions* of the Gospel—that is, to be a partaker with Him in His rejection. And it will be ours also to share His *glory*, by and by—to be a *partner in it*!

### WHAT IS GOD'S BUSINESS?

God has now a business on hand. In a word, it is the glorifying of His Son in this world where men have despised and rejected Him! For this reason, He is having the Gospel of His grace made known to sinners; and everyone who hears and obeys the message, receives life everlasting, and becomes a "partaker of the glory that is to be revealed", at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is also gathering saints together, to know and own Christ Jesus as their Lord—their Master in all things. His Person pre-eminent, His Name exalted, and His authority as Lord, not only over the individual, but in the assembly of His people, owned. "For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). His people, gathered in His Name, ensuring His presence and power!



Now the question before us is, What practical part have you and I in this business, dear child of God? Are we realizing that, according to the Word of God, we are *partners* in this work God has on hand? Or, are we simply *patrons*, having a friendly feeling towards it, and willing, in a way, to help it along, when it suits us?

The apostle could thank God for the *fellowship in the Gospel* which the saints at Philippi had shown from the first day, of which we read in Acts xvi., until that time — ten or eleven years after (Phil. i. 3-5). This was certainly *part* of the “fellowship” into which they had been “called”. Years had passed since that memorable day when Lydia, the seller of purple, whose heart the Lord had opened to attend to His message of life by His servants, had seen her privilege, as a partner in the great work of making Christ known, and had thrown her home open for the servants of God. In that way, she showed her

### FELLOWSHIP IN THE BUSINESS

In the Epistle to the Philippians, Lydia is not mentioned. Others had been raised up, during those years, but the same blessed spirit characterized them — they sought to carry on the work of the Gospel by having fellowship in it — because they were *partners* in it! It was not merely *the apostle’s work* they were interested in, it was *God’s work*, with which He had identified them as partners with Himself and His Son, Jesus Christ! And the practical expression of this, as sent by them through Epaphroditus to God’s servant, then in bonds, was reckoned as a sweet-savour offering unto Himself!

Many there are who have a desire to help on any good thing that may attract their attention, or perchance have a feeling of responsibility to keep up their share of the current expenses of the assembly — many, alas, do not even have that! But they fail to rise to the thought of *partnership in it* all. They are simply *patrons*! One may patronize the Gospel by his presence occasionally, or by helping on the “cause” somewhat, by contributing of his means; and yet, all may be done, without any sense of the fact, that this work is simply part of the business God is carrying on, and in which they are by grace His partners — a work in which God would have us to be “workers together with Him”!

I may attend a Gospel meeting as a critic — some do. I may attend a Gospel meeting because I have nothing else to do, and

because it is my habit to go. I may attend because I like the preacher, the preaching, or the singing. And yet, I may never know what it is to feel I have an atom of responsibility in the Word preached or its results. And I may congratulate myself that I am fulfilling all that is to be expected of me, as one "called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ".

The Lord grant that these things may more deeply exercise us His own people, that we may more intelligently live for Him here. May we learn the true secret of *fellowship with Him* in all that He is doing. This would lift our share in it above the low motive of *human patronage in the things of God*, to the higher and more Scriptural thought of fellowship with Him ! Our time, our ability — great or small — our influence, our means, our all for Him. Why ? Because we are *His*, and it is *His right*. That ought to be enough to make us yield ourselves to Him for ever more. But there is another reason, and that is : He has, in most marvellous grace, lifted us up out of the dunghill, to set us among the princes of His people, and associated us with Himself in all His honourable and glorious work. He has called us into partnership with Himself in it, *and such grace is worthy of nothing less than our utmost devotion*. May it be ours to rise to it, for His Name's sake !

## Sowing and Reaping

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It is a principle of Scripture, as well as of nature, that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap". And this is true in its application to saint and sinner. In nature, the farmer who would sow oats, does not expect to reap wheat, or barley ; he reaps according to what he sows. This law of nature, which is also an unchanging law in the Kingdom of God, knows no deviation — those who "*sow to the wind*" shall "*reap the whirlwind*" (Hos. viii. 7. And "To him that *soweth righteousness*, shall be a sure reward" (Prov. xi. 18).

Hence, we have that solemn message in Galatians vi. 7-10, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that *soweth to his flesh*, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that *soweth to the Spirit*, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting", etc. In the days of Job was it testified by one, "Even as I have seen", he says, "they that plow iniquity and *sow wickedness*, reap the same" (Job iv. 8). This witness is still true ! And let us not forget, we are all sowing, day by day, *something*, and in view of this might we well ask ourselves the solemn question, "*What shall the harvest be ?*"

As our thoughts run in the direction of what we, who are God's people, are sowing, we would consider, first, the great responsibility devolving on each of us, to be

### SOWING THE WORD

In our Lord's explanation of the "parable of the sower", He tells us that "*The sower soweth the Word*"—or, to use the language of another Gospel : "The seed is the Word of God" (Luke viii. 11), and then follows a description of a fourfold result of this sowing.

Thus the Lord has not left us in doubt, or to our own devices,

as to *what* we should sow among men. We are left here, in our sphere and measure, to *sow the Word of God* among them — not our *opinions*, or the opinions of others ; not theories, nor fanciful interpretations, but — the Word of God !

The apostle Peter, in writing to the scattered children of God, speaks of them as having been “*born again*, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible, seed, *by the Word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever. . . . And *this is the Word*, which by the Gospel is preached unto you” (1 Pet. i. 23-25). The apostle James writes : “Of His own will begat He us *with the Word of truth*, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures (Jas. i. 18). And the apostle Paul, in his last message to his genuine son, Timothy, says, “I charge thee before God . . . preach the Word ; be instant in season, out of season”, etc. (2 Tim. iv. 1). Thus does our blessed Lord and His apostles emphasize the Word of God, as the precious seed to be sown by the children of God, in their testimony for Him here !

And may we not add the words of the proverb already quoted :

### THEY SHALL HAVE SURE REWARD

In the service of God, however, mere “clearheadedness”—an ability to state truth clearly — does not of itself suffice. Good it is to have a clear grasp of the truths of God’s Word, but more is needed if the seed is to be caused to grow. Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but *God* must give the increase (1 Cor. iii. 26).

This implies a *condition of soul* in the sower, as well as quality of seed in his basket. He is dependent upon God to give the increase. The seed is good, and the commandment is urgent to sow it, and this may be done diligently and well — yet, if God give not the increase, all is vain. All sorts of “drawing” devices may be used to “get the people”—yet, if the Spirit of God be not there to fructify the seed sown, death will still remain.

Again, there must be *exercise of soul* on the part of God’s people, who sow the seed. “They that *sow in tears*, shall reap in joy. He that *goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed*, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psa. cxxvi. 5, 6). Here we have in evidence that condition of soul that was seen in our blessed Lord, and also in His servant Paul, and others. A real exercise of heart, as the condition of the world or of God’s people weighs upon the spirit, leading one to weep before God, and cry to Him to give increase

unto His own Word. And if, perchance, they will not heed the Word, then like Jeremiah to lament : "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride ; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive" (Jer. xiii. 17).

## SOW EVERYWHERE, AND ALL THE TIME

"Blessed are ye that *sow beside all waters*" (Isa. xxxii. 20). "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days. . . . He that observeth the wind *shall not sow*, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. . . . *In the morning sow thy seed*, and *in the evening* withhold not thy hand ; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they shall both be alike good" (Eccles. xi. 1, 4, 6).

Here is encouragement, indeed, to all honest effort, both in the world and among the saints of God. The precious seed is to be sown everywhere, and it is to be sown — no matter whether the winds blow favourable or adverse. In the morning — in the evening — keep sowing the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, and *He* will make it to prosper, to His glory, and our reward.

The printed tract or magazine, with its message of salvation, goes oftentimes where the feet of God's messengers would not be allowed. The Word spoken in tenderness and yet faithfulness is often remembered, and who can tell the far-reaching effects of such sowing ? The opportunity of the public Gospel meeting is of necessity limited, but "*the field is the world*", and *there* we will never overtake our responsibilities. Let us sow the good seed, then, dear fellow-saints, everywhere, and all the time, till Jesus comes, and calls us into His rest above. Let us not be turned aside from it, by anything else — to sow the seed of the Word of God is our one important business !

## SOWING DISCORD

Alas, that there should be any other kind of "sowing" done by or among the people of God ! Yet Proverbs vi. 17-19 enumerates seven "abominations" to the Lord. "A proud look ; a lying tongue ; hands that shed innocent blood ; an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations ; feet that be swift in running to mischief ; a false witness that speaketh lies ; and *he that soweth discord among brethren*". Linked up in the black list, beginning with

*pride* and ending with *perjury*, is this awful abomination in His sight—"he that soweth discord among brethren".

Psalm cxxxiii, tells us of the beautiful sight of *brethren dwelling together in unity*"—what it is in God's sight, and its benefits and blessings to men. This unity is the working of the Spirit of God. But Satan has ever sought to mar this, by the workings of the flesh, producing distraction, discord, and division among the people of God. For this reason God places such efforts among the "abominations" which He "hates" !

In Absalom's career (2 Sam. xv. 1-6), we have one of the many illustrations in Scripture of this Satanic work. King David, the father of Absalom, had been placed on the throne of Israel by God, and amid human frailty and failure was seeking to rule for God. But Absalom, who owed his very life and liberty to the king, had an ambition of his own—he wanted the throne, and the throne he would have, if he had to overthrow the Lord's anointed in accomplishing it. But he must act carefully, lest his plotting be discovered ; so he begins to "sow discord among his brethren" of Israel. It was all to be done on the quiet, by getting hold of disaffected persons, and making it appear that *their* difficulties were the product of existing conditions which would be remedied if he were only made king. Thus, saith the Lord, who saw it all, Absalom

### **"STOLE THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE" !**

David, his father, had *won* the hearts of Israel. He had risked his life for them on that day he slew the giant of Gath, single-handed, and delivered Israel from all their fears.

But with Absalom it was not so. He was never known to risk his life for anyone, and thus win their hearts. He "*stole*" their hearts by honeyed phrases—not noble, self-sacrificing deeds—and by carefully-worded insinuations against those who were seeking to rule for God. Nothing to lose had he, but everything to gain, in the distraction and discord that might be brought in among the Lord's people. And, alas, the short-sightedness of God's people allowed him to succeed for a time. David, the Lord's anointed, who had done so much for Israel, was driven out, a fugitive ; the kingdom was disrupted, and Absalom on the throne ! True, God's judgment came down later on him and on his foolish followers. But what havoc was wrought, meanwhile, by that one man whose ambitions led him to "sow

discord among brethren" !

May the Lord graciously preserve reader and writer from doing this awful work of sowing discord. And may He give us grace and wisdom to see the snare that Satan through others might seek to lay for our feet. "In vain is the snare set in the sight of any bird", but Satan knows it is equally true he must cover *his* snares. But the Lord give us the anointed eye, enabling us to see through every effort of the enemy to alienate our hearts from those with whom God has brought us into such close relationship and friendship. Beware of Satan's wiles and under-hand ways, they are more dangerous than his out-and-out opposition and "roaring".

Peculiar difficulties assail the Lord's people in many places, and we need to be kept very close to the feet of our blessed Lord, if we are to see a clear path for our feet. As he looked on to such days, the apostle said to the elders of Ephesus : "I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up", etc. (Acts xx, 32), and this is our recourse *now*. God still lives, and our appeals to Him will not be unheeded. And His Word still remains the same, to guide us to the end of the way. Let us then judge ourselves and our ways in His presence — let us confess our failure — and then, with deeper purpose of heart, let us cleave to the Word, and seek to carry out God's will revealed there. The Lord deliver us from the din and discord of internal strife, and grant to His people the harmony and peace — that expression of the Spirit's unity — which He desires, so that, undistracted, they may go on at their legitimate work of "sowing the Word of God" !

## Reviving Needed

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It is generally acknowledged that things might be improved, or at least that they *need* to be improved. Of course, there are various schemes proposed to accomplish this much-to-be-desired end, and many a "cure-all" is exploited at the one thing needful.

But the child of God, who is at all intelligent regarding God's Word, knows that in matters social, political, commercial, and religious, affairs will *get worse* instead of better. The corruption of the whole system is an open secret, and one has to close his eyes if he is to play the role of an optimist.

In more senses than one is that word true, as spoken by the prophet : "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it . . . until He come whose right it is ; and I will give it unto Him" (Ezek. xxi. 27). And again, at a later date, has God spoken : "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. iii. 13). So much for the world's "open sore", from God's view-point.

Now God has left His children here, not to be *world reformers*, but *witnesses* —not righting the world's wrongs, but bearing witness to Him whom the world crucified ! This is clear from Scripture. That in this they have been, and are largely, a failure, is just as evident to the one who measures things by God's standard. Alas ! worldliness, prayerlessness, and neglect of God's Word, have wrought havoc among God's people ! Surely a revival is needed, and *it must come from the presence of the Lord !*

### A REVIVAL OF PRAYER

All real work for God has *begun* in the closet. And the power to *continue* the work has been found there. This is the lesson of Pentecost, and the days that followed. They were "all together",



“in one place”, “with one accord”, waiting on God — when the Holy Spirit came, filling all who were there. Later, when trouble arose, caused by the raging of the enemy without, they got together for prayer, to breathe out their need and desire into God’s ear ; the result being, that the place was shaken by the power of the Holy Ghost. But not only that, for with *great power* they bore testimony to the Word of God, and *great grace* was upon them all (Acts iv.). These were the Church’s best days, and we will never have Pentecost repeated. Yet we may know the same in *kind*, if not in *measure*. God’s arm is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that it cannot hear. He is still “waiting to be gracious” !

What sad tales our closets would tell, if they could but speak ! What melancholy sermons the empty chairs in our prayer-meetings preach ! — telling, as they do, of indifference and a lack of apprehension of our need of God !

We are satisfied that here is where a revival must needs begin. As of Israel, so of us, God speaks, saying, “I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face ; in their affliction they will seek Me early” (Hos. v. 15). *Oh for a revival in the habit of prayer !* There will be no revival of God’s work in our hands without it. That His work will be done, ’tis true. But He will find other instruments in fulfilling His purposes, and we shall be laid aside as unfit for the Master’s use if we turn not unto Him.

## A REVIVAL OF LOVE FOR THE WORD

God has revealed Himself in His Word, and He delights to use it. In prayer, we speak to God. When God would speak to us, He uses His Word ! Thus both are requisite, if we are to enjoy communion with Him.

God uses His Word in the *regeneration* of souls (1 Pet. i. 23) ; in their practical *sanctification* (John xvii. 17) ; in *cleansing* their ways (Psa. cxix. 9) ; in *building* them up (Acts xx. 32) ; in *feeding* them (1 Pet. ii. 2) ; and in *separating* them from the ungodly things around (Jer. xv. 16, etc.). And surely the lack of diligently feeding and meditating on God’s Word, is responsible for much of the worldly conformity so prevalent !

May the Lord stir up within us a love for His own Book,—not merely truths *from* the Book, but the Word itself, that, like Job, we may esteem its precepts more than necessary food ; and,

like David, we may prove them more precious than gold, and sweeter than honey from the comb. Let us not forget, that only truth learned from God, and in fellowship with God, will make us of use in the world,—for that which we learn from Him, alone reaches *our own* hearts, and brings us in touch with Himself, so making us the channels of blessing to others.

“The Word that *goeth forth out of My mouth* shall not return unto Me void”. This is the word that is blessed and made a blessing. God speaks it to *us* through His Book, and it is blessed to us. Then we are able, in turn, to speak it to others, and *He* gives the increase. Paul carried the Gospel to Thessalonica, “not in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance” (1 Thess. i. 5), with blessed results. His message was from God, and so had power !

### A REVIVAL OF LOVE FOR GOD

When first “the love of God was shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost”, we loved God without an effort. We loved Him because we had learned, in our souls, that *He had first loved us* ! Our thoughts were upon Him, our hands employed in serving Him, and our tongues delighted to speak of Him. His Word was a source of continual delight, and prayer seemed as natural to us as formerly it had been natural to neglect it.

But is it so now ? Alas ! many of us in shame hang our heads, and confess it is not. And with our neglect of prayer, and the reading of, and meditating on God’s Word, came an inrush of other things, to displace Him in our heart’s affections, and love to Him began to wane ! We may not be considered as open backsliders. We may be in our usual place in the meeting of God’s people. We may even preach and pray in our accustomed manner. And yet, coldness and deadness have filled the heart that was at one time afire with the love of God, and our love to Him in return. May He speak to us all about this !

Again, *with waning love to God, comes waning love to His people*, and the work upon which He has set His heart. We are now ready to listen to Satan’s “Pity thyself”, rather than our Lord’s “Deny thyself” (Matt. xvi., 22, 24, margin). We are too busy, or too weary, to go to the prayer-meeting, or to seek the welfare of some straying lamb or sheep ; or, perchance, to go after some poor lost sinner. And thus, because of our waning love to God and man, the work in our hands languishes. Surely,

then, we may well cry to our God for a revival here, at the very fountain-head of the trouble — our love to God !

## A REVIVAL OF DEVOTEDNESS TO HIM

We are fond of singing, it may be :

*Nought that I have mine own I'll call,  
I'll hold it for the Giver ;  
My heart, my strength, my life, my all,  
Are His, and His for ever !*

But, in practice, is it so ? Paul could say of the many in his day, "All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's". And if true then, how much more so now ! "My business", "my work", "my home", "my family", "my property", "my money" are the common expressions heard on every side, even among the children of God ; while the things of God, and the work of God, are looked upon as something to be *patronized*, but not necessarily *part of my affairs*. Is it not so ?

We surely need revival then. A revival that will not merely touch our *feelings* and make us *sing*. But one that will go deeper, and make us *pray* — deeper still, and make us "*work* the work of the Lord" — and still deeper, until *we shall no longer call aught that we possess our own, but shall hold it and use it for Him*. We shall not then be found robbing God and ourselves too. But shall "bring the tithes into the storehouse" and, proving Him, find Him true to His own Word, to "pour out a blessing" upon us, "that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. iii.).

"The river of God is *full of water*", and it is only our own foolishness and sin that hinder its life-giving stream from flowing in blessing over our poor barren sands. In some of our hearts God may be creating a *yearning* for a season of blessing from His own right hand. If so, let us seek to "prepare the way of the Lord, and make His paths straight", that there may be nothing to hinder Him in His gracious operations.

*Revive Thy work, O Lord !  
Thy mighty arm make bare,  
Speak with the voice that wakes the dead,  
And make Thy people hear.*

## What about the Judgment ?

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It is a generally received opinion that all men, good and bad, are going on to a day of judgment, which will finally settle their eternal destiny for heaven or hell !

That unconverted people should hold such views is not to be wondered at ; inasmuch as not having any assurance of salvation, they comfort themselves with the thought that they are as far advanced as any one can be, which, of course, is true if "none can know they are saved until the judgment day" !

But it seems strange that any of God's children should hold such thoughts. They, at least, are expected to read their Bibles, where they would find God teaching the opposite of any such uncertainty. Let us see what *He* says :

"He that believeth on the Son, *hath* everlasting life" (John iii. 36). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that *heareth My Word*, and *believeth on Him* that sent Me, *hath everlasting life*, and *shall not come* into condemnation [judgment, R.V.], but is *passed* from death unto life" (John v. 24).

Does such language, which might be amplified by scores of texts, seem to teach uncertainty for the believer as to the future ? Does it not teach the most *positive certainty*, not only as to the present, but as to the future also ? But let us listen to

### FURTHER TESTIMONY

First : As to *Salvation*—"The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness ; but unto *us who are saved*, it is the power of God" (1 Cor. i. 18). "But after that the kindness and love of God, our Saviour, towards man appeared ; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He *saved us*" (Tit. iii. 5).

Second : As to *Security*—"I give unto them eternal life, and

*they shall never perish, and no one [none] is able to pluck them out of My hands*", etc. (John x. 28, 29). "Unto Him who is able *to keep you from falling*, and to present you *faultless* before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy . . . be glory and majesty", etc. (Jude 24, 25).

Third, As to *Death* — "*We know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved [that is, if we should die], *we have a building of God*, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1). "*We are confident*, I say, and *willing* rather to be *absent from the body*, and to be *present with the Lord*" (2 Cor. v. 8). "*To depart and to be with Christ*, which is far better" (Phil. i. 23). Such is the confident way of the apostle, in speaking of death.

Thus we have the testimony of the Word of God, which could be confirmed by scores of other Scriptures we might quote, as to the

### **SALVATION, SECURITY, AND CONFIDENCE**

of the people of God. They are all incompatible with the idea of an *unsettled* sin question, or a judgment-day, when such questions are to be decided. Yet, Scripture *does* speak of judgment, both of the saved and the lost !

Examining the Word, we find there are many aspects of the subject there, to understand which we must give heed to the exhortation to rightly "divide the Word of Truth". Shall we look at a few of them ?

First in order, as affecting us, we may place *God's judgment of Sin at the Cross*. The blessed Christ of God came forth from the bosom of the Father, emptied Himself of His glory, became Man, that as such He might, in this scene, do the will of God. He came into the world saying, "*I delight to do Thy will*, O My God ; yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psa. xl. 8). And that "will" led Him, not only to Bethlehem's manger, or the humble home of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth ; not only to the desert and the mountain side, but it led Him on to Gethsemane, the place of His deep sorrow (Matt. xxvi. 36), to Gabbatha also, the place of man's judgment (John xix. 13), and Golgotha, "the place of a skull", the scene of His death (John xix. 17). "There they crucified Him".

But hark, what means that awful cry from that Blessed One ? "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?" Had He

not ever done those things that pleased God? He had. Then why was He forsaken of God? The answer is, that on that Cross He was made

### THE BEARER OF SIN

and God, "who is of purer eyes than to behold evil", and who "cannot look on iniquity" (Hab. i. 13), must judge Him. He *dies* and is *buried*. But "God raised Him from the dead". Not only so, but has *seated* Him at His own right hand in the glory, saying to Him, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Psa. cx. 1; Heb. x. 11, 12).

Thus has God given proof of His own infinite satisfaction with the work done, and hence, as it has been often stated, "It is now no longer the *sin* question, but the *Son* question", that God is raising, "What think ye of Christ?"

The believer now is seen "in Christ", and God says, "If any man be *in* Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17) — literally, he is of the new creation. Again, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are *in* Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). Thus do we see how God has settled the "sin question", so that, as regarding it, the believer "shall not come into judgment". He is now made a child of God, by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26) and, as such, is a subject of the Father's discipline. This brings us to another phase of our subject:

### OUR JUDGMENT AS SONS

"My son, despise not thou the *chastening of the Lord*, nor faint when thou are rebuked of Him; for who the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth *every son* whom He receiveth" (Heb. xii. 5, 6). From the verse that follows, we find that, in His discipline or training of us, God deals with us as a Father with His sons, desirous of our "profit", and that we might be "partakers of His holiness" (Heb. xii. 7-10).

In 1 Cor. xi. 29-32, we have an illustration of how He thus deals with His children, in contrast to His judgment of the world.

Some, in Corinth, had been eating the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, and, not judging themselves and their ways in the light of God's truth, becoming, therefore, subjects for His judging hand. As He says: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep; for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but, *when we are judged, we*

*are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world*".

Because we fail in *self-judgment*, and allow sin to rest on the conscience, God has to deal with us — as a father would with his child — not casting us into hell, but chastening or disciplining us, that we may become, in a practical way, "partakers of His holiness", walking in the light, and having fellowship with Him.

## OUR JUDGMENT AS SERVANTS

But we are not only sons, we are *servants* ; and, as such, will have our *works* tried. To this aspect of our subject applies a word in 2 Corinthians v. 10, "For we [Christians] must all appear [be manifested, R.V.] before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether they be good or bad".

As to the *manner* of this judgment, we find in 1 Corinthians iii. 13-15, "Every man's work shall be manifest ; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be *revealed by fire*, and *the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is*. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, *he shall receive a reward*. If any man's work shall be burned, *he shall suffer loss*, but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire".

As to the *time* of this judgment, see 1 Corinthians iv. 5. "Therefore, judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart ; and then shall every man have praise of God".

Now all this is beautifully simple. The believer is not to be tried at a judgment bar in order to see if he is saved. That question is settled once and for ever, as a guilty sinner, he rests his soul on Christ, who was judged for his sins, and is now on the throne for him !

But the believer's *works* will pass in review before *Him* "whose eyes are as a flame of fire", and that which has been for Him will abide, and for that he will be rewarded. All else will be consumed, and he will suffer loss. The *time* of this judgment will be when the Lord comes. As to *when* He is coming, we are not told, and it is not wise to guess — but He would have us ever on the look-out for Him, and abiding in Him, that when He does come, we may "have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him" (1 John ii. 28). There is no further judgment than this for the saints, and

this, as we have seen, is not a question of *sin*, or of *sonship*, but of *service*! Nevertheless it is exceedingly solemn, and should exercise our hearts most deeply, leading us to serve Him “with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. xii. 28).



## Present Sorrow and Future Joy

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“Verily, verily, I say unto you, That we shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. . . . Ye now, therefore, have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you” (John xvi. 20, 22).

These words are some of the parting utterances of our blessed Lord, while speaking to His disciples, just before He went to the Cross. It was natural that they should sorrow, as the fact of His coming death began to take hold of their spirits. For some time He had been saying things that should have prepared them for it. But now that the time of His sorrow was upon Him, they were filled with grief, and, forgetful of Himself, He hastens to comfort them thus.

No doubt the first “application” of these words would be to the disciples *then* with Him. His death would cause them sorrow, and His resurrection cause them joy.

But, in a larger sense, the words are applicable to us who are now in this scene. And the comfort of His message to them should be ours to-day, as we take in the fact that He is truly gone from us — that He is in heaven while we are on earth. But that just as surely as He returned in resurrection to cheer the sorrowing hearts of His own in that day, so surely will He return again from heaven to claim His own redeemed, and associate them with Himself for ever ! In our Scripture, we have

### FOUR THINGS HE TELLS THEM

FIRST — *He is going away, and the world will be glad.*

SECOND — *He is going away, and they will be sorrowful.*

THIRD — *He is going away, but He will return again.*

FOURTH — *He is coming again, and that will turn their sorrow into permanent joy.*

There was nothing that interfered with the world's ambitions, pleasures, or religion, like the presence of the Lord Jesus. Herod, when he heard He was born, left no stone unturned to encompass His destruction. For, if Jesus be indeed heir to the throne of Israel, then Herod felt there would be no place for him there. Hence, Jesus must be gotten out of the way. He was and is in the way of worldly ambitions. Therefore, the world then, as the world now, breathed a sigh of relief at the thought of His absence.

And the leaders of the world's *religion* had no use for the Lord Jesus. His holiness rebuked them; so Scribe and Pharisee, priest and elder, clamoured for His blood, and were never satisfied until they had Him on the Cross. The world must have "its religion", of course! And "Christianity" is supposed to be the proper religion of these lands. But holding to one of the various creeds of Christendom is one thing, and knowing and loving the Lord Jesus is another.

The presence of the Lord Jesus in the midst of the fashionable religion of Christendom in this twentieth century would be as intolerable as it was in the midst of the effete Judaism of the first! Yes, the world is *glad* that the Christ of God is gone! They have "another Jesus" of whom they sing, and preach (2 Cor. xi. 4), but the Christ of the Bible would be in the way of their *religion*, even as He is in the way of their *ambitions* — so they are glad that they have got rid of Him!

"But", says the Lord to His own, "ye shall be sorrowful". Why should they be sorrowful at His leaving them? Had he ever set before them any prospects of earthly greatness which only His presence could bring them? Had He led them to think that by adhering to Himself He would lead them to wealth, or power, or distinction among men? On the contrary, He had ever been talking of poverty, and loss, and the Cross, as the portion they must expect with Him. In fact, the path in which He had led them so far, had been one the farthest removed from what men hold dear, and yet

### THEY HAD SORROW

Why? Because their hearts had been won to Himself, personally. They loved *Him*! And in losing Him they were losing all! No wonder they were in sorrow.

Beloved fellow-Christians, we all have our sorrows — in the home, in business life, and perhaps we have Church sorrows. But

what about *this sorrow*? Do our hearts really sorrow for Him? Do we miss Him? Is this world an empty scene because He is not here? Who has not gone into a home, recently devastated by the loss of a loved husband and father, and heard the wail of the bereaved widow, "The world is empty since my dear one left me". God has well described the true widow as "desolate". All that made the home — all that filled up the sum of her little world, has been taken, and hence, although surrounded by a busy, bustling world — although the same attractions and allurements are still there that formerly captivated her, there is no response, because *he* is gone!

Beloved, is it any the less true in our case? Can we — do we rejoice with the world, as though we were glad too, because He is gone? Are we "at home" in the world that has no room for Him? They gave Him a stable in which to be born — a gallows on which to die! Shall *we* forget it, and try to settle down here, as though it were not a fact that there was, and is, no room for Him? Alas, so deceitful are our hearts, we may sing with others most heartily:

*The foxes found rest,  
And the birds had their nest,  
In the shade of the cedar tree;  
But Thy couch was the sod,  
O Thou Son of God!  
In the deserts of Galilee —*

and then turn to drown in the world's ambitions, pleasures, or false religion, all thought of His rejection then and now — a rejection by that same world whose smile and favours we court!

Now He comforts them in their sorrow by a very blessed prospect. As they thought of it, it would cheer them and nerve them to do and dare for Him. What was it? Was it that His Gospel would spread over the world until all His enemies should be subject to Him? Did He tell them that by the power of that Gospel, righteousness and the knowledge of God should cover the earth as the waters cover the sea? Did He assure them that matters in this world would become better and better, as time went on, and that civilization and education and missionary zeal (things most commendable in themselves) should bring in the millennium of peace? Ah, no. He had already warned them of the opposite of this. The *cause* of their *grief* was, *He* was going

away ; the *source* of their *comfort* was, as it is ours to-day, if our hearts are true to Him, that He had said :

### **"I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN"**

"This same Jesus, whom ye have seen go into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). Such were the words of the heavenly messengers that day, when, on the Mount of Olives, the disciples stood gazing up into the heavens, their eyes fixed upon the very spot where last they had seen Him.

How poignant would be their sorrow and grief at *losing* Him? How blessed this *hope* God had sent to cheer them ! And let us remember, dear fellow-saints of God, *this is the hope He has set before us*. Many of God's dear children are joining with the world in their vain expectations of the betterment of things. Many are hoping, by means of reformatory and educational measures, to bring in a reign of peace and righteousness. But, in all this, they but manifest that they have missed the point of *His* words of comfort, "*I will see you again*". In John xiv. 3, He had said, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also".

Their hearts were mutually knit one with the other. He loved them, and they loved Him in return ! It was needful that He should leave them. But He would send the Holy Spirit to them, and He would comfort them, and lead them, and teach them, and remind them of the words of the Lord Jesus ; but the climax of their hopes was this : "*I will see you again*"—"I will come and receive you unto Myself". Then would they be together, and their joy would be full.

Many have "fallen asleep in Jesus", whose hearts looked and longed for that coming. Many are now looking and longing for Him, and singing as they wait :

O joy ! O delight !  
Should we go without dying !  
No sickness, no sadness,  
No dread, and no crying ;  
Caught up through the clouds  
With our Lord into glory —  
O Lord Jesus ! How long ?—  
How long, ere we shout the glad song ?  
Christ returneth ! Hallelujah !  
Hallelujah ! Amen !

*The time of His coming again He has not given us.* To guess at it is folly. To "figure it out", has only brought, and must only bring, disappointment. But to true hearts, His words must ever bring present comfort as they wait, and cause them, like the Thessalonians of old, to serve the living and true God, while they wait for the Son from heaven, whose coming will turn their sorrow into joy.

### PERMANENT JOY

His coming will bring joy of which the world cannot rob us ! How much of our joy is bound up with our circumstances now ! How quickly a change in those circumstances fills us with dismay, and perchance reproaches and murmurings ! But in *that* day, the stamp of permanency will be on everything.

Sorrow now, but rejoicing hearts then ! As we have it in Psalm xxx. 5, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning". And oh, what a morning will His coming be ! The dark and dreary night of His absence ended. The desolation of a scene in which He had no place ; the weary, weary watching, with strained eye and heavy heart, all now a thing of the past. He has come ! He is with us, and we are with Him, never to part again ! As the bright and Morning Star, He will have heralded the coming eternal day, the day without a cloud, and without a night to us ! No more sorrow ! No more sinning ! No more heart wanderings ! No more worldliness and no more waywardness ! We shall see Him, and be like Him, and be with Him for ever ! Our hearts shall rejoice, and our joy no man shall be able to take from us ! In prospect of it, well may we cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus !"

## God Judging the World

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Who has not heard Matthew xxv. 31-46, applied to "a general judgment" of the righteous and the wicked in the last day? *Then*, it is supposed, their eternal destiny will be fixed, for heaven or hell! But if the reader will *carefully* study this portion, there are a few things that will doubtless occur to him.

FIRST — *This throne is situated on the earth*, and the occupant thereof is the Lord Jesus, as the "Son of Man"—a title connected with the earth. He is accompanied by the holy angels, His heavenly escort.

SECOND—*Those who stand before Him there, are "all nations"*. And, you notice these are nations *living on the earth* at that time. There is no hint of a *resurrection* of any who will be there.

THIRD — *These are three classes referred to by the Lord Jesus*. "The Sheep", "The Goats", and those He calls "My Brethren". The judgment of the first two, you will notice, is to be according to their treatment of the latter, during "the great tribulation", referred to in Matthew xxiv.

FOURTH — *This is introductory to His Millennial reign*, of which we will speak presently. Like Solomon, who was a type of Christ in His earthly glory, and who began his reign by executing judgment on his and his father David's enemies (compare 1 Kings ii. and Revelation xix. 11, 12), so with our Lord Jesus;—"Justice and judgment shall be the habitation of His throne" (Psa. lxxxix. 14).

In Matthew xxiv., we read of "the great tribulation" which will come upon the Jewish people in a coming day. For the Lord Jesus Christ, who was God's Anointed, and who came in the name of His Father, they would *not* receive. Another, the Antichrist, "who will come in *his own* name, him they will receive" (John v. 43).

## **"THE GREAT TRIBULATION"**

The warning words of Matthew xxiv. 15-24, will doubtless reach the ear and heart of a godly remnant in the nation of Israel, who will heed the signs given, and flee from the impending danger. At that time, the nations of the earth will have a part for or against this peculiar people; and so fearful will the persecution be, that, were it not for the coming of the Son of Man (Matt. xxiv. 29), no flesh would be saved. His coming will *shorten* the days of trial, and a remnant will be saved, the nucleus of His Millennial Kingdom. In this our day, it is the *lengthening* of the time (of grace) that is salvation (see 2 Peter iii. 15).

Revelation xix. 11-21, and Zachariah xiv. 1-5, should be read together. They both refer to the same circumstances, the coming of the Son of Man to the rescue of Israel, and the judgment of the Antichrist and the nations allied with him against God's ancient people.

The prophecy of Matthew xxv. 31-46, then, is descriptive of the *manner* in which these nations will be judged. The *place* of the judgment will evidently be the "Valley of Jehoshaphat" (Joel iii. 1-3, 12), just outside of Jerusalem. You will note that the question of "faith in Christ" is not raised at this time, except by inference, the main question being their treatment of His brethren, during the day of "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx. 7).

## **THE GREAT WHITE THRONE**

Of this we read in Revelation xx. 11-15. All are agreed that this is the *final* judgment, as revealed in the Word. Toward this "grand assize" all unsaved people are hastening, and before it, all such will surely stand. Will the reader take God's Word, and carefully note each verse?

In this twentieth chapter, we read of Satan being bound, and chained, and thrust into the abyss, where he will be kept for a thousand years. Now this "thousand years" is the Millennium, to which so many of God's saints have looked yearningly, as the time when peace and prosperity would fill the earth, and when sin, sickness, and death would be practically unknown.

*Christ on the throne, and Satan in the pit, for one thousand years!*

Surely *that* will be heaven begun below! And surely, one might add, it will *always* be so, for all will be so entranced with

the beauty of righteousness, that Satan and sin will find no place among men for evermore ! *Will such be the case ?*

Alas, the record is the opposite, for "men love darkness rather than light". Hence, at the end of the thousand years, when Satan will be loosed from his prison, he will find a multitude as the sand on the seashore ready to go against God and His saints. It will be God's last proof of the incorrigibility of man, manifesting how that even a thousand years of deliverance from temptation, added to the beneficent rule of the Lord Jesus, is insufficient to change man's nature, which is "enmity against God" ! The Lord Jesus spake an eternal truth when He said to Nicodemus, "*Ye must be born again*" !

God having visited summary judgment on the rebels, and Satan having been cast into the lake of fire, the seer next beholds a "great white throne", upon which sat One of transcendent glory, who is now to execute righteous judgment upon every one, according to their works".

### JUDGMENT, NOT MERCY

THIS is where many are looking forward to having mercy shown to them. Alas, they are doomed to be sadly mistaken. This is not a "*throne of grace*", it is a "*throne of judgment*" The wicked dead are raised — the great and the small, from the prince to the pauper — and stand before that throne, and Him who sits thereon.

As to *their souls*, they have been in hell (Luke xvi. 23, 24). As to *their bodies*, they have been buried, or burned, or disposed of in some other way. But God will, by the voice of the Son of Man, call them forth (John v. 27-29), and they will now be judged "according to their works". For, just as the saints will not receive their reward until they stand, *in their resurrection bodies*, before the judgment seat of Christ ; even so, the wicked will not receive their full measure of punishment until, *in their raised bodies*, they stand before the great white throne.

*The whiteness of the throne* would indicate the *purity* of the judgment dispensed there. There will be no mistakes made, and no appeals will be made to a higher court. Even those who are judged will be forced to acquiesce in the justness of the sentence.

*The Lamb's Book of Life*, where the names of the feeblest and most wayward of God's saints are enrolled, will be searched in vain for one of those who will stand there. God's Word will also



be there, as an additional witness against the Christ rejector, and truth despiser (John xii. 48).

*Their end shall be the lake of fire.* And "whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15). And *then* ETERNITY ! Not judged alone for rejecting Christ, but now made to pay for the many sins that would have been forgiven, had they but come in faith to Him. For all their works will be brought up, and they judged accordingly. Happy in that day are they who, clothed in the righteousness of God, stand complete in Christ, before Him ! WILL YOU ?

*Additional copies may be had from :*

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