

Winning the Crowd

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&c., &c.

WITH FOREWORD
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FOREWORD BY S. D. GORDON

THE crowds need winning, wooing and winning, and at heart the crowds want winning. There is something inside every man that answers to the wooing winning cadence of the Gospel.

Our Lord is a winning Saviour. If we can once get men into touch with Him, He will do the rest. He is a winsome Saviour, and Friend, and Master.

Our Lord Jesus will win men to Himself. Whenever and wherever He is lifted up, high in plain sight, lovingly, earnestly, He wins men. He pulls on their hearts, and wills, and lives.

Jesus drew men, and men draw Jesus. Wherever He went, men came, and came a-running, and came in crowds.

And wherever men were Jesus went, under the gracious guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our sore need drew Him from the Throne to the Cross, to the tomb ; out of the tomb, back to the Throne again.

And some day we men in our sorest need will draw Him back, down again, to start things going in His own way down here.

Let us hold Him up to the crowds.

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SECTION I
THE WORLD AND ITS NEED

CHAPTER I

THE WORLD IN DARKNESS

“THE whole world lieth in wickedness”—so writes the Apostle of love.

We shall not do much for God in this world until we realise the gravity of the *need*, which is not only local, but universal, and perpetual.

The following statement is interesting, emanating as it does from a high official connected with the League of Nations: “The world is in a bad way. Look where we will we see signs of unrest. In different parts of the world nations are facing one another in hostility, and spending money which they can ill afford on weapons of destruction. The two and a half million pounds a day which the nations are flinging away on preparation for warfare is a symptom of the fevered condition of the world.”

The world is indeed in a bad way. One looks in vain for the faintest sign of universal peace. Let it be stated at once boldly and emphatically that what the world needs to-day is the GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

Speaking generally, the world is divided up into various religions, and a brief survey of these will shew how little has been accomplished in the way of

spreading the Gospel, and how much territory there remains to be possessed. In the following particulars the numbers are necessarily approximate.

One of the greatest religions in point of adherents is *Hinduism*, which has no formal confession of faith, but has a long series of sacred books which teach that Brahma is the all-pervading person who expands through all space, and from whom everything emanates. With him two other deities are now associated—Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Destroyer. In the literature of Hinduism three doctrines are found : (1) Transmigration of the soul through an innumerable succession of bodies ; (2) Karma, or merit, the sum of a man's acts, which decides his fate in every stage of existence ; (3) Moksha, an attempt to escape from Transmigration and Karma by absorption into Brahma. Hinduism consists in devotional ceremonies and pilgrimages, and has produced an idolatry so universal that it is said to be easier to find a god than a man. Of this Christless religion there are about *two hundred and ten million* adherents.

Another religion which has its millions of followers is *Buddhism*, which sprang out of Hinduism. Gautama, its founder, dissatisfied with Hinduism, asked : “ What is the meaning of this unending transitory life ? ”, and in order to find the secret he retreated to the jungles and lived the life of an ascetic. In course of time he got the illumination he sought. Man must cease from all desire ! All pain and sorrow come from desire, and these may cease by conquering desire. This means the attainment of *Nirvana* by

complete extinction of self. Nirvana is neither heaven nor God. Strictly speaking Buddhism knows no God. It regards the body as the abode of evil. This religion encourages the idea of the soul's transmigration, but (unlike Hinduism) teaches that the being who is re-born is not the same as the one who died, but another being who bears the results, good or bad, of the previous one. Salvation means escape from existence : therefore, successive re-births for ages are necessary. In Buddhism, as seen to-day, Gautama the founder has been elevated as an object of worship. Other men have also been deified, so that its temples abound in idols which are worshipped as gods. This Christless religion claims about *one hundred and thirty-eight million* adherents.

The religion which probably has more followers than any other is *Confucianism* with which is connected *Taoism*. While the doctrines of Confucianism have mainly to do with human relationships, yet it holds that God, the Supreme Ruler, should be revered and worshipped. Associated with the Supreme Ruler are spirits who have places allotted to them in the direction of the world's affairs. The spirits of a man's ancestors must also be worshipped. Man is by nature good, and only needs a knowledge of duty to ensure its performance, but he may, and does, deteriorate through ignorance. Sin is followed by punishment, and there should be reformation, prayers, and offerings which may include *propitiatory* sacrifices (which, however, does not mean *expiatory* sacrifices). The worshipper is generally his own priest, though

on certain occasions the Emperor was the high priest for the nation, and the head of the family was the high priest for his household. About life after death Confucius refused to say anything, though he tacitly admitted such a future life by his command to worship the ancestral spirits *as if they were present*.

Taoism was founded by Lao-tsze, a contemporary of Confucius. The word "Tao" means literally "the Way," and it is used to describe the operations, the course, or the *way*, of nature, or natural law, or reason. The small book supposed to be left behind by its founder is deeply subtle and mystical. It has been summed up on this wise: "To allow Tao to work in one's life, rather than to trust to continual exertion of will, is the only right course for man." As a matter of fact the words of this book are seldom quoted by professed Taoists, and are quite unknown by the common people. Taoism has incorporated into itself all kinds of animistic superstitions. Spiritism, magic, fortune-telling, and all kinds of idolatry are carried on under its ægis. These two cults combined have somewhere about *three hundred and one million* adherents. A change, however, has taken place within recent years in China. Under the present Republican Government, Confucianism has fallen into disrepute, and the Confucian classics, formerly the only text books, are now banned from all schools, and the teaching of Dr. Sun Yat Sen has been substituted. Dr. Sun's doctrines are more political than religious. They are embodied in his book, *People's Three Principles*, and may be called "Socialism, Democracy,

and Nationalism," and these themes are now taught in the schools. Dr. Sun's will is held by the Nationalist party as being above the laws of the land, and wherever the Nationalist Army holds sway this sacred document is forced upon the people just as the Mohammedans have done with the Koran. To so great an extent is this "will" revered that each Monday morning it must be read by all officials of the Nationalist Government, followed by a silence of three minutes. Poor China!

Mohammedanism is said to be the third greatest religion in the world in point of numbers. This religion was promulgated by the sword. Its foremost teaching is "There is no deity but God, and Mohammed is the messenger of God." Mohammed laid down a plan of salvation which was based on ceremonial law. Fasts and festivals were proclaimed; stress was laid on pilgrimages, and special blessings were attached to a pilgrimage to Mecca. Mohammed at first was tolerant and even friendly towards Christians, but his attitude was afterwards changed to one of aggression and persecution. A "holy war," in which a martyr's crown was offered as the reward of those who fell, was prosecuted against "infidels." Captive women were condemned to slavery or concubinage: polygamy was not only countenanced but encouraged. Mohammed himself wrote nothing. The Koran, in which is contained the entire teaching of Islam and its theology, and which also forms the basis of Moslem law and government, was compiled after Mohammed's death. This book is the final court of appeal for all Moslems.

Mohammed repudiated all intercession or atonement. Each follower was required to work out his own salvation, although to-day at Mohammed's tomb and at the sepulchres of saints sacrifices are offered in order to bring down upon the worshipper the mercy of the deity. Attached to this sensual, loveless, Christless religion there are about *two hundred and twenty-two million* adherents.

There is a religion with which perhaps we are not quite as familiar as we are with those religions already mentioned, namely, *Animism*. This strange theory attributes a living soul not merely to human beings, but also to the lower animals, and even to inanimate objects. Certain anthropologists employ the term to include the simpler conception that all beings, animate and otherwise, are endowed with personality and conscious life. The theory is largely based upon the evidence of the senses as interpreted by the crude and child-like science of the savage. It involves the savage idea that the soul is capable of being separated from the body temporarily during sleep or trance. The soul then sallies forth on various adventures which the owner remembers in the form of dreams and visions. It can also be separated from the body during sickness, when the place which the soul vacates is often occupied by less desirable spirits. In this case the great object of the savage medicine-man is to recover the soul—to drive out, if necessary, the invaders who have taken its place—and to induce it to re-enter the body, its proper abode. Many savages believe that it is for the advantage of the

owner that his soul should be extracted and hidden away out of danger. Some carry this into practice on removal to a new house. Seeing that such removal is fraught with supernatural danger to the inmates, the priest collects beforehand all the souls into a bag, of which he takes charge, until the lapse of a specified period, when, with certain superstitious ceremonies, he restores them to their owners. This doctrine of Animism also includes the theory that the lower animals, as well as trees, plants, and inanimate objects, being all endowed with souls precisely analogous to those of men, have not only human feelings and passions, but are often held to be actually transformed men. Hence the theory of Animism is said to be the groundwork of the philosophy of religion, though it could almost be designated the religion of the unenlightened savage. The estimated number of Animists is *one hundred and fifty-eight millions*.

Before mentioning the more civilised religions, we ought to draw attention to the Japanese cult of *Shintoism*. Shinto means literally "the way of the gods." No concise definition of this theory exists, but the following are some of its leading points. It contains no moral code. A high authority on the subject, a man named Motoori, asserted that in Japan no system of morals was necessary, as every Japanese acted aright if he only consulted his own heart. Motoori also declared that the entire duty of a good Japanese consisted in obeying implicitly and without question the commands of the *Mikado*. In Shintoism Japan is held to be the country of the gods, and the

Mikado is believed to be the direct descendant and actual representative of the Sun goddess. The Shinto shrines throughout the country are very simple, being generally constructed of white wood, but unadorned by brilliant colouring as in Buddhist temples. Before each shrine stands one or more *torii*, which are archways formed of two upright posts, beneath which is a smaller horizontal beam. This archway gradually assumed the character of a special symbol of Shinto, so that the number erected in honour of a deity became practically unlimited. The Shinto shrines nearly always contain some object in which the spirit of the deity therein enshrined is supposed to reside. The followers of Shintoism are about *twenty-five millions*.

These religions with their innumerable idols remind us of the vivid description of the idolatry of the heathen in Psalm 115: "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. *They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.*" All this is contrasted to the living God of heaven Who can speak, see, hear, and handle. Little wonder that the Psalmist goes on to say, "O Israel, trust thou in the Lord; He is their help and their shield." Human reason tells us that it is better to trust in the living God than in a dumb idol.

We now come to the more civilised religions, of

which *Roman Catholicism* is one of the greatest numerically. The doctrine of transubstantiation forms one of its strongest pillars. At a council held in the year A.D. 1215 this theory was placed among the settled doctrines of Rome, and it was affirmed that when the officiating priest utters the words of consecration, the sacramental elements of the bread and wine are converted into the substance of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. All sorts of superstitions followed the establishment of this doctrine. During the service of *Mass* the priest elevates the host—i.e. the consecrated sacramental wafer—and instantly the people fall prostrate before it in worship. On certain occasions the wafer is placed in a casket, carried in solemn procession through the streets, and the “faithful” bow the knee in token of adoration. Thus the priests persuade their flocks that the living God, in the form of bread, resides in the casket, and may be carried from place to place. Truly this constitutes one of the greatest travesties of Scriptural teaching in existence! Another institution in the Roman Church, which is also in direct opposition to the Word of God, is “Mary-worship.” The following is one of the many prayers directed to Mary: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of death, Amen.” Again, “We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever gracious and blessed virgin.” And yet again, “Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope!

To thee we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning, and weeping, in this valley of tears ; turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us ; and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement ! loving ! O sweet Virgin Mary ! ”

However intelligent people can reconcile this with the most clear and definite statements of the Lord Jesus that prayer should be made to God through Him (i.e. Christ) surpasses one’s comprehension. Connected with Mary-worship may be mentioned two other forms of adoration, namely, saint-worship, and relic-worship. Many Romanists have their own patron saint, which, in many instances, is regarded as the peculiar protector of the individual, whilst the passion for relics has been prominent from the times of the Crusaders, and even before. The doctrine of *Purgatory* is another pillar of the Roman communion. The well-known Council of Trent decided that in the fire of Purgatory the souls of just men are cleansed by a temporary punishment, in order to be admitted into their eternal country, into which nothing that defileth entereth. And the same Council stated that the sacrifice of the Mass is offered for those that are deceased in Christ, not entirely purged. As to where and what Purgatory actually is we have no definite and uniform statement. Many Romanists believe that it is a middle place between heaven and hell, in which the soul passes through the fire of purification before entering heaven. Praying souls out of Purgatory by Masses said on their behalf has been a source

of wealth to the Church. This doctrine is one of the most specious and misleading of all the doctrines of Rome. It at once nullifies the value of the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary. According to the teaching of Scripture, the moment the sinner really believes in the Saviour he is fitted for heaven, without any intermediate fire of purification being needed. How grand is the gospel of the grace of God! How deceptive is the teaching of Rome! Another Romish delusion is *Extreme Unction*, the last sacrament for the dying. According to the Council of Trent, the object of the sacred oil is to wipe away every remaining sin. How grossly inconsistent! If Extreme Unction is efficacious, what need is there of Purgatory? If every remaining sin is wiped away by Extreme Unction, why must the soul pass through the fire of purification before entering the unsullied courts of heaven! On the other hand, if *every soul* must pass through Purgatory, why administer Extreme Unction? Far better introduce the dying soul to Christ and tell him or her that the Saviour offered *one* sacrifice for sins, and now presents eternal life and blessing to all who are sufficiently wise to exercise implicit faith in Him. A further misleading and harmful Romish doctrine is *Auricular Confession*. The penitent kneels down in the presence of his confessor, makes the sign of the cross, and says, "I confess to Almighty God, to the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to you, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly, in thought,

word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault." At this point the penitent specifies his several sins in their details, without evasion or equivocation. He then proceeds, "For these and all my other sins, which I cannot at present call to my remembrance, I am heartily sorry, purpose amendment for the future, and most humbly ask pardon of God, and penance and absolution of you my ghostly Father. Therefore I beseech the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, the blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, and you, Father, to pray to our Lord God for me." How different is this from the words of the Apostle of love, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Our great high priest is the Lord Jesus Christ, and, thank God, we need no earthly priest. Our privilege is to go direct to God through His beloved Son, and immediately we confess our sins we are forgiven, because God is not only merciful and gracious, but also *faithful* and *just*. It is estimated that the number of Roman Catholics is round about *two hundred and seventy-three millions*. Poor deluded, misguided souls, if only they knew the value of Christ's atoning death, and the reality and preciousness of His glorious Person, they would be rejoicing in the present and eternal pardon of their sins, without any fear of purgatorial fire or any other judgment of the imagination of men.

The creed of the *Eastern Churches* is in many respects similar to that of the Church of Rome. The Greeks

practise auricular confession, but do not attach the same importance to it as the Romanists. On Saturdays and Sundays they celebrate a Mass of the *pre-sanctified* (that is, with a host previously consecrated). They indulge in the worship of the saints and their relics, though statues, crucifixes, and all images in relief are forbidden, as well as the use of organs or musical instruments. Moreover, the Eastern Churches refuse to acknowledge the primacy and infallibility of the Pope; nevertheless, like that of Rome, the system is one of salvation by *works* which is in direct conflict with the words in Ephesians ii, 8 and 9, "For by *grace* are ye saved through *faith* . . . it is *the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*" The membership of the Eastern Churches is about *one hundred and twenty millions*.

The *Jews*, with their apparent adherence to the Old Testament Scriptures; their practical rejection of the New Testament; their total refusal of the Lord Jesus Christ as their promised Messiah and Saviour; their firm attachment to the Rabbinical teachings and traditions, number about *twelve millions*.

The followers of the various *unclassified* religions in the world total about *fifteen millions*.

There remains one religion to mention particularly, namely, *Protestantism*. This familiar term must not be mistaken for Christianity, because a Protestant is not necessarily a Christian. It is one thing to protest against a certain form of religion: it is quite another matter to exercise a living faith in a living Saviour. The first Protestants were the supporters

of Luther who "protested" against the decree of the second Diet of Spire, though Luther himself was not present on that occasion. This decree aimed at the restoration of the Mass in all the states in which it had been discontinued, and enjoined that all ministers in those states should avoid controversial questions, and expound the Scriptures only on the lines hitherto authorised by the Roman Catholic Church. The title "Protestant" was soon adopted by all the Churches which separated from Rome, whether Episcopal or Presbyterian. In England it has now become a somewhat controversial term, and denotes the Low Church as opposed to the High Church section in the Established Church. The number of Protestants is estimated to be *one hundred and seventy-two millions*, but how many of these are definitely trusting in the Lord Jesus for salvation we cannot say.

The brief synopsis we have given is sufficient to reveal the intense spiritual darkness which exists everywhere. The world needs the Gospel more than anything else. Questions, couched more or less in the following terms, have been asked by many: "Why trouble about the heathen? Why not leave them to themselves? Why interfere with their ancient practices and religions?"

There are at least three powerful reasons why we should interest ourselves in the welfare of those who are groping in darkness and in the shadow of death. One reason is because we have something *good* to pass on to them—something infinitely better and more satisfying than what they possess. The person who

has in his breast an important secret, the widespread knowledge of which would benefit humanity at large, and wilfully retains that secret in his own possession, is guilty of inexcusable selfishness, if not of criminal negligence. We who are Christians possess the greatest gift God can bestow, and we are fully assured that this gift is for "whosoever will." It is our privilege, therefore, inasmuch as in us is, to spread the glorious news to the remotest parts of the earth.

Another reason why we should go to the heathen with the Gospel is because of the lasting benefits which Christianity bestows wherever its divine principles are allowed to operate. The Gospel of Christ is the world's *panacea* in that it lifts up the fallen; strengthens the weak; straightens life's crooked turnings; comforts the sorrowing; calms the troubled mind; transforms gloom into glad hopefulness; changes a life of utter despair and wretchedness into a life of holiness and usefulness; makes cruel men kind, and selfish men spiritual and material benefactors. Surely such a Gospel is worth proclaiming.

The third reason is the most important because it is unanswerable, namely, *We are distinctly commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature.* Almost the last command the Lord Jesus gave to His disciples before His return to heaven was, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of *all nations.*" If we believe that the Bible is the Word of the living God, we are in duty bound to obey it. Disobedience would imply gross disloyalty to our Sovereign Master. In the light of this definite command every argument used against

missionary effort is nullified. The Christian has received his marching orders, and if he is faithful he will gladly fall into line with God's will. If he cannot go himself he will do what he can to send others. The spirituality of a church may to a great extent be gauged by its missionary zeal. There ought not to be the great difference between the "foreign field" and the "home field" which is so frequently assigned to them. In the eyes of the Lord of the harvest they are one. At the same time, as the disciples were told to begin their testimony in Jerusalem, so we should begin to witness for Christ in our own immediate neighbourhood.

Elisha and his servant are together on a mountain in Dothan, surrounded by the common enemy, the Syrians. Escape seems to be impossible, so much so that the servant says to Elisha, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Elisha prays that the eyes of the young man may be opened. The prayer is answered, and the young man observes that the mountain is full of horses and chariots round about Elisha.

What a mercy it would be if the eyes of God's people were opened to see the appalling need of the world!

Psalms 14 and 53 are worded well-nigh identically. They record a *divine inspection*. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and that did seek after God." The result of the inspection was altogether discouraging:—"They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." God saw the need, and,

in the fulness and fitness of time, sent His Son to be the Saviour of the World.

The Lord Jesus saw the multitudes in the desert, and had compassion upon them. Why? Not only because He saw them as sheep scattered abroad without a shepherd to care for them, but also because He saw beneath the exterior a need—a yearning for something they did not possess. He realised the need, and immediately took steps to meet it.

The children of Israel were in Egypt, treated as slaves and chattels by Pharaoh and the taskmasters. In their utter helplessness the people groaned by reason of their intolerable burdens. God saw the desperate need and condescended to come down to meet it. The divine communication to Moses was full of significance, “I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them” (Acts vii, 34).

When the Apostle Paul was in the wicked city of Athens, and saw that the place was wholly given up to idolatry, his missionary spirit was stirred within him. He saw the need and at once began to preach the Gospel to those people.

God saw the need in Nineveh, and sent His servant Jonah to proclaim His message. Similarly, God saw the need in Samaria, and sent the evangelist Philip with the message of salvation through Christ.

We might well pray, “Lord open Thou our eyes that we may see the deep, desperate need, and then grant us Thine enabling grace to meet it.”

Let us, at this juncture, remind ourselves of some of the most pathetic words of tenderest love toward the perishing recorded in the Old Testament, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; *for why will ye die, O house of Israel.*" (Ezekiel xxxiii, 11.) Let us now listen to the New Testament confirmation of this outburst of divine compassion: "The Lord is . . . long-suffering . . . *not willing that any should perish*, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter iii, 9). To what extent do *we* enter into this tremendous heart-yearning for the lost?

When the exiled Nehemiah heard concerning his beloved Jerusalem that the wall was broken down, and the gates thereof burned with fire, also that the remnant of the Jewish people residing there were in great affliction and reproach, he sat down and mourned certain days, and poured out his soul to the God of heaven—so deeply did Nehemiah realise the need of battered, shattered Jerusalem.

When Moses descended from Mount Sinai, and saw the people worshipping *gods of gold* and heard them shouting, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt," his heart was so deeply stirred that he pleaded with God to forgive His people, even though it meant that his own name should be obliterated from God's book.

When David saw the carelessness and ungodliness of those about him, he tells us in Psalm cxix, 136, that

rivers of waters ran down his eyes because the people had so utterly despised God's law.

A similar attitude was adopted by Jeremiah as he contemplated the backsliding condition of God's people. He actually wished that his head were waters and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep night and day owing to the appalling indifference of the people.

One of the greatest outbursts of soul-passion was expressed by the Apostle Paul when he wrote, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved" (Romans x, 1). St. Paul's love toward his kinsmen was unbounding. He was willing to suffer anything if only they might be attracted to their true Messiah and Saviour. So great was this compassion that he also said, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans ix, 3). A greater and more vehement expression of love toward the perishing than this, it would be difficult to imagine.

One further example of this divine passion for souls must needs be quoted. When our blessed Lord was descending Mount Olivet, and saw the city of Jerusalem, He wept over it, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew xxiii, 37).

Yes, indeed, the need is real ; the need is desperate ;

the need is universal ; the need is perpetual ; the need is urgent.

The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Yea, the fields are white already to harvest. Who will put forth the Gospel sickle and gather in the golden grain for the great harvest thanksgiving which is so quickly approaching ? Who will hear the call, " Son, go work *to-day* in My vineyard "—and willingly respond to it ? Who will this day consecrate himself to the grandest of all service for the best of all Masters ?

Let me appeal to my fellow-Christians with all the energy of which I am capable not to allow their own personal interests to impede the progress of the Gospel. May God in His mercy grant us the vision to see the reality of the need around us as well as in other lands ; may He grant us an insatiable desire for the blessing of our fellows so that we shall be willing to sacrifice anything and everything for their eternal salvation and blessing.

The joyful tidings reaches us that in many parts of the world God is working mightily by His Spirit. Souls are being attracted to Christ in large numbers in Africa, the West Indies, many parts of Europe, and other places. For this we are sincerely grateful to God. But we are not—we *cannot* be satisfied. One soul in the divine valuation is worth more than the wealth of ten thousand worlds. Oh for a mighty spiritual awakening in our own beloved land !

CHAPTER II

THE NEED AROUND US

How true were our Lord's words when He said, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and MANY there be that go in thereat. . . . Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it." Countless multitudes are thoughtlessly hurling themselves to destruction. How many of those who live in our own immediate neighbourhood—yea, how many of those who live by our side—make any profession of Christianity?

There is a terrible craze in these days for something sensational. For evidence of this one has but to observe many of the advertisements connected with picture palaces and other places of amusement. And this desire for the "sensational" is possessed by both old and young, the inevitable outcome being a condition of restlessness and dissatisfaction. We are, therefore, faced with this fact, that there are tens of thousands of people who never enter a church, chapel, or mission hall to hear the gospel. If only we could realise the vast number of inhabitants in the British Isles (to say nothing of the regions beyond) who are living without God and without hope in the world, we should feel constrained to betake ourselves to our knees and cry to God to intervene. Moreover, a large proportion of

these indifferent souls are *thoroughly dissatisfied*. If we could see beneath the surface we should find that in the innermost recesses of the spiritual being of by far the majority of our fellow-men there is a deep-seated longing for something higher, better, greater, nobler, more satisfying, and more abiding than what they possess. *And what can this mean but a longing for God Himself*. Scripture affords a forceful illustration of this. When the prodigal was in the far country, and found himself faced with famine, he *began* to be in want, and that sense of hunger and wretchedness increased as time advanced.

Are *we* doing what we can to stem the tide? Do *we* realise that there is an aching void in the heart of man which only God can fill? Do *we* appreciate the fact that God made man for His own glory, and that the creature can never rest until he returns to the God who created him and who loves him with a love beyond all finite conception? Have *we* the unalterable conviction that the need which exists at our very doors can only be met by God, through Christ, by the operation of the Holy Spirit? *And are we alive to the fact that God requires our immediate assistance to meet that need?*

We do well to observe what the Word of God has to say concerning the last days. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy iv, 1). The Holy Spirit has spoken many times, but in the above passage He *speaketh expressly*, thereby indicating the importance of the message. Are we not living in the very days depicted here, as well as in the companion

passage in 2 Timothy iii, 1-5, where we read of men being lovers of their own selves, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ; having a *form* of godliness, but denying the power thereof? Not a few are falling away from the faith once for all delivered to the saints, departing from the simplicity that is in Christ, throwing overboard the grand fundamental truths of the Bible, and giving heed to *seducing spirits*.

Among other cults prevailing in London is one known as " The worship of Satan." A well-known writer of fiction was an eye-witness of one of these performances, and she confesses that she was amazed that in the West End of London in 1932 there could be such a terrible mockery of decency. In a long underground room the walls were covered with strangely designed tapestry. Pictures of beasts were seen so contorted and abnormal that they might have been conceived in a terrible nightmare, also birds with human faces, surrounded by symbolic signs. The atmosphere was suffocatingly close and incense was burning in golden censers.

Soon the room was full, but there was complete silence save for a swift breathing, and a pulsating, anticipating stillness which defied description. The uncanny record proceeds as follows:—" They were all watching and waiting. Suddenly the altar lights went out, and weird music commenced, a chant of but a few notes. Before the altar stood a man dressed in vestments embroidered in coloured jewels. Behind him on the altar was the beautiful body of a naked woman. There were acolytes in scarlet and gold kneeling at the priest's feet.

“ The priest turned, and a wild chant was started by the acolytes. The priest moved backwards and forwards, performing a service. A throbbing of drums became stronger and stronger until the tension was unbearable. There was a sudden cry of an animal, and a scarlet stream of blood on a white body, spoiling the purity of the marble, then—silence! A silence which released the last bonds of sanity. The room seemed to be full of wild animals, mouthing fierce sounds which were not human words. Something else was there, too, something supernatural, monstrous, terrifying. I was afraid to look. For an indefinite period there was only horror of bestial sound. Then the light faded. I had seen enough—more than enough. I crept away past the black guardian of the door, up to the fresh, chill air of the streets, etc., etc.”*

What a mercy it is that God is longsuffering!

We are living in times of economic stress, and yet in various quarters many people seem to have more money, more leisure, more pleasure, but less real satisfaction. The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches are eating into the very life of the community. Men are living entirely for SELF, thereby shutting God out of their lives. How true it is that although some have a form of godliness, yet by their lives they openly deny the power thereof. The words “ disobedient to parents ” were perhaps never more in harmony with actual fact than in the present day. Twentieth century home life is altogether different from that which was one of the outstanding character-

*Recorded in *Passing Show*, May 7, 1932.

istics of England fifty years ago. This virtual cessation of home life is a serious national menace. In numerous instances the younger generation, following the example set by their elders, have little desire for the parental roof. Surely the Church ought to be "up and doing."

The Bible is full of paramount principles, one of which is that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Thieves, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, and those who have a Christless religion can have no part in God's kingdom. *And such were some of us.* But we have been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God. Have we not a heart for those around us? Has God granted us His great salvation that we might keep it all to ourselves? Has He given us the light of His Word that we might hide it under a bushel? Has He delivered us from bondage that we might rejoice in our emancipation and be forgetful of others? Has He given us His Son that we might be self-satisfied and slothful? Has He implanted within us a hope both sure and steadfast that we might be content if we arrive ultimately in heaven without troubling who else may be there?

How busy is the enemy of souls! We are informed that the devil walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Direct opposition to the Gospel, and open persecution of God's gossellers are unmistakable evidences of this. How little we grasp what enormous power the enemy is able to exercise for the accomplishment of his sinister purposes!

We are further informed that the devil is transformed

into an angel of light, and that many of his ministers follow his example by transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness. False teachings which abound on every hand clearly attest to this statement. How little we realise the *craftiness* of the arch-enemy !

We are also reminded that the devil is blinding the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them. This "blinding the minds" of people is the devil's chief business. For this he utilises every possible agency. He cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. Night and day, year in and year out, he never ceases his activities in luring men and women to perdition. He has not the slightest objection to folk becoming religious so long as they do not enter into personal relationship with Christ. When the Gospel is preached clearly and faithfully, the devil is present to snatch away the good seed. Why? Because he knows perfectly well that if the Word of God is received into the *heart*, the result is eternal salvation, according to our Lord's teaching in St. Luke viii, 12.

The Apostle Paul regarded the preaching of the gospel not only a privilege, but also a stern necessity. Hence his stirring words in 1 Corinthians ix, 16, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; . . . yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." The Gospel of Christ was woven into the spiritual nature of God's servant. In a very real sense he was free from all men, and yet he was willing to make himself a servant unto all that he might gain the more. Yes,

he became *all* things to *all* men, that he might by *all* means save some. He manifested first a passion for Christ, and then a passion for souls.

Our deep concern should be to ascertain what the will of the Lord is concerning us, and to buy up the opportunities. The words, "Occupy till I come" apply with equal force to every true Christian. Sooner perhaps than we expect we shall be called upon to give a true account of our stewardship. We read of certain brethren who went forth scattering the incorruptible seed of the Gospel "for His name's sake"—because they loved HIM and desired to please HIM—that was all! (See 3 John vii.)

The Bible is full of interrogations. Here is one which ought to arrest our attention: "Will a man rob God?" Is it possible that a creature will rob His Creator? Is it conceivable that a Christian will rob Christ? Alas, how many of us have to lower our heads with shame as we listen to the indictment, "Yet ye have robbed Me." Some of us have robbed Him in respect of time, talents, money, and influence. Instead of placing Him first and ourselves last we have frequently completely reversed the order, and possibly because of this the devil has succeeded in keeping us comparatively idle in the service of the best of Masters.

The late Professor Drummond pointed out that the aboriginal African has practically no wants. One stick pointed makes him a spear; two sticks rubbed together make him a fire; fifty sticks tied together make him a house. The bark he peels from them makes his clothes; the fruit which hangs on them forms his

food. With this the average native is content to go through life. But what a lack of imagination and aspiration is thus indicated! What a straitened outlook! What a poor apology for life in all its reality and blessedness!

How illustrative this is of those Christians who are spending their lives aimlessly when they ought constantly to be extending their borders of usefulness! About the middle of last century there lived in a lovely castle on the banks of the Spey a man whose name was Hay Macdowall Grant. For many years he was a professing Christian, quiet, gentlemanly, kind, liberal, courteous, and exceedingly particular as to the amenities of his household. But he was never heard to speak of Christ or for Him until he was brought face to face with the need around him. He then, in a humble way, began to speak for his Lord, and within a short time someone came to him to say that what he had heard made him anxious about his eternal future. Shortly after came another, and then another, until one year between three and four hundred enquirers approached him, and the following year more than five hundred came. Of these nine hundred or so persons who were awakened to a state of soul-anxiety Mr. Grant had reason to believe that *more than three hundred had been savingly converted to God.*

May this prove an inspiration to us in our day and generation. Who can tell the possibilities of a life WHOLLY SURRENDERED TO GOD?

SECTION II
*THE CHURCH—THE DIVINELY APPOINTED
CHANNEL*

CHAPTER I

ITS CHEQUERED HISTORY

DURING the first century of the Christian era the Church was *persecuted*, but *powerful*. It is an established fact that the Church has ever prospered midst the fires of persecution. In the early days so great was the manifestation of the power of God that we read: "By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people . . . and of the rest durst no man join himself to them" (Acts v, 12 and 13). The line of demarcation which divided the followers of the Lord Jesus from the unbelievers was so pronounced, the lives of God's people were so beautifully consistent, the preaching of God's servants was marked by such power that the ungodly refrained from identifying themselves with the Christians, and "great fear came upon all."

After the martyrdom of Stephen, persecution raged fiercer than ever. Scripture informs us that there arose a *great* persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem. The leading persecutor was a young man named Saul of Tarsus, who hated Christ, also His teaching, also His disciples. On the one hand we contemplate Stephen being carried to his burial midst the genuine lamentation of those who loved him,

and on the other hand we see Saul of Tarsus seizing the opportunity of manifesting his unvarnished spite against the Christians. Saul made havoc of the Church, entering house after house, committing both men and women to prison. His own references to his attitude at this time are couched in language which is unmistakable. He tells us that he persecuted the Church of God beyond measure, and ravaged it. He punished the followers of Christ oft in every synagogue, even causing some of them to blaspheme. Being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them unto strange cities, and gave his vote against them when they were put to death. But the climax was reached when Saul, breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, proceeded on his memorable mission to the city of Damascus. With his soul full of venom he had already approached the high priest for the necessary authority to bind all that called upon the name of the Lord in that place, and to bring them back in chains to Jerusalem for spiteful punishment. But the devil over-reached himself, and one of the most extraordinary results of this fearful persecution was *the conversion of the great persecutor*. Before Damascus was reached Saul of Tarsus became an added jewel to the Saviour's crown—an outstanding trophy of divine grace.

Let me now mention a number of interesting incidents which are well known to all students of Church history. After the days of the apostles persecution continued, encouraged by the heartless and inhuman Nero, the man who watched Rome

burning, amusing himself the while with his guitar. He then had the cowardice to blame the Christians for the disaster, and inaugurated almost unthinkable tortures against the inoffensive followers of Christ. Some of them "were sewn in the skins of wild beasts and torn by dogs: others were wrapped in a kind of dress smeared with wax, pitch, and other inflammable material, and were set alight at the close of the day that they might serve as illuminations in the public gardens of amusement." Nero, coward that he was, perished by his own hand in utter wretchedness and despair about two years after the conflagration of Rome. The relentless persecution, however, continued under the heartless and despicable Emperor Domitian, who issued the command that his own statue should be worshipped as a god, and tortured those who refused to obey his blasphemous fiat.

But Christianity *prospered*, notwithstanding these imprisonments, torments, and executions. What surprised the persecutors most were—(1) the consistent lives of the Christians, (2) their patient and even cheerful endurance of their sufferings, (3) their inattention to objects of worldly ambition, and (4) their boldness in confessing their Saviour and Lord. History relates the glorious fact that within a hundred years from the day of Pentecost, the Gospel had penetrated into the greater part of the Roman Empire.

It is good to remind ourselves of the fortitude and loyalty which those early martyrs evinced. The testimony of Polycarp sends a thrill of admiration

and praise through one's soul. He must have been over ninety years of age when he was sentenced to death. The proconsul urged him to swear by the genius of the Roman Emperor, and to give proof of his penitence. But God's devoted servant was calm and firm, with his eyes lifted heavenward. The proconsul urged him once more, saying, "Revile Christ, and I will release thee." The dear old man replied, "Six and eighty years have I served Him, and He has done me nothing but good; and how could I revile Him, my Lord and Saviour?" When the fire was kindled, the flames played around his body like a sail filled with wind, and the superstitious Romans, fearing that the fire would not consume him, plunged a spear into his side and quickly despatched him to glory. Not only were many put to death who were advanced in years, but young men and maidens also manifested their love and devotion to Christ by receiving the martyr's crown. We may well thank God for them all!

The time arrived, however, when the persecutions abated, and then the Church began to degenerate. What open persecution failed to do, the allurements and attractions of the world accomplished. Places of importance and prominence in the Church were eagerly sought after. Christians began to secure high offices in the state and also in the royal household, so much so that during the fourth century the profession of Christianity became a safe preliminary to the possession of earthly wealth and honours. Consequently numerous doctrinal errors found their way into the Church.

This was inevitable. Instead of the Church changing the world, the world converted the Church. Rites, ceremonies, and vestments increased with well-nigh mushroom rapidity. Elaborate churches were built, and the officiating clergy were attired in elaborate dresses. It was about this time that the burning of candles in daylight, incense, images, processions and other things were introduced. Thus we see how far the Church had wandered from "the simplicity that is in Christ."

But notwithstanding all this, in the process of time Christianity (using that term in its broad sense) spread over Europe. The Gospel was proclaimed in Ireland, Scotland, England, Germany, and other parts. Amidst all the pomp and ceremony of Church ritual, there were many humble, yet genuine, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The golden thread of divine grace is seen in those who clave unto the Lord with all purpose of heart, and who preached salvation through faith in Christ Jesus alone apart from works of merit.

About the seventh century there came into prominence in Eastern Europe a number of earnest Christians, known as Paulicians, or Manicheans. These people testified against superstition and apostasy, and, by their holy and consistent lives, made themselves the target of the enemy. An edict was issued by the Empress Theodora which decreed that the Paulicians should either be reconciled to the Greek Church or be exterminated by fire and sword. When all attempts to gain them had failed, the floodgates of persecution were opened against them. The severity

of the persecution may be judged by the numbers who were slain by the sword, beheaded, drowned, or consumed in the flames. History informs us that, in a brief reign, one hundred thousand Paulicians were martyred. For nearly two hundred years they suffered as Christians, but at length their faith and patience failed, and they openly rebelled against the government, thus forfeiting their spirituality and usefulness.

Passing over a number of years we approach the closing portion of the tenth century, when "Christian" Europe presented as dark a picture as one could imagine. The Mohammedans in the East and the pagan Northmen in the West had conspired against the progress of Christianity ; and now a new enemy, the Hungarians, made their appearance. They were as wild beasts let loose on mankind. The people were panic-stricken before their devastating enemies. The inevitable followed. Famines, plagues, and pestilences accomplished their deadly work.

But there was a further misfortune which increased the horrors of the situation. It was boldly proclaimed by some, and believed by the people, that the world would come to an end at the expiration of a thousand years from the Saviour's birth, and the year 999 was thought to be the last in the world's history. The state of things was appalling. The land was left untilled ; houses were allowed to decay ; the ordinary occupations of life were neglected. Corn and cattle were exhausted, and no provision was made for the future. The last evening of the thousand years

arrived—a sleepless night for Europe. But the night passed away just as other nights, and in the morning the sun arose as gloriously as ever.

The year 1096 was conspicuous owing to the inauguration of the Crusades. A holy war was suggested for the purpose of rescuing the sepulchre of Christ from the hands of the infidel Turks. Women urged their husbands, their brothers, and their sons to support the Cross, and those who refused became marks for contempt. Property of all kinds was sold in order to raise money. Three hundred thousand “warriors of the Cross,” so called, went forth, though probably not one of them knew what the Cross signified, save as an idolatrous emblem. But they were without order or discipline, nor had they any idea of the distance between them and Jerusalem. Not more than twenty thousand survived. There were eight Crusades altogether, but the object the Crusaders had in view was never fulfilled, though hundreds of thousands of precious lives perished. One of the most pathetic episodes was the Children’s Crusade about the year 1213, when a shepherd boy in France professed to have been commissioned by the Saviour in a vision to “follow the Cross.” He gathered other children about him by telling them of his revelations, until about ninety thousand boys from ten to twelve years of age began to march to the Holy Land, chanting, “O Lord, help us to recover Thy true and holy Cross.” But within a short time the whole band melted away. Many died through hunger and fatigue, and others were easily betrayed by shipmasters who promised

to convey them to the shores of Palestine, but in all probability sold them as slaves. And all this was undertaken in the name of Christianity!

About this time Monastic enthusiasm was considered to be the only real Christian perfection. The renunciation of the world, solitude, and stern mortification were preached as comprising the only safe way to heaven. Hence it was that, the more sincere the monk, the more he inflicted upon himself every kind of torture and misery. Holiness was measured by suffering: pain and prayers were the unwearying occupations of a so-called saintly life. These were indeed the dark ages of the Church's history. If a gospel was preached, it was a gospel of WORKS rather than of grace. There were exceptions, of course, such as the preaching of Arnold of Brescia who, according to the light he had, was a sincere Christian and who argued that ministers of the Gospel should have no power but for the spiritual government of the flock of Christ. He also advocated the complete separation of Church and State, and, moreover, he was a real friend to the poor. For his constancy he received the martyr's crown.

During the twelfth century the Gospel made great strides throughout Europe. Two communities, one known as the Albigenses and the other as the Waldenses, who were separated largely by the Alps, remained true to the Gospel which was proclaimed by the first missionaries who visited those regions. These devoted "men of the valleys" persisted in preaching the glorious message of the grace of God

to lost sinners. A vast army, headed by Simon de Montford, attacked the infected provinces. The Albigenes were told to renounce their faith or suffer the consequences. They replied that they could not renounce a faith which gave them the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Men, women, and children were slaughtered indiscriminately. The population of Beziers, which so recently had thronged the streets, now lay in slaughtered heaps. In other cities the persecution of God's people was similarly relentless, until the whole country became the scene of the most awful cruelties.

The Waldenses suffered a similar fate. Avarice, malice, and superstition were united against the unoffending peasants. The poor people, seeing their mountain caves possessed by their enemies, fled across the Alps. But the severity of the elements proved fatal to nearly all who had sought to escape from their persecutors. One hundred and eighty babies are reported to have died in their mothers' arms, and these were soon followed by other children, only to be succeeded by the broken-hearted mothers. It was to such scenes as these that Milton alluded when he wrote :—

“ Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ;
Even them that kept Thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones.
Forget not ; in Thy book record their groans,
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold,
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled

Mother and infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant ; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learned Thy way,
Early may flee the Babylonish woe."

But the fierceness of persecution only increased the fortitude of those devoted people. Amidst all their sufferings their resolution to persevere in the truth of God remained unshaken. Nothing could subvert their faith or subdue their courage. It has been said that the Waldenses exhibited a spectacle of fortitude and endurance that has no parallel in history. Here again we see clear evidence of the enemy over-reaching himself, and, instead of the Church of God becoming extinct, it only increased, notwithstanding the severity of its sufferings for Christ's sake.

At a council held in Toulouse, in 1229, a permanent Inquisition was established against the "charities," and it was this council which condemned the use of the Bible by the laity. The following is a fair example of the false interpretation of Scripture by the clergy in those days: "If so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart." The people were referred to as beasts because of their ignorance: the Word of God was as a mountain, and, if the people dared to touch it, they were to be killed instantly. The Inquisition found its way into Italy, France, Spain, and other countries.

Spies, called the "Familiars," were appointed to discover those who manifested any trace of "heresy." Unspeakable tortures were inflicted in order to wring confessions from those who were suspected. Those who openly confessed Christ were burnt alive. It is estimated that between the years 1481 and 1808 this cruel tribunal condemned upwards of three hundred and forty-one thousand persons in Spain alone.

But now let us turn our attention to events which make much more pleasant reading.

About the year 1320 John Wycliffe, the "Morning Star of the Reformation" was born in an insignificant north country village. He it was who thought that everybody in the country ought to have the opportunity of reading the Bible in their native tongue. He it was who undertook to translate the Bible from Latin into English. By the year 1388 the Book of Books was translated, and this proved a tremendous gain for England from a religious standpoint and also from the viewpoint of literature. Wycliffe's knowledge of Scripture, the purity of his life, his unbending courage, his eloquence as a preacher, his mastery of the common language of the people, rendered him the object of admiration. He preached that salvation was by grace through faith, without human merit. His disciples, the Lollards, continued to spread the Gospel, though many of them had to seal their testimony by death. The glorious truths of the Word of God, however, found their way into the hearts and homes of so many that in the year 1416 it was

stated by an enemy of the Gospel that the "heresies" of Wycliffe and Huss had spread over England, France, Italy, Hungary, Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, and Bohemia.

About the year 1474 the art of printing was introduced into England; and in 1508 it was set on its feet in Scotland. Before the days of printing a copy of the Bible cost from forty to fifty pounds for the writing only, and it took an expert copyist about ten months' labour to compile one. Another interesting fact is that, although several books were issued from the presses following the inauguration of printing, the Bible was the favourite book with all the printers.

In a very real sense all these events were pleasant preliminaries to the Reformation. Martin Luther, the son of a peasant, was born at Eisleben, in Saxony, in 1483. The story of Luther is so well known that it is only necessary to recapitulate a few of the events in his remarkable life. There is one episode which is particularly worth repeating, showing as it does the truth of the promise that all things work together for good to them who are called according to the divine purpose. At the age of fourteen Luther found himself without friends, without money, and without sufficient food to sustain him as he studied in a Franciscan school at Magdeburg. He therefore employed the intervals of study in begging bread from door to door. A year later he moved to Eisleben, and continued his studies, but pinched with hunger he again had to beg his bread by singing. One day, returning from his labours disappointed and depressed, a door

suddenly opened, and a kindly-disposed woman, attracted by his seriousness and the sweetness of his voice, not only relieved his immediate wants, but also, with the approval of her husband, took him as an adopted son. This formed a crisis in Luther's life.

Luther's thirst for knowledge was insatiable, and by 1501 we find him in the famous Erfurt University. Shortly afterwards he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts, and two years later became Doctor in Philosophy. At twenty years of age he discovered a book in the Erfurt library entitled "The Holy Bible," which he read and studied with increasing delight. He decided to become a monk, and, saying farewell to his friends, books, and all else, he hastened one night to the gate of the Augustinian Convent at Erfurt. He condescended, or rather *descended*, to all the humiliations of monastic drudgery, sweeping out the dormitories, winding up the clock, opening and shutting the gates, performing the duties of a porter, and becoming the menial servant of the cloister, besides being publicly mortified by being sent out into the streets, at the cessation of his manual labours, *to beg for the convent*.

For a long time Luther had been experiencing soul anxiety. An aged monk, who visited the convent, repeated to him the words, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," and these words in all probability transferred the mind of Luther from works to faith. But the great crisis came when he moved to Wittenburg and occupied a Chair of Philosophy at the invitation of the Elector Frederick. He was lecturing on the Epistle to the Romans, and when he came to the words, "The just

shall live by faith," a supernatural light flooded his soul. This wholesome experience was confirmed shortly afterwards when Luther visited Rome. As he ascended " Pilate's staircase " on his knees, he thought he heard a voice, loud as thunder, saying, " THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." Henceforth the great Reformer not only preached the grand doctrine of Justification by Faith, but simply revelled in it.

In the year 1517, as a result of the promiscuous sale of the Pontifical Indulgences, Luther nailed his celebrated theses to the church door at Wittenburg, and in ninety-five propositions challenged the entire Church of Rome.

At the famous Diet of Worms, the converted monk faced his enemies. When asked if he would retract, he gave his noble answer : " Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture I cannot and will not retract . . . Here I take my stand ; I cannot do otherwise ; may God be my help ! Amen." The Reformation brought about by Luther in Germany extended to Switzerland, where it was encouraged by Ulric Zwingle. Both men were used of God marvelously. Zwingle preached clearly and faithfully the doctrine of reconciliation through faith in the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary. His grand motto was : " Christ alone saves, and He saves everywhere." At the close of his first year's ministrations in Zurich he estimated that as many as two thousand persons were converted to the Gospel. What we owe to the labours, courage, and self-renunciation of such men eternity alone will reveal.

In Scotland the Reformation made considerable progress, particularly at first among the clergy, nobility, and landed gentry. The preaching of such men as Patrick Hamilton, George Wishart, and John Knox was used to scatter the invaluable seed of the Gospel over the whole of that country, and in 1560 the Scotch Parliament declared Protestantism to be the national faith.

In England the Word of God made great strides. Probably through the influence of Cranmer, the king ordered the free sale of the Bible ; he also insisted that a copy in Latin and English should be provided for every parish church in the country, and chained to a pillar or a desk in the choir that any person might have access to it and read it for himself. God used the martyrdom of Ridley, Latimer, Cranmer, and other faithful exponents of His truth for the furtherance of the Gospel, and the salvation of not a few. Thus we are faced once again with the fact that the Church of God flourished and increased in the midst of internal opposition and outward persecution.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century Puritanism made its influence felt over the entire country. As a result of an Act of Parliament that every minister should, on or before a specified date, declare his unfeigned assent to the Book of Common Prayer or be deprived of his living, two thousand ministers resigned their posts. Gradually, however, worldliness and indifference once again characterised the Church. The people had thrown off the restraints of Puritanism

and returned to their amusements. In fact, the condition of things in the beginning of the eighteenth century was so low that, according to one authority, at no time in our history were morals and religion more deeply submerged. On one occasion Lord Bolingbroke, addressing a number of clergymen, told them plainly that, in his opinion, the greatest miracle in the world was the subsistence of Christianity and its continued preservation when the preaching of it was committed to the care of men so un-Christlike.

But "where sin abounded, grace did superabound," and in the midst of this intense spiritual darkness and apathy God graciously raised up men like George Whitfield, John and Charles Wesley, and others to bring about a glorious awakening. These men were used of God to rescue the English people from the depths of indifferentism, and to lead thousands both in this country and in America to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since the days of Whitfield and Wesley there have been remarkable interludes of blessing. The great Irish "Revival" of 1859 was followed within about twelve years by the successful evangelistic efforts of Moody and Sankey. The Welsh "Revival" took place in the year 1904 when vast multitudes were attracted to the Saviour by the clear, faithful, powerful preaching of the Cross.

Surely there is a real need for another awakening even now! Surrounded as we are by all kinds of unscriptural cults such as Christian Science, Russellism, Seventh-day Adventism, Philadelphianism, and Spiritism, we need to supplicate the throne of grace that such a

season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord may come. The Churches are saturated with modernism and higher criticism. Men who are paid to preach the Word of God are pulling it to pieces, so that shortly there will be nothing left but the covers. We find ourselves in the Laodicean element. The Church is neither hot nor cold, but in a condition of insipid lukewarmness. She thinks she is rich, increased with goods and having need of nothing, instead of which she is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The call to holiness and effective service is individualistic rather than collective, and the Lord is standing at the door and knocking, saying: "If *any man* hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." May we gladly respond, and thus give the Head of the Church His rightful place. So shall we be enabled to overcome, and have the inexpressible privilege of sitting with Him in His throne, even as He also overcame, and is now set down with the Father in His throne.

CHAPTER II

ITS PLACE IN THE WORLD

THE Church is here for a witness to her absent Lord, and if she fail in this office she is of no use in the world. The divine message to Israel relating to this matter was, "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen : that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He : before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me" (Isaiah xliii, 10). Israel's business as a nation was to witness to the truth of *one God*, beside Whom there was no Saviour. To see how Israel failed in her obligation we need only to glance through the writings of the Old Testament prophets. To see how the *Church* has failed in her mission of winning souls to Christ we need but to glance back over the past years and remember what a dearth of conversions there has been in our beloved land.

When the Lord Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, one reason was that He should bear witness to Christ, in which delightful service the disciples were to participate because they had been with their Lord from the beginning.

The most important persons in a lawsuit are *the witnesses*, and on more than one occasion the result of an important case has turned upon the evidence of a child of tender years.

One of the greatest dangers which confront the Church to-day is the danger of spiritual lethargy. The Bible exhorts us to be constantly on our guard lest we find ourselves overcome by this common failing. Hence in Romans xiii, 11, we read, "It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." It is a wonderful thought that however many years we have known the Lord, our complete salvation is that much nearer than when we first believed. Surely this ought to prove a tremendous incentive to each one of us to "keep awake." Again, in Ephesians v, 14, we have a similar exhortation, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee."

Our Lord once likened the kingdom of heaven unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. Every genuine believer is a product of that *good seed* which was sown by the Son of God when He was here, and which has been sown by His many servants since. But, unfortunately, there came a time when the enemy approached and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. When did this catastrophe take place? "WHILE MEN SLEPT." Then it was when the enemy saw his opportunity and accomplished his deadly work. The devil is doing exactly the same kind of thing to-day in all parts of the world by the powerful aid of the printing press as well as by his human agents. The devil hates Christ, and he wins a tremendous victory if only he can strike at Him in any way, but he is particularly delighted when he can strike through God's people.

When Jonah received his commission to go to

Nineveh to preach the divine message, he deliberately went in the opposite direction and attempted to out-run God by making for Tarshish. He therefore hurried down to Joppa, found a ship about to sail to the very place upon which he had decided, went on board, paid the fare—and also *paid the penalty for disobedience*. A terrific storm overtook the vessel which made the mariners cry every man to his god for safety. But where was Jonah? Down in the sides of the ship. What was he doing? *Sleeping*. Endeavour to appreciate the circumstances. Here was Jonah fast asleep when he should have been in Nineveh preaching for God. Nay, more, Jonah was fast asleep whilst the men actually sailing with him were in danger of perishing any moment. And have we not here a picture of many present-day believers? The sad fact is that there are so many Christians doing nothing for Him Who has done everything for them. Does this happen to be true of the reader?

We are informed that Samson lost his strength when the seven locks of his head were shaven. But when did that happen? *When he was fast asleep*. His treacherous, wicked wife Delilah, who was in league with the Philistines, caused him to sleep upon her knees. A man was called who shaved off the seven locks of his head. The sequel—his strength departed from him. When the cry was raised “The Philistines be upon thee, Samson,” he boasted that he would go out as at other times and shake himself, *but his power was gone*. How sad! The Lord had departed from him, and he knew it not. The Philistines put out his

eyes, bound him with fetters of brass, compelled him to grind corn in the prison-house, and made him an object of scorn and ridicule.

If only the enemy can lessen our love for Christ, and encourage us to be slothful in the service of God, the results will be (1) spiritual blindness, (2) bondage, (3) assisting the enemy, (4) bringing a reproach upon that holy Name we bear.

Peter, James and John were greatly favoured when they accompanied their Lord to the Mount of Transfiguration. There they heard Him pray; they saw the transformation of His countenance; they saw His raiment become white as snow; they saw Moses and Elijah appear in glory; they heard the voice from the heavenly glory, saying, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased"; *they were eyewitnesses of His Majesty*. But an event took place on that holy mount, the full importance of which it is difficult to estimate, namely, the conversation held between the Lord Jesus and the two Old Testament visitants. It was one of the most sacred and most momentous conversations ever held in the world's history: "They spoke of his decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." What would one not give to have a record of that interview! But it is not recorded either in the Gospels or in St. Peter's Epistle. Why? Possibly the reason is seen in the following words: "But Peter and they that were with him *were heavy with sleep*." This statement rather implies that those disciples never heard a word of that conversation, and herein lies a much needed lesson for us all. If we lapse into a condition of

spiritual drowsiness ; if we become cold and careless in life and service we shall never understand as we might, and as we should, the deep meaning of Calvary.

The same three disciples accompanied their Lord to the Garden of Olive Presses. The Master left them at the entrance, and instructed them to watch and pray. But they did neither. When the Lord Jesus had spent a period of agonising prayer, He returned and found them asleep. Departing from them once more He gave the disciples another opportunity to carry out His wishes, but when He returned the second time He found them asleep still. Again He departed from them, thus affording them a further opportunity to do His will, but came back only to find them still sleeping. At this crisis of our Lord's life, with the darkness of the Cross awaiting Him, surely He looked for the fellowship and sympathy of His own ; but, alas, they failed Him. Their opportunity had come *and gone*. This is eloquently suggested by the words, " Sleep on now, and take your rest." Do we desire to know the reality of true fellowship ? Do we desire to be used by Him in the spread of His grand Gospel ? Then *let us keep awake*.

The writer of the book of Proverbs tells us that he passed by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding. Clearly that field ought to have been occupied with corn : that vineyard ought to have been filled with fruit. Instead of this, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles covered the face thereof. Furthermore, the stone wall, which was intended to guard both the field and the vineyard from outside influences, was broken down.

All this indicates palpable neglect, inexcusable laziness, and unpardonable carelessness.

The wise man of Proverbs, with his accustomed perspicacity, learned an important lesson from this lamentable condition of things. He tells us that he "considered it well," and from it "received instruction." What was the result of his careful consideration? What instruction did he receive? Let us listen to his own words, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man" (Prov. xxiv, 33-34).

How suggestive! How illustrative of many present day Christians! A *little* slumber, a *little* sleep; a *little* folding of the hands to sleep; a *little* carelessness in the things of God; a *little* neglect of the Scriptures; a *little* unwarranted association with the world; a *little* coldness in the service of the Master—then POVERTY OF SOUL as one that travelleth (that is, suddenly); and WANT OF THE ONE THING NEEDFUL as an armed man (that is, irresistibly). These two enemies, Poverty and Want, are to be guarded against at all cost, seeing that they mean loss of joy, peace, satisfaction, and every other divine blessing.

Shall we in the quietness of our own hearts review our past life in the light of the above illustration? That field of mine ought to have yielded a plentiful amount of corn for the benefit of others. That vineyard of mine ought to have yielded abundant fruit for God. In other words, my life ought to have been both useful and God-glorifying. *But has it?* Possibly thorns and nettles

have abounded instead. Possibly the stone wall, implying prayerfulness and study of the Scriptures, has been broken down, thus allowing the devil to take advantage of our neglect and spoiling our lives.

Fellow-Christians ! it is high time for us to wake out of sleep ; it is high time for us to watch and be sober. Full soon every golden opportunity for service will have passed for ever. The words of the Prophet Amos, " Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion," should serve as a timely warning against Christian lethargy.

The Church's position in the world is (or should be) one of *separation*. The first part of St. John, chapter xv, reveals to us the familiar metaphor of the Vine and the branches. How simple and yet how expressive ! So long as the branch abides in the vine fruit is the natural consequence. This is *all* that the branch is expected to do—just to abide in the vine. So long as the believer abides in Christ (i.e. keeps in living touch with Him ; realises his entire dependence upon Him ; and finds his joy and satisfaction in Him), so will he bear fruit *spontaneously, without any self-effort*. And let us remember that fruit-bearing does not necessarily mean preaching, teaching, or any other outward form of service. It implies rather the manifestation of the nine properties comprising the fruit of the Spirit, namely, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. In other words, fruit-bearing refers more to the life we live than to the spectacular service we render. And let us never forget that the Lord wants to see fruit—not foliage. It is a lovely sight to see a vine not merely crowded with

luscious grapes, but literally bowing down with the weight of them. The Apostle John writes, "He that saith he abideth in him ought (the Greek word implies 'indebtedness') himself so to walk even as he walked" (1 John ii, 6). The life of each believer should be, as far as possible, a reproduction of the holiest and most beautiful life ever lived on this earth. So much for the *earlier* part of St. John, chapter xv.

The *latter* portion of the chapter reveals our attitude towards the world. If we are abiding in Christ the attractions and allurements of the present age will have little weight with us. The world may frown upon us and frequently misunderstand us, but it acted in the same way toward our Master. If we were of the world, the world would love its own, but because we are not of the world, but have been chosen out of it, we must not, therefore, be surprised if the world hate us. Our Lord lived a life of separation, though He was never alone because, as He tells us, the Father was ever with Him.

Many appear to be under the impression that the path of separation is so irksome and exacting as to involve almost a life of seclusion. The people who think thus overlook an essential fact. We are not merely separated *from* the world. We are separated *unto* a Person. And it is this that makes all the difference. God's purpose concerning His earthly people was that they should be separated from the tyranny and entanglements of Egypt *unto Himself*, that they might be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. This means that if we are to understand the

truth of separation we must have a *counter-attraction*.

If ever a follower of Christ knew what it was to be separated from the world it was the great Apostle of the Gentiles. He was willing to sacrifice everything for His Lord. Why? Because he had a counter-attraction—CHRIST. For the surpassing excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord he was ready to suffer the loss of all things. This is the tremendous secret of holy living and effective service—*the realisation of the reality of Christ*. If only we were so thoroughly occupied with Him as to become literally fascinated with His glorious Person, we should find ourselves weaned from those things which tend to violate the divine will.

Our Lord did not pray that His followers should be taken out of the world, but that they might be kept from the evil. On account of this He requested that they might be sanctified through the truth, and, as their perfect pattern, He sanctified Himself that they also might be sanctified through the truth (His Word). This example on His part is the more amazing when we consider that there was never a moment when He was *unsanctified*.

It is one thing for the Christian to be in the world. It is quite another matter for the world to be in the Christian. God found it more difficult to get Egypt out of Israel than He did to get Israel out of Egypt.

“ If a man therefore purge himself from these (i.e. those things which should have no place in the believer's programme) he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work ” (2 Timothy ii, 21).

SECTION III

*THE GOSPEL—THE DIVINELY APPOINTED
PROVISION*

CHAPTER I

OPEN-AIR EFFORT

THE unsettling fact has already been stated that there are tens of thousands of people who never attend a church, chapel, or mission-hall to hear the Gospel. How are the multitudes to be reached? To a great extent they can be reached *through open-air effort*. But if this laudable object of "winning the crowd" by means of open-air meetings is to materialise, it is essential that such meetings be conducted in a way which *commends* the Gospel. It is sadly possible for open-air meetings to be conducted in such a way as to be productive of more harm than good.

There are numerous examples of open-air preaching in both Old and New Testaments, and we do well to remember that each example we have in Scripture is not only an encouragement to us to continue along the same lines, but it also forms our authority to engage in this grand work.

A rapid glance at a few of these Scriptural examples would be well worth our while, seeing that they are at once interesting, suggestive, and instructive.

The first recorded open-air preacher was Noah. The Apostle Peter designates him a "preacher of righteousness." Unfortunately, the result of Noah's preaching was anything but encouraging.

An open-air meeting of importance was held in Nehemiah's day, when Ezra the Scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood (which had been made for the purpose). He then opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above the people), and read in the Law of the Lord distinctly, and gave the sense.

A further example of open-air preaching is recorded in Jonah, chapter iii. For one whole day Jonah preached in the streets of Nineveh. The results were greater than the preacher ever anticipated.

Coming to the New Testament, the first preacher mentioned was essentially an "open-air preacher." As a matter of fact, John the Baptist was one of the greatest and most courageous open-air preachers the world has ever known.

Our blessed Lord frequently took advantage of the open air for the enunciation of that Gospel which He came to make possible by His vicarious sacrifice and triumphant resurrection. His incomparable Sermon on the Mount was preached in the open air. So were the parable of the sower, and its companion parables mentioned in St. Matthew, chapter xiii, according as it is written, "The same day went Jesus forth OUT OF THE HOUSE, and sat by the sea side" (Matt. xiii, 1). Similarly the grand invitation "Come unto Me" was given under the open expanse of heaven, also our Lord's notable Bible reading to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus when, "Beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

It is more than probable that the Apostle Peter's

address at Pentecost was delivered in the open-air, and Philip undoubtedly preached in the open-air when he went down to Samaria to preach Christ unto them ; also when he delivered his memorable " personal " sermon to the Ethiopian in the desert when he took for his text the very words the Eunuch had been reading from Isaiah liii.

When St. Paul and those with him spake to the women by the riverside just outside the city of Philippi (when Lydia was beautifully converted), those heart to heart discourses were given in the open-air ; also the Apostle's masterly address to the Athenians on Mars' Hill.

Now let us revert to some of these historic incidents, and endeavour to obtain from them certain points calculated to assist the servants of the Lord in these last days.

Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood. It is always advantageous for the speaker to be able to see his audience, and for the audience to see him. For this purpose a platform is a necessary part of " open-air furniture." Although we do not read that Ezra employed a harmonium, yet, speaking generally, some musical instrument might with advantage be used to assist the singing, especially when the singing is more voluminous than euphonious.

Better have a harmonium
Than a gloomy pandemonium.

When Ezra read from the Law of the Lord, he read *distinctly*, and gave the sense, so that the people

understood what was read. This is a matter of first-rate importance. There is an art in reading the Holy Scriptures intelligently. Timothy was exhorted to give himself to the public reading of the Scriptures, and his application to this sacred service greatly increased Timothy's usefulness. Let my younger brethren aspire to become as proficient in this matter as possible. Let them practise reading *aloud* from the Bible in their own quiet chambers, and then it will be a pleasure to listen to them as they read passages from the most wonderful Book in the realm of literature.

If we ought to be distinct in our reading, we ought to be clear in our preaching. To many people the Bible is practically a sealed Book. As they cannot understand its teaching they need a lucid explanation. The answer which the Ethiopian gave to Philip's question, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" was very significant. His answer was, "How can I except some man should guide me?" The same is true of those who are in need of the Gospel of Christ—they want it explained to them.

When *Jonah* preached in the streets of Nineveh, his message was a short one: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." This suggests a splendid principle for open-air preachers—*not to be too long*, otherwise they will prove themselves "moving" speakers in the wrong sense. Another fact to be borne in mind is that Jonah's message was one of *judgment*, and in this respect it differs from the message which we are called upon to deliver in our day. The Gospel which has been entrusted to us is a Gospel of

grace, peace, and joy, as indicated by the declaration of the heavenly messenger at the birth of our blessed Lord, " Behold, I bring you *good tidings of great joy*, which shall be to all people " (Luke ii, 10). It is a mistake to preach nothing but judgment. In point of fact the mention of judgment is *not* good news : it is the saddest news possible, although, of course, it must not be overlooked, but, as occasion demands, its certainty and necessity should be stated *with fear and trembling*. Our great privilege is to tell the people that God loved them so much as to send His well-beloved Son to be their Saviour—and *that He loves them still*. The Lord Jesus told Nicodemus in plainest language that the Son of Man came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. In the early days of D. L. Moody's evangelistic efforts he preached that God was a God of wrath and judgment—that He was behind the sinner with a double-edged sword ready to hew him down. But when Moody heard Henry Moorhouse's discourses on St. John iii, 16, his heart began to thaw : he could not withhold the tears : it was like news from a far country, and D. L. Moody came to the conclusion that there is one thing that draws above everything else in this world, and that is LOVE. Henceforth he preached the Gospel of Love : he told the people that God's heart was bursting with compassion toward them, with the result that he was instrumental in winning thousands of souls to Christ.

Jonah's preaching was amazingly successful. The entire city repented, and cried to God for mercy.

What a glorious spiritual awakening swept over Nineveh at that time! Strange to say, instead of this result pleasing Jonah, he was very angry and actually complained that God was gracious and merciful (*see* Jonah iv, 1 and 2). If our hearts are in tune with the Eternal we shall exult when blessing attends our preaching, or the preaching of any other servant of the Lord.

John the Baptist was willing to be *a voice for God*. Yes, a voice in the wilderness. When the question was put to him "What sayest thou of thyself?", he replied, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." John was willing to be anything for God. He was willing to go anywhere if only he could glorify his Lord. He was a man of character; a man of purpose; *a man of God*. The Lord Jesus gave him a testimony which was altogether unique, "Among them which are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Luke vii, 28). He was indeed a burning and a shining light. That is to say his testimony was both *effective* and *far-reaching*. Our ministry for Christ ought to be just like that. It is recorded of him that he did no miracle, but all things that he spake of the Lord Jesus Christ were true, the result being that many in those parts believed in the Saviour. The Baptist was a voice *crying* in the wilderness. That does not imply shouting or howling. The way some speakers shout in the open air makes one wonder they do not split their pharynx.

The Apostle Paul's address at Mars' Hill was masterly. Taking for his text the words, "To the Unknown God,"

he emphasised the truth that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed such spectacular performances, seeing He gives to all life, and breath, and all things—that in Him we live and move and have our being. The preacher followed this up by quoting certain of the Greek poets who had said, "For we are also His offspring." This was a master-stroke. The Greek people well-nigh idolised their poets, and assumed that what they said was the last word. St. Paul, therefore, gained an important vantage-ground when he was able to confirm his theology by a quotation from their own writings. If open-air preachers can quote any lines from Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, or any of the other poets in support of their preaching, by all means let them do so. St. Paul then emphasised the need of repentance toward God, because He hath appointed a day when He shall judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, the assurance of which He has given to all men by raising His Son from the dead.

Some have been inclined to find fault with the Mars' Hill discourse because the clear message of the Gospel appears to be wanting, but such criticism is by no means justified. The preacher had already encountered his audience in the market-place where he had seized the opportunity of preaching unto them *Jesus and the resurrection*. He had therefore already proclaimed Christ as Saviour, and his address on the hill was a continuation of his discourses in the market-place.

The Lord Jesus was the perfect open-air preacher, as He was the perfect teacher, the perfect exhorter, the perfect expositor. He spake with *authority*, and not as the vacillating scribes who interpreted the law to suit their own convenience. It was for this reason that the people were astonished at His doctrine. Having the Word of God in our hands, it is our privilege to speak *with the same divine authority*.

Truer words were never uttered than those which came from the lips of the officers who were sent by the religious authorities to take Christ, and came back without Him: "NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN." His words were gracious, comforting, penetrating, convicting, living, and soul-transforming. How easily and completely He answered the various questions which His enemies put to Him! How easily and spontaneously He was able to put questions to His antagonists which thoroughly baffled them, so that rather than expose their folly and ignorance they preferred to remain silent! How wonderfully apt were the illustrations He used in announcing His glorious Gospel! How severe and scathing He was when circumstances demanded His censure! How lovingly and graciously He spake to those who came to Him in their sorrow and trouble! How sympathetically He handled those who needed His healing touch! How longsuffering He was toward those who resisted His teaching! How patient He was with those who desired earnestly to follow Him! And what is His message to us? Surely it is, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." It should be our urgent

business to “*catch men alive.*” Without Him we can do nothing : with Him we are invincible.

We will now apply ourselves to a number of suggestions shewing the right and the wrong way of conducting open-air services. Let me bring before the imagination of my reader three scenes, each of which actually occurred :

Scene 1. It is a somewhat windy Sunday, and in a busy street of a busy city a number of sincere souls are *struggling* to maintain an open-air meeting. The street lies a few hundred yards from a popular park. Omnibuses, trams, and other traffic are roaring past, creating one incessant din, whilst most of the people are hurrying on to the inviting slopes of the park near by. Truly it is a *valiant struggle* to maintain a testimony in such circumstances, but how futile and disappointing ! Far better get away to a quieter spot where the message can at least be heard, or even in the park itself if open-air services are allowed.

Scene 2. Another Sunday evening on the side of a London heath. Energetic workers are bringing up long rolls of carpet, a harmonium, a rostrum, as well as an attractive banner announcing the meeting.

The carpets are laid on the ground, and soon the children are seen rolling up by the hundred, when they join heartily in the singing of choruses and hymns which are displayed in such a manner that all might see. Presently the speaker (who has been carefully chosen for the occasion) takes control, and the crowd of children listen with interest to the Gospel message.

The service closes with a simple appeal to the young people to yield their lives to the Saviour.

The children are now journeying homewards, and there immediately follows a second meeting for the adults, many of whom have already gathered, attracted by the young folk and their hearty singing, and have listened to the simple story which was told to the little ones. These friends form the nucleus of a big company which is drawn from the crowds strolling on the heath. For this meeting the singing (individual and united) is carefully organised. Gifted speakers are selected, and a large company stand and listen to a clear enunciation of the message of eternal salvation. How different is this scene from the first !

Scene 3. It is a lovely summer's evening. In the heart of a Northern industrial city, a Gospel car is drawn up in the central square which is thronged by people taking a more or less aimless evening stroll. Behind the car lies a side street leading to a railway siding. Presently the doors of the car open, the platform is lowered, and the crowd begins to gather, its curiosity having already been aroused by the striking Gospel messages painted on the car. After a brief word of prayer, and a few attractive hymns, the evangelists (who had served their apprenticeship as speakers in circumstances very different from Gospel preaching) occupy the platform. These devoted men are out for the salvation of souls. Soon the crowd swells, and a kindly policeman asks that the van may be withdrawn down the side street as the square is becoming blocked with people. The car is soon

moved and a typical good-humoured British crowd follows, who are joined by others until the company extends once more into the square. The power of the Holy Spirit is manifestly present throughout the meeting, and as it is about to be closed with prayer it is noticed that many of the congregation (to whom prayer is evidently a forgotten exercise) are raising the hand, or lifting the hat or cap, with a realised sense of God's presence. A number remain after the meeting for personal conversation. The gracious results of that evening eternity alone will reveal.

The last two scenes shew clearly that it is often far better to conduct meetings out of doors on a warm summer's evening than in an ill-ventilated and unattractive building.

It is sometimes profitable in open-air gatherings for two brethren to engage in a dialogue in matters relating to sin, righteousness, salvation, assurance, and other subjects, only this should be done *carefully*, and the plan of campaign should be thought out beforehand.

If a stranger ask questions, endeavour to answer him as far as possible from the Scriptures. If the question is beyond you, do not attempt to answer it. Endeavouring to manufacture an answer on the spot is a sad business. There are certain questions which no man can answer, just as there are difficulties which the wisest man in Europe is unable to solve.

One of the greatest and most useful gifts which God has granted is the gift of *personal work*. Although this is regarded by many as a special talent, it is within the possibility of each of us, and are we not dis-

tinctly exhorted in Scripture to covet earnestly the best gifts? Although the exercise of this gift implies a combination of qualities such as wisdom, patience, and grace, plus personality and winsomeness, surely the grace of God is sufficient to grant these to any of His children who are willing to manifest them.

We do not read that Andrew was a great preacher, nor that he accomplished anything of a sensational character, but, in his quiet, unassuming way he was successful in winning his brother Simon Peter to Christ. If nothing else has been placed to the credit of Andrew in heaven's record, this one act of introducing his brother to the Saviour is sufficient to stamp him a wise soul-winner, though, happily, there are other instances recorded of Andrew's usefulness. Let us endeavour to emulate his success in individual work. Well-conducted open-air meetings give many opportunities for the exercise of this gift of personal effort.

We must not close our eyes to the fact that in these days open-air meetings have to a great extent lost their novelty as compared with the times of Whitfield and Wesley. Those two men of God could attract thousands to their meetings, and keep their audiences riveted as they expounded God's way of Salvation. Speaking generally, people are always interested in something *new*. If it were possible for the Gospel to be preached from an aeroplane suspended in the air in a state of inactivity, thousands would throng to see and hear. Such is the psychological tendency of human nature. Nevertheless there is still a desire to hear the real message when that message is delivered with sanctified

energy and in the power of an ungrieved Spirit. A bow at a venture frequently finds its way between the joints of the harness.

Another matter of importance is this—*aim at punctuality*. Strive to be present when the meeting begins, and, if possible, stay unto the end. If you must leave before the close, leave the meeting without being observed. Also during the progress of the meeting, refrain from conversations with your fellow-workers. This sort of thing is exceedingly distractive both to the speaker and to the listeners.

I fancy I hear my reader say “ I cannot speak, and I therefore feel that I am utterly helpless.” But stay ! you can help in many ways ; by your presence, your singing, your quiet inaudible supplications, and by manifesting an *intense interest* when God’s servant is delivering his message.

But a word of encouragement just here to my younger brethren. If you have never attempted to speak in the open air, why not make the attempt ? Tell the people what God has done for your soul. The open-air platform is a splendid training ground for young soldiers of Christ. Endeavour to prepare carefully, thoughtfully, and prayerfully, a short address which will last five or ten minutes—and take a week to do it. Furthermore, in your preaching make it clear that salvation is a *personal* matter, just as the Bible is a *personal* book. Emphasise such statements as “ Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and shew how St. Paul included himself in this number, even placing himself at the head of

the list by saying, "Of whom *I* am chief," and follow this up by driving home his personal interest in Christ with the words "The Son of God Who loved ME, and gave Himself for ME." Seek to avoid unnecessary arguments, but at all cost, in every place and at all times, give the people the Word of the living God. Also you will find it a useful practice to carry a notebook and pencil with you, and to write down any thoughts or illustrations which may occur to you before they slip from your memory.

So let us exercise whatever gift God has entrusted to us, and thus endeavour to fulfil our Lord's command, "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*."

A RADIANT GLORY OF LOVE.

A radiant glory of Love ! This was CHRIST
 As He walked through the Holy Land ;
 Healing and blessing ! From Galilee, north,
 To Judea in the south . . . Blessèd hand,
 As He touched the bier : as He broke the bread,
 Near the city—the mountain—the strand.

.

A radiant glory of Love ! This same Christ
 Stood in Pilate's judgment hall,
 When they cried " Barabbas," instead of the Christ
 Who had come to save them all.
 Then—" He savèd others : He cannot save
 Himself " : Hear that scoffing call !

.

A radiant glory of Love ! *Could* not Christ
 Save Himself ? O, He *would* not call
 Twelve legions of angels : they *would* have come,
 And He need not have borne it all,
 But *we* should have suffered eternal loss ;
 So He " came to save " us all !

.

A radiant glory of Love ! Yes, the Christ :
 He came not to judge, but to save :
 Not to *wound*, but to *heal* ; not to *take*, but to *give*.
 That glory of Love, He *gave*.
 That cry of " Barabbas " (instead of Christ),
 Even THAT awful sin He forgave !

.

A radiant glory of Love ! There He stands ;
 The most fateful moment of all
 In the ages the world has ever known !
 " Barabbas ! "—brought down the pall
 Of blackness and horror of SIN, on HIM
 Who was dying to save us all !

.

A radiant glory of Love ! May we shine
 As we walk through the lanes of our land,
 And the streets of our cities, to tell of His love,
 And the wondrous works of His hand.
 In the OPEN AIR where Christ chiefly taught,
 Let us follow HIM, taking *our* stand.

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R. and L. M. Warner.

CHAPTER II

IN-DOOR WORK

IN-DOOR work has many advantages. Unlike open-air meetings the congregation does not vary, and there is obviously a greater opportunity to "follow up" the work, and to keep in touch with those who appear to be particularly interested. Also, many of the Lord's servants are able to speak in a building whose voices are not suitable for open-air preaching.

If we are to entice people inside a building to hear the divine message of love, we need to remember certain essential features, such as :

The importance of *Attractiveness*. Every item connected with the service should be made as attractive as possible. The building itself should be well-lighted, well-ventilated, comfortable, and clean. When David charged his son Solomon to build a house for the Lord, he said that the house must be "exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries." It was to be a house worthy of the God of heaven. In like manner all we undertake for the Lord should be worthy of Him. In numerous instances buildings have to be *adapted* for meetings, and all honour is due to those who live in more or less isolated country places, and who are willing to devote their barns, etc., for the preaching of the Gospel, but all such improvised

meeting-places ought to be as comfortable and as clean as possible. Let us remember that in this, as in all else, God deserves the best we can give Him.

The importance of *Reverence*. Carelessness and irreverence never commend the Gospel. Ours is a holy business, and every item connected with our work should be sanctified. There is a grave danger of our handling sacred things too lightly, simply because of their familiarity. Joshua's message to the people prior to the taking of Jericho was most impressive and suggestive. "Sanctify yourselves ; for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you " (Joshua iii, 5). When we realise, as we should, Whose we are and Whom we serve, and when we appreciate as we should the tremendous privilege of serving the Lord of Life and Glory, we shall most willingly place ourselves in His hands that He may, through us, do wonders.

The importance of *Earnestness*. The servant of God should let his congregation see that he is thoroughly in earnest from the very first sentence he utters. If we are under an obligation to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, we should certainly unite all our powers in His delightful service. God is desperately in earnest in His desire to bless mankind. He could not give more than He has given. He could not do more than He has done. The word " sincere " is very suggestive. It was formerly derived from *sine*—without, *cera*—wax, whilst the Greek word *eilikrines* signifies " that which is judged by sunlight." Therefore, whatever we do for the Master ought to be done WELL.

The importance of *Wisdom*. We are exhorted to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Some of us are in danger of becoming as wise as doves and harmless as serpents, but whenever we reverse the order of Scripture we find ourselves in the path of failure. It behoves us to be out to catch fish, not to frighten them. Wisdom has builded her house, and she hath built it somewhat on this wise: (1) *The foundation*:—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," (2) *The superstructure*:—"He that winneth souls is wise," (3) *The topstone*:—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." For the winning of precious souls to Christ, and for the "after care" of the young converts, we need all the wisdom God can give us. *And we may have it for the asking*. Let us take heed to the words of encouragement in St. James i, 5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men *liberally*, and upbraideth not; *and it shall be given him*." If it be true (as it *is* true) that some Christians are wise, and some are *otherwise*, may we be numbered among the former.

The importance of *Humility*. Many years ago a young man was announced to preach a sermon. Unfortunately he had an overrated opinion of his own abilities, and, having prepared his address with great care and thought, he was so sure of success that, when the time arrived for him to deliver his discourse, he ascended the pulpit stairs with an air of self-confidence, so evident as to be observed by all. To his disappoint-

ment and dismay his attempt ended in utter failure, and he descended from the pulpit thoroughly humiliated. An elderly gentleman, approaching him, said, "Young man, if only you had gone up those stairs the same way as you came down, you might have come down the same way as you went up." If some of us only realised our limitations, we should accomplish more real work than we do. Pride is a curse. Humility is a blessing. It is the easiest thing possible for us to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, and this is one of those things we are strictly forbidden to do. The Apostle Paul said that he laboured more abundantly than all his contemporaries, but he immediately qualified the statement by adding "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." As surely as we exalt ourselves in the sight of God, so surely will He humble us. If, on the other hand, we humble ourselves before Him, He will be pleased to exalt us. From this principle God has never deviated. He that is low need fear no fall, and the lower we are in our own estimation the better, because the less height there will be from which to fall. Humility is an essential preliminary to successful soul-winning. It is not without purpose that the words, "Before honour is humility," are mentioned *twice* in the book of Proverbs. If we desire to be divinely honoured in divine service, let us recognise *our* frailty, and the all-sufficiency of *our God*. In the Philippian Epistle the thread of *confidence* is seen twining and intertwining itself throughout the four chapters, but there is one place where the subject is mentioned negatively, and the precise words are

these :—“ *No confidence in the flesh* ” (Chapter iii, 3). The most successful servants of God in past ages have been men and women who thought little of themselves, but everything of Christ. One of the most stinging and cutting remarks St. Paul ever penned was his “reminder” to the Galatian Christians—“ If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” If we are to *ascend* in God’s estimation we must *descend* in our own until we realise ourselves to be “ less than the least of all saints.” The reason why God highly exalted Christ Jesus and gave Him a name surpassing every name was because He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The words of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, are as applicable to-day as when they were uttered :—“ Talk no more so exceeding proudly ; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth : for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed ” (1 Samuel ii, 3).

The importance of *Courtesy*. The mention of this matter ought not to be necessary, but seeing that the Apostle Peter mentions it in his first Epistle we are perfectly justified in referring to it also. We should be courteous to everybody, even though some folk may not be courteous toward us. Daniel showed due courtesy to King Darius when he said “ *O king, live for ever. My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me.*” This leads to the subject of “ Apologetics.” When we find ourselves in the wrong we ought to be willing to apologise, though at times it needs more than ordinary

grace to do so. When the Apostle, rather unwisely, called the high priest "a whited wall", and was reminded by those who stood by who it was to whom he was speaking, he at once apologised, saying: "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." Courtesy (which implies *court-like manners*) costs very little, but it goes a long way in "winning the crowd."

The importance of *Concentration*. This quality is necessary in every department of life if success is to be obtained. It is equally essential in the service of Christ, Whose ambassadors we are. The *glory of God*, which includes all else, should ever be our aim. It is painfully possible for us to run the Christian race in vain, and to engage in Christian service in vain. It is indeed possible for us to spend the whole of our lives in vain. Hence the need for us to have the Judgment Seat of Christ constantly before us.

The importance of *Love*. This is ALL IMPORTANT. The great love chapter in the Bible is 1 Corinthians, xiii, and we should do well to read this chapter until our souls are saturated with it—until it grips us—until other people can read it in us. Love is the greatest thing in the world, and if we are bereft of this virtue we are lacking in every other virtue mentioned in the Word of God. We may speak with the tongues of men and of angels; our eloquence may attract hearers from far and near, but if we have not the love of Christ in our hearts we are nothing more than sounding brass and clanging cymbals. We may have the gift of

prophecy, and understand all the mysteries mentioned in the Bible, and we may have faith to so great an extent as to remove mountains, yet apart from love all our knowledge counts for nothing, and our ministry is worthless. We may give all we have to feed the poor, and even go so far as to suffer our bodies to be burned for what we believe to be right, but if we have not the greatest of all virtues, *love*, all this self-denial will profit us nothing. The Christian who is full of love carries a fragrance of Christ wherever he goes. The love of Christ should constrain us in every department of our service.

To these suggestive items might be added the advantage of *singing*. This should be hearty, real, and God-honouring. Scriptural choruses are frequently a great assistance before the meeting begins. They give the audience an added interest. Samuel's words, "Bring me a minstrel," imply a greater significance than may appear on the surface. Solos, duets, and other kinds of special singing are helpful on the distinct understanding that those who sing *use their voices for God*. Self-importance in singing, as in everything else, tends to impede the progress of the Gospel. Let us avoid anything incompatible with our heavenly calling, and let us cultivate warmth, freshness, brightness, and holy enthusiasm.

The Gospel is not primarily for the edification of believers, but for the eternal blessing of the unregenerate. The believers' privilege is to assist by their presence and prayers, and by bringing others to the service, endeavouring thereby to win their neighbours

and friends to the Saviour. An excellent opportunity for this frequently presents itself by a kind invitation to tea. If a cup of cold water, given for Christ's sake, will in no wise lose its reward, how much greater reward will a *cup of tea* ensure?

We ought always to remember that the Gospel is not only the simplest theme under heaven—it is also the grandest and most dignified, in that it embodies God's perfect provision for His creatures. The Gospel is also unchanging and unchangeable. Methods differ; speakers differ; congregations differ; circumstances differ; results differ—but the glorious Gospel of the grace of God is evermore the same.

The preacher should keep faith with his audience. If a definite time is announced for closing the meeting, that time should not be exceeded. If the congregation is given to understand that the service is for an hour and a quarter, it is a great mistake to prolong the meeting for an hour and three-quarters. "Let all things be done decently and in order." On the tomb of Edward I in Westminster Abbey is carved the life-motto of that great monarch, PACTUM SERVA—"Keep troth." This motto should be adopted by all preachers of the Gospel. Furthermore, when dealing with the souls of men and women, the preacher should abstain from jocularities. He should realise that he is engaged on the most important mission in the universe. Similar to the apostles of old, he should be unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one the savour of life unto life; and to the other the savour of death unto death.

There is a right and a wrong way in giving out a hymn. It should be announced in a dignified manner. Although it is not necessary to read a hymn through word for word, yet if there are portions which the preacher feels ought to be emphasised, by all means let them be emphasised.

The servant of the Lord should *expect* blessing every time he preaches the Gospel. If God be pleased to grant us visible results, instead of being over-elated, let us give HIM the entire praise. If at times blessing appears to be withheld, let us not be unduly depressed thereby, but rather endeavour to ascertain the reason why the results are so meagre, ever keeping our hearts stayed upon Him from Whom all blessings flow.

A fitting exhortation with which to close this chapter is that which appears in Colossians iii, 17: "And *whatsoever* ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

CHAPTER III

SPECIAL EFFORTS

IN a very real sense every time the Gospel is preached should constitute a special effort.

But there are occasions when a special series of evangelistic services is distinctly advantageous, not only in respect of the unregenerate, but also in regard to the people of God. Young and old are set to work in various ways. Those who have grown somewhat cold often experience a spiritual resuscitation. But the main object of such an enterprise is obviously to attract unbelievers to our Lord Jesus Christ.

The suggestion has occasionally been mooted that a special effort in the Gospel should be arranged only when a local church finds itself in a healthy condition spiritually, but such a proposition is clearly unsound. If some churches wait until they find themselves in a healthy state, it is possible that they will never participate in a special effort during the whole of their history. In many companies of God's people there are a few whose hearts have been stirred, and who are longing for a real awakening in their midst. And who knows but that the prayers, aspirations and long-sightedness of those few will cause that particular locality to be aflame with Gospel power and blessing,

and also that the flame will spread far beyond the borders of the immediate neighbourhood until the whole country suddenly finds itself in the vortex of a glorious awakening ?

Not the least important part of a special evangelistic effort is to secure the right man for the work. Too much care cannot be exercised in this matter. Certain evangelists are suitable for certain localities, which means, of course, that they may be altogether unsuitable for other districts. Although God can, and does, use whom He will for the carrying out of His eternal purposes, He expects His people to exercise the faculty of discrimination.

When the Lord Jesus ascended upon high He gave gifts unto men ; and He gave some . . . *evangelists*. An evangelist is not necessarily a teacher or a pastor. His essential business is to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ—the grand news of a full, free, and everlasting salvation—to those who need a Saviour. His preaching should be powerful, attractive, winsome, and effective. He should know how to allure the fish into the Gospel net, thus manifesting his qualifications as a wise soul-winner. He should know his work from A to Z. He should be careful in regard to his outward appearance, i.e. his dress and general deportment. *Above all things his life should be free from blame.*

Some special efforts may continue too long, whilst others may be cut too short. It may be difficult in many instances to leave the duration of a “ mission ” an open question, but a tremendous advantage would be gained if this were possible. Too frequently a

distinctive effort has been brought to a close when the people have become thoroughly interested and when the Spirit of God is manifestly working.

As a general rule the first part of a special effort is directed to definite "ground work," when the reality and awfulness of sin, the character of God regarding His supreme holiness and inflexible righteousness, the urgent need on the part of the sinner to believe God's Word, and similar truths are emphasised. The latter part is generally devoted to winning souls definitely to Christ. And this is as it should be.

Although we should be careful to guard against *indiscriminate* buttonholing, raising of hands, or signing of cards, at the same time no opportunity of bringing people to the real issue should be lost. The holy art of spiritual discernment ought to be cultivated by every Christian, as the success of any special effort rests not only upon the preacher and the message he proclaims, but also upon the prayerful attitude and harmonious activities of the workers. If we are walking with God we shall be led to speak to the right individual at the right moment ; we shall say just the right word, and have the necessary wisdom granted to lead that soul gently and lovingly to the Saviour.

The late Henry Varley was conducting a special evangelistic effort in a certain town. The opening services were times of great power, and as they proceeded the power increased, but Mr. Varley refrained from testing the meetings. The mission continued and the presence of God was realised in a peculiar way, but still the evangelist did not feel free to test the audience.

A dear friend of mine, now in the glory, was on the platform and, with others, became quite concerned, wondering why the meetings were allowed to pass without the congregation being given an opportunity to manifest publicly their acceptance of Christ. Towards the end of the second week, at the close of a stirring message, Henry Varley asked those who would there and then definitely trust the Saviour to rise to their feet, *and about sixty members of the congregation responded.* God's servant knew his work. Little wonder that he was so successful an evangelist.

It is scarcely necessary to emphasise the importance of advertising a special effort discreetly and widely by means of sandwich-boards, banners, streamers, circulars, notices in the local press, and so forth. Every legitimate means should be used to attract outsiders into the meetings. Among other ways, an excellent plan is to have a nicely-worded invitation printed in the form of a letter, and, with the help of a local directory, to have the envelopes *addressed personally* to the friends who live within a fairly wide radius of the place of meeting. These could be delivered by hand, and where possible a verbal invitation could be added.

In connection with this subject of "special efforts," a splendid opportunity presents itself to God's servants who possess a fair supply of this world's goods of holding special drawing-room and other meetings. By inviting their friends to such gatherings, and by securing the services of a suitable evangelist, those who find themselves in a position to arrange these meetings may have the supreme pleasure of knowing that, *through their*

efforts, many a precious soul will be eternally associated with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Above all things let us remember the absolute necessity of united and individual prayer. Let there be a real laying hold upon God many days before the special meetings begin. Let there also be an unqualified reliance upon the Holy Spirit of God, Whose work it is to reveal Christ to the soul. The words uttered by the prophet many years ago are as true to-day as when they were uttered, "NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS."

In writing his first letter to the Thessalonians St. Paul was anticipating some of the grand events which will take place at the second coming of the Lord Jesus, and his soul must have overflowed with divine gladness as he penned the words recorded in Chapter ii, 19, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" He addresses the Philippian saints in similar terms, "My joy and crown." (Phil. iv, 1). One wonders how many believers will welcome the Apostle in heaven at the coming of Christ for His own!

On one occasion the Saviour exhorted His disciples to make friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when they failed, those friends might receive them into their everlasting habitations. (See Luke xvi, 9.) What our Lord meant was apparently this: We should utilise the earthly blessings with which we have been entrusted to win the confidence of those around us with the ultimate object of winning

them to Christ, so that when we pass hence we may have the supreme joy of being welcomed by them in yonder glory.

Next to the joy of seeing the Lord Jesus in heaven will be the joy of seeing those in whose eternal salvation we have been instrumental. The very suggestion of such a possibility ought to create within our hearts the heaven-born desire to rescue the perishing. How many newborn souls will, by and by, welcome the reader of this volume? How many will welcome the writer?

CHAPTER IV

“ PENTECOST ”

PENTECOST was not only a fulfilment of the prophecy mentioned in Joel, chapter iii—it was also a fulfilment of our Lord's words in St. John vii, 38–39: “ He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow *rivers* of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified).”

We might with considerable profit study a few of the outstanding characteristics in connection with Pentecost, and see how far they are applicable to the present day.

The first outstanding feature was

PRAYER.

The *prayer meeting* was the preliminary to all the blessing which was so plentifully outpoured on the day of Pentecost. Just a handful of disciples continued with one accord in prayer and supplication in an upper room situated in the city of Jerusalem. By so doing these disciples were fulfilling their Lord's injunction when he told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. These humble followers of the Lord Jesus first laid hold upon God in

intense supplication—and God honoured them beyond measure. Truly the energised supplication of a righteous man is a great force, and when a number of righteous people get together to wait upon God, their combined intercessions are a greater force still.

We should *never* undertake any service for God without first invoking His power and blessing.

The book of Acts is a book of *models* for present day Christians, and it is interesting to observe the number of model prayer meetings recorded therein, particularly in the earlier portion of the book. A prayer meeting of intense interest is mentioned in chapter iv. Peter and John, accompanied by the lame man who had recently been healed, having been released from the Council (whither they had been summoned to answer the charge of daring to preach Christ publicly), went to their own company, and, unitedly, they cried to God for definite blessing. The result was that the place was shaken where they were assembled together; they were all filled with the Holy Spirit; they spake the Word of God with boldness; they proclaimed with great power the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all.

In chapter xii we see the Apostle Peter in prison, guarded by sixteen soldiers, sleeping between two others bound with two chains, and “the keepers before the door of the prison.” But prayer was made *without ceasing* by the Church unto God for him. God answered the cries of those believers beyond their wildest imagination. *St. Peter was delivered.* Every obstacle had to give way before the overruling hand of Omnipotence.

A further prayer meeting is recorded in chapter xvi, which took place by the riverside on the outskirts of Philippi, the result of which was the conversion of Lydia. As the servants of God continued their visits to the place of prayer, a certain demon-possessed girl cried after them, and before many hours had elapsed the evil spirit was cast out. This was followed by one of the most remarkable prayer and praise meetings on record. Paul and Silas, in the inner cell of the Philippian prison with bleeding backs and fastened feet, are engaged with their Lord. They pray ; they praise ; and God answers. The entire prison is shaken to its foundations, and the jailer and his family are won over to Christ.

Prayer not only changes things—it changes people also. Unless we engage constantly in this spiritual activity we shall find ourselves helpless. Israel had first power with God, and then he had power with men. God must always be first.

When the disciples returned from their extended preaching tour, they told the Lord Jesus *all things*, both what they had done and what they had taught. It is always well to get alone with God *after* engaging in His service as well as beforehand. It is a good thing to tell Him what a feeble effort ours has been, and to ask Him to condescend to bless what has been done.

Long prayers should be avoided in public meetings. Many people are wearied by lengthy supplications made in the pulpit. A vast territory can be covered within the space of *five minutes*.

Our public intercessions should always be *sympathetic*.

The majority of people need comfort in some form or other, and if they feel that the preacher is entering into their trials and difficulties, that will go a long way towards captivating their unflagging interest.

The second outstanding feature of Pentecost was

PARTNERSHIP.

The disciples were all with one accord in one place. There was oneness of heart ; oneness of desire ; oneness of purpose. The phrase "with one accord" occurs twelve times in the Acts of the Apostles. When St. Peter stood up to preach, he stood up "with the eleven." Harmony among believers is essential if the crowd is to be won and if souls are to be snatched as brands from the burning, though when we speak of harmony we mean on the basis of truth rather than at the expense of it. Where this essential quality is absent among the servants of the Lord, the work of God is necessarily impeded. Where it obtains, blessing necessarily follows :—"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity . . . for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." God is so thoroughly pleased when He sees His people working together in happy fellowship that He *commands* the blessing—and when God commands, the blessing *must* come. This is the teaching of Psalm 133 which is a Psalm of degrees, and this condition of oneness is one of the highest "degrees" we can reach.

When the Master chose His twelve followers, He chose them that they might be *with Him*, and that He might

send them forth to preach (Mark iii, 14). He desired their company, their sympathy, their fellowship. On a subsequent occasion when He sent them forth, He sent them by *two and two*, thus emphasising the maxim laid down so clearly in the Old Testament that two are better than one, and that for two reasons, (1) that if one fall the other can lift up his fellow, and (2) because they have a good reward for their labour, and in the coming harvest both shall rejoice together.

When the Lord Jesus was surrounded by the multitudes in the desert, and saw that they were as sheep having no shepherd, hungry and dissatisfied, He said to His disciples, “ Give YE them to eat.” He could easily have fed that multitude Himself without their assistance, but He longed for their fellowship, *as He longs for ours*. Those disciples failed on that occasion because of their unbelief, and the privilege of practical partnership was granted to a nameless lad with his five barley loaves and two small fishes. The Saviour is still saying to us “ Give YE them to eat,” and if we are wise we shall gladly comply with His request and thus assist Him in the spread of His glorious Gospel.

A threefold cord is not easily broken. The three godly Jews, mentioned in Daniel, chapter iii, were thoroughly united in their testimony for God. *Unitedly* they refused to obey the blasphemous order of the king ; *unitedly* they were arraigned before Nebuchadnezzar ; *unitedly* they gave their heroic answer ; *unitedly* they were cast into the burning fiery furnace ; *unitedly* they walked with the Son of God in the midst of the fire ; *unitedly* they proved God’s eternal faithfulness ;

unitedly they came out of the furnace without the slightest trace that they had ever been inside it.

The Apostles Peter and John were *united* when the lame man was healed, and when so much blessing ensued. Their fellow Apostles Paul and Barnabas were *united* when they entered "both together" into the synagogue of the Jews in Iconium and so spake that a great multitude believed, including Jews and Greeks. St. Paul and Silas were *united* during their sojourn in Philippi—*united* in their testimony; their sufferings; their supplications; their praises; and their ministry of comfort and edification in the house of Lydia. It is interesting to observe that when St. Paul at a later date wrote to the Philippian believers, his soul was flooded with joy as he remembered their love, first to the Lord, and then to himself as the Lord's servant, but his joy would surely have been greater still had Euodias and Syntyche been "of the same mind in the Lord."

The locusts have no king, but the indisputable fact remains that they go forth all of them by bands, thus manifesting their power of destruction, and thus teaching *us* the lesson that a crowd attracts a crowd.

We are informed at the end of the third Gospel that, after the Lord Jesus Christ had been received up into heaven, His disciples went forth and preached everywhere, *the Lord working with them*, and confirming the word with signs following. This is what we need to-day—a realisation that the Lord is working with us, as apart from this our ministry will be but a waste of precious time and labour.

When we as Christians learn to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, when we are able with one mind and one mouth to glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, then there will be real progress in the extension of God's kingdom. The Corinthian believers were exhorted to speak the same thing ; they were to avoid anything in the shape of divisions among them ; they were to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. In the last chapter of the second Epistle, the Apostle gives those same believers a final message along exactly the same lines, beseeching them to be perfect, to be of one mind, and to live in peace. Who will be so bold as to say that the Church militant needs no such exhortations in these days ?

The highest fellowship of all is that which has ever existed between the Father and the Son. On one great occasion the Lord Jesus said that He could do nothing of Himself but what He saw the Father do, for whatsoever things the Father did, these did the Son likewise, thus manifesting the perfect oneness between them, whilst toward the close of His unique life the Son uttered these words: “ And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee *before the world was* ”. The consideration of this complete fellowship adds tremendous weight to our Lord's prayer for His own: “ That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: *that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*” (St. John xvii, 21.)

If it is too much to expect this oneness among all

Christians in all places, let us each one endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, according to the clear teaching of the Scriptures of Truth, remembering at the same time that unity does not necessarily imply uniformity.

One of the greatest hindrances to harmony is *jealousy*, which we should seek to avoid as we would the plague. Jealousy is one of the most terrible things on earth. It has been responsible for some of the worst crimes in history. Even a rapid glance through the Scriptures will reveal the awful possibilities of this sin.

We are informed that Joseph was loved by his father, and hated by his brethren, and it would appear that the more his father loved him, the more his brethren hated him. Indeed, their minds were so embittered against their brother that they "could not speak peaceably unto him."

This *crescendo* of undeserved hatred is indicated by the following sentences: "They hated him." "They hated him yet the more." "And they hated him yet the more" (Genesis xxxvii, 4, 5, and 8). They hated Joseph *because they envied him*, and this inexcusable spirit of envy led to the subsequent cruel treatment which their brother received at their hands. This is clearly stated in the following passage: "And the patriarchs, *moved with envy*, sold Joseph into Egypt" (Acts vii, 9). *Jealousy* and *envy* are practically synonymous terms.

Darius appointed over his kingdom a hundred and twenty princes. Over these he set three presidents, of whom Daniel was first. The king preferred Daniel

above the other presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was found in him. But Daniel's official colleagues hated him, and, as in the case of Joseph's brethren, their hatred increased as time advanced.

It is quite possible that the cause of the hatred on the part of these presidents and princes was *jealousy*. They envied Daniel because of his high position. They envied him because they saw that the king was so favourably disposed toward him. They therefore determined to bring about his downfall, though, unfortunately for them, in their determination they had reckoned without God. Consequently their evil machinations were brought to nought, in spite of the fact that they succeeded in having Daniel cast into the lions' den.

The spirit of envy reached its meridian when the Lord Jesus was delivered by the chief priests and pharisees to Pilate. One short sentence in St. Matthew xxvii, 18 is sufficient evidence of this: “ He (Pilate) knew that for ENVY they had delivered Him.”

If it be true that “ love is strong as death,” it is also true that “ jealousy is cruel as the grave ” (Cant. viii, 6).

Jealousy is the rage of a man. In the day of vengeance he will not spare. When a suitable opportunity presents itself, this spirit of jealousy will be manifested in the exercise of appalling cruelty. Such a man will not regard any ransom ; neither will he rest content though he be offered many gifts. That is to say that jealousy not only leads a man to be horribly vindictive ; it also makes him utterly unreasonable and unsociable.

When jealousy is allowed to reign in the heart, there is no knowing what the result may be. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence even of your lusts that war in your members?" (St. James iv, 1.) These "wars and fightings" are brought about largely by this unchristian spirit of jealousy. Like the tongue it is full of deadly poison, and it defileth the whole body. It is earthly, sensual, devilish, and emanates from the lowest pit.

It is sadly possible for this spirit to be prevalent among God's people. It is possible for one brother to be jealous of another brother, simply because that other brother happens to be a little more prominent than he. It is likewise possible for one sister to be jealous of another sister—for some reason best known to herself.

But let us have done with this sort of thing. Let us rather love one another as God has loved us. Let us endeavour to see more of Christ in one another. Let us always make for harmony rather than discord.

When Nehemiah had builded the wall of Jerusalem, and there was *no breach* left therein, then it was that Sanballat and Geshem thought to do him mischief, and suggested a conference in one of the villages of Ono.

One feels that there are far too many breaches among God's people in the present day. If only the spirit of unkindness were to cease, if only the ungracious word were left unspoken, if only the root of bitterness were removed, *then* we could confidently expect to see SHOWERS OF BLESSING both in the work of the Gospel and among God's beloved saints.

We now come to the third feature of Pentecost, namely

POWER.

This was the spontaneous outcome of prayer and partnership. The work seen at Pentecost was not the work of men, *but the operation of the Holy Spirit working through human channels*. The disciples were at the Holy Spirit's disposal. They were quite ordinary men—many of them just Galilean fishermen—but they had sufficient power to move the world. This means that God uses whom He will for the accomplishment of His own purposes and for the extension of His kingdom, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, “ What doest Thou ? ”

There are numerous occasions recorded in the book of Acts when, individually and collectively, the servants of the Lord were Spirit-filled. In chapter four the Apostle Peter appears before the Sanhedrin, “ filled with the Holy Spirit.” In the same chapter the persecuted preachers of the Gospel are assembled together for prayer, and the same expression occurs : they were all “ filled with the Holy Ghost.” In chapter six certain men are appointed for the work of the daily ministrations, and their qualifications are distinctly set out : “ men of honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost.” In chapter seven, Stephen, the first martyr for Christ after Pentecost, was “ full of the Holy Spirit.” In chapter eleven we read the following beautiful description of Barnabas : “ He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.” In chapter thirteen Saul, who also is called Paul (on the

occasion of the first miracle he wrought) was "filled with the Holy Ghost." The very recapitulation of these incidents ought to fire our souls with a holy zeal. No one can tell what God is able to do through Spirit-filled and Spirit-controlled men and women.

The arresting exhortation in Ephesians v, 18, "Be filled with the Spirit," not only applies to those servants of the Lord to whom a special work has been entrusted, but to *every believer*. The Spirit-filled life is therefore within the reach of us all. The Apostle also prayed that the Ephesian believers might be strengthened with all might by God's Spirit in the inner man.

Let us ever remember that it is the Holy Spirit's prerogative to convict of sin; to awaken people to a sense of their need; to reveal Christ; and to transform the life. All the preaching, teaching, warning, and persuading in the world will never regenerate a single soul apart from the Spirit's operation. Thus we see how essential it is to realise our entire dependence upon the third Person of the Trinity in every department of our service for God. If only we were Spirit-led, Spirit-controlled, and Spirit-filled, such results would be revealed that we should be compelled to say, "This is the Lord's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

This leads us to the consideration of that which the Holy Spirit used so wonderfully on the day of Pentecost, namely,

The Apostle Peter's Address

When the Apostle "lifted up his voice," he was the mouthpiece of God, and the representative of his

fellow disciples. The sum and substance of his address was “ Jesus of Nazareth ” (v. 22), and HE has been the centre and circumference of every faithful Gospel discourse delivered from that date to this. HE is God’s provision for fallen humanity. If we leave HIM out of our preaching we might just as well not preach at all. A splendid motto for the heralds of the Gospel is : MAKE EVERYTHING OF CHRIST.

St. Peter first of all emphasised the *life* of the Lord Jesus by reminding his audience that He was a man approved of God among them. Let us follow this excellent example and endeavour to force home the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ was the only man in the world’s history who enjoyed the unqualified approval of God—the only Person concerning Whom the words heard from the opened heavens were appropriate : “ This is My beloved Son *in Whom I am well pleased.*” Moreover, it was He Who said to the Father, “ I have glorified Thee on the earth ; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do,” and none but He could have given expression to such a statement in all its grand significance.

The evidences of this Divine approval was seen in our Lord’s miracles. Every miracle He wrought was a distinct proof that God sent Him, and that God approved of Him. To this evidence He Himself referred when He said : “ The works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of Me that the Father sent Me.” (St. John v, 36.)

At the same time let it be clearly stated that the *life* of Christ cannot avail for the salvation of the soul.

Indeed, the reverse of this is true. That spotless life *condemns us*, and we need only to compare our life with His to see how far short we have come of God's perfect standard. The spotless life of the Lord Jesus Christ *signified His fitness to die for others*.

The Apostle Peter then referred to the *death* of Christ, and in so doing he was careful to emphasise the dual truth that, (1) He was delivered by the determinate counsel of God, and (2) He was delivered according to God's foreknowledge. An eternal purpose lay behind the death of Christ. Also, that death was foreknown in the Divine counsels ages before the great event took place. The tragedy of Calvary was not an afterthought—not something brought about merely by human vindictiveness. It was the greatest possible manifestation of the Love of God toward His creatures.

Considered from a human point of view the death of Christ was a failure; a defeat both crushing and complete; an ignoble end to a noble life. But from the divine viewpoint the Cross was a glorious VICTORY, because there was manifested as never before the eternal wisdom and power of God. Immediately before the Saviour dismissed His spirit, He cried with *a loud voice*, "It is finished," implying a complete triumph over the great enemy and the combined powers of darkness. It was essential that Christ should thus suffer for the sake of the human race. Let us therefore lay great stress on the *sacrificial* aspect of Christ's death, at the same time giving the people to understand plainly that if they could reach heaven by their own efforts it would not have been necessary for the Lord

Jesus Christ to have come at all. There is an expression often used in Gospel preaching which needs to be explained, namely, “ The blood of Christ.” How little does the ordinary listener realise that these words imply *the substitutionary death of Christ*, seeing that the life of the flesh is in the blood, and that apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission !

The next fact St. Peter emphasised was the *resurrection* of Christ. This is of paramount importance, because Christianity stands or falls in its relation to Christ’s resurrection. If Christ did *not* rise from the dead, there is no such thing as Christianity. If, on the other hand, Christ *did* rise from the dead, Christianity is an established fact, never to be overthrown.

It is interesting to observe how deliberately and how frequently the Apostles reiterated this grand truth. Let my reader study carefully the book of Acts with this truth before his mind, and he will scarcely fail to see the reason why the doctrine of the resurrection occupies so prominent a place in the divine programme. When St. Peter quoted the closing words of Psalm 16 : “ Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, nor suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption,” he not only referred them to Christ, but also shewed that it could not have been otherwise, for the simple reason that David, who wrote the words, was both dead and buried, and, as incontrovertible evidence of this, his sepulchre was located in Jerusalem. Therefore David could not have written of himself. Of whom could he have written but Christ ? The Apostle Paul argued in exactly the

same way when he addressed the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia (*see* Acts xiii, 34 to 37).

There ought to be more preaching of the resurrection in these last days. Let it be preached during Eastertide by all means, but let it also be proclaimed at every other favourable opportunity.

One further characteristic of the Apostle's Pentecostal address needs to be considered, namely, his numerous quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures. A fairly large proportion of his discourse is occupied by such quotations. We are informed by certain theological professors to-day that it is about time we discontinued to preach the Gospel from the Old Testament, but St. Peter most assuredly did so at Pentecost, and who will say that he was labouring under a misapprehension? Moreover, St. Paul was frequently quoting from the Old Testament, and our Lord Himself found great delight in so doing.

We see from this the advantage of quoting Scripture in our preaching, but to quote the Scriptures implies that we need to *know* them. It is both convenient and advantageous to commit to memory the passages we desire to quote in our preaching, because by so doing we shall find it ever so much easier to maintain the attention of our hearers.

Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures from a child. No doubt he had committed a great portion of the Old Testament to memory. What could be a grander occupation for my younger brethren than for them to store their mind with the finest material in the universe—THE WORD OF THE LIVING GOD!

CHAPTER V

THE PREACHER AND HIS MESSAGE

“ IF any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ” (1 Peter iv, 11). This is the first thing a preacher should remember, because an adequate appreciation of this principle will make all the difference in his ministry. Preachers of God’s Gospel are to preach as *God’s oracles*—not that they might hear themselves speak : not for self-aggrandisement ; not that they might please their hearers, but as God’s mouthpiece ; as God’s representatives. The very contemplation of this responsibility is sufficient to make one tremble. No servant of God should preach unless he has first received a message from God Himself. Such a message delivered in the power of the Holy Ghost is certain to bear fruit. Such a message would be worth hearing, yea, it would be worth while travelling twenty miles to hear it.

We are living in an age of compromise and unfaithfulness. Many preachers endeavour to maintain their popularity by compromising the truth, thereby indicating in many instances that they lack the courage of their convictions. Let us, therefore, seek to be *faithful* whatever sacrifice it may involve.

The servant of the Lord must believe, without the

shadow of suspicion, that God is both *willing* and *able* to save. He must manifest implicit faith in the whole of the Bible, because if he should waver in any part of it his power for God and for good will be correspondingly lessened. His great business is to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and his preaching should be according to the words of the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus, "We speak that we do KNOW." He is called upon to preach a *full* message, a *full* Gospel, a *full* salvation, a *full* Christ. When the preacher has exhausted the unsearchable riches of Christ he may cease preaching, but not until, so long as strength is granted him. In St. Paul's magnificent utterance before Agrippa he was able to testify that by divine help he had witnessed to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. "*Saying none other things*"—that was the great Apostle's mission, and from this he never swerved. But what things were they which Moses and the prophets did say should come? "*That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead.*" The death and resurrection of Christ formed the basis of St. Paul's preaching and teaching. It may be confidently affirmed that the average person would rather listen to a definite *living* message from the Bible than hear the Word of God criticised from Genesis to Revelation.

The message must first grip the preacher before it is likely to grip his audience. To a very great extent the effect of Gospel preaching upon the hearers will be not only according to the personality of the preacher, but

also according to the power of his preaching, and the sublime simplicity of his message. The comparatively young Thessalonian converts were reminded that the Gospel came unto them not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance—three essential accompaniments. Why was this? Why did the Gospel come to those people in *power*? Surely because it was preached in power! Why did it come in all the *convicting and converting energy of the Holy Spirit*? Surely because it was heralded by men who were Spirit-filled! Why was the Gospel received in *much assurance*? Surely because it was preached in much assurance!

We need to emphasise the great fundamental truths of the Bible. How little is the heinousness of *sin* understood in these days! How little is the fact grasped that sin implies “missing the mark,” or falling short of God’s glory! How slow people are to appreciate the inflexibility of *divine righteousness*—that righteousness implies a perfectly straight line which God Himself has drawn, and that the slightest deviation therefrom constitutes *unrighteousness*. How little is the grand truth of *redemption* understood—the act of “releasing from captivity at a price,” just as the slaves in the British Colonies were redeemed to a life of liberty in the early part of the nineteenth century at a cost of £20,000,000 sterling! How comparatively few there are who, hearing the Gospel, enter into the *full assurance* of salvation! How little is the grand significance of the *resurrection of Christ* grasped by the multitudes! How slow even Christian people are to

appreciate the all-sufficiency of *Christ's unfinished work at the Father's right hand*—that He is our Advocate when we sin, and our Great High Priest at all times, ever sympathetic toward His people, ever interceding for them, and ever able to save them to the uttermost !

Every time a servant of God delivers the Divine message he should preach as though it were his last opportunity to testify for Christ on earth.

When Mr. Brownlow North preached for the first time he captivated his audience to so great an extent that every eye was fixed on him. He riveted and retained the attention of all, and when he met the blaspheming sophistry of the infidel he carried the bulk of his audience along with him. At length he was forced to stop through sheer exhaustion and want of breath. Many cried out, "Go on, sir ; we want to hear more." But he was physically unable to say more. The voice of an old man was then heard, saying, "Sir, your words should be written in letters of gold."

We need more preaching of this sort to-day. We need gossellers who mean what they say, and who say what they mean. One great actor was asked how he and his colleagues kept their listeners in rapt attention, whilst preachers, armed with a theme sufficiently great to sway multitudes, too frequently well-nigh sent their audiences to sleep. The reply was to this effect: "*We* speak as if our fictions were truth ; *they* as if their truth were fiction."

To be an ambassador for Christ is a high and holy calling, and with that privilege is linked a tremendous responsibility. St. Paul realised this when

he wrote, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God." This profound ministry of reconciliation includes every aspect of the Gospel. By this means the eyes of the spiritually blind are opened; those who have been for years in the fetters of Satan are loosed from their shackles and enjoy the forgiveness of sins; the ungodly are not only made holy, but are also granted an heavenly inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

The preacher should pre-engage himself with his message. He should remember that it is always better to have something to say than to have to say something. It is dangerous to wait until the last moment for a sudden spasm of inspiration. Those who make a habit of this sort of thing often find themselves bound by "fixed" addresses. It also encourages laziness. One of old said, "While I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." Before the flame of Gospel eloquence is kindled, there must be that deep exercise of heart—that silent meditation in the sanctuary—which produces a message of Holy Ghost power.

Certain preachers (though one sincerely hopes that the number is comparatively infinitesimal) apply to themselves the words, "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak: for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you," and assume that they are perfectly justified in acting upon the principle which this passage indicates. *But*

these instructions were given for peculiar circumstances. The Lord Jesus was forewarning His disciples that the day would arrive when they should, for His Name's sake, be delivered up before the Councils; scourged in their synagogues, and brought before governors and kings for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. When the disciples found themselves in this situation they were not to be unduly alarmed, nor disturbed in mind as to what they should say, seeing that God would vouchsafe to them a special wisdom which would thoroughly confound their adversaries.

Stephen experienced this special dispensation of power and wisdom when he stood before the Sanhedrin and delivered his superb defence recorded in Acts, chapter seven. No doubt St. Paul experienced a similar supernatural leading when he testified so nobly before Felix, Festus, Agrippa, Nero, and other great men.

But this is altogether different from expecting Providence to grant a special supply of inspiration any time we are expected to preach. When King David approached Araunah the Jebusite to arrange the purchase of his threshing floor for the purpose of building there an altar unto the Lord, Araunah offered to make a present of the threshing floor to the king. But David replied, "Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: *neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing*" (2 Samuel xxiv, 24). If a discourse which has for its theme the weightiest truths in the universe costs the preacher nothing by way of time, thought, and careful

investigation, that discourse is worth precious little to himself or to his congregation.

The preacher should be careful not to *misquote* texts, nor to *mislocate* them. He should also guard against careless errors when referring to the Epistles. How frequently one hears Jude's letter mentioned as the Epistle *to* Jude, instead of the Epistle *of* Jude. These may be considered matters of minor importance, but they ought to be remembered.

The use of illustrations in Gospel meetings is helpful, with this proviso—be sure your illustrations *illustrate*. Certain illustrations have been used so frequently that they ought to have been superannuated years ago.

Illustrations divide themselves into three classes, namely, Scriptural, literal, and hypothetical.

A splendid Scriptural illustration may be gathered from St. Paul's letter to Philemon, wherein is mentioned a slave, named Onesimus, who had robbed Philemon his master and had fled to Rome, where, in the providence of God, he heard the Gospel from the Apostle Paul's lips, and was genuinely converted to God. The Apostle subsequently sends Onesimus back to Philemon with this message, "Receive him as myself," followed by a further injunction, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account: I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it." This beautiful incident constitutes an effective picture of heavenly grace toward the sinner. However seriously the sinner has wronged God: however great is the debt he owes his Creator, there was One Who said, "Put that on Mine account, I will repay it," and so the Lord

Jesus Christ suffered at Calvary for all the wrong wherewith the wrongdoer has wronged God, and thereby paid the entire debt. In other words, all the sinner's demerit is reckoned to Christ, and all Christ's merit is reckoned to the sinner.

Literal illustrations are so numerous that no useful purpose would be served in quoting one, but a sample hypothetical illustration may prove suggestive and helpful. An exceedingly rich man (far richer than any man living), who owns a business of world-wide dimensions, meets a street urchin who is covered with filth and clothed with rags. There is, however, something in the lad's countenance which appeals to this man of wealth, and he invites the boy to his palatial residence. The invitation is gladly accepted, and before many hours have elapsed the lad is comfortably housed, stripped of his rags, cleansed from his filth, and arrayed in becoming apparel. The lad's benefactor then takes him into his business, and shews him not only *how* he does certain things, but also *why* he does them. This continues for some time, when one day a thought flashes across the boy's mind, and he reasons with himself thus: "I see now the object of all this. My master's purpose is to constitute me a *partner with him* in this colossal business. This is why he interested himself in me when I was a street urchin. This is why he brought me home, and cleansed, and clothed me. Yes, I see it all now, and it is wonderful—altogether wonderful."

The application of the above illustration is obvious, though the picture fails in at least one point. There

was something in the lad's countenance which appealed to his benefactor, but there is *nothing* in the sinner which can appeal to the Heavenly Benefactor Who can see nought but the sinner's sinfulness and unworthiness.

On a certain day Jeremiah the Prophet went down to the potter's house to see for himself a work on the wheels—a vessel in the process of manufacture. The vessel which the potter made was unfortunately marred, and he then *re-made* it, “as seemed good to the potter to make it.” This was primarily a lesson for the benefit of the children of Israel who had, as a nation, failed so lamentably to carry out God's purposes, but whom the Divine Potter was willing to re-make if only they would place themselves unreservedly in His skilful hands: “O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel” (Jeremiah xviii, 1 to 6).

It is sadly possible for a minister of the Gospel to become a *marred vessel*—one whom God is unable to use because of some foreign substance which has found its way into the vessel, thereby spoiling the original design. What is wanted? Nothing less than a recasting. God desires to have His way with us, moulding and fashioning us according to His own will. He longs that we should be vessels worthy of His divine workmanship, answering to His delicate touch, and willing to be under His perfect control.

There were at least two things of paramount importance which Jeremiah witnessed, (1) the pliability of the clay, and (2) the skilful hands of the potter.

Both are necessary if we are to be exactly what God would have us be, namely, VESSELS UNTO HONOUR.

“ Go, *hide* thyself ” . . . (Ere Carmel’s triumph came).
 A deeper life in Him, we all must know.
 We all must “ come apart ” with Christ alone,
 Ere He can use us. He must bring us low.
 “ Go, *hide* thyself.”

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“ Go, *show* thyself ” . . . (Ere Carmel’s triumph came).
 The drying brook of Cherith wrought the power !
 The soul that waits *alone* upon its God,
 Is fitted for His use in service hour.
 “ Go, *show* thyself.”

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I Kings xvii, 3 and xviii, 1.

L. M. Warner.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECRET OF SUCCESSFUL SERVICE

(Thoughts on Isaiah vi)

The Prophet's Vision

“ IN the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.”

It has been well said that for versatility of expression and brilliancy of imagery Isaiah had no superior, not even a rival. His style marks the climax of Hebrew literary art. Both his periods and descriptions are most finished and sublime. He is a perfect artist in words. Beauty and strength are characteristic of his entire book, which is considered to be the great masterpiece of Hebrew literature. He is famous for his richness of vocabulary and synonyms.* The chapter now engaging our attention forms a splendid example of Isaiah's exquisite style.

The prophet informs us that in the year in which King Uzziah died he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne.

King Uzziah had been smitten with the loathsome disease of leprosy because of his deliberate interference with sacred things, the handling of which had been strictly allocated to the priests of the Lord.

Whilst Isaiah is in the temple of God, he is transferred

*The International Standard Bible Encyclopædia.

in spirit from a scene of leprosy and defilement to the realm of unsullied holiness. He has a vision of the King of Kings, enthroned, high and lifted up, with His train filling the temple. *This is the first step towards successful service.* The servant must be much in the presence of God, contemplating His holiness, righteousness, and other eternal attributes. One reason why the exceeding sinfulness of sin is not preached to-day as it should be preached is because the infinite holiness of God is so little appreciated.

To return to the vision. Above the throne stood the seraphim. Each of these mysterious creatures had six wings, two being used to cover the face, two to cover the feet, and two to fly—i.e. *two-thirds* for worship, and one third for service. The prophet listens with intense interest as these celestial beings cry one to another, and as he listens he observes that they are occupied with one subject only, namely, *the holiness of God.* Their precise phraseology is: “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.” A similar scene is depicted in Revelation, chapter four, where we are introduced to One Who is seated upon a rainbow-encircled throne. In the midst, and round about the throne are four living creatures, each one having six wings: and they rest not night and day, saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”

Considering these two visions jointly we see that one of the outstanding subjects with which the heavenly hosts are occupied is, and ever has been, the sublime topic of divine holiness.

God is eternally holy. Were He not so He could not be what He is. He dwells in the high and *holy* place. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and He cannot look upon sin. The heavens are not clean in His sight. His name is holy; as the Psalmist is so careful to inform us, "Holy and reverend is His name" (Psalm cxi, 9). (Incidentally this is the only place in the Bible where the word "reverend" occurs.) He charges His angels with folly. The very throne upon which He sits is a throne of holiness. In fact, every thing pertaining to God is holy.

Of all the divine attributes emphasised in the hearing of the children of Israel after their redemption from Egypt, the most frequently stated was *the holiness of God*. Especially is this discernible in the book of Leviticus.

God is holy : Christ is holy : the Spirit is holy : the Book we love to read and study is rightly designated "The *Holy Bible*." The title "THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL" occurs no less than twenty-one times in the prophecy of Isaiah.

One of the most inspiring songs ever sung by human lips was the song of Moses, which is recorded in Exodus, chapter xv. In this exquisite composition the mighty power of God is indicated in almost every verse. Pharaoh's chariots and hosts were cast into the sea. God's right hand became glorious in power, dashing in pieces the enemy of His people. When Pharaoh proudly boasted that he would pursue; he would overtake; he would draw his sword; his hand would destroy—"God blew with His wind; the sea

covered them ; they sank as lead in the mighty waters." Thus was the power of God manifested in the deliverance of His people and in the destruction of their enemies. But we do well to remember that in the midst of this thrilling recapitulation of divine wonders, these words occur : " Who is like unto Thee, O Lord among the gods ? Who is like Thee ? GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS, fearful in praises, doing wonders ! " (Exodus xv, 11.)

We are exhorted to worship the Lord in the beauty of *holiness* : our privilege is to serve Him in *holiness* and righteousness all our days ; and we are called upon to give thanks at the remembrance of His *holiness*.

The greatest and most terrible manifestation of the holiness of God was seen at Calvary. If the question is raised why the Saviour cried that most piercing of all cries, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " the answer is found in Psalm xxii, 3 : " *But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*" When the Lord Jesus Christ became the sin-bearer, and the sinner's substitute, the hiding of God's face was essential. During those three dreadful hours of unsurpassed suffering, two things were clearly revealed, namely, the holiness of God and the awfulness of sin.

Following the prophet's vision we see,

The Prophet's Estimate of Himself

Let us read the exact words, and endeavour to appreciate their significance. " Woe is me for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

This was inevitable. No sooner had the prophet a vision of the holiness of God than he received a revelation of his own worthlessness. Every thing around and within was unclean. The words, "I am undone" indicate an acknowledgment of the prophet's helplessness. The expression, "I am a man of unclean lips," indicates an acknowledgment of his unworthiness. The phrase, "For I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips," indicates a realisation of the need around him which he was, of himself, utterly unable to meet. In the previous chapter, Isaiah pronounces six distinct woes upon the wicked, but when he sees the King, the Lord of Hosts, his language is, "WOE IS *ME*."

It has ever been so. When God gave the law on Mount Sinai there were thunders, lightnings, blackness, darkness, tempest, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud. The sight was so awe-inspiring that the people trembled. Indeed, so terrible was the sight that Moses, the man of God, the meekest of all men, the man with whom God spake face to face as a man speaketh to his friend—even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

The Patriarch Job had heard a lot *about* God, and had also heard His voice, but there came a time when Job had a remarkable revelation of Jehovah. What was the result? His own words were, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xlii, 6).

When the Apostle of Love saw the Lord Jesus in all His glorified humanity, clothed with a garment down to the foot, girt about the breasts with a golden girdle; His head and His hairs white like wool, as white as

snow ; His eyes as a flame of fire ; His feet as fine brass as though they burned in a furnace ; His voice as the sound of many waters ; a sharp two-edged sword proceeding from His mouth ; His face as the sun shining in all his strength—when the Apostle John saw this amazing sight, he fell at His feet as dead. He had had a vision of the holiness and majesty of his Lord !

When Saul of Tarsus drew nigh unto the city of Damascus, whither he was bound on a mission of hateful persecution and cruelty, he saw a light from heaven above the brightness of the Eastern sun at noonday, and, because of the glory of that light, proud Saul of Tarsus was struck down to the earth, where he lay helpless and astonished. *He had seen the risen Christ !*

And so with us. The more we are occupied with Christ, the less we shall think of ourselves. Our language should ever be similar to that of John the Baptist : “ He must increase, but I must decrease.” Let *Him* fill all the heaven—let *me* fill a little space, if, thereby, God be glorified. One of the greatest qualifications we can possess for the service of God is a realisation of our own helplessness and unworthiness. We read concerning the Old Testament heroes that “ out of weakness they were made strong.” Their utter weakness gave God the opportunity of making them what they subsequently became.

We now arrive at the next division of this chapter, namely,

The Prophet Adjusted

The words are exceedingly striking : “ Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his

hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar : and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips : and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

Whether these words are to be taken literally or figuratively does not really matter. What does matter is the important truth contained in these verses, the central thought of which is SACRIFICE. The prophet, in his unclean condition, was totally unfit for divine service. Adjustment was imperative. But there can be no adjustment in the spiritual life apart from sacrifice. The live coal which was taken from the altar of burnt offering was applied to the lips of the prophet, and by this means the unclean servant was sanctified and fit for the Master's use.

No believer can afford to wander far from the Cross. The great statement recorded in 1 John i, 7 : " The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," although frequently applied to the unregenerate, is primarily for the child of God. That precious blood which was shed at Calvary is sufficient to cleanse away all defilement, and, therefore, when we realise our sinfulness and unworthiness, it is our privilege to plead the virtue and efficacy of that sacrifice which we proved to be so effective when we came to Him originally.

When Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, he found himself in the wrong place, and got into serious trouble by foolishly giving the king of Egypt to understand that Sarai was not his wife but his sister. Pharaoh told Abram clearly that, being thus misled, he might have taken Sarai to be his wife, and apparently he would

have done so had it not been for the fact that the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues. It was a near thing. Abram found that communion with God was impossible in Egypt. He, therefore, had to return to Canaan, and it is most significant that he came to Bethel unto the place where his tent had been *at the beginning*, unto the place of the altar, which he had made there *at the first*. Yes, Abram the wanderer found it was necessary for him to return unto "the place of the altar," when communion with his God was restored, and when he was enabled once again to rejoice in all the good things which God had given to him.

One reason why Christ "suffered without the gate" was that He might sanctify His people with His own blood (Hebrews xiii, 12), and we are told that if, under the ancient order of things, the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer *sprinkling the unclean*, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Dead works are the works of the flesh. The works of the flesh are necessarily defiled, inasmuch as in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing. Hence the necessity of the blood of Christ to purge the conscience from these *dead works*.

God's instruments must be clean. The reason why Israel were defeated so ignominiously at Ai was because there was sin in the camp, and until the sin was judged victory was impossible. When the Lord Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, one of the first things He did was to

cleanse the temple of the money changers and of them that sold doves. When this cleansing process was complete "the blind and the lame came to Him and were healed." *Then* was heard the sweet voices of the children singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Let us remember the Old Testament saying, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord," and also the New Testament exhortation, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, *and touch not the unclean thing.*"

The last thing to observe is,

The Prophet's Commission:

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me."

The prophet is now a clean instrument. He has been in the presence of the Lord; he has realised his unworthiness; he has been satisfactorily adjusted—he is now ready to be anything, to do anything, and to go anywhere according to the will of God. He hears the call to service, and at once volunteers in the words "Here am I, send me." He gladly places himself at God's disposal. Whatever the future might open for him, however difficult the task, though countless enemies might endeavour to hinder the work committed to his charge—he is prepared to meet them all in the strength which God alone can give, thus reminding us of the triumphant note of the Apostle, "I am strong for all things through the Christ Who empowers me" (Philippians iv, 13). What was the prophet's commis-

sion? It was to inform the people that hearing they did not understand, and seeing they did not perceive. By his message he was to make the heart of the people fat; to make their ears heavy; and to shut their eyes; lest at any time they should see, hear, understand, be converted, and be healed. Of all commissions given to the servants of God in past ages, this was one of the most extraordinary. To say the least, it was anything but encouraging. But what followed was even stranger still. When the prophet asked, "Lord, how long?" he was told: "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without men, and the land be utterly desolate." Surely a more gloomy and despairing outlook could scarcely be imagined. Not a single ray of encouragement is discernible in these verses.

It may assist us in the understanding of this strange commission when we bear in mind that it was primarily a prophetic utterance concerning the Jews which was fulfilled in the days of our Lord's earthly ministry (*see* Matthew xiii, 14 and 15). The prophecy was also quoted by the Apostle Paul when his message was rejected by the Jews and accepted by the Gentiles (Acts xxviii, 25 to 28). In 2 Corinthians iii, 15, St. Paul also reminds us that this veil of unbelief continues to rest upon the nation of Israel.

There is a grand principle underlying all this. If we are cleansed from all defilement, and are walking in fellowship with God, we shall be prepared to do anything so long as He is glorified and souls are attracted to the Saviour. If it be His will for us to stay where we are, we shall stay. If it be His will for us to go to

some remote corner of the earth to preach Christ, we shall go. We shall know something of the blessedness of being in perfect agreement with the Master. We shall respond to the summons by saying cheerfully and spontaneously, "Here am I, send me." We shall know the joy of being His servant, unfettered, and unattracted by the allurements of the world.

But it would be a mistake to close this chapter without noticing the closing words of Isaiah vi. Although it is true that in the verses we have been contemplating *hope* appears to be an absent quality, yet we are informed that in the midst of the forsaking there shall be a tenth, though the fulfilment of this promise would be seen long after the prophet had completed his mission and passed off the scene.

Our commission is not nearly so depressing as was Isaiah's. We *shall* reap if we faint not, but more of this side of the subject will be found in the chapter entitled, "Incentives and Encouragements." The secret of successful service is this—*Being in a direct line with the will and purpose of God.* For this we need to realise how great and holy He is, and how utterly unworthy we are. If adjustment is necessary He is willing to adjust us here and now. So shall we go forward to do His bidding, serving Him with gladness of heart, and proclaiming His glorious Gospel as He opens the door of opportunity.

CHAPTER VII

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING CHRIST

SERVICE is important. Worship constitutes a greater privilege than service. *The life we live is more important than either.* If my life is wrong, my service is ineffective. If my life is inconsistent, my worship is mere mockery. If my life is out of harmony with the will of God, everything else must be out of harmony. Every Christian should be a living epistle—not a “dead letter.” Let us be careful not to follow the example of the preacher of whom it was said that he preached so eloquently and lived so inconsistently that when he was in the pulpit he ought never to have got out of it, and when he was out of it he ought never to have got into it. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: *It is the life which tells.* It is dreadfully possible to have a name to live and to be void of all spiritual vitality.

When the blind man, mentioned in St. John, chapter nine, received his sight, the first people who noticed the change and began to ask inquisitive questions were *the neighbours.* We who profess to be followers of Christ need to remember that we are being watched by those who live in the same street, and more closely perhaps than we sometimes imagine.

How carefully was the Lord Jesus watched! His enemies watched Him as to what He would *do*, and also as to what He would *say*. They endeavoured to find some flaw in His flawless life. They tried ever so hard to entangle Him in His speech, *but they were thoroughly disappointed.*

Much more is expected of a man who professes to be a Christian than of one who makes no profession whatever. If people will not trouble to see Christ in the Scriptures, they ought to see Him in the lives of His followers. A man was once asked if he were a Christian, and his answer was, "No, but if my brother continues to live as he is living I shall be compelled to become one."

The thing which counts most in a man's life is *character*. We need not trouble much concerning our reputation if our character is as it should be. One reason why God allows us to have trials, difficulties, and such like is that we might become men and women of real worth and stamina.

John the Baptist, to whom reference has already been made more than once in this volume, was a man who had the hallmark of character stamped upon every detail of his life. Our Lord asked a number of interesting questions concerning him, as, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" Nay, John was no frail reed bent first one way and then another according to the caprice of the elements. He was rather like an oak, which, when receiving the full blast of the storm, drives its roots ever deeper into mother earth. "But what

went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft (i.e. delicate) raiment?" Nay, the gorgeously apparelled had their habitations, not in the obscure wilderness but in the courts and palaces of kings, whereas the Baptist was content to wander from place to place clad in the unpretentious clothing of camel's hair, and a girdle of skin about his loins. As for his daily repast, that consisted of locusts and wild honey. "But what went ye out for to see? A prophet?" Yes, indeed, he was all that—and more. He was one of the greatest of the prophets. He was a burning and a shining light. His testimony for God was both penetrating and far-reaching. He was a man of power simply because he was a *man of God*.

St. Paul was a great preacher, and his preaching was signally blessed by God. But it was not so much his public utterances which stamped him as being an outstanding servant of the Lord—*it was the life he lived*. His life's motto was, "For to me to live is Christ." This was ever before him as the ideal. Nothing else really mattered. He was willing to endure privations, persecutions, distresses, and every other form of personal discomfort if only Christ was magnified in his mortal body. It was a bold challenge he made to the Thessalonian believers when he wrote and said, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you", but he was sure of his ground. He carried a fragrance of Christ wherever he went. He could exhort his fellow-Christians to follow him as he followed Christ. And not only so, but there are two instances on record

when he enjoined the believers to follow him, *without adding the qualifying clause, "as I follow Christ."* When he wrote to Timothy and charged him to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus ; a diligent husbandman ; an approved workman ; a vessel unto honour ; a patient servant ; a man of God—he was really exhorting his son in the faith to be what he was himself. When the Apostle wrote to Titus, another of his children in the faith, he emphasised the truth that the grace of God not only brings salvation, but it also teaches us *how to live*—soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age. It is whilst thus living that we are enabled to look for the consummation of our highest hope, the coming of the Lord, never losing sight of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The Apostle Peter was also a great preacher—probably a more attractive orator in many ways than his contemporary to whom he refers as his "beloved brother Paul." And what has St. Peter to say relating to this subject of living ? Many things ! In his first Epistle he warns us against fashioning ourselves according to those former lusts which characterised us during the period of our spiritual ignorance. He follows this by exhorting us to be *holy* in all manner of behaviour, basing his exhortation on the Old Testament charge to Israel, "Be ye holy for I am holy." He then lays upon us the responsibility of laying aside those things which should have no place in the believers' programme, such as malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies,

and evil speaking. He reminds us of our dignified fourfold calling, namely, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, an adequate realisation of which will enable us to shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. He enjoins us to love as brethren, to be pitiful and courteous ; not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, seeing that to these very things we have been called. He charges us not to live the rest of our lives in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God ; not to suffer as thieves, nor as evil-doers, nor as busybodies in other people's matters, though if we suffer as Christians we need not be ashamed, but rather glorify God thereby. He emphasises the need of humility, sobriety, and vigilance, and prays that we may be adjusted, established, strengthened, and settled.

In his second letter the Apostle informs us that God has graciously given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, and in the light of these gifts from heaven it is incumbent upon us to manifest the essential virtues of Christian life, such as faith, courage, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love. If these things be in us and abound (as in truth they should), we shall neither be idle nor unfruitful. If these things are lacking it means that we are spiritually blind, unable to see afar off, and that we have forgotten that great event in our history—the purging from our old sins. As the writer approaches the end of this second Epistle he describes in the most vivid manner possible “ the day of the Lord ”, when the

heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth with all its works shall be burned up. In view of these terrible happenings, says he:—"What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy behaviour and godliness?" He then declares with the same vividness that we, according to the divine promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, thus pointing us forward to that happy time when God will make all things new. In view of this glorious prospect, says he:—"Be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless." And so the true Christian should ever be growing in grace, and in the full knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Whose steps of holiness and obedience he is enjoined to follow.

St. John, the Apostle of love, could be stern at times, even to the point of severity. The importance of holy, practical living is seen twining and intertwining itself throughout his three Epistles. When he mentions the subject of *fellowship* he gives his readers to understand most clearly that if believers are walking in darkness fellowship is impossible, for the simple yet profound reason that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. This means, of course, that if we say that we have fellowship with Him and, at the same time, are living inconsistent lives, *we lie* and do not the truth. But if we are walking in the light as He is in the light, fellowship is our present portion, and this condition of soul means the enjoyment of heaven upon earth. When he mentions the subject of *love*, the Apostle makes it

quite clear that if we say that we love God, and fail to keep His commandments, we are hypocrites, because love necessarily implies obedience. Connected with this is the duty of a Christian loving his fellow-Christians. If a man profess to be a believer and hate his brother, that man is not of God, and such an one might well look to his bearings as to whether he was ever really born from above. Also, love must be *practical*, and not merely theoretical. If a man possess this world's goods and see his brother in a state of genuine poverty, and he deliberately shut up his bowels of compassion from him, "how dwelleth the love of God in him"? It is so easy to love in word and in tongue. It is quite another matter to love in deed and in truth. Doctrine is one thing—consistent living is another. Theory is one thing—practice is another. Both are important, *and both should harmonise*. The Apostle adopts the same attitude when he refers to the all-important matter of abiding in Christ. If we say that we abide in Christ and omit to walk as He walked, we are self-deceivers, because our statement is flatly contradicted by our action. The expression "if we say" is one of the features of St. John's first Epistle, and it implies the common danger of saying too much. Let us *think* before we speak. Let us *say* less and *do* more. If we know these things, happy are we, not if we simply talk about them, but if we *do* them.

The Apostle James is the most practical writer in the New Testament, and in the five chapters which comprise his Epistle we are taught what might be aptly termed "the rules of life." Like a qualified physician he

carefully diagnoses a case, and like an experienced surgeon he endeavours to localise the cancer and remove it. We have not to travel far into his Epistle before we discover these words, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Throughout this Epistle the writer has before him the *double-minded man*. This is why he uses language so strong that a careful reading of the Epistle is sufficient to make one wonder what sort of a life, after all, one has lived! His contrasts, his metaphors, his facts, his comparisons, his undisguised censures, his practical exhortations are all brought to bear upon the life of the individual. His Epistle is really the Sermon on the Mount in miniature. Let us see how practical is his teaching. Mentioning the Word of God, he says:—"Be ye *doers* of the Word, and not *hearers* only, deceiving your own selves." What is the use of our reading our Bibles if we fail to obey the divine precepts? The person who merely *reads* or *hears* the Word without doing it is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror, then goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. Our responsibility is to look into the divine mirror (i.e. the Holy Scriptures), *and to continue looking* until the Word of God takes hold of us in such a way that we shall spontaneously translate our reading into a life of love. Shortly after this the Apostle introduces us to what he terms *The Royal Law*:—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—and if we fulfil that law we shall do well, as that is something pre-eminently practical. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father consists not merely in visiting places of

worship, but also in visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and need ; not in sanctimonious platitudes, but in keeping oneself unspotted from the world ; not in being double-minded, but in manifesting the mind of Christ. We are not surprised, therefore, that St. James emphasises the importance of *works* as an evidence that we are justified by *faith*. His argument is irrefutable. He asks what profit is there if a man say that he has faith and does not trouble himself one iota about those who are not so happily circumstanced as he ? It is one thing to manifest faith *without* works (which, of course, is ESSENTIAL for salvation) : it is altogether another proposition to manifest our faith *by* our works (which, of course, should be the ambition of every true believer in Christ).

The Apostle James is seen at his best when he handles the subject of the use and misuse of the tongue. No other writer in the New Testament deals with this matter exactly as he does. In nothing should we exercise more minute care than in the use of this little, but mischievous, member. St. James tells us that if a man is able to control his tongue, he is able to control any part of his body. This is indeed a startling proposition, but the writer amplifies his statement by quoting practical examples, such as a bit in a horse's mouth, a helm attached to a ship, a spark alighting on a forest. These devices are wonderfully simple, but the results are out of all proportion to the means used. By placing a bit in a horse's mouth we are able to turn about its whole body. A relatively

small helm is attached to a huge liner or battleship, and by this means the vessel is turned this way or that according to the will of the helmsman. An entire forest is set ablaze by a match or a stray spark from a passing locomotive.

These are the metaphors used by the Apostle James to shew the tremendous possibilities of the tongue for good or ill. When allowed to have its way the tongue becomes a fire, a world of iniquity; it defileth the whole body; and it is set on fire of Gehenna. The tongue cannot be tamed by man. Birds, beasts, serpents, and even fishes can be tamed, but not the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With the same member we bless God and curse men. A natural spring never sends forth at the same time sweet water and bitter, but the tongue can send forth both messages of tenderness and love, and arrows poisoned with the poison of hell. Unbridled, the tongue is one of the cruellest weapons in the universe. *Controlled by God*, it is one of the greatest blessings to mankind.

St. James passes on to the subject of *patience*. We have heard of the patience of Job—who hasn't? Job is set forth as one of the greatest examples of suffering affliction, and of patience that we have within the compass of the Scriptures. If we are to "win the crowd," we must cultivate this golden virtue. Impatience never exalts Christ. The husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and for this it behoves him to have *long* patience, because natural irritability can neither increase the harvest nor accelerate it. How

frequently do the words, "Ye have need of patience," apply in the ordinary course of our daily life! How frequently do we need to remember the injunction, "Let patience have her perfect work!" How frequently do we need to "pull ourselves up" lest we say things which we may have subsequently to regret! How far-reaching is the exhortation that we are to be patient, not now and again, but continuously "unto the coming of the Lord!"

Thus we see how thoroughly practical is the Apostle James. Happy is the man who appreciates the value of his writing and seeks to act accordingly.

We cannot close this chapter without a reference to the highest of all authorities on the subject of *living*, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. A large proportion of His teaching was along the line of personal behaviour. He was the living embodiment of all that He taught. We see in Him our perfect pattern, and as we keep along the straight path which He trod we need never be afraid of losing our way. The "Sermon on the Mount" is crowded with everyday truths, and let us ever bear in mind that this notable discourse is not merely dispensational—it has a present application to Christian conduct. Our Lord presents to His hearers two standards, the earthly and the heavenly. The earthly standard is embodied in the words, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew vii, 12). We are not to act toward others as they act toward us, but as they *should* act toward us in thought, word, and deed. The heavenly standard is worded thus:

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. v, 48). We have only to compare our past history with these two ideals to see how far short we have come of either of them.

In our Lord's teaching He emphasised the universal principle that a tree is known by its fruit. Men do not gather grapes from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles. Thorns produce thorns, and thistles produce thistles. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. So it is with the Christian life—it is known by the fruit it bears. One great characteristic of the world is *selfishness*, but we who belong to Christ should be *unselfish*. We are under an obligation to follow the steps of our Master by loving our enemies, blessing those who curse us, doing good to those who hate us, and praying for those who despitefully use us and persecute us. When we *give* to others, our gifts should be given unostentatiously, the left hand being blissfully ignorant of the benefits conferred by the right hand. When we *judge*, our judgment should begin with ourselves. Before beholding and criticising the tiny mote that is in my brother's eye, I should consider the conspicuous beam that is in my own eye, and it is possible that the difference between the failure of my brother and that of myself may be all the difference between a straw and a piece of timber.

Such is the practical teaching of this sermon preached by the lips of the Son of God. If these instructions do not apply to present day believers, we might just as

well reject every other practical exhortation mentioned in the New Testament.

But similar teaching is found in our Lord's other discourses, as in St. Luke, chapter xi, 36, where He says that if the whole body be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light as when the bright shining of a candle gives light, and nothing but light. This should be the aspiration of every Christian: the whole body to be full of light, *having no part dark*—each thought, each word, and each action to be so definitely controlled by the Holy Spirit that the entire life might be one glorious radiation of light.

What the Lord Jesus most condemned was *hypocrisy*. This sort of thing brought forth some of the most scathing remarks recorded in the Gospels. How terrible were His words to the religious people of His day:—“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, and within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also” (Matthew xxiii, 25-26). Men see that which is *without*, and they judge accordingly. God sees that which is *within*, and He judges accordingly. If we are wrong in the centre, we shall be wrong in the circumference. The heart is the mainspring of life: therefore let the *inside* be clean, that the *outside* may be clean also.

We need not multiply words. Enough has been written to shew how punctilious we ought to be in every detail of life and conduct. All the power we need

for this is centred in the risen Christ, and that power has been transmitted to us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore endeavour to WIN THE CROWD by the lives we live.

CHAPTER VIII

INCENTIVES AND ENCOURAGEMENTS

It has ever been God's pleasure to use the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the mighty.

The history of Gideon should prove both an incentive and an encouragement to all God's servants. Gideon thought nothing of himself. His family was poor in Manasseh, and he acknowledged that he was the least in his father's house. And yet it was to this man that the angel of the Lord came, saying:—"The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." It was upon this man (notwithstanding his natural disadvantages) that the Lord looked, saying, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hands of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" It was this man who received the invigorating promise, "*Surely* I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

When Gideon received this definite commission, his first thought was to gather to his standard as many men as possible, and he succeeded in raising an army of thirty-two thousand men. But this number was too great for God's purpose. The victory was to be *the Lord's victory*, and if Gideon with his thirty-odd

thousand soldiers had defeated the enemy, Israel would have vaunted themselves, saying, "Mine own hand hath saved me." A test was given—a test of *courage*. Those who were fearful were told to return home, and there returned of the people twenty-two thousand. Only ten thousand remained. Even now the number was too great. God was about to shew to Gideon, to Israel, and to the enemy how He could accomplish the apparently impossible with a handful of devoted men. Therefore a further test was given—the test of *alacrity*. The men were brought down to a running stream, and Gideon was told to observe how the men drank of the water. Nine thousand, seven hundred occupied time by kneeling upon their knees to gather the water. The residue, numbering three hundred, were so eager to fight the Lord's battles that they would not take the trouble even to kneel upon the ground, but they gathered the water with their hands, lapping "as a dog lappeth."

Then came the message: "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand." And so it came to pass. The men were divided into three companies; a trumpet was placed in the hand of each man; also a pitcher in which was a lamp. Then came the critical moment. The trumpets were blown; the pitchers were broken (thus allowing the light to shine forth); the shout was heard, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The impossible was then accomplished. Although the Midianites were as grasshoppers on the earth for multitude, there was nothing but consternation and chaos

in their camp. Every man's sword was set against his fellow, and the entire host fled in abject terror, leaving Gideon and his faithful few gloriously and completely victorious *without a single casualty*. It was indeed the Lord's victory, but there was a beautiful partnership between the divine and the human, indicated by the words:—"The sword of the Lord *and of Gideon*." Our God is the God of miracles. With three hundred men, plus one, He turned to flight the army which Israel had feared for seven long years. If three hundred devoted Christians to-day were thoroughly united and bold enough to place themselves at God's disposal, what could be accomplished?

For our further encouragement we might well consider how God has frequently taken up members of the *younger generation* for His own grand accomplishments. The first prominent mention of *Joseph* is in Genesis, chapter xxxvii, where we see him at the tender age of *seventeen*. What happens? God takes this young man and makes him one of the most beautiful types of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

One of the most thrilling chapters in the Bible is 1 Samuel, xvii, where the fascinating story of David and Goliath is recorded. One can almost hear Goliath challenging Israel in his proud words:—"Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you; and let him come down to me. . . . I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man, that we may fight together." But Israel had lost their confidence in God, and were altogether helpless. At the sound of Goliath's words they were dismayed, and

greatly afraid. Even Saul, the king, shrank from the conflict. But in the midst of this hopeless confusion, when all appeared to be lost, God takes up *a lad* who is the youngest of his father's sons, a ruddy, fair-countenanced youth, *David*, and through him brings about a mighty victory for His people. Great Goliath, with all his military paraphernalia and with all his boasting, is utterly defeated. Young David, with five smooth stones and a sling, and with his faith firmly fixed in God, is completely victorious. *One person with God* always constitutes a majority.

When Stephen was stoned to death, we read that the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a *young man* whose name was Saul. What happens? God, in His inscrutable wisdom, takes up this young man, revolutionises his life and uses him in such a way that neither the Church nor the world will ever know what it owes to the subsequent life, example, influence, teaching, and writings of the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

In Acts xvi, 1, *Timothy* comes on the scene for the first time. He is quite young, and, apparently, quite unassuming. The brethren are able to give a good report of him, so consistent was his life. And God takes up this young disciple and uses him so effectively that Timothy becomes one of the outstanding pillars of the Church.

The above instances remind one of a phrase which occurs in St. John vi, 9 :—“ *There is a lad here.*” Yes, a lad may at this very moment be reading this volume. My young brother, remember that you belong to

Christ, and He requires your talents, your abilities, and all you possess. By His death and resurrection He claims you, spirit, soul, and body. If only you were to hand everything over to Him, there is no knowing how He may use *even you* in your future days in "winning the crowd" for Him!

There may be a lass reading these lines. My young sister, you, too, belong not to yourself but to Him who purchased you at the awful cost of His precious blood. *He wants you.* He has need of you. He longs to fill you with holy joy and effective service. He desires to have his own way with you. And if you are wise enough to surrender *all* to Him, who can tell what a blessing *even you* may become in "winning the crowd" for Him!

Very little things have often changed the face of the world. The cry of a weeping infant brought forth the compassion of an Egyptian princess. Thus Moses was spared to become the divine instrument in Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

A captive maid was used to the cleansing from leprosy of an Assyrian general. Thus Naaman came to know God as the God of Israel and the God of all who would trust and obey Him.

A young man, St. Paul's nephew, was raised up to deliver God's devoted servant from the uncontrolled rage of a fanatical mob. Thus St. Paul was enabled to announce Christ before rulers, governors, and kings as represented by Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and Nero.

"Who hath despised the day of small things?"

We have seen the magnificent result of the out-

pouring and incoming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost when about three thousand people were gloriously converted to Christ. We have also observed that, as a result of Jonah's preaching, the entire city of Nineveh repented, turned to God, and were wonderfully blessed. We might also take courage when we remember the results of the Apostle Paul's ministry. Although it is true that some treated his message with ridicule, and although certain procrastinated, saying, "We will hear thee again on this matter," yet there were those who genuinely believed in Christ and were enabled to pass on the message to their fellows. Let us never forget the triumphant ending of the parable of the Sower :—" But other (seed) fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, *some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.*

Has not God said, " My Word shall NOT return unto Me void " ? Did He not say to His representative in Corinth, " Be not afraid but speak, and hold not thy peace . . . *for I have much people in this city* " ? Did He not also encourage that same beloved servant of His when sailing through the Mediterranean in the midst of a tempest so terrible that all hope of being saved was taken away, " Fear not, Paul . . . for lo, *God hath given thee all them that sail with thee* " ? Did not the Apostle say to the Corinthian believers, " Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is NOT in vain in the Lord " ? Did not the unnamed writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews state most emphatically, " God is NOT UNRIGHTEOUS to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewed toward His Name " ?

Was it not the sweet singer of Israel who sang as only he could sing, "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" ?

Surely God has a definite purpose in placing these "exceeding great and precious promises" on record, and it is our privilege to believe that they will be fulfilled in our own experience simply because He has said so ! The words of Balaam to Balak, the son of Zippor, should inspire each of us with fresh confidence and zeal, "God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall HE not do it ? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good ?"

During the eighteenth century there lived a clergyman whose name was William Grimshaw. So thoroughly energetic and devoted was he that he not only preached in his church, but also in the fields and by the wayside. Also, he was not content to preach within the confines of his own parish, but wherever an opportunity presented itself he proclaimed Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Because of this Mr. Grimshaw found himself in conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities who gave him to understand that all this indiscriminate preaching was contrary to the regulations. Mr. Grimshaw's reply was to this effect ; "Gentlemen, I can assure you that I only preach on two occasions—*in season*, and *out of season* !" We should do well to adopt a similar attitude, and remind ourselves of the exhortation in Ecclesiastes xi, 6, "In

the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand ; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they shall both be alike good." How encouraging to think that both may be ALIKE GOOD. "Morning and evening" embrace not merely the beginning and end of the day, but also the morning and evening of our life.

We are often apt to be discouraged when little or, seemingly, no success attends our efforts. But these periods of depression are frequently preliminaries to an avalanche of blessing. There is a suggestive passage which occurs three times almost word for word in the book of Psalms :—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance" (Psalm xlii, 5 and 11, and xliii, 5). In each verse the same question is raised, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" In each verse the remedy is the same, "Hope thou in God." In each verse the same result is promised, "For I shall yet praise Him." When we find ourselves in the vale of depression because of the paucity of blessing, let us, like Jacob, *cling to God*; let us renew the spirit of prayerfulness; and let us apply ourselves with increased earnestness to the propagation of the theme of themes which is so rapidly filling heaven with redeemed souls. We shall then, sooner or later, have ample reason to praise Him for the health of His countenance, the manifestation of His presence, and the consequent salvation of sinners.

Our friends on the other side of the Atlantic are

justly proud of the fact that in their five great lakes they possess well-nigh half the fresh water of the world. How did those vast lakes come to be formed? It is quite possible that at one period of the world's history the northern portion of North America was covered with ice, and as the ice receded it left vast depressions which now comprise those gigantic inland "seas" of fresh water.

Is it not possible that God allows us to have these seasons of spiritual depression in order that, in His own time there may come a flood of blessing, so great that our influence for Christ may extend to the remotest parts of the earth?

One of the grandest promises in the Bible is recorded in the closing book of the Old Testament. The people of Israel had backslidden from God; they had questioned His love; profaned His table by offering blemished sacrifices; robbed Him of His tithes; and had even said, "It is a vain thing to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His charge?" And, wonder of wonders, in the midst of this dreadful declension, God graciously promised His people that if only they would bring all their tithes into the storehouse, so that there might be *something for Him*, and thereby prove Him, He would respond by opening the windows of heaven, and would pour out a blessing so vast that they would be utterly unable to contain it (Malachi iii, 10). Oh for this opening of heaven's windows—for this deluge of blessing that will not only fill every crevice of our spiritual being, but overflow to others! Is it really possible for Christians to-day to

have a spiritual experience such as this? Yes, a thousand times, yes! Let every impediment be removed. Let us give to God what is His. Let there be a complete surrender of time, ability, talents, money, and all else. *Then* we might confidently expect to witness a tornado of blessing and power. *Then* the crowd would be won in such a way that thousands would turn to the Lord.

In the light of the appalling need ; in the light of our present golden opportunities ; in the light of our Master's command to make disciples of all nations ; in the light of our Lord's near return—let us bestir ourselves and be willing to sacrifice our personal comforts, endeavouring by every legitimate means to

WIN THE CROWD

that ultimately we may have the joy of

WINNING THE CROWN

and also the surpassing privilege of casting that crown before the Saviour's feet, ascribing to Him praise, honour, glory, dominion, authority, and worthiness through the endless ages of an endless eternity. Amen.